A Critical Discourse Analysis of News Reports on Covid-19 in People's Daily and The New York Times

Analisis Wacana Kritis Laporan Berita tentang Covid-19 di People's Daily dan The New York Times

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Abstract

Critical Discourse Analysis aims to explore the ideology implicit in the discourse, thereby exposing the injustice, discrimination and prejudice in the discourse. The sudden epidemic has become the world's biggest event in 2020. Such international news is a special public discourse, and the discourse system and ideology displayed by various countries are different. This paper uses Fairclough's Three-dimensional Framework and Halliday's Systemic Functional Grammar as analysis tools, and selects 12 reports from the People's Daily and The New York Times on the Covid-19 epidemic for Critical Discourse Analysis. After analysis, it is found that People's Daily and The New York Times both use a lot of negative and derogatory terms, the difference in the focus of the media coverage of the two countries reflects the ideological difference caused by the cultural difference.

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Keywords: *Critical Discourse Analysis, Three-dimensional Model, Systemic Functional Grammar, Covid-19*

Abstrak

Analisis Wacana Kritis bertujuan untuk mengeksplorasi ideologi yang tersirat dalam wacana, sehingga mengungkap ketidakadilan, diskriminasi, dan prasangka dalam wacana. Pandemi mendadak ini menjadi peristiwa terbesar dunia pada tahun 2020. Berita internasional semacam itu merupakan wacana publik yang khusus, dan sistem wacana serta ideologi yang ditampilkan oleh berbagai negara berbeda-beda. Makalah ini menggunakan three-dimensional model Fairclough dan systemic functional grammar Halliday sebagai alat analisis, dan memilih 12 laporan dari People's Daily dan The New York Times tentang epidemi Covid-19 untuk Analisis Wacana Kritis. Setelah dilakukan analisis, ditemukan bahwa People's Daily dan The New York Times sama-sama banyak menggunakan istilah-istilah negatif dan merendahkan, perbedaan fokus pemberitaan media kedua negara tersebut mencerminkan perbedaan ideologis yang diakibatkan oleh perbedaan budaya tersebut.

Kata kunci: Analisis Wacana Kritis*, Three-dimensional Model, Systemic Functional Grammar, Covid-19*

INTRODUCTION

The Covid-19 pandemic, which first appeared at the end of 2019, has now spread throughout the world, and has become a global problem. The world was then faced with a serious health crisis, which then led to a global economic crisis and even a political crisis. Relations between countries also experience tension, especially between China and the United States as two giant countries that continue to compete both politically and economically. Previously, the tension between the two countries had been going on since Donald Trump's presidency, but then these tensions escalated when the Covid-19 pandemic erupted. The situation got worse as China demonstrated its coping capabilities, while the US was losing ground, proving to be the country with the largest number of coronavirus cases in the world.

Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) is a discourse analysis method developed by Western linguists represented by Roger Fowler, Gunther Kress, etc. in the late 1970s and early 1980s. And it has absorbed the essence from many disciplines such as sociology, psychology, semiotics, and developed into an in-depth perspective that brings together text analysis and social orientation. CDA focuses on inequality and power relations in language and aims to explore the ideology implicit in the discourse, thereby exposing the injustice, discrimination, and prejudice in the discourse. With the rapid development of science and technology today, people have more diverse channels for obtaining information, but news is still one of the ways for people to obtain reliable information. It becomes an effective means to influence people's attitude, cognition, and ideology. However, news is also produced under specific social conditions and ideological backgrounds. The news we see and hear always contains ideology. To meet the needs of different social and cultural backgrounds, reports of the same event may reflect different focuses and ideologies. As Van Dijk (1993, 36) says, media discourse is the main source of knowledge, attitudes and ideology of elites and ordinary citizens. In the context of global international communication, international news as a specific public discourse is becoming increasingly important in building the country's image and expressing attitudes and positions. Therefore, studying the influence and transmission of ideology in discourse is very important.

People's Daily (PD), one of China's mainstream media, was founded in 1948. It has always adhered to the correct direction of running the newspaper. As the mouthpiece of the party and the government, it actively promotes the party's theories and major policies. As an important window for China's foreign cultural exchanges, it can promptly disseminate information in various fields at home and abroad. PD actively records the changes in Chinese society and reports on the reformation that are taking place in China. *The New York Times* (TNYT) of the United States has a wide range of internationally recognized influence. It claims to adhere to the principles of objective and neutral reporting. In terms of news reports, TNYT sees itself as a 'newspaper record'. The reliability of reporting on current events is very high, so it is often directly used as a news source by other newspapers and news agencies in the world.

