

Discourse and Ideology: The Taiwan Issue in the Chinese and American Media¹

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1. Introduction

With Lee Teng-hui's statehood claim on 9 July 1999, the density of media reportage on the Taiwan issue rocketed and remained high till an earthquake struck Taiwan in late September. Notable are the many textual differences between the Chinese and American media representations of the issue. However, are these differences systematic? Are they triggered by their underlying socio-ideological contexts? How do they in turn bear upon their underlying ideologies? These are the questions that have prompted interest in the present research.

This paper applies the framework of Critical Discourse Analysis to a comparative study of two corpora of Chinese and American Internet news discourse on the Taiwan issue during this period. The purpose of the study is to reveal how the dialectical relationship between discourse and ideology is instantiated in this particular case. The hypotheses formulated from preliminary observations of the news texts are threefold. First, we expect the textual differences between the Chinese and American news discourse to be systematic, and we aim to describe and interpret them with the aid of computer tools. Second, we expect these differences to be determined by the socio-ideological contexts underlying the production of the news discourse, and we aim to explicate how that actually works. Third, we expect the corpora of news discourse to bear different counter-impacts on their underlying socio-ideological contexts, and we aim to illustrate these functions specifically.

2. Framework and methodology

Within the theoretical framework of Critical Discourse Analysis, discourse is defined as "use of language in speech and writing seen as a form of social practice" (Fairclough, 1992:63; 1995:54). This definition implies that discourse is not only a mode of representation, but also a socially situated mode of action, in a dialectical relationship with other facets of the social (*ibid.*). On the one hand, discourse is shaped by social structure: by various social relations at a societal level, by the relations specific to particular institutions, and by the situations prompting the communicative event; on the other hand, discourse is socially shaping: it may contribute to the construction of social identities, roles, and relationships as well as systems of knowledge and belief (Fairclough, 1993:134). Ideology is construed as significations or constructions of reality built into various dimensions of the forms or meanings of discursive practices, which contribute to the production, reproduction, or transformation of relations of power and domination (Fairclough, 1992:87). "The ideologies embedded in discursive practices are most effective when they become naturalized and achieve the status of 'common sense'"

¹ In Candlin, Christopher N. ed. 2002. *Research and Practice in Professional Discourse*. Hong Kong: City University of Hong Kong Press, 589-608.

(*ibid.*), and critical discourse analysis has a particular stake in denaturalizing such naturalized ideologies.

To account for the nature of the ideological working of discourse, the paper adopts a three-dimensional analytical framework, in which each discourse event is treated as a spoken or written text, an instance of discursive practice involving the production and interpretation of text, and a piece of social practice simultaneously (Fairclough, 1993, 1998). Analysis in the first dimension describes the discursive strategies in the media discourse from a multifunctional approach. Halliday's Systemic Functional Grammar (1994) is especially relevant here as it is essentially the ideological functioning of the discursive strategies that are of interest. Analysis of discourse as discursive practice focuses on the interpretation of the socio-ideological implications of the discursive strategies. In practice, these two dimensions of analysis are integrated in section three. Analysis in the dimension of discourse as social practice situates the media discourse in their underlying socio-ideological contexts, and explains the relationship between discourse structure and social structure.

The corpus-based study involves three stages. The first stage is corpus design and compilation. Taking into consideration the reputation and popularity of the source institutions and the width and depth of their coverage of the Taiwan issue, we decided to gather news texts from the four websites at <http://www.peoplesdaily.com>, <http://www.chinadaily.com.cn>, <http://www.cnn.com>, and <http://www.abcnews.go.com>. The corpus of Chinese media discourse (CMD) includes all the news texts on the Taiwan issue in the first two between 10 July and 20 September 1999, and the corpus of American media discourse (AMD), those in the rest two. The news texts collected were refined through necessary edition. The second stage is corpus processing. To maximize the information extractable, we tagged the corpora using the Constituent-likelihood Automatic Word-tagging System (CLAWS4), labeling each word with a "tag" specifying its word-class based on surface syntactic functions. The final stage is then corpus analysis, which is a combination of computer-aided and interactive work and of quantitative and qualitative approaches. WordSmith Tools 98 were used to generate relevant word frequency lists and concordances in a Keyword in Context format. In most cases the qualitative analysis of the meanings and functions of the linguistic patterns involves careful examination of the quantitative information extracted.

