

Discourse and Framing: A Content Analysis Based on Chinese News Quoted by New York Times

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Abstract. This paper is a content analysis study on news coverage, based on how New York Times quoted the discourse of Chinese foreign ministry spokesmen in their news coverage. 62 sampling news are selected from New York Time website, from Jan.1st 2013 to Dec.25th 2013. Those samples have been collected by key words searching and are manual coded by the author. The study mainly adopts and operated by five generic frames, which are conflict frame, human interest frame, economic consequences frame, responsibility frame and remedy frame. At the beginning, two research questions are put forward: 1) Is there frame building in handling second-hand news materials; 2) What type of frame is more salient in news quoted in New York Times? At last, the findings conclude that, there is frame building in the news selecting process, and the conflict frame is the most salient one, which has the highest quoted frequency by New York Times journalists.

Keywords: Content Analysis, Framing, Conflict.

1. Introduction

This paper is a content analysis study, based on how New York Times journalists quote news from Chinese government spokesmen. By quoting or translating news, the journalists or editors can frame it into a different discourse, which may generate public opinion among audience. So, the framing process includes two parts, the first part is framing building, which emphasis on how news frames are generated by the producers, and the second part is frame setting, which is mainly about the framing effects, how the audience accept these frames. This study focuses on the first part, the framing setting area, and put forward two research questions, which are:

- Is there frame building in handling second-hand news materials?
- What type of frame is more salient in the news quoted by New York Times?

In this study, we attempt to find answer to the above research questions, and also try to deepen the understandings in this international and multicultural world.

2. Research Background and Methods

2.1. Framing theory

News framing is a way in which journalists depict an issue in terms of a “central organizing idea” (W. Gamson and A. Modigliani). Frame-building refers to the process and factors that influence the structural qualities of news frames. By framing, the journalists can select news and frames to make some of the attributes more salient. So, not all frames have the same chance for catching on.

Frames can be divided into issue-specific frames and generic frames. In this paper, we apply five generic news frames as the study guidance: conflict frame, human interest frame, economic consequences frame, responsibility frame and remedy frame. Conflict frames depict conflict between individuals, groups, or institutions; human interest frames emphasize human life stories and emotivity; economic consequences frames couch issues in terms of the material benefits or costs they will have for individuals, groups, institutions, regions, or countries (Semetko & Valkenburg, 2000). Responsibility frames emphasize the responsibility of an individual or groups, which part should take the responsibility of the issues, Remedy frames refer to the solutions to the issues.

Entman (1993) also suggested that frames in the news can be examined and identified by “the presence or absence of certain keywords, stock phrases, stereotyped images, sources of information and sentences that provide thematically

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reinforcing clusters of facts or judgments”. Entman’s framing definition is very useful for the concept operation, and was quoted by most researchers, In this study, the author also applied Entman’s definition to refine frames from the news coverage.

2.2. Research methods

This study applies a content analysis method, by analysis certain keywords, stock phrases, stereotyped images, sources of information and sentences to find out if there is frame building in the quoted reports. The news samplings all collected from New York Times official website, by using the names of three Chinese government spokespersons as searching key words, who are Hua Chunying, Qin Gang, and Hong Lei. At last, totally 62 pieces of news were collected during the time Jan.1st 2013 to Dec.24th 2013.

The following study was guided by the above 5 frames, which are conflict, human interest, economic consequences, responsibility and remedy. The unit of analysis is every single piece of news, and allow multiple frames to be refined form every single piece of news. The whole process was done by news reading and find out related key words. And, the news frame refine process can be guided by the following questions, as list in table 1:

Table 1. Guiding questions for frames refine

Frame types	Guiding questions
Conflict frames	Are there conflicts between governments, groups or individuals?
Human interest frames	Does this report try to personalize, dramatize or emotionalize this issue?
Economy consequences	Is there profit or cost for governments, groups or individuals?
Responsibility	Which part should take responsibility for this conflict?
Remedy	Is there suggestion or other information about how to solve the conflict?

3. Content Analysis Result

By totally coding the 62 pieces of news of New York Times, the frequency of each frame is listed as follows, and multiple-frame is allowed in single piece of news.

Table 2. Total frames number refined from news reports

	Conflict	Human interest	Economy consequences	Responsibility	Remedy	Total
Number	53	14	18	31	34	150

*N=62

From the above table, we can see, the frequency of conflict frame is the highest, followed by remedy and responsibility frames. So, there is no doubt that conflict frame is the most salient one when New York Times journalist quoted Chinese government news.

3.1. Conflict frames

As the most frequently cited media frames, New York Times mainly focus on the conflicts among Chinese territory conflicts, cyber-attack issues, and North Korea unclear problems. There are some other conflicts, but not very salient. The frequency of each conflict frame is shown in table 3.