For Fairclough, language in critical discourse analysis is discourse, and discourse as social practice is determined by social structure (Wang and Yang, 2008). Fairclough combines text analysis with the theoretical orientation of social criticism, and proposes a three-dimensional analysis framework, which can not only study language changes from the textual level, but also rise to the social level, placing the discourse in a broader context and discussing Its deep meaning. This three-dimensional framework includes text, discourse practice and social practice. On this basis, Fairclough (1992) divides discourse analysis into three stages: description, interpretation, and explanation.

The textual dimension of discourse, that is, the analysis of the text, the first stage of discourse analysis: description. Fairclough believes that both language form and meaning should be involved in text analysis. Fairclough draws on Halliday's systemic functional grammar, focuses on the linguistic features of the text, and describes the formal and structural features of the text in terms of vocabulary selection, transitivity, and modality. The dimension of discourse practice is also the process analysis of discourse practice, that is the interpretation of the relationship between text and the communicative process of generating, disseminating, and receiving text. At this stage, Fairclough emphasized the 'intertextuality', which can link the three dimensions before and after to conduct critical analysis more effectively (1992, 102).

Social practice, involving the relationship between discourse practice and social cultural practice, is also the third stage: explanation. At this stage, the study of discourse is placed in a broader context, with the purpose of exposing the embedded power and ideology and revealing the restraint of text and discourse practice.

Halliday (2004, 29) believes that language is a social symbol system, and meaning is not created out of thin air. He focused on establishing a method to explain 'what is language' and 'how language works. This complete meta-functional ideological theoretical system is an important part of Halliday's theory of functional linguistics and one of the core ideas of systemic functional grammar. It plays an important role in linguistics. Metafunctions includes three aspects: ideational function, interpersonal function, textual function.

First, the idealtional function enables humans to understand their experience of the surrounding and inner" (2004, 29). It can be divided into experience function and logic function. The representation of the external world and the internal world is mainly achieved through vocabulary and transitivity. In addition to conceptualizing the world, language also enables people to establish and maintain relationships with others, which Halliday calls 'interpersonal function'. In the process of language interaction, the speaker can influence or even change the attitude and behavior of the listener by explaining his own feelings, judgments, and opinions about a specific situation. Therefore, interpersonal function often reveals the speaker's attitude and the impact he expects on others. To a certain extent, textual function plays an important role in ideational and interpersonal functions. It can combine the thoughts and interactions involved in the other two functions into meaningful text (2004, 30).

The impact of the Covid-19 epidemic that broke out at the beginning of 2020 is now expanding around the world, bringing unprecedented problems and challenges to countries. The sudden epidemic has become the world's largest event in 2020, and this public health crisis has evolved into a global economic crisis. During this period, the mainstream media reports in China and the United States conveyed different positions and attitudes and established different discourse systems to guide public opinion. The epidemic caused China and the United States, which had been strained by the trade war, to once again fall into a battle of public opinion. PD and TNYT have many reports with conflicting views, while reporting on international events, mainstream media not only convey relevant information, but also contain different ideologies. This article aims to use a three-dimensional framework and systemic functional grammar as tools to conduct a critical discourse analysis of the PD and TNYT reports on the Covid-19 epidemic, and explore their respective attitudes and positions on the new crown epidemic, and the ideology behind their news discourse, at last try to study the following questions: (1) How did the *People's Daily* and *The New York Times* shape and present Covid-19 related reports?; (2) What are the language differences between the two media in reporting on the Covid-19 epidemic?; (3) What are the factors that cause these differences in language use?

Van Dijk, an important CDA researcher, believes that cognition plays an important role in discourse research, and discourse research is carried out in the triangle framework of 'discourse-cognition-society' (Liu, 2018). Since the late 1980s, he began to apply his theory to media discourse. For example, he published *Prejudice in Discourse: An Analysis of Ethnic Prejudice in Cognition and Conversation* in 1984, which revealed elitism, racism, or sexism in news discourse.

Fairclough (1992, 25) put forward his three-dimensional model, which emphasizes the concept of discourse as a kind of social practice, in which text is the product of loose practice, including the production, distribution and consumption of text. The textual dimension and the discourse practice dimension are restricted by social practice. Discourse and language as social practice are determined by social structure. Treating discourse as a social practice helps to analyze the interrelationship between text, process, and context. His three-dimensional model made a great contribution to the development of CDA and was accepted and adopted as a theoretical framework by later media scholars. Especially in media discourse, he cited a large number of examples from various news sources in his CDA research to reveal the correlation between mass media practices and social cultural practices.