3. Discourse as text and discursive practice

3.1 A general comparison of the corpora

Before analyzing the corpora, we need to take a brief look at some basic facts about their structures. This is relevant especially in places where statistical comparison is involved. As Table 3.1 shows, CMD comprises 293 news texts which amount to 117,264 tokens, and AMD contains 239 news texts with up to 114,292 tokens. The overall size of CMD in token is 1.026 times that of AMD. The type/token ratio indicates the degree of lexical variety of the texts. The higher ratio of AMD hints upon a wider range of subject matter coverage. Besides, the longer texts and shorter sentences in AMD may bear the same

implication. The hypothesis thus runs that AMD may be more heterogeneous than CMD in terms of the subject matters concerned and the ideologies encoded.

Table 3.1
Basic Statistical Facts about CMD and AMD

Item	CMD	AMD
Number of news texts	293	239
Number of tokens	117,264	114,292
Number of types	6,063	7,095
Type/Token ratio	5.17	6.21
Number of sentences	3,264	4,503
Average sentence length	34.10 tokens	25.25 tokens
Average text length	400.22 tokens	478.21 tokens

3.2 Ideational meaning

Analysis of the ideational meaning of language is concerned with how social experiences in the real world are constructed through language. Different ways of conceptualizing social realities linguistically give away different ideologies underlying the societies using the language. Actual analysis will focus on two aspects of language use, i.e., transitivity and lexicalization.

3.2.1 Transitivity

This section compares the top twenty process types of the clauses in the news texts in the two corpora by examining their top twenty non-modal verb forms. Due to the practical difficulty in differentiating the multifarious functions of the various forms of *be* and *have*, they are excluded from the analysis. Table 3.2 lists the top twenty verb forms with their tags (cf. Garside, Leech and McEnery, 1997: 260) in the corpora.

The two corpora demonstrate considerable differences as far as their top processes are concerned. In both corpora, verb forms realizing verbal processes rank highest. However, among such neutral verbs as *say* and *tell*, we see a high density of verbs conveying a sense of verbal emphasis in CMD, such as *stress*, *point (out)*, and *reiterate*, and that of verbs creating a sense of verbal opposition in AMD, such as *warn* and *threaten*. This difference implies that CMD tends to foreground voices stressing mainland China's policies or reiterating supports on them through verbal processes, while AMD tends to emphasize the oppositional verbal exchanges between the parties concerned.

Ranking second are verb forms realizing material processes. Notably, CMD contains a cluster of verbs pinpointing Lee's *splitting* and *separating* the motherland, which he must *stop* and which are *doomed* to failure. The material process pertaining to the Chinese government and people, *safeguard*, bears a sense of dignified determination. Conversely, AMD characterizes the same material process as *invade*, projecting a contrastive motivation. Material processes like *split* and *separate* are not highlighted in AMD.

Table 3.2
Top Twenty Verb Forms in CMD and AMD

Rank	Verb Form in CMD	Number	Verb Form in AMD	Number
1	said_VVD	1043	said_VVD	1355
2	says_VVZ	291	told_VVD	171
3	split_VVI	111	saying_VVG	169
4	made_VVN	110	says_VVZ	118
5	made_VVD	90	use_VVI	85
6	separate_VVI	76	take_VVI	83
7	doomed_VVN	73	did_VDD	78
8	stressed_VVD	61	said_VVN	70
9	changed_VVN	60	do_VD0	63
10	saying_VVG	59	regards_VVZ	60
11	splitting_VVG	58	do_VDI	58
12	pointed_VVD	57	quoted_VDD	58
13	reiterated_VVD	57	warned_VVD	58
14	added_VVD	55	conducted_VVN	58
15	safeguard_VVI	55	invade_VVI	55
16	told_VVD	53	make_VVI	50
17	does_VDZ	52	reported_VVD	50
18	expressed_VVD	50	sent_VVD	50
19	stop_VVI	50	threatened_VVN	48
20	make_VVI	49	seen_VVN	47

3.2.2 Lexicalization and collocation

Lexicalization is the most obvious way in which the ideational meanings of a discourse are signaled (Halliday 1994). Investigation of the patterns of lexical reiteration, relexicalization, and collocation of the two corpora will gain us insights into the preoccupations of the respective groups of discourse producers.

