

Investigating the Evaluative Language in Philippine and Chinese News Reports on the South China Sea Disputes

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ABSTRACT

This study examined a cross-cultural perspective on how the top popular press in the Philippines and China portray an evaluative stance as regards the current South China Sea tensions. It set out to reveal the news writers' positions through examining Martin and White's (2005) appraisal framework particularly the attitude category. The analysis of the media reports from the two countries culled from a three-year period (January 2013-December 2016) focused on how the news writers construed their attitudinal judgment and positions. Findings reveal that the high occurrences of appreciation resources in both corpora provide subtle or indirect expressions of behavioral judgment in the course of journalistic writing where conventions relating to objectivity are necessary. Even if dominated by appreciation evaluative language that construes value of phenomenon relating to aspects of the disputes, affect (manifesting emotions) and judgment (relating to behavior) evaluative resources are employed to reflect or represent the socio-cultural and political contexts, government policy and even capture the local sentiment in which the news reports are written. As regards the difference between the two, the Chinese news reports lean towards a more diplomatic stance through the noteworthy use of evaluative affect and appreciation resources that underscore enhancement of relationship, partnership and accord while the Philippine news reports are more inclined to express implied negative subjective attitudinal stance on the issue. This paper set out the significance of language in framing positions, sentiments, opinions and policies in which meanings are construed in news reports. Examining media discourse from the lens of the appraisal system or evaluative language underscores how subjectivity occurs where beliefs, notions and values in a society are generated.

INTRODUCTION

Media representations depict portrayals of people, events, places and other ideas from a specific value perspective or ideological standpoint. Regarded both as a process and a product, representations highlight the process of construction by going beyond mere portrayal or representation but formation of the meaning of reality (Chandler, 2017). Language, operating as a representational system, serves as a means in framing these positions and ideologies and a key to the processes in which meanings are constructed.

Even as news reporting involves a depiction or representation of happenings and situations, Hall et al. (1978) and Shojaei et al. (2013) explain that news reporting has underlying ideological agenda since news reporters and editors deliberate as to what to include and not to include in news reports in the same way as how to portray those aspects picked to be reported. With this, the media do not merely present what is newsworthy but all news discourses reflect the values and ideologies of the news reporters. News which is never neutral is depicted through linguistic representation. As van Dijk (1997) emphasizes, the study of discourse is tied

to the intention of the writer as discourse is regarded to be a practical, social and cultural construct.

Considerably, Foucault sees discourse as a "system of representation" that impacts the way ideas are realized into practice and regulate how others conduct themselves (Hall 2006). Representation in media, the discursive delineation of meaning to groups, is regarded as a competitive undertaking that is tied to power struggle, which is the very nature of politics (Chilton & Schaffner, 2002; Holquist, 1983; Jacobs et al., 1998; Wenden, 2005). As it is, meaning is portrayed not by the reality that is perceived but entrenched through linguistic constructions (Wenden). Representation becomes a discursive construction of meaning to groups which is developed through linguistic depiction.

This study attempted to examine a cross-cultural perspective on how the top popular press in the Philippines and China portray an evaluative stance as regards the current South China Sea tensions. It sought to answer the following questions:

- 1) What are the prevalent evaluative items used in the Philippine and China media news reports on the South China Sea disputes?

- 2) How similar and different do the news writers from the Philippines and China state their evaluative positions about the South China Sea disputes?

The South China Sea Disputes

Tensions have steadily increased within the region and concerns have been raised in the international community on the territorial claims of the different nations in the South China Sea. Such strain is compounded by China's militarization of the area and the Philippines' filing of a historic international arbitration procedure against China at the United Nations-backed Permanent Court of Arbitration. Not just a regional issue, naval powers in the South China Sea region namely the United States, Japan and Australia are also involved in pressing for support for freedom of navigation in the area.

Spanning an area of around 3.5 million square kilometers, the South China Sea region forms part of the Pacific Ocean and is a strategic location as one-third of the world's shipping pass by the area. It is also a home for lucrative fisheries, coral reef ecosystem and may offer abundant oil and gas reserves. Included in the contested region is the Spratly group of Islands in which several sovereign states claim and occupy.

Historically, the territorial conflict in the region began with China's 'nine-dash line' originally an "eleven-dash line", presenting a demarcation line of China's boundaries and claiming maritime rights and entitlements to 85.7% of the whole South China sea. The 'nine-dash line' was first pointed out by the Kuomintang Government of the People's Republic of China in 1947 then two years after, was taken on by the People's Republic of China. Gao and Jia (2013) explain that this move was set by China to reestablish its dominance on the islands and the island groups in the South China Sea in the early post-war era. In the mid 1950s, the Philippines set up ownership over some parts of the Spratly Islands and Macclesfield Bank should. Meanwhile, in the 1970s, other claimant countries in the region started naming part of the Spratly Islands as part of their territory. In 2009, through the *Notes Verbale* addressed to the United Nations, China countered Vietnam and Malaysia's joint paper in asserting China's legal, factual and historical misguided 'nine-dash claim'.

Tensions escalated over the years despite certain agreements signed by the claimant countries to resolve the sea disputes. In 2012, a Scarborough Shoal standoff occurred between China and the Philippines when Chinese surveillance ships obviated the Philippine authorities for apprehending Chinese vessels allegedly caught with illegally collected marine species on Philippine waters.

The Arbitration Case at The Hague

On January 22, 2013, an arbitration move was initiated by the Philippines at the United Nations Tribunal at The Hague. The Philippines appealed to resolve the maritime dispute, seeking for an award that would invalidate China's 'nine-dash claim', compel China to conform its domestic

enactment in order to fulfill its obligation in the United Nations Convention on the Law and the Sea (UNCLOS), an international pact in which the Philippines and China are both signatories. Meanwhile, on February 13, 2013, China declared that it would not cooperate in the arbitration case. On December 7, 2014, China submitted a white or a position paper citing its reasons for not joining the proceedings. The Philippines gained advantage on the dispute on October 29, 2015 when the Arbitral Tribunal ruled that it had jurisdiction over the case.