Research on CDA in China started a bit later than in the West. In 1995, Chen Zhongzhu published an article in the journal *Foreign Language Teaching and Research*, which was also the first CDA-related article in China. His article *Introduction and Evaluation of Critical Linguistics* published in 1995 made several Chinese scholars realize the importance of CDA research. In the article, Chen Zhongzhu divides Western research on CDA into five periods, and summarizes the philosophical and linguistic foundation of CDA. In another article, 《语篇与意识形态批评性语篇分析—对两条罢工新闻的分析》*Critical Discourse Analysis of Discourse and Ideology—Analysis of Two Strike News* Chen used the analysis tools proposed by CL by analyzing two news articles in two British newspapers. It demonstrates in detail how to use grammar and discourse structure to achieve ideological performance. Xin Bin is a leading linguist in China. He published the article *Language, Power, and Ideology: Critical Linguistics* in 1996, introducing Western critical discourse analysis theories. And he also does a lot of critical analysis and focuses on Chinese and English news discourse.

METHOD

To answer the above questions, this article will select Covid-19 news reports from February 2020 to October 2020 as the research sample. Then entered Covid-19, China and the United States as keywords on the websites of *People's Daily* and *The New York Times* respectively, to select relevant reports. After reading, author selected 6 articles on national image, policy, and international relations from each website newspaper. At the last, a combination of qualitative analysis and quantitative analysis is used to conduct critical discourse analysis of relevant reports.

As described in the previous article, the *People's Daily* and *The New York Times* both have good reputations at home and abroad, and both have reported facts in a fair and neutral manner. However, in the report on the Covid-19 epidemic, the two have shown different positions in the report. For example, PD reported in March that Chinese scientific research and medical technology had achieved positive results, and testing and treatment rates had increased significantly. However, TNYT published an article on March 9 entitled "*China May Beating the Coronavirus, at a Painful Cost*", which stated that there are still patients in China who are not receiving treatment and that China's economy is still unable to emerge from the crisis. The two-

mainstream media in the two countries continue to form and shape the Covid-19 discourse to lead public opinion both in their respective countries and the international public. Therefore, it is necessary to conduct a critical discourse analysis of the two reports on the Covid-19 epidemic. This article will use Halliday's analysis tools within Fairclough's three-dimensional framework to analyze the relevant reports of the *People's Daily* and *The New York Times* in terms of lexical classification, transitivity, modal verbs, news sources, reporting mode, and explore the attitude and ideology implied in this incident from mainstream media of the two countries.

RESULTS

Text representation from PD and TNYT on the issue of the Covid-19 pandemic

In the first stage of the three-dimensional framework, this article mainly analyzes the reports of the two-mainstream media from vocabulary classification and transitivity. According to Halliday's systemic functional grammar, vocabulary selection is inseparable from the classification system. In the news discourse, the writer chooses different words to have different effects on the same event. Therefore, it is very important to start from the most basic vocabulary to classify and analyze. The following is a specific analysis of the words used by the Chinese and American media in reporting on the Covid-19 epidemic.

Lexical classification

> *"Millions of people are without health insurance, and millions of others live close to the **edge**… They are much less likely to go to a doctor or clinic at the first sign of a fever or cough," [...] "Medicare for All is now desperately needed," one netizen exclaimed, noting that rural hospitals are often underfunded, and the middle class and the poor are **neglected** in many ways.   (Sample 1, PD)*

In this example, the PD chose the word 'edge' to describe the difficult situation of many Americans without medical insurance in the epidemic. This shows that many uninsured people in the United States are marginalized in the epidemic. In addition, 'neglected' is also used to modify the middle class and the poor in the United States. The government, which is responsible for its own people, has ignored the poor and even the middle-class people because of insurance issues during the epidemic. PD described the epidemic condition in the U.S., most of the people were unable to receive government assistance despite the shortage of protective equipment.