3.2.2.1 Top ten nouns in CMD and AMD

A close look at Table 3.3 brings forth a handful of meaningful information. In CMD, the high density of *people*, *reunification*, *policy*, and *remarks* indicates the concern of CMD over such matters as the interest of the Chinese people, reunification, China's policy, and Lee's remarks. The high frequency of *cross-Straits* implies the tendency of CMD to define relations between mainland China and Taiwan as between two sides geographically separated by the Taiwan Straits. In AMD, the high density of *Beijing* and *Taipei* shows the two governments are frequently mentioned as such. This, however, creates a strong sense of political equality between them. The presence of *U.S.* in the list hints upon an important role attached to it. The high frequency of *President* in AMD accompanies that of *Lee*, since Lee is consistently referred to as *President Lee*. This endorses the title unacknowledged by mainland China. Finally, versus *reunification* in the list of CMD is *independence* in that of AMD. The divergent patterns of lexical reiteration of the two corpora correspond to the different aspects of the Taiwan issue on which they slant emphasis.

Table 3.3
Top Ten Nouns in CMD and AMD

Rank	Noun in CMD	Number	Noun in AMD	Number
1	Taiwan	2361	Taiwan	2608
2	China	1963	China	1943
3	Lee	1699	Beijing	845
4	people	879	Lee	841
5	relations	836	island	404
6	Teng-hui	709	Taipei	398
7	cross-Straits	502	U.S.	378
8	reunification	453	President	325
9	policy	410	independence	316
10	remarks	404	relations	316

3.2.2.2 Defining cross-Straits relations

Whereas the key issue concerned throughout the news discourses is the same, i.e., the relations between mainland China and Taiwan, the subject matter *per se* is lexicalized rather differently in CMD and AMD.

Table 3.4
Lexical Items Defining Cross-Straits Relations in CMD and AMD

Lexical Items	CMD	AMD
cross-Straits relations, cross-Straits relations	376	16
relations across the (Taiwan) Straits	94	28
relations between the two sides of/across the Taiwan Straits, relations between both sides of the Taiwan Straits	26	9
relations between the Chinese/China's mainland and Taiwan	7	0
relations between Taiwan and the mainland/the mainland and Taiwan	5	2
relations between China and its Taiwan province	1	0
Subtotal 1	509	55
relations between China and Taiwan/Taiwan and China	6	11
Taiwan-China relations, China-Taiwan relations	0	19
Taipei-Beijing relations, relations between Beijing and Taipei	0	7
relations between the two rivals/arch-rivals	0	6
relations between Taiwan and communist China	0	2
Subtotal 2	6	45
Total	515	100

Table 3.4 differentiates two groups of lexical items used to conceptualize the “relations”. Group 1 comprises wordings that avoid creating any sense of political or ideological opposition between the two sides. Rather, the idea is that they are only geographically separated by the Taiwan Straits and are both parts of the united one. Group 2 includes lexical items that tend to convey a sense of political equality or ideological opposition between the two sides.

In CMD, lexical items from Group 1 pervade, with 509 out of the 515 instances (98.8%) falling under this category. This preponderance concurs with the prevalent ideology underlying the Chinese society and serves to legitimize it. In AMD, the picture is more diversified. Although Group 1 still accounts for the majority (55%), the proportion gap between the two groups is far less notable. Relexicalization brings about a larger lexical variety in AMD, confusing the reader about the nature of the “relations” instead of clarifying the issue with a consistent definition.

3.2.2.3 One China policy

The “one China” policy is admittedly the bottom line of mainland China in handling cross-Straits relations. Most countries, including the U.S., accept this policy. However, does this superficial agreement necessarily lead to convergence in treating the concept in the media?