On July 12, 2016, the Permanent Court of Arbitration through its commissioned Arbitral Tribunal handed down its verdict and decided that: (1) China has no legal basis in claiming historical rights within the sea areas enclosed in the 'nine-dash line'; (2) the Philippines has exclusive economic zone rights over some areas in the Spratly Islands specifically the Mischief Reef and the Second Thomas Shoal; (3) China breached the sovereign rights of the Philippines by interfering the latter's fishing and petroleum exploration, creating artificial Islands and tolerating the Chinese vessels fishing in the Philippines' zone; (4) With the construction of artificial islands causing damages to coral reefs and removing marine creatures from their natural habitat, China failed its obligation to safeguard and conserve marine environment; and, (5) China's actions in disputed South China Sea aggravated the territorial dispute in the area (*Philippines v. China*, PCA, 2016).

The mounting concern in the South China Sea among the claimant nations may have calmed down due to the non-confrontational policy instituted by the present Philippine government two years after the award was given, as Panda (2017) observes that the "ruling should have become a major affirmation of the principle that, in the South China Sea, might could not make it right. Instead, since the promulgation of the decision, little has changed and the tribunal's award sits as a mere piece of paper," (para. 5). Torode and Blanchard (2017) report that Beijing is set for fresh South China Sea assertiveness as foreseen by the regional diplomats and military officers. With the foreboding deployment of its first jet fighters onto its runways in the Spratly islands and with the intelligence report that China is already utilizing its facilities to expand naval and coast guard facilities deep into Southeast Asia, the country's build-up of the disputed seas reflect the determination to exert its power in the area. The United States and the other claimants would hold China pay for violating international rules and norms (Torode & Blanchard).

Considering the imminent danger in the South China Sea amid the seemingly precarious situation, it would be interesting to note how the representations of this significant issue in the Philippines and China, the main countries involved in The Hague Tribunal ruling, are constructed in their respective media.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Language use signifies or denotes the individuality or uniqueness of individuals as language serves as means by which humans connect with each other (Edwards, 2009). Hunston

and Thompson (2007) indicate that evaluative language may reflect one's ideas and opinions, attitude and stance about the topic being discussed. Hence, texts may also "shed light on the specific assumptions and practices that affect the way people handle and represent experience within particular communities" (Breeze, 2011, p. 94). Through the language of evaluation, one can have a greater understanding on how language functions in shaping interpersonal meaning and social relations can be recognized. Likewise, Volosinov (1973, as cited in Sarangi, 2003) puts greater emphasis on the importance of value judgment than grammatical coordination and word meaning. He further specifies that referential meanings are identified through evaluation while the context of use affects the production of utterances towards the target audience.

Hunston and Thompson (2007) explain the three functions of evaluation in discourse: articulating opinions, maintaining relations, and organizing discourse. Expressing opinions which emphasizes one's philosophy and beliefs set in the text, serves as the main function of evaluation. Preserving relations, on the other hand, has three functions: manipulating, hedging, and politeness that may have an effect on the way the fellow interlocutor perceives text. Lastly, evaluations transpire in certain parts of discourse reflecting a work's organization.

Significantly, Heffer (2007) conducted an empirical study on the linguistic construal of evaluation by legal participants (lawyers and judges) on lay people. Specifically, he adopted the systematic semantic framework, the appraisal system, particularly its sub-system judgment, and employed it in a corpus of official court transcripts in analyzing the legal-lay discourse. His findings confirmed the "tension between legally-framed fact-finding and subjectively evaluative narrative construction" (p. 175).

Josephson, Woodward-Kron, Delany and Hiller (2015) employed the appraisal theory in evaluating the language and function of evaluation in 18 physiotherapy consultations from primary healthcare providers in Sweden and Australia and hospital rehabilitation in Australia. Results from this discourse analytic study present a mismatch between the evaluative language reflected in the espoused physiotherapy and what happens in practice. While both therapists and patients attended to the evaluation of emotions, behaviors and objects, the difference was on the use of the affect sub-system. The use of the judgment and appreciation resources by the therapists centered on the prescribed physiotherapy while patients' affect evaluation had something to do with the emotions pertaining to loss of capacity and pain.

Myskow (2018) did a quantitative study in differentiating how explicit evaluative language was employed in secondary and university history textbooks particularly on the treatment of World War 1 in the Canadian educational setting. The 49 319-word corpus that included narratives of the textbooks and other source materials was analyzed using the judgement, appreciation and affect of Martin and White's (2005) appraisal theory. Results revealed that all the categories of attitude had higher occurrence in the secondary group reflecting a more considerate text as regards emotional

expressions in the same way as valuations were made more explicit to the readers of secondary texts.

Chiluwa (2011) explored how the media portrayed the Joint Military Task Force (JMTF) in the Niger Delta crisis in Nigeria through assessment of the military activities in protecting oil installations and anti-insurgency practices. Results of his study provided the positive representation of the JMTF and for the Niger Delta youth, negative by way of the media's exaggeration, labeling and agency attribution.

Another study by Chen and Yin (2015) examined the images of transnational migrants in Taiwan's mainstream newspapers by employing a random sample of 466 news segments for content analysis. The work found that a great part of migrant news was covered on local sections of the newspapers with no less than 600-word content. Other findings concerned the disparity as regards how the groups of transnational migrants were covered and so with the inner characteristics reflecting positive images of these migrants.

Other studies (Sykes, 1985; Yaghoobi, 2005; Wattles/Radic-Bojanic, 2007) have critically addressed the connection between media's choices of grammatical features and structure and media representations, i.e., how the media position the readers to view personalities or issues. Sykes exhibited how the 'Black youths' were strategically presented in an active construction in "Black youths stoned the police" to put the blame on the subject, the primary agents who attacked the police. On the other hand, Yaghoobi pointed out passivisation and nominalization strategies to maneuver the meanings of agency and power.