> *It is hard to believe that a **superpower** like the US has a **shortage** of test kits and is not able to test enough people for the coronavirus, causing a public outcry. (Sample 2, PD)*

The definition of 'superpower' in the Oxford dictionary is "one of the countries in the world that has very great military or economic power and a lot of influence, for example the US". And the definition of 'shortage' is "a situation when there is not enough of the people or things that are needed." PD uses superpower to describe the strength of the United States, while shortfall is in sharp contrast to superpower. With such a strong national power, there is a shortage of testing tools, which is incredible. It echoes the 'hard to believe' in the previous parts. Also, PD use 'outcry' to describe the public's response, and public as the object to illustrate the US government's actions and the shortage of equipment that have caused strong dissatisfaction among the people. The description of the public's response reveals that the U.S. government's policy in fighting the epidemic is not as strong as its national power.

> *They clearly signaled the ruling Communist Party's alarm that it had failed to gain control of the coronavirus epidemic, which has **overwhelmed** the health care system, spread abroad, and **threatened** to **paralyze** China, the world's most populous country and second-largest economy.   (Sample 7, TNYT)*

The meaning of 'overwhelm' is to have such a strong emotional effect on somebody that it is difficult for them to resist or know how to react. 'Threaten' means: to seem likely to happen or cause something unpleasant. The definition of 'paralyze' is to prevent something from functioning normally. TNYT used a series of relatively negative words to describe the Communist Party's failure to control the Covid-19 epidemic, which caused the epidemic to spread abroad. The epidemic also threatened and hit China's medical system and even paralyzed China's economy. The stacking of these negative words reflects that the United States is not optimistic about the situation in China.

> The Chinese Communist Party has spent decades **pressuring** and **cajoling** a historically **fractious** nation of 1.4 billion people to see China as a united country. Now, it is keeping them apart. *(Sample 9, TNYT)*

The word 'cajoling' means persuade (someone) to do something by sustained coaxing or flattery. And 'fractious' means: easily upset, especially by small things or making trouble and complaining. In this sentence, TNYT used 'decades' to explain the long period of China's reunification and used two verbs to describe the way China's reunification, reflecting the American media believe that China's reunification was forced, the people were deceived, and reluctantly reunified together. At the same time, it uses 'fractious' to describe China, which on the surface expresses the hard-won unification of China. The latter sentence is in contrast with the previous one, expressing that Chinese government is separating the people at this moment. It can be seen that the U.S. media does not approve of China's lockdown and isolation to fight the epidemic.

Transitivity

Transitivity is the focus of CDA in the textual dimension. It originated from Michael Halliday's systemic functional grammar. Halliday believes that the transitivity system refers to the various processes that humans can use to describe the real world. And he said that "the transitivity system construes the world of experience into a manageable set of process types" (2004, 170). The transitivity system contains six processes: material process, mental process, behavioral process, relational process, existential process, and verbal process. Material process refers to the process of doing something. In this process, there needs to be an action verb, a subject makes the action (actor), and the target of the action (goal). The material process is a process of describing events in detail and is considered to be the most objective process among the six processes (Halliday, 2004, 179). In Halliday's view (2004, 252), the verbal process is an important resource in various discourses. They help to create narratives and make it possible to set dialogue and paragraphs. Generally speaking, the verbal process is easy to distinguish, because it is a process of 'speaking', so there are some words, such as 'say, tell, compliment, describe' etc, it can also be seen in the sentence. In the verbal process, there are three participants: sayer, receiver and verb. Mental processes are manifested in psychological phenomena such as 'perception', 'reaction' and 'cognition'. Mental processes are generally subjective, so they rarely appear in news texts. Behavioral processes refer to physical and mental behaviors such as breath, cough, smile, laugh, cry, stare, and dream. Simply put, the behavioral process is an intermediary between the mental process and the material process. It emphasizes the behaviors related to physical and psychological (Halliday, 2004, 248). The relational process refers to the process of describing and identifying events or people involved in news. Halliday divides the relationship process into two types: attributive and intensive. Halliday (2004, 256) believes that the existential process represents the existence or occurrence of something. It is a process between the relational process and the material process. After reading and collating the reports, the following table shows the data of 12 reports from PD and TNYT.

Table 1. Process distribution in news samples

Process	People's Daily		The New York Times	
	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage
Material	105	53.6%	228	59.2%
Verbal	39	19.9%	100	26.0%
Relational	32	16.3%	29	7.5%
Mental	9	4.6%	15	3.9%
Existential	9	4.6%	8	2.1%
Behavioral	2	1%	5	1.3%
Total	196	100%	385	100%

It can be seen from the table that among the 12 reports selected from the PD and TNYT, the material process accounts for the largest proportion, followed by the verbal process. Therefore, the following part will mainly analyze the material process and verbal process.