Figure 3.1
Sample Concordance Listing of *one China policy* in CMD

African country will insist on a “One China” policy, adding this that the UN will continue to uphold a “one China” policy. She made the in October. Myanmar Abides by “One China” Policy: Statement took a clear-cut stand on the China's “one China” policy. The support Bill Clinton reiterated his country's “one China” policy on Wednesday she added. US favours ‘one China’ policy WASHINGTONG
France reaffirmed on July 21 its one China policy it has adopted “strong commitment” to adhering to its “one China” policy on the Taiwan and it will continue to follow the “one China” policy. James Foley reinforced the wide acceptance of the “One China” policy and further

Figure 3.2
Sample Concordance Listing of *one China policy* in AMD

President Lee Teng-hui abandoned a “one China” policy last week, saying Taiwan's recent decision to scrap its “one China” policy and put relation Taiwan, overturning its longstanding one China policy. The deal was Beijing by dumping the longstanding “One China” policy. “It fits the last week by junking the longstanding “one China” policy in a bid to break since Taipei's decision to drop the “one China” policy that has basis _ a seeming departure from the “one China” policy China and Taiwan response to Taipei's rejection of the “One China” policy, a lynchpin of Lee Teng-hui's repudiation of the “one China” policy. But they Taipei said it backed away from the “one China” policy because Beijing

The co-texts in which *one China policy* occurs in the two corpora differ. The concordance of it in CMD shows a preponderance of collocations of it with verbs and nominal groups of an affirmative nature. Typical verbs preceding it include *uphold, pursue, follow, support, advocate, affirm, reaffirm, reiterate, stress, favor, abide by, insist on, adhere to*, and *stick to*. Dominance of such collocations creates the sense that the “one China policy” is extensively “affirmed” in words and “abided by” in action. Typical nominal groups preceding it include *adherence to, commitment to, support for, acceptance of*, and *promise on*. Altogether, 167 out of the 178 instances (94%) occur in positive co-texts. Contrastively, in AMD, only 31 out of the 112 instances (28%) appear

in positive environments. In the 81 negative instances, typical verbs collocating with *one China policy* include *abandon*, *scrap*, *junk*, *drop*, *dump*, *repudiate*, and *overturn*, and typical nominal groups include *abandonment of*, *rejection of*, *repudiation of*, and *departure from*. It is also *pushed* by China and *used by China to marginalize Taiwan*. With such patterns of collocation, the connotations *one China policy* obtains in the two corpora contrast with each other. In CMD, it is consistently represented as something extensively affirmed and abided by, whereas in AMD, emphasis on the constant “scrapping” and “repudiation” of it by the Taiwan authorities lends to it a negative and pejorative nature.

3.3 Interpersonal meaning

Analysis of the interpersonal meaning of language is concerned with how social identities of and relations between different social subjects and groups are constructed and sustained. Actual analysis will concentrate on how the personal noun *we* as “subject” in the “mood” structure is used in this line.

Table 3.5 indicates that in CMD, the Chinese Government, people, and army constitute the overwhelming majority of the groups of *we*, seconded by the U.S. Government, people, and army. The Taiwan Government and people are the least represented. The gap between the groups is rather obvious. In AMD, the order is almost reversed, and the gap between the three groups is considerably reduced. Compared with CMD, AMD presents a more heterogeneous picture. The more unified scene of CMD tends to identify the Chinese Government, people, and army as the dominating group whose voice carries the greatest gravity in the issue. The more diversified scene of AMD, however, denies the dominance of the voice of the group, appropriating a larger portion of the stage to the Taiwan Government and people and a more important role to the U.S. Government, people, and army.