Meanwhile, Taiwo and Igwebuikwe (2015) did a media discursive representation of the social attitudes of the Nigeria-Cameroon participants and their roles over the oil-rich Bakassi Peninsula through the use of thematic representations. Results of their study present the favorable positive images both countries portrayed, each claiming to be the victim or the sufferer for their key actors.

These foregoing literature and studies offer the richness of language (as a carrier of meaning) that can be utilized for evaluation and how discourse analysis can expose ideologies, prejudices and values as construed in the construction of a particular representation of an event, group or action.

The Appraisal Theory

Zeroing in on the interpersonal perspective or social relations in language, the appraisal theory explores writers' position in relation to both the material they communicate and the audience or readers of the texts. It is concerned with exploring the linguistic mechanisms that account for mapping how people interact particularly their interpersonal or social relations. Moreover, the appraisal theory presents beyond what speakers overtly encode in their attitudes with those indirectly projected evaluative positions. These evaluative positions direct or set readers/listeners to provide evaluative stances.

The appraisal system comprises of three sub-systems: attitude, engagement and graduation. Attitude presents people's feelings and anything that concerns emotional reactions,

behavioral evaluation and assessment of things. Engagement concerns the interpersonal aspects in sourcing attitudes and the voices involved in the creation of such opinions in discourse. Finally, graduation relates to the grading or scaling of phenomena in which feelings are highlighted. This study focused on attitude.

Attitude which relates to feelings that include emotional expressions, evaluation of behavior and judgment of things is regarded to have a central importance. Attitude goes beyond emotions as it deals more broadly with feelings covering affect, judgment and appreciation. Affect relates to resources for informing emotional expressions or reactions. Meanwhile, judgment pertains to resources for evaluating behavior based on different normative principles. Lastly, appreciation relates to resources for explaining the value of things that would look into the natural phenomena and semiosis.

As a system of meanings, attitude consists of three semantic regions namely, emotion, ethics and aesthetics. Serving as the heart of the regions, emotion, referred to by Martin and White (2005) as *affect*, is the expressive or suggestive resource people are born with and express through physiological means (Painter, 2003 in White & Martin). Affect concerns about construing positive and negative feelings, reacting to behavior, text/processes and phenomena. Judgment involves ethics, evaluating behavior, registering attitudes towards behavior in which people applaud or abhor. Lastly, appreciation is concerned with aesthetics as it presents assessment of existence of ideas, things and other natural phenomena based on ways in which they are valued or not in a given context.

The realizations of attitude expand through different layers of grammatical structures. First, as 'quality' in depicting participants, attributing to participants and as a manner of process; second, as 'process' as affective mental and behavioral; and lastly, as 'comment' as a desiderative. The realizations occur through participants and processes, their affective and behavioral occurrences and modal adjuncts.

Affect can be classified into three major sets concerning the following: un/happiness, in/security and dis/satisfaction. The un/happiness set covers emotions or affairs of the heart; in/security relates to ecosocial well-being concerning peace and anxiety. Lastly, dis/satisfaction concerns emotions dealing with achievement and frustration of people engaged as participants and spectators.

Judgment presents meaning with regard to attitudes of people and in terms of the way they measure up to established norms. Judgments can be divided into those that concern *social esteem* which relates to the evaluation of behavior that has to do with one's social standing in the community (Tokunaga, 2010). Social esteem's subsets include 'normality' dealing with aspects of someone being uncommon or unusual; 'capacity' relating to one's capability or ability and 'tenacity' pertaining to a person's dependability or resoluteness. The other side of the spectrum concerns *social sanction* relating to 'veracity' or the truthfulness or honesty of a person and 'propriety' dealing with someone's ethics or honor. While social esteem is more evaluated in the oral culture, social sanction is more codified in writing.

Lastly, appreciation pertains to the evaluation of things, actions and phenomena, Martin and White (2005) classify appreciation in terms of people's 'reaction' to things referring to their impact and quality; their 'composition' pertaining to how balanced, logical and complex things are; and, 'value' in terms of the worthiness and appropriateness of things.

METHODOLOGY

Research Design, Data and Sampling Procedure

This cross-cultural study on the Philippine and Chinese media representations of the South China Sea maritime issue is a qualitative-quantitative descriptive study. News articles totaling 360 (193 from the Philippines and 167 from China) were culled through systematic random sampling. News articles published from the two leading newspapers from each country (Philippine Daily Inquirer and Philippine Star; China Daily and People's Daily) from January 2013 from the time when the Philippines initiated the arbitration proceedings up to December 16, 2016, five months after the International Tribunal handed its decision on the dispute.

The following table presents the total number of news articles gathered from the four newspapers and the corresponding sample size for four newspapers.

Based on Table 1, the total number of articles totaled 5750 (Philippines: PDI-1784 and PS-1290 and China: CD-562 and PD-2114). The following formula from the Philippine Social Survey Council was used in determining the sample size from each newspaper:

Table 1. Total number of news reports and computed sample sizes from the Philippine and Chinese data

	<u>PDI-(Ph)</u>	<u>Sample size</u>	<u>PS-(Ph)</u>	<u>Sample size</u>	<u>CD-(Ch)</u>	<u>Sample size</u>	<u>PD-(Ch)</u>	<u>Sample size</u>
	<u>News articles</u>		<u>News articles</u>		<u>News articles</u>		<u>News articles</u>	
2013	286	18	137	9	38	2	215	13
2014	447	28	203	13	53	3	22	20
2015	441	27	326	20	132	8	544	34
2016	610	39	624	39	339	22	1033	65
Total	1784	112	1290	81	562	35	2114	132

Legend: PDI-(Ph) – Philippine Daily Inquirer, PS-(Ph) – Philippine Star, Ch-(Ch)– China Daily, PD-(Ch)– People's Daily

$$n = \frac{(N) \left(Z_{\alpha/2} \right)^2 [P(1-P)]}{NE^2 + \left(Z_{\alpha/2} \right)^2 [P(1-P)]}$$

N = Population size

p = reliability proportion (0.5 used)

E = standard error (0.05 used)

$Z_{\alpha/2}$ = standard score of the desired confidence (0.95 confidence used, $Z_{\alpha/2}$ =1.96)

Out of the 3074 (1784+1290) identified news articles from the Philippines and 2676 (562+2114) articles from the China newspapers, 193 and 167 articles were computed as sample sizes for the Philippines and China data, respectively.