Material process:

*Politics **lead** the fight against the epidemic, leaving science powerless. (Sampel 6, PD)*

*It's now become global popular demand that China and the US must **shun** their differences to **defeat** the coronavirus for the sake of humanity. (Sampel 3, PD)*

In example (5), 'politics' as actor, process is 'lead', the goal is 'fight'. PD believes that a superpower like the United States should be at the forefront of science in the world. However, in the face of the epidemic, the United States has left to the end and did not address the domestic epidemic problem immediately. Instead, it tried its best to politicize the epidemic problem and solve the problem. If there is a mistake in the direction, no matter how strong the scientific strength is, there is nothing that can be done. In example (6), 'China and the US' as actor, 'shun' is the process, and the goal is 'their differences'. The second process is 'defeat', goal is 'coronavirus'. PD used a global perspective as an explanatory perspective to express China's position, believing that the widening differences between China and the United States in the epidemic are not conducive to curbing the epidemic. At the same time, it showed that China agrees and is willing to cooperate with the United States. On the contrary, the United States is the leader in the deterioration of Sino-US relations and the non-cooperative parties in the joint fight against the epidemic.

*China **faces** a torrent of suspicion from other countries that could undermine its ambitions of becoming a global economic and political power. (Sample 10, TNYT)*

*China has **urged** countries to work together, but **lashed out** at the United States and others, at least in part, it seems, to deflect public anger at home. (Sample 10, TNYT)*

In example (7), 'China' is the actor, 'faces' is the process and 'suspicion' is goal. TNYT first thought that the epidemic had damaged China's international reputation and aroused suspicion from other countries. The epidemic even disrupted the process of China's economic and political world hegemony. On the one hand, TNYT stated that China's handling of the epidemic was not satisfactory and failed to eliminate the doubts of other countries. On the other hand, China has always had the intention to dominate the world. The epidemic only frustrated China's development ambitions and slowed down the pace of development. In example (8), 'China' also as actor, 'urged' is process and the goal is 'countries'. The second process is 'lashed out', goal is 'the United States and others'. According to the TNYT, China's accusation of the U.S. is because China wants to divert the attention of the people and hopes that the anger of the people can be transferred to America. What TNYT wants to express is that the United States did not have any

fault in the epidemic, so China's denounce against the United States are groundless and unreasonable, just to divert the public's attention.

Verbal process:

According to Sachs, *the Trump administration's claims that the virus came from a Wuhan laboratory are "reckless and dangerous", which could "push the world to conflict just as the Bush Administration's lies about weapons of mass destruction in Iraq pushed the US into war in 2003."* (Sample 5, PD)

In this example, sayer is Sachs, professor and director of the Center for Sustainable Development at Columbia University. He disagreed with the statement from the Trump administration that virus came from the Wuhan laboratory. He compared Trump's actions this time with the Bush administration's practices in Iraq, and believed that both were lies. PD used his words to state its position, indicating that China firmly resists and disagrees with the Trump administration's unfounded speculation.

"This outbreak could still go in any direction," **Dr. Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus**, *director-general of the World Health Organization,* **said** *on Wednesday.* (Sample 8, TNYT)

In example (10), the sayer is Dr. Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, 'said' as process. TNYT used the words of WHO officials to show that the true situation of the epidemic in China is far from this, proving that the epidemic has not been controlled. China has not controlled the spread of the epidemic, so the epidemic may still affect China more badly. It shows that the number of infections is decreasing, and it is too early to think that the epidemic situation in China were improved.

Discourse practice of the Covid-19 pandemic in the text of PD and TNYT

Interpretation is the second step of the three-dimensional framework. The focus of this stage is the relationship between text and discourse practice. At this stage, the process of text generation and text interpretation will be analyzed. The connection between text and social practice is seen as mediated by discourse practice. On the one hand, the process of text generation and interpretation is formed by the nature of social practice; on the other hand, the production process is formed and leaves 'traces', the interpretation process operates according to the 'clues' in the text (Faiclough, 1995, 9). This stage will mainly analyze the modality, news sources and reporting mode in the selected reports.

Modality

Modality refers to the estimation and uncertainty of the language user's knowledge of something, that is to say, modality is an expression of indeterminacy (Halliday, 2004, 148). At the same time, Halliday (2004, 135) divides modal verbs into high-value, medium-value and low-value. Modality is a useful analysis tool for describing textual ideology. It can reveal the true attitudes and opinions of the speaker and the author on the event. In news reports, the use of modality strategies can reflect the author's views and beliefs about the event.