Table 3.5
Who are *We* in CMD and AMD

Parties Included in <i>We</i>	CMD	Percentage	AMD	Percentage
The Chinese Government, people & army	103	63.1%	76	25.8%
The U.S. Government, people & army	34	20.9%	94	32.0%
The Taiwan Government & people	6	3.7%	114	38.8%
Other foreign parties	16	9.8%	8	2.7%
Irrelevant	4	2.5%	2	0.7%
Total	163	100%	294	100%

As Table 3.6 indicates, in CMD, 88.3% of the groups of *we* support mainland China’s view. These include not only the Chinese Government, people, and army, but also the majority of the groups of U.S. parties, all the groups of foreign parties other than the U.S., and two thirds of the groups of the Taiwan Government and people. Contrastively, the Taiwan authorities’ view receives support from only 2.5% of the groups. The U.S. is given little space to comment on its own role in and principles of the issue. This

overwhelming disproportion in the support of the views of the two sides serves to endorse one and marginalize the other.

In AMD, the picture is again drastically different. The view of the Taiwan authorities receives the greatest support among the groups of *we*. Furthermore, most groups of the U.S. parties support the view of Taiwan, as do most other foreign parties. Yet, the gap between the number of parties supporting mainland China and Taiwan is not so dramatic as that in CMD. Meanwhile, more space is allocated to the U.S. Government to emphasize its own role and voice its comments. In short, whereas AMD gives more support to the view of the Taiwan Government, it keeps the platform more open than CMD does.

Table 3.6
What Side Do *We* Take in CMD and AMD

Parties Supported	Parties Included in <i>We</i>	CMD		AMD	
		No.	Percentage	No.	Percentage
Mainland China	The Chinese Government & army	103	66.6%	76	25.9%
	The U.S. Government	21	12.9%	8	2.7%
	Other foreign parties	16	9.8%	1	0.3%
	Supportive Taiwan parties	4	2.5%	0	0%
	Subtotal	144	88.3%	85	28.9%
Taiwan	The Taiwan Government & army	2	1.2%	114	38.8%
	The U.S. Government & army	2	1.2%	13	4.4%
	Other foreign parties	0	0%	4	1.4%
	Subtotal	4	2.5%	131	44.6%
U.S. role	The U.S. Government	11	6.7%	73	24.8%
Comments	Other foreign parties	0	0%	3	1.0%
Irrelevant		4	2.5%	2	0.7%
Total		163	100%	294	100%

3.4 Textual meaning

Analysis of the textual meaning of language is concerned with how information is organized into coherent texts. Different choices in ways of organizing the same messages carry different implications. Our analysis at the macro-level of message organization seeks to differentiate meanings of different topic control strategies through comparing the news headlines in the two corpora.

As Table 3.7 indicates, the topics covered by the news texts in CMD center around two themes. Greatest prominence is allocated to overt accusations of and negative comments on Lee and the Taiwan authorities' stance. Altogether, they constitute 53.2% of all the topics. Notable prominence is also assigned to the promotion of mainland China's policies and the commitments of international parties to the "one China" policy. Topics related to this theme take up 21.5% of the topics.

Table 3.7
Topics Selected in CMD

Topics Selected	Number	Percentage
China's policy	20	6.8%
International commitment to "one China" policy	43	14.7%
Sino-U.S. relations	21	7.2%
Denouncing Taiwan's international participation	12	4.1%
Direct accusations of Lee and Taiwan's stance	86	29.3%
Negatively commenting on Lee and Taiwan's stance	70	23.9%
Urging Lee and Taiwan to stop separatism	8	2.7%
Military news on PLA	13	4.5%
China's determination to guard integrity and fight separatists	10	3.4%
Developments in cross-Straits exchanges	10	3.4%
Total	293	100%