Research Procedure and Data Analysis

A corpus-based analysis of 360 news reports from the top English online version of the Philippine (Philippine Daily Inquirer and Philippine Star) and China (China Daily and People's Daily) newspapers underwent a quantitative-qualitative approach in identifying lexicons in the articles that construe judgment.

To verify the lexical items expressing judgement, affect and appreciation, *WordNet* application was consulted to "judge the potency, activity, and evaluative factors" (Whitelaw, Garg, & Argamon, 2005, p.41) of the lexes. The results were then rechecked with *Dictionary.com* and *Collins English Dictionary* for rich lexical sources to further validate the meanings and functions of the items found. Importantly, a second coder did 30% of the sample and the intercoder reliability test resulted in agreement that ranged from 87% to 100%.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The analysis of the media reports from the Philippines and China culled from a period of three years (January 2013- December 2016) focused on how the writers construe their attitudinal judgment using Martin and White's (2005) appraisal system.

Prevalent Evaluative Items Used in the Philippine and China Media News Reports on the South China Sea Disputes

Following the number of news reports released from 2013-2016, only those evaluative items that garnered more than 10 occurrences are presented in the tables from year 2013 to 2015. As 2016 accounts for more than 40% and 50% of all the news reports about the South China Sea Disputes, those with more than top 20 occurrences are presented in the tables.

Table 2 shows that appreciation lexes dominated the most used evaluative words in the Philippine news reports (i.e., Philippine Daily Inquirer and Philippine Star) on South China Sea disputes with words and derivatives of *dispute*, *peace* and *cooperate* used 77, 28, 26, respectively. These words specifically

Table 2. Most frequently used evaluative items in the Philippine news reports on the South China Sea disputes in 2013

Word	Frequency	Category
1. Dispute(-s, -d)	77	Appreciation (Valuation)
2. Peace	28	Appreciation (Valuation)
3. Cooperate(-ion)	26	Appreciation (Valuation)
4. Issue(-s)	21	Appreciation (Valuation)
5. Joint	13	Appreciation (Composition)
6. Peaceful(ly)	12	Judgment (Propriety)
7. Develop(-ment)	12	Affect (Satisfaction)

Table 3. Most frequently used evaluative items in the China news reports on the South China Sea disputes in 2013

Word	Frequency	Category
1. Develop(ment)	38	Affect (Satisfaction)
2. Cooperate(-ion)	27	Appreciation (Valuation)
3. Dispute(-s)	27	Appreciation (Valuation)
4. Issue(-s)	16	Appreciation (Valuation)
5. Peace	15	Appreciation (Valuation)
6. Peaceful(-ly)	15	Judgment (Propriety)
7. Stability	14	Appreciation (Valuation)
8. Joint	13	Appreciation (Composition)

point out to the worth and value in relation to territorial sea disputes. Martin and White (2005) underscore that the valuation subsystem in the appreciation category is dependent on the field since what is valued is anchored on the institutional focus. The importance given to this issue reflects the sentiments of the Filipinos validated by the results of the Social Weather Stations (a private organization in the Philippines which conducts surveys on varied national issues) survey results pertaining to two issues. Findings of the surveys conducted each year regarding the Filipino adults' approval of the government's actions on the tension in the Scarborough Shoal revealed 65% approval rating in 2013, 62% in 2014 and 49% in 2015. It was also found that most of the Filipino adults were worried that there would be an armed conflict between the Philippines and China over the disputed islands: 88% in 2012, 89% in 2013, 87% in 2014 and 84% in 2015 (Social Weather Stations, 2015). A number of the appreciation evaluative lexes are expressed in the headlines of the Philippine newspapers:

- 1) *China hits Manila as UN arbitration proceedings on Spratlys dispute start*-Ph PDI Data #5 (July 17, 2013)
- 2) *China raises concerns over PH's reported development plans on Ayungin Shoal*-Ph PDI #7 (May 29, 2013)
- 3) *Vietnam vows cooperation with Philippines on sea dispute*-Ph PS #12 (August 1, 2013)

For the news reports presented in the China Daily and People's Daily for 2013, it can be noted in Table 3 that the word *develop* and its derivative *development*, regarded as the sole evaluative affect under the satisfaction category, topped the list with 38 occurrences. Although the expression of appreciation dominantly prevailed in the most frequently used

Table 4. Most frequently used evaluative items in the Philippine news reports on the South China Sea disputes in 2014

Word	Frequency	Category
1. Dispute(-s, -d)	126	Appreciation (Valuation)
2. Issue(-s)	47	Appreciation (Valuation)
3. Peace	37	Appreciation (Valuation)
4. Develop(-ment, -ed, -ing)	24	Affect (Satisfaction)
5. Concern(-ed, -ing)	20	Affect (Insecurity)
6. Stability	17	Appreciation (Valuation)
7. Cooperate(-ion)	14	Appreciation (Valuation)
8. Agree(-d, -ment)	12	Affect (Happiness)

evaluative lexes, such expression of affect particularly that of satisfaction is highlighted. Analyzing the co-text in which the words are used, the attitudinal lexes *development* and *develop* reflect the expression of emotions in establishing a more positive atmosphere in the region as quoted from the top Chinese officials' remarks in the following news reports.