It's now become global popular demand that China and the US **must** *shun their differences to defeat the coronavirus for the sake of humanity.* (Sample 3, PD)

In example (11), the high-value modal verb 'must' show a firm stand. PD think that at this stage, China and most countries in the world hold the same opinion and believe that China and the United States must cooperate, in order to effectively fight the epidemic. And the US's approach is contrary to the wishes of most countries in the world. At the same time, it also expressed China's firmness in choosing cooperation to fight the epidemic.

*Even countries that **could** copy China still **have to** ask whether the cure is worse than the disease. (Sample 11, TNYT)*

In this example, TNYT use two modal verbs, 'have to' in here also means must. 'Could', as a medium-value modal verb, represents low probability, and it also has a dubious connotation in the sentence. TNYT believes that few countries in the world can replicate China's anti-epidemic model, because China's anti-epidemic model comes at a huge price for the normal life and freedom of the people, and this price is worse than the diagnosis of the disease, so the U.S. does not promote China's anti-epidemic model at all.

News Resource

There are three main types of news sources: specific sources, semi-specific sources and unspecific sources (Halloran et al. 1970, 137). The specific source refers to clearly indicating the source of the information. Semi-specific means that the reporter does not directly point out the source of the report but uses some words to imply indirectly. As for the unspecific source, the reporter wanted to deliberately conceal or did not know the source of the news. The choice of different news sources undoubtedly shows the reporter's position. Through reading and sorting news materials, the following table is about the news source data of PD and TNYT. According to table 2, it can be seen that the the most used by PD and TNYT is Specific source.

Table 2: The distribution of news resource in news samples

Type	*People's Daily*		*The New York Times*	
	Number	**Percentage**	**Number**	**Percentage**
Specific	33	48.5%	52	49.5%
Semi-specific	7	10.3%	27	25.7%
Unspecific	28	41.2%	26	24.8%
Total	68	100%	105	100%

*"It's times like this that we really see the need for stronger public policies," **C. Nicole Mason**, president and CEO of the Institute for Women's Policy Research, told CNN. (Sample 1, PD)*

In this example, the specific resource is C. Nicole Mason. Nicole Mason expressed her attitude towards the situation in the United States. She believes that the current American policy is not effective and that the situation in the United States requires a stronger anti-epidemic policy. PD use specific source of information to make reports more objective and credible.

*Russia and China as well as Iran have sharply increased their dissemination of disinformation about the coronavirus since January, even repeating and amplifying one another's propaganda and falsehoods, including anti-American conspiracy theories, said **Lea Gabrielle**.   (Sample 12, TNYT)*

TNYT used Lea Gabrielle as the source of information to clearly indicate that China and Russia are spreading false information about America. It also shows that China and Russia's claims about the United States are untrue, it makes reports more convincing.

Reporting mode

According to Fairclough (1995, 55), reporting modes can be divided into two main types: Direct Discourse (DD), Indirect Discourse (ID). DD refers to sentences that do not change the original information. ID refers to the transcribed version of the original information. In this paper, Direct Discourse Slipping (DDS) is also analyzed, it means that some single words or phrases are quoted, but the original statement has not changed.

"How can they expect normal citizens to contribute to eliminating the potential risk of person-to-person spread if hospitals are waiting to charge us $3,270 for a simple blood test and a nasal swab?" Azcue told the newspaper.   (Sample 1, PD)

In the example, sayer is Azcue, a American citizen, and stated that the US government charges high fees for citizens' blood test and nasal swab. This move caused public dissatisfaction. Although it is a question sentence, it has a positive meaning, which means that ordinary people will not take the initiative to carry out the test under the condition of charging high testing fees to reduce the risk of human-to-human transmission, which means that the high cost also indirectly leads to the diffusion of epidemic.

> *"Beijing is playing geopolitics with the epidemic," Ms. Shirk wrote. "The domestic propaganda is hostile to the U.S. and emphasizing the superiority of the Chinese system and the wisdom of Xi Jinping." (Sample 10, TNYT)*

In example (16), Shirk stated that China, mainly Beijing, is using the epidemic to engage in geopolitics. Externally, hostile to the United States, and the deterioration of Sino-US relations, China is also responsible. China has been instigating the anger and hostility of its people towards the United States. Internally, China propaganda the superiority of its system and the wisdom of its leaders and convince the people of the leadership and decision-making of the Communist Party.