The force of the accusation is reinforced by the recurrence of two syntactic structures, i.e., NP1 (naming the accuser) + Verb (realizing the accusation) + NP2 (naming the accused), and NP (naming the accused) + VVN (past participle of the verb realizing the accusation). Typical examples of the first include "People In Eastern China Criticize Lee's Separatist Remarks," "Taiwan Business People Slam Lee Teng-hui's Splittist Remarks," and "Bangladeshi Organization Condemns Lee Teng-hui's Separatist Remarks." Instances of the second are "Lee Teng-hui's Dangerous Step Censured," "Lee Tenghui's 'Two Nations' Theory Refuted," and "Lee Teng-hui's 'Two States' Statement Severely Condemned." Within the theme and the homogeneous syntactic structures, we see a multitude of accusers involved: apart from the official voice of the Chinese Government, various domestic groups are brought in, as are a few Taiwan parties and foreign parties. The extensity of the parties included in the pool of accusers adds up to the intensity of the accusation. The verbs selected include *refute*, *lash out*, *condemn*, *slam*, *criticize*, *lambaste*, *denounce*, *rebut*, *contradict*, *blast*, and *disagree with*. The target of the accusation is unanimously Lee's remarks and views taking the shape of different linguistic forms. Realized in two recurrent syntactic structures, the repeated accusations from a multiplicity of parties directed towards the single target impinge upon the readers' minds forcefully.

The international community's commitments to the "one China" policy is also predominantly realized in one syntactic structure, namely, NP1 (naming the committer) + Verb (realizing the commitment) + NP2 (naming the object to which NP1 is committed to). Typical examples include "U.S. Reaffirms 'One China' Policy," "EU Supports 'One China' Principle," and "UN Chief Reiterates 'One China' Policy." Appearing in the position of NP1 is a large number of countries and international organizations. The verbs used are all associated with commitments and support: the most typical two are *reiterate* and *reaffirm*; others include *support*, *stress*, *abide by*, *stick to*, and *uphold*. Target of the commitments and support, i.e., the "one China" policy, remains the same all through, though unfolded in slightly different linguistic forms. The prominence given to the reiterated commitments to the "one China" policy from such a big group of parties is due

not so much to their news value as to the intention of the discourse producers to sustain a consciousness of extensive support to the policy.

Table 3.8
Topics Selected in AMD

Topics Selected	Number	Percentage
Beijing against Taiwan	30	12.6%
Military reports: China	39	16.3%
China's concern over foreign intervention	10	4.2%
China's internal situation	10	4.2%
Subtotal: the voice of mainland China	89	37.3%
Taiwan against Beijing	24	10.1%
Lee and Taiwan's effort to cool the tension	11	4.6%
Internal situation of Taiwan	20	8.4%
Taiwan's international participation	8	3.3%
Military report: Taiwan	23	9.6%
Subtotal: the voice of Taiwan	86	36.0%
Other aspects of cross-Straits relations	11	4.6%
The U.S. role	36	15.1%
International concern over the issue	17	7.0%
Total	239	100%

In terms of the distribution of prominence, Table 3.8 demonstrates an extraordinary non-uniformity among the topics covered in AMD. Voices of mainland China and Taiwan take up over one third of the overall topics each, with the rest one quarter allocated to those of the U.S. and other international parties. No party dominates the stage.

Specific topics regarding mainland China in AMD differ from those in CMD, too. Primary attention is given to issues related to its military power and exercises and its claim of the force option. Typical examples include "Security Expert: China Can Take Taiwan Without Firing a Shot," "China Flaunts Military Might Amid Taiwan Row," and "War Games Reported as Taiwan Dispute Heats Up." Mainland China's accusations of and negative comments on Lee and the Taiwan authorities are reduced. Another aspect covered is mainland China's concern over foreign intervention, in which mainland China is warning foreign parties not to intervene, accusing the U.S. of its arms sales to Taiwan, and expressing worries of the U.S. involvement. As such, in AMD, mainland China is not only opposing Lee and the Taiwan authorities militarily and verbally, but also trying to warn off international parties. The policies mainland China advocates are not publicized; neither is the international support it receives.

Lee and the Taiwan authorities are granted equal opportunities to air their views in AMD. Here, the most remarkable prominence is attached to the stance they take against mainland China, particularly their statehood and democracy claims. Typical examples include "Lee Stands Firm -- Taiwan's President Reaffirms His Controversial Remarks on the Island's Status," "In Volley of Harsh Words, Taiwanese Leader Fires Back at China," and "Taiwan VP Vows No Letup in Demand for Equality." Such claims are all pointedly

against mainland China's policies. Whereas in CMD, these views are explicitly discredited, in AMD, they are placed in juxtaposition with mainland China's counterattacks with an equal status as the latter. The second largest group of topics projecting Taiwan's voice focus on Taiwan's responses to the military exercises of mainland China, and Taiwan's military power and needs. Typical examples include "Taiwan's President Says Economic Problems Keep China from Military Action," "It Takes More Than War Games to Make the Taiwanese Jittery," and "Amid Tension with China, Taiwan Rolls out Upgraded Tanks." This focus constitutes a tit for tat of the large proportion of military reports on mainland China.