- 6) *Chinese Vice Foreign Minister Liu Zhenmin said on Friday that China will continue its efforts to promote peace, cooperation, stability and development in the South China Sea region.* Ch PD#1 (July 19, 2013)
- 7) *"We expect all sides to focus on cooperation and develop a positive atmosphere,"* Gao said. Ch CD#1 (July 24, 2013)

A notable finding on the use of affect in the news reports from China concerns the source of the lexes as coming or quoted from the news participants, not authorial voice as seen in Extracts (6) and (7). This finding is consistent with what Wahl-Jorgensen (2013) and Myskow (2017) observed in their analysis of news articles and secondary textbooks, respectively. Results generated from their studies reveal the emotionality components termed as 'ritual of emotionality' present in both results even if a 'ritual of objectivity' is expected in each discourse.

The rest of the frequently used evaluative items are appreciation attitudinal lexes under valuation sub-category. With majority of such attitude construing valuation object of the phenomenon, similar results to that of the Philippine data are posted, with valuation or being worthwhile as the focus of the construction of meaning. Martin and White (2005) assert that valuation is the most sensitive to the field or topic among the types of evaluation (the others reaction and composition). It can be noted that just like in the findings from the Philippine data on entities reflecting evaluative language, the main linguistic feature used was abstraction or the use of nominalized language features (e.g., *cooperation, dispute, issue, stability*). Such employment of abstraction of entities construes a contentious or argumentative stance towards the subject matter on 'cooperation' and 'disputes' as reflected in the headlines:

- 8) *'Breakthrough' helps China, Vietnam build trust, boost cooperation*-Ch PD#3 (October 16, 2013)
- 9) *China opposes taking sea disputes to UN: FM*-Ch PD# 12 (January 31, 2013)

As shown in Table 4, the Philippine media present a marked preference for the word *dispute* (with derivative *dis-*

Table 5. Most frequently used evaluative items in the China news reports on the South China Sea disputes in 2014

Word	Frequency	Category
1. Cooperate(-tion)	55	Appreciation (Valuation)
2. Dispute(-s, -ed)	49	Appreciation (Valuation)
3. Peace	27	Appreciation (Valuation)
4. Issue(-s)	26	Appreciation (Valuation)
5. Develop(-ment)	25	Affect (Satisfaction)
6. Stability	19	Appreciation (Valuation)
7. Concern	15	Affect (Insecurity/security)
8. Joint(-ly)	15	Appreciation (Composition)
9. Peaceful(-ly)	15	Judgment (Propriety)
10. Negotiate(-tion)	13	Judgment (Veracity)
11. Strategic	13	Appreciation (Composition)
12. Agree(-d/-ment)	11	Affect (Happiness)

putes) with 126 occurrences. This evaluative appreciation word is under valuation sub-category.

- 10) *The Philippines has had standoffs with China in the West Philippine Sea over maritime disputes.*-Ph PDI #3 (October 16, 2014)
- 11) *US diplomat questions China's construction in disputed sea*-Ph PS# 1(December 18, 2014)

It must be noted that several instances of authorially-sourced appreciation under valuation sub-category can be found in the Philippine data as exemplified in the above extracts. The word *dispute* and its derivatives *disputes* and *disputed* are used as part of a report in (10) and as part of a headline in (11). Eggins (2004 in Martin & White, 2005) explains that valuation as a subcategory of appreciation is "considered [an] opinion" which can be related to cognition as a mental process type and the ideational metafunction relating to the phenomena of experience. Aside from the occurrences of the lexes on evaluative appreciation words, it can be observed that evaluative affect lexes and their derivatives are also present in the corpus (*develop-satisfaction; concern-insecurity; and agree-happiness*). These significant occurrences of appreciation and affect evaluative language are sourced through the news writer.

Based on Table 5, out of the top evaluative items that appeared in the Chinese news reports in 2014, appreciation (valuation) has the most number of occurrences (5 out of 12). Evaluative affect lexes are also part of the list with 25 episodes for *develop/ment*, 15 occurrences for *concern*, and 11 for *agree*. Majority of these affect words were sourced through authorial voices meaning that the words were not attributed from external sources (18 out of 25 for *develop/ment*; 9 out of 15 for *concern* and 9 out of 11 for *agree/d/ment*).

One way in which the word *cooperation* was used in the news reports was that it served as part of a quoted text by the then US Secretary of State Kerry to promote a positive atmosphere in the region.

- 12) *"We are committed to avoiding the trap of strategic rivalry and intent on forging a relationship in which we*

broaden our *cooperation* on common interests and constructively manage our differences and disagreements,” he (US Secretary of State Kerry) said. Ch CD#1 (August 15, 2014).

In the next extract (13), it is interesting to emphasize how another news report that appeared in the People’s Daily Online constructs an attitudinal appreciation (valuation) in presenting how China through Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi’s proposal to promote unity amid the tension. This is in contrast to the negative headline stating the *Philippines’ plan destined to fail*.