The Socio-cultural context of the Covid-19 discourse battle between PD and TNYT

The most macroscopic dimension of Fairclough's three-dimensional critical discourse analysis is the social cultural practice dimension, which corresponds to the process of discourse explanation. The purpose of this dimension is to emphasize social analysis, that is to reveal the power relations and ideologies hidden in the text in combination with the social context. The analysis of social practice is an explanatory process based on the previous text analysis and discourse analysis. The purpose of explanation is to reveal how social structure affects discourse production and how discourse responds to social structure. Therefore, the following section will discuss and analyze the social factors that influence media discourse in PD and TNYT.

Politic aspect

China's political party system is a system of multi-party cooperation and political consultation under the leadership of the Communist Party of China. As the ruling party, the Communist Party of China is the strong leadership core of the cause of socialism with Chinese characteristics. The report of the Fourth Plenary Session of the 19th Central Committee pointed out that the party's overall leadership system is a system that firmly safeguards the authority of the Party Central Committee and centralized and unified leadership. The United States implements a two-party system under the presidential system. It is a political party system in which two evenly matched parties, the Democratic Party and the Republican Party, obtain a majority of seats in the parliament through elections, or win the presidential election and take turns in power. The advantage of this kind of party system is that the two parties take turns in power and supervise each other, forming a mechanism for restricting the operation of public power.

However, the epidemic also exposed the shortcomings of the two in the face of crisis events. China's bottom-up centralization and unification is led by the Communist Party, when problems arise, the lower-level reports to the higher level one by one. On the one hand, it will cause time delays. On the other hand, although multiple parties participate in politics, the voice of the minority is always lower than that of the majority, which easily leads to bureaucracy. This indirectly leads to formalism among Chinese officials, and also makes them care about 'face'. The shortcomings of the two-party system in the United States are that the internal organization of the party is loose, power is scattered, and ideology is weak. In principle, it is only an 'election machine', which only plays a role in the election of members of parliament and executive heads

at all levels. The two parties attack and constraints each other, long cycle of policy formulation, complicated process, weak policy continuity, and low administrative efficiency. It seems all make the US government's slow action in response to emergencies, or even governance failure. The different characteristics of the political party system have led to different responses and decision-making in the handling of crises between the two countries.

Cultural Aspect

China is a country with a history of 5,000 years of civilization. Such a country with a long history and its traditional culture have also had a profound impact on the country's development. Confucian culture, as the mainstream culture of Chinese traditional culture, has influenced the country for more than two thousand years. There was no such thing as a society in ancient China. Ancient Confucianists put forward the concept of 'Jia Guo' (family & country), explaining the inseparable relationship between family and country in Chinese thought and culture. The country is the largest home, everyone's home, and the monarch is the patriarch. Home is also country, home is the smallest country. The national sentiment puts the value of the individual in the collective value of the country, society, and the group, and opposes the individualistic values of self-interest. In addition, under the influence of Confucian culture, people pay attention to the whole, and have strong respect of the sages, monarchs, and those who serve the country, and gradually formed the habit of collective decision-making, and developed over time to formed as collectivism which focus on collective interests (顾平, 2020, 79). Confucian culture emphasizes respect for authority, social stability, and national interests above personal interests. Personal interests should be subordinate to the interests of the group, nation, and state. Therefore, the Chinese people who are deeply influenced by the concept of 'Jia Guo' advocate a consciousness and culture of obeying the overall situation from the perspective of family security and stability. Therefore, when the epidemic broke out, the people obeyed the party's instructions, stayed at home, and worked together to fight the epidemic.

The United States is an immigrant country with a history of only more than 200 years. People from all over the world gather here, different ideologies and cultures make this country develop rapidly and become a superpower in the world. Western human rights theory emphasizes the legitimacy of human's natural attributes and natural desires, and believes that as a natural person, humans should enjoy all kinds of inherent and inalienable human rights. Therefore, Western culture is more inclined to individualism, emphasizing the supremacy of individual autonomy, that is focusing on self-expression, encouraging individual independence, and first relying on oneself to solve problems and giving priority to personal interests. Because individualism values individual freedom, and everyone only cares about their own feelings, takes care of themselves, and does not rely on authority. Therefore, people in an individualistic society are unlikely to make people take collective actions such as staying at home and avoiding gatherings. They are also unlikely to accept quarantine and support coercive measures such as large-scale lockdown. In response to the public's wishes, the government of an individualistic society would hesitate to take coercive measures, which also caused the delay of the US government to take necessary measures in the early stages (Jiang et al. 2020).