3.5 Summary

With the comparative analysis above, we are now standing at a good stead to summarize the section. First, at the descriptive level, the linguistic analysis has demonstrated systematic discrepancies between the discursive strategies at various levels employed by the two corpora, as are summarized in the tables. Second, at the interpretative level, such descriptive discrepancies mean that the language in the discourses in the two corpora function in contrastive ways. Ideationally, discourses in CMD have systematically reproduced and represented those aspects of the social realities that are in favor of the policies and stances of mainland China but to the disadvantage of Lee and the Taiwan authorities. Those in AMD keep the picture more heterogeneous, emphasizing such realities as the oppositional yet equal exchanges of words or action between the two sides. Interpersonally, CMD identifies mainland China as the dominating party on the stage enjoying favorable relationships with other parties; Lee and the Taiwan authorities are isolated and marginalized; no substantial role is assigned to the U.S. or other foreign parities. In AMD, no party dominates the scene; rather, mainland China and Taiwan are positioned as oppositional equals, with the U.S. playing a significant role in the issue, too. Textually, CMD has opted for such topics that are again to the advantage of mainland China's policies and stances and disadvantage of Lee and the Taiwan authorities in terms of topic control. AMD has selected topics that convey a sense of equal opposition between the two sides of mainland China and Taiwan, or a sense of importance of the U.S. itself in the issue.

4. Discourse as social practice

This dimension of analysis situates the corpora of media discourse in their underlying socio-ideological contexts and explicates the relationship between the two. The societal contexts underlying the production of CMD and AMD differ from each other in several significant aspects: economic, political, cultural, and strategic. Economically, mainland China calls for a peaceful and stable domestic and international environment as well as reciprocal relations and exchanges with other economies, including Taiwan and the U.S. (Clough 1999). Meanwhile, with the economic liberalization of Taiwan, the U.S. sees a new interest in fostering an economically powerful Taiwan to contribute to the management of the global economy (Lin 1998: 142). Politically, Socialism and authoritarianism in mainland China contrast Capitalism and the Westernized democracy in the U.S. and Taiwan. Culturally, mainland China places overriding priority on issues

of sovereignty and territorial integrity as a result of its surging nationalism, while the U.S. and Taiwan claim emphasis on such values as freedom, equality, human rights and democracy. Strategically, Taiwan constitutes a strategic asset to mainland China, while there is an increasing mood in the U.S. to check the potential “China threat” with the “Taiwan card” (Lin 1998: 143). These considerations have resulted in substantial ideological and policy divergences between mainland China and the U.S.

In terms of the institutional contexts, Won (1989: 68) observed that mass media in China serve basically as a link between the government, the Communist Party, and the people, and one expected to help push forward the Socialist cause. The dominant part of China’s journalism is an organ of the Communist Party, and its political orientation and fundamental policies largely depend on those of the Party (Won 1989: 56-57). Mass media in the U.S., however, are commercialized and profit-driven; they enjoy considerable freedom and independence in news selection and are subject to minimum government control (Hiebert 1999, Balkin 1993).

In terms of the situational contexts, Sino-U.S. relations were rather complicated then as a result of a series of events, including the 1995-1996 crisis incurred by Lee’s Cornell trip, NATO’s bombing of the Chinese Embassy in Belgrade in May 1999, the U.S. allegation that China stole its nuclear weapons technology, the stagnating bilateral negotiations on China’s accession to the WTO, the U.S. arms sales to Taiwan in between China’s military exercises, and the argument over the inclusion of Taiwan in the high-tech Theatre Missile Defense (TMD). Meanwhile, mainland China has also observed a tendency of Lee and the Taiwan authorities towards independence from the 1995-1996 crisis and Lee’s statehood claim on 9 July 1999.