13) *Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi came up with 12 proposals for political regional and oceanic cooperation at foreign ministers meetings, which offer real potential for bilateral cooperation and send a signal to members of ASEAN that it is sensible to promote cooperation rather than create tension.* Ch PD# 7 (August 13, 2014)

Meanwhile, there are a number of instances in which the evaluative appreciation (valuation) words *peace* and *stability* were used together as presented in the following extracts (14) and (15):

14) *The U.S. is the most powerful external factor that plays a role in Asia’s peace and stability.* Ch PD#1 (December 29, 2014)

15) *China will continue to promote peaceful settlement of disputes through negotiation with the countries concerned, said China’s Vice Foreign Minister Liu Zhenmin on Tuesday. He added that no country should doubt China’s determination and will to safeguard the peace and stability of the South China Sea.* Ch CD#3 (May 2, 2014)

The dominant use of appreciation (valuation) evaluative language construed in the news reports from the Chinese media can be reflective of China’s stand on the South China Sea disputes. In China’s Ministry of Foreign Affairs official post titled “Wang Yi on the South China Sea Issue at the ASEAN Regional Forum” dated August 6, 2015, China’s position on the South China Sea Disputes was reiterated through the remarks of Foreign Minister Wang Yi that the South China Sea is stable as opposed to the hyped-up confrontations reported. Moreover, despite China considering itself as the victim on the issue, it continues to promote:

“Peace and stability in the South China Sea, we have exercised utmost restraint. Here is China’s basic proposition: we seek to peacefully resolve disputes through negotiation and consultation on the basis of respecting historical facts and in accordance with international law, including the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS).” (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People’s Republic of China, para. 8).

As shown in Table 6, the evaluative appreciation word *dispute* and its derivatives *disputes* and *disputed* are again used overwhelmingly in the Philippine media in 2015 in the same way as in 2014 (185 occurrences in 2015 while 126 in 2014). This shows how the Philippine media put so much value or importance on the South China Sea issue. The table also presents that while the appreciation category still dominates the attitudinal lexis, affect and judgment words are also

Table 6. Most frequently used evaluative items in the Philippine news reports on the South China Sea disputes in 2015

Word	Frequency	Category
1. Dispute(-s, -ed)	185	Appreciation (Valuation)
2. Issue(-s)	44	Appreciation (Valuation)
3. Develop(-ment, -ing)	27	Affect (Dis/satisfaction)
4. New(ly)	27	Appreciation (Reaction)
5. Concern(-s, -ed)	26	Affect (Insecurity)
6. Tension(s)	21	Affect (Insecurity)
7. Peace	20	Appreciation (Valuation)
8. Stability	17	Appreciation (Valuation)
9. Negotiation(-s, iate)	13	Judgment (Veracity)
10. Commit(-ed, -ment/s)	13	Judgment (Tenacity)

prevalent in the list of most used evaluative words in the Philippine news reports on South China Sea disputes for 2015.

Attitudinal affect, which pertains to emotional reactions, is expressed in the following extracts:

16) *Vietnam’s deputy defense minister said on Saturday that the reports about the weapons, if true, were a very worrying development.* Ph PDI#18 (May 31, 2015)

17) *China has accused the Philippines of “exaggerating” the tension over the disputed seas, referring to the country’s ongoing military exercise with Japan and the United States.* Ph PDI#16 (June 26, 2015).

18) *The tribunal noted that the case concerns the role of “historic rights” and source of maritime entitlements in the disputed South China Sea.* Ph PS#6 (October 30, 2015)

The word *development* in extract 16 exhibits a negative or dissatisfaction subcategory in the affect level. The sentence in which the word *development* appeared was from a Vietnamese top diplomat remark about the troubling situation of China’s militarisation in the disputed seas. Similarly, the word *tension* as an expression of affect (insecurity) in Extract 17 is further escalated by the presence of the terms “accused” and “exaggerating”. The whole expression or sentence shows China as the ‘accusing’ party is the more aggressive and assertive party than the Philippines being the ‘accused’. Another co-text which further amplifies the dissatisfactory feelings would be the headline which presents “PH tells China: Don’t blame us ‘if others laud our approach’”. Lastly, extract 18 is another attitudinal affect (insecurity) bringing to readers’ feelings about the concern of the tribunal in the case brought to The Hague.

These results are congruent with Oteiza (2003) and Myskow’s (2018) findings on the instances of affect in their studies on evaluative language on textbooks. While Myskow noted the highest occurrence of affect resources in analyzing history textbooks, affect resources found in this study are still substantial with the top 5 and 6 highest occurrences in the Philippine corpus despite the objectivity required as a convention in journalism.

Just like in the two previous years (2013 and 2014), the evaluative language that dominated the China news reports

are mostly appreciation category (valuation) with words and derivatives *dispute*, *peace*, *stability* and *issue* occupying the top four spots in the list as shown in Table 7. Evaluative words under affect total to four words while the judgment category has three. In particular, as the evaluative judgment words *negotiate/ion* (veracity), *commit/ment* (tenacity) and *effort/s* pertain to the capacity of the object of study, in this case, China is involved in the experience or performance of an activity as found in the following extracts:

- 19) *China has always been committed to the peaceful settlement of disputes through negotiation and consultation on the basis of respecting historical facts and international law.* Ch PD#6 (November 10, 2015)
- 20) *Constructions in South China Sea 'to boost search and rescue efforts and international liaison' China's ongoing efforts to build and upgrade infrastructure on islands and reefs in the South China Sea will improve its maritime search and rescue capability and help other nations, according to military experts.* Ch CD#5 (May 4, 2015)
- 21) *China is committed to jointly safeguard peace and stability of the South China Sea with ASEAN members, he added.* Ch PD#26 (April 15, 2015)

All the evaluative lexes shown above for *negotiation* (19), *efforts* (20) and *committed* (21) exhibit positive capacity on the part of China to play a friendly and significant role in maintaining peace and stability in the South East Asian Region. Such position taken by the Chinese media is attributed to the China Communist Party's control of the country's state and privately-owned media in attaining "complete hegemony over news coverage and the creation of an international media order heavily influenced by China" (BBC News, 2018, para. 3).