Table 3. Conflicts frames

Territory conflicts	Number
Diao yu/Senkaku Island	6
Air Zone defense	5
India-China border conflicts	2
	Total 13
Cyber-attack conflicts	
Hackers attack	10
Snowden	3
	Total 13
North Korea Nuclear	7
Total	33

*N=62

The “territory conflicts” sub-frames mainly focus on Chinese and japan, the dispute island, named Diao yu Island in China, and Senkaku in Japan, is claimed by both countries. The second conflict, the “cyber-attack conflicts” sub-

frame is as salient as the territorial conflicts. But, compared with USA complains about Cyber-attacks from China, the “Snowden event” only appear 3 times, was not very salient in New York Times coverage. The third conflict sub-frame is “North Korea nuclear” problem, Totally 7 reports are quoted. In the unclear issue reports, news coverage tends to urge China to promote the multilateral dialogue with North Korea.

Besides these 3 top conflict frames, there are other 21 sub-conflict frames. But they are not very salient among other reports. Those sub-frames are: Journalists’ visa problems(3), Middle east conflicts(2), Myanmar conflicts (2), Religion issues(2), Human right problems(2), Japan war shrine (2), Xinjiang conflicts(2), Philippine typhoon donation(2), Taiwan/ Philippine conflicts(1), Australia NSA(1), Democratic threat (1), total 21 conflicts are quoted by New York Times.

3.2. Human interest frames

Because multiple frames are allowed to be refined from single piece of news, so, one news event can get more than one frames, as the details shown in table 4, some human interest frames and conflict frames come from the same piece of news.

Table 4. Human Interest frames

Human rights frames	Number
Journalists’ visa	3
Hackers	3
Human rights	3
Demotic problems	3
Religion	1
Humanism	1
	Total 14

*N=62

In table 4, the “journalist visa” events, can be defined as conflicts frame between foreign journalists and Beijing government, and also can be defined as human interest frame, because it also depicts personal stories of the journalists. The “hacker” news event is the same, the news coverage adopt the conflicts frame between USA and China, and also cover many stories to support their argument, such as tell audience the story of Coco Cola Company, how it was attacked by hackers, which are human interest frames.

3.3. Economy consequences frames

Before this study, we assumed that the “economy consequence” frames might be very salient, maybe just second to the conflict frames. However, the findings are not the same as we have predicted before, the following table shows the results of this part.

Table 5. Economy consequences frames

Economy consequences frames	Number
Damage commerce	6
Strengthen economic influence	4
Economic sanction	4
Influence military/defense costs	2
Promote trade	2
	Total 18

*N=62

From table 5, we can see that, the economy frames concentrate on five sub-frames, the “damage commerce” sub-frame is the most salient one. For example, the coverage mentioned the commerce stopped because of the conflicts between Myanmar and Kachin. And, the “economic sanction” sub-frame mainly appears in coverage related to North Korea and Iran. Those conflict issues all related to some economy consequences.

3.4. Responsibility frames

Responsibility refers to who should take the responsibility of the conflicts and which part should be blamed, based on how New Yorks Times setting agenda and framing Chinese news in past time, and also the ideology influencing factors, we have predicted that, they will attribute China to take most of the responsibilities, and the results of this part support our prediction, for more details see table 6.

Table 6. Responsibility frames

Responsibility attribute to	Number
China	18
North Korea	6
Japan	4
Myanmar	2
Kachin	2
Palestine	1
Individual	1
	Total 31

*N=62

For the responsibility frames, as it shows in table 6, China should take responsibility for lots of issues, followed by North Korea and Japan. Those responsibilities include: cease conflicts, such as North Korea nuclear issue, Middle East conflicts and border territory problems; also include responsibility of human rights, religion problems, economic problems, etc.

3.5. Remedy frames

The last frame, remedy frames, is the most complicated part, because every conflicts related to at least 2 organizations or individuals, they all have different remedies, so this type of frames cannot be analyzed in details in this study.

For example, the Chinese Air Zone defense conflict, according to coverage from New York Times, there are three countries involved, Japan, China and the United States. Japan claims the conflict remedy should be China must “retrieve the Air Zone defense area” from the East Sea; China assumes the remedy to be “establish an equal conversation environment”, because Japan and USA had already set up their Air defence zone in the last 70s, China should be treated equally; However, USA puts that, they will “ignore the Air Zone defence area”, just behaves as usual, as if this event does not happen (Huailin.Chen). All those parts have their own reasons to their actions. So, because of its complexity, the remedy frames will be studied further in the issue-specific research in the near future.

4. Conclusion and Discussion

From this study, we can see, when New York Times journalists quoting Chinese news, framing building does exist in this news production process, which can answer our first research question at the very beginning. And the second research question, which frame is more salient, can also be explained by the findings. It is obvious that the conflicts issues are more frequently quoted by New York Times, and much more salient than the others.

However, this paper has not explained why it is like this, how frames were formed, and how they will influence the audience. As mentioned by Shoemaker & Reese (1996), there are several factors that can influence news coverage, including organizational restraint, professional values of journalists, or the journalists’ expectations about audiences on news form and content. So, in order to conduct a well-round research, more materials must be included, such as journalist interviews.

All of the above factors that determine how final coverage are formed, then, the following study will focus on the factors that lead to frame building, such as medium routine, financial supports sources, societal schema, profession values of journalists, etc.

The future studies also need to pay attention to the reliability in content analysis research, because all the materials are coded by only one person, it is possible that some relevant factors might be ignored. so, it will be more reliable to apply more coders in order to avoid coding bias, and more coders can deal big sum of news reports, which can also improve the validity of the study.

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