The obvious social and cultural differences between the two countries have caused them to have completely different measures and methods in dealing with crises. At the same time, *People's Daily* and *The New York Times* have different focuses and ideologies in their news reports on Covid-19 epidemic. China emphasizes the priority of collective interests under special circumstances, while the United States pays more attention to individualism and pursues human rights and individual freedom.

CLOSING

This article combines Fairclough's three-dimensional framework and Halliday's functional grammar theory to conduct a critical discourse analysis of 12 reports in the *People's Daily* and *The New York Times* and try to explore the different ideologies in the two media news discourses on the Covid-19 epidemic report. In the description stage, both of two medias used a lot of serious and derogatory terms to describe each other's domestic Covid-19 epidemic situation, shaping that both countries have been hit hard by the epidemic and faced unprecedented challenges and risks. In the analysis of transitivity, in order to show the objectivity of news reports, PD and TNYT both use different actors and verbs in the material process. In the verbal process, in order to make the information and opinions in the report more convincing, PD and TNYT has selected people from all walks of life as information sources and sayers, and both of them express their representative positions and attitudes in their own reports.

In the Interpretation stage, PD used the 'must' a high-value modal verb to show that China and the United States should cooperate in the fight against the Covid-19 during the epidemic. TNYT used 'have to' to indicate that China's anti-epidemic policy is not feasible. Therefore, the United States does not advocate copying China's epidemic prevention model. In the analysis of news resource and reporting mode, both use specific source and DD extensively to improve the authenticity and reliability of reports, and indirectly convey the ideology they really want to express. PD tends to describe the ineffectiveness of the US anti-epidemic policy and the spread of the epidemic caused by capitalism. TNYT is more use specific source, citing other people's words to disagree with China's anti-epidemic policy and condemn China for spreading false information against the US, believing that China has worsened Sino-US relations.

At last, in the explanation stage, this paper briefly explained the factors that affect the different tendencies of the two medias in news reporting from politic and cultural aspects. China is a socialist country under the system of multi-party cooperation and political consultation under the leadership of the Communist Party of China, while the United States is a capitalist country where two political parties take turns in power under the presidential system. The differences in political systems have affected the differences in the country's responses and measures when faced with crises. In terms of social culture, Chinese people who are influenced by Confucianism advocate family and country sentiments, have always put the country's long-term development in an important position, and can make personal sacrifices for the country's development. The United States accommodates people from all over the world, is avant-garde, and has always advocated a spirit of freedom and individualism. Adhering to the ideology that personal interests and pursuit are more than everything. This also explains that things that are taken for granted in China are completely oppressive and unbelievable in the United States, and the pursuit of personal freedom like Americans under special circumstances is completely unreasonable and selfish in China. Therefore, the reports of the *People's Daily* and *The New York Times* also presented different focuses and conveyed different information and ideologies.

The current purpose of the research is not to judge which party is correct in the epidemic, but to explore how the news media can use various language tools to guide readers toward a specific mentality, and what role ideology plays in shaping news discourse. It may arouse the critical consciousness of readers. When the readers can subconsciously and critically read news, they will not be easily influenced by the news.

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News Samples from *People's Daily* and *The New York Times*

Number	Headline	Newspaper	Date
1	Is US able to protect the lives of its people as COVID-19 spreads?	*People's Daily*	March 3
2	US government continues to flounder as COVID-19 situation worsens	*People's Daily*	March 10
3	US and China cooperation a must for defeating coronavirus	*People's Daily*	April 19
4	US COVID-19 statistics challenged by multiple research: lethal virus is far more widespread in the country than previously thought	*People's Daily*	April 21
5	Blaming China for US problems a "big lie of the Trump administration": US expert	*People's Daily*	May 6
6	The 'reopen' and 'lockdown' game behind the worsening of the US epidemic covid-19	*People's Daily*	July 15
7	China Tightens Wuhan Lockdown in 'Wartime' Battle with Coronavirus	*The New York Times*	February 7
8	Coronavirus Cases Seemed to Be Leveling Off. Not Anymore	*The New York Times*	February 13
9	A 'Blue Great Wall' Divides a City as It Battles the Coronavirus	*The New York Times*	March 5
10	China Pushes Back as Coronavirus Crisis Damages Its Image	*The New York Times*	March 9
11	China May Be Beating the Coronavirus, at a Painful Cost	*The New York Times*	March 9
12	As Virus Spreads, China and Russia See Openings for Disinformation	*The New York Times*	March 30