The year 2016 marked 40% and 51% of all the news reports about the South China Sea disputes totaling 1,234 and 1,372 from the Philippines and China, respectively. With these, based on the computed population sampling, a total of 78 (Philippines) and 87 (China) news articles were analyzed in 2016. It must be remembered that the Tribunal at

Table 7. Most frequently used evaluative items in China news reports on the South China Sea disputes in 2015

Word	Frequency	Category
1. Dispute(-s,-ed)	65	Appreciation (Valuation)
2. Stability	34	Appreciation (Valuation)
3. Issue(-s)	38	Appreciation (Valuation)
4. Peace	33	Appreciation (Valuation)
5. Develop(ment, ing)	26	Affect (Satisfaction)
6. Peaceful(-ly)	21	Judgment (Propriety)
7. Negotiate(-tion)	20	Judgment (Veracity)
8. Urge(-d)	18	Affect (Dissatisfaction)
9. Commit(-ment)	18	Judgment (Tenacity)
10. Efforts	13	Judgment (Tenacity)
11. Concern	13	Affect (Insecurity)
12. Cooperate(-ion)	13	Appreciation (Valuation)
13. Tension	12	Affect (Insecurity)

The Hague handed its decision of the case on July 12, 2016.

For the Philippine data as presented in Table 8, out of the top 16 evaluative items with more than 20 occurrences in the Philippine news reports, nine attitudinal appreciation categories were noted with the word *dispute* and its derivatives *disputes* and *disputed* topping the list at 212 occurrences. Aside from the valuation subcategory reflected in seven items, reaction and composition subcategories were also realized in the words *new* (appreciation-reaction) and *jointly* (appreciation-composition). The high occurrence of the appreciation resources in the Philippine news reports validates the increased percentage of adult Filipinos being aware of the Philippine-China dispute at 80% or 7 points increase from 73% in 2013. In addition, while 78% approved of the government's filing of a case against China to resolve the dispute over the South China Sea, 87% were confident of the Philippines victory in the arbitration case (Social Weather Stations, 2016).

Meanwhile, the affect category is realized in five items topped by the word *agree* and its derivative *agreement* (happiness) with 55 occurrences followed by *tension* (*insecurity*) with 51. Lastly, two occurrences of the judgment category are reflected in the items *negotiation/s* and *respect* with 24 and 23 occurrences, respectively.

It is interesting to note that the word *respect* as an expression of attitudinal judgment pertaining to the assessment of behavior is employed in the Philippine data as in the following:

- 22) *The US, Japan and Australia, amongst others, have urged Beijing to fall into line and respect the tribunal's ruling.* Ph PDI #2 (July 19, 2016)

Table 8. Most frequently used evaluative items in the Philippine news reports on the South China Sea disputes in 2016

Word	Frequency	Category
1. Dispute(-s, -d)	212	Appreciation (Valuation)
2. Issue(-s)	71	Appreciation (Valuation)
3. Against	71	Appreciation (Valuation)
4. Stability	58	Appreciation (Valuation)
5. Agree(ment)	55	Affect (Happiness)
6. Tension(-s)	51	Affect (Insecurity)
7. Security	50	Appreciation (Valuation)
8. New	43	Appreciation (Reaction)
9. Peace	36	Appreciation (Valuation)
10. Concern (-s, -ed, -ing)	35	Affect (Insecurity)
11. Develop (-ed, -ment, -ing)	34	Affect (Satisfaction)
12. Joint(-ly)	32	Appreciation (Composition)
13. Cooperate(ion)	28	Appreciation (Valuation)
14. Peaceful(-ly)	27	Judgment (Propriety)
15. Negotiation(-s)	24	Judgment (Veracity)
16. Respect	23	Judgment (Propriety)
17. Resolve	21	Affect (Satisfaction)

The word *respect* as a judgment on propriety resource zeroes in on appropriateness of conduct particularly urging China to respect and submit to The Hague ruling. In fact, in a 2018 survey conducted by the SWS, 81% of adult Filipinos said “it is not right to do nothing about China’s intrusion in claimed territories” (Social Weather Stations, 2018, para. 2) In this case, the authorial voice provides a judgment evaluative language in terms of the “behavior as moral or immoral, as legal or illegal, as socially acceptable or unacceptable, as laudable or deplorable, as normal or abnormal and so on” (White, 2015, Judgment, para. 1).

Table 9 indicates that out of the top 18 most frequently used evaluative lexis, eight words with appreciation under valuation subcategories dominate the list and at the same time the top spots with *dispute*, *issue* and *cooperation* and their derivatives gaining the top three spots, respectively. As in the case of the Philippine data, the same findings are found. Such occurrences can be attributed to the previous study of Wahl-Jorgensen (2013) on the domination of appreciation resources in her study on the evaluative language used in Pulitzer Prize-winning articles. It can also be noted that the word *negotiation(s)* under judgment category under veracity subcategory is marked belonging to the top four spot. The only other lexis under judgment under propriety subcategory also appears to be the word *respect*. They are both used in the following extract:

23) *China urges the Philippines to solve bilateral disputes through negotiation and consultation on the basis of mutual respect and trust, a Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson said Tuesday.* Ch PD#5 (September 20, 2016)

In the above context, with the ruling of the tribunal favoring the Philippines, the Chinese government pushes for bilateral

Table 9. Most frequently used evaluative items in China news reports on the South China Sea disputes in 2016

Word	Frequency	Category
1. Dispute(-s, -d)	168	Appreciation (Valuation)
2. Issue(-s)	161	Appreciation (Valuation)
3. Cooperate(-ion)	87	Appreciation (Valuation)
4. Negotiation(-s)	78	Judgment (Veracity)
5. Peace	63	Appreciation (Valuation)
6. Stability	53	Appreciation (Valuation)
7. Tension(-s)	50	Affect (Insecurity)
8. Security	48	Appreciation (Valuation)
9. Agreed(-ment/s)	47	Affect (Happiness)
10. Joint	45	Appreciation (Composition)
11. Hope(-s, -d)	42	Affect (Satisfaction)
12. Concern (-s, -ed, -ing)	39	Affect (Insecurity)
13. Peaceful(ly)	37	
14. Respect(-ed, -ing)	36	Judgment (Propriety)
15. Resolve(-d, -ing)	31	Affect (Satisfaction)
16. New	30	Appreciation (Reaction)
17. Against	29	Appreciation (Valuation)
18. Develop(ment)	29	Affect (Satisfaction)

talks on the account of consideration and respect. Judgment, in the light of the appraisal theory, measures up one’s behavior in reference to an institutional norm. The extract above, containing the evaluative *negotiation* and *respect*, expressed in nominalized quality which function as head nouns in the nominal group, reflects that what is evaluated is the abstraction of the dispute. Their base forms, namely *negotiate* and *respect* and derivatives are similarly found in the results of the Philippine data. It is interesting to note that through these language resources, the two countries emphasize on upholding respect and settling the dispute properly. It can then be said that what the Philippines and China desire, as expressed in the media, is for settlement of the issue upholding the standard of propriety in doing so.