On the one hand, we can conclude that the systematic discursive differences between CMD and AMD are determined by their different underlying socio-ideological contexts. The various considerations of mainland China lead to a policy aiming at an early “peaceful reunification” under the “one country, two systems” framework; it promotes the “one China” concept and opposes any move of Taiwan towards independence or expansion of its international space. The institutional practice of the Chinese mass media requires them to publicize and support major government policies. The societal and institutional contexts explain CMD’s ideational representations of the social realities favorable to the policies and stance of mainland China and unfavorable to Lee and the Taiwan authorities. The centralized socio-political system and thus unified policy in major political issues, the censorship policy, and the supportive attitude of the mass media towards government policies, account for the relative homogeneity in the scope of social realities reproduced. At the same time, part of mainland China’s policy is that the Taiwan question is an internal matter of China, and it opposes any international interference; it insists that Taiwan is part of China and only the PRC can represent China in the international arena. However, China also needs a peaceful environment and reciprocal exchanges with other economies. The situational context shows that mainland China believes there is a strong move of Taiwan towards independence, and the Sino-U.S. relations are not in good terms. These policies and the situational context explain CMD’s interpersonal construction of the dominating position of mainland China, its favorable

relationships with other parties, the isolation of Lee and the Taiwan authorities, and the marginalization of the U.S. role. Likewise, CMD's textual rendition of the messages can also be explained.

The case of AMD is of a similar nature. The intricacies of the various considerations of the U.S. have resulted in equal complexities in its policies. The U.S. maintains a policy of constructive engagement with mainland China, commits itself to the "one China" policy, and admits that the Taiwan issue should be resolved by mainland China and Taiwan; yet, it is also developing relations with Taiwan, supporting it with continuous arms sales, and warning mainland China against its force option. The institutional practice of the American mass media and the censorship policy allow minimum government control and considerable independence in news selection. Driven by commercial profits, they tend to offer what they deem as of news value to their customers. The situational context demonstrates visible complicatedness in the trilateral relations between the U.S., mainland China, and Taiwan. All the societal, institutional, and situational contexts contribute to AMD's ideational representation of the reality as an equal opposition between mainland China and Taiwan as well as its emphasis on the problematic facets of the issue. It is the opposition between the two sides and the problematic aspects of the issue that create news value. These complex contexts also explain the heterogeneity of the scope of social realities reproduced. Accordingly, in terms of interpersonal meaning, the dominating position of mainland China is denied, whereas the U.S. is attributed a substantial role in the issue. The textual rendition of the messages is determined likewise.

On the other hand, we can also conclude that the discursive strategies employed in the two corpora not only encode and embody their underlying ideologies linguistically, but also help to propagate, legitimize, and sustain them, challenging the opposing ideologies at the same time. CMD has shown an explicit function in bringing to the fore the policies and views of mainland China, giving them overruling publicity with a strong sense of legitimacy. This endowed legitimacy clearly helps to maintain the publicized ideologies among the public. Similarly, AMD reflects the complexity of the U.S. ideologies pertaining to the Taiwan issue. It challenges the dominating role of mainland China in CMD by positioning Taiwan in an equal position, and by assigning the U.S. a legitimized role in the issue. In this sense, discourse also constitutes a site for power struggle between the different parties concerned. The dialectical relationship between discourse and ideology lies exactly in the effects and counter-effects of them on each other.

5. Conclusion

From the three-dimensional analysis of the two corpora of Chinese and American media discourse on the Taiwan issue, we are able to envisage a dialectical relationship between discourse and ideology in this particular case. The systematic discursive differences between the two corpora are shaped by the different socio-ideological contexts underlying the production of them, and bear upon these contexts differently. The analysis aims to help understand the naturalized ideologies embedded in the seemingly neutral news discourse, and promote a critical awareness of political discourse in general and discourse on the Taiwan issue in particular. Further research in this line could incorporate

a study of the reader's response to selected news discourse, and a reexamination of the analytical results in follow-up corpora.

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