Similarities and Differences on How News Writers Present Their Evaluative Positions on the South China Sea Disputes

Over the course of four years spanning from January 2013 when the arbitration case was raised until December 2016, five months after the tribunal released its decision on the case, the evaluative words in the above figure show the top lexis used by both media in both Philippine and Chinese news reports.

Except for the word *development* (affect-satisfaction), the rest of the four top words used are appreciation words under valuation subcategory with the word *dispute(-s,-ed)* as the highest occurring evaluative word with 741 instances followed by *issue(-s)* with 424 and *develop(-ment)* with 308 incidence. Moreover, it is significant to note that the first two words *dispute(s)* and *issue(-s)* have high negative connotative sense as confirmed in the *Wordnet.com*. The remaining three words *develop(-ment)*, *cooperate(-ion)* and *peace* have positive connotative meaning. As explained earlier, appreciation lexis under valuation are regarded to be closest to judgment. This implies that such rhetorical choice of appreciation may be after all hinting at judgment but in an impersonal stance in the absence of human appraisers in the constructions. This validates the contention of Wahl-Jorgensen (2012) in presenting that since journalistic writing adheres to a ritual of objectivity, explicit judgment is not pursued; instead, implicit subjective judgment is employed through the use of appreciation judgment resources.

The same words found in Figure 1 for the most commonly used words combined for the Philippines and China are

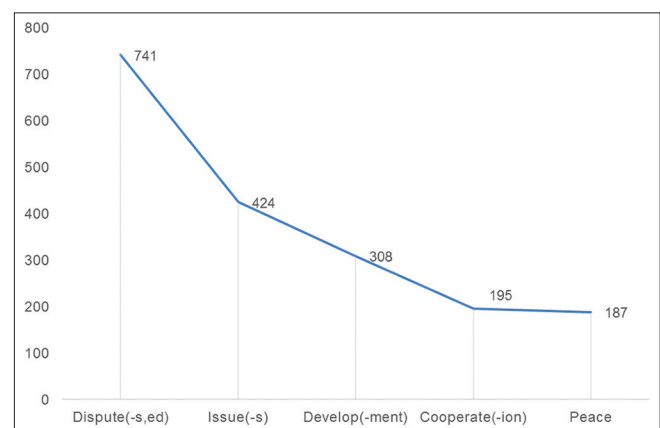


Figure 1. Overall top evaluative words used by Philippine and Chinese news media on the South China Sea disputes

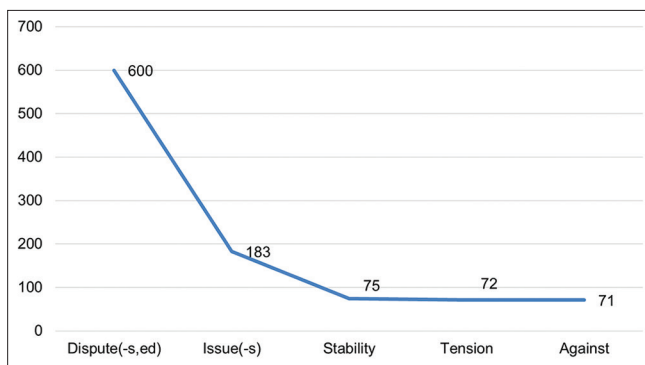


Figure 2. Top most used evaluative language in the Philippine news reports on South China Sea disputes

also the same China's overall top five evaluative lexis used in its news reports but *develop(-ment)* (N=257), *issue(-s)* (N=241) and *cooperate(ion)* (N=169) ranked from one to three, respectively. The case for the Philippines is different as shown in the following figure:

Figure 2 shows the pervasive use of the word *dispute(-s,-ed)* in the Philippine corpus. Specifically, this word is found as one of the most frequent lexis all throughout 2013-2016 most especially in 2016 when the ruling on the case was promulgated. The figure also shows that the lexis *tension* (N=72) and *Against* (N=71) are not part of the combined overall most frequently occurring evaluative language for the two countries as well as for the Chinese corpus. It is also important to emphasize that four out of five of these lexis (i.e., *dispute(s)*, *issue(s)*, *tension* *against*) reflect a negative connotation. Comparing the two corpora, the Philippine news reports are dominated by appreciation under valuation sub-category except for *tension* (affect-insecurity). Meanwhile, the Chinese news reports are topped by affect under satisfaction attitudinal category (*develop(-ment)*) while the rest of the words fall under appreciation (valuation) division. It can be depicted that the Chinese news reports have constantly emphasized harmony in China's dealings with the Philippines in the South China Sea tensions.

It can be remembered that in year 2016 when the tribunal decision was handed down in favor of the Philippines, there was another significant political happening in the Philippines. While the previous Aquino administration raised the South Sea disputes case, it was during the new Duterte administration when the decision was handed down. What happened was a change in policy in the new administration approaching the issue in a more diplomatic way in contrast to what former President Aquino did. This new maneuver and the development of a friendlier ties are seen of the two countries even as the current Philippine President Duterte even had a state visit in China in 2016. Such overwhelming number of occurrences emphasizing *develop(ment)* and *cooperat(-ion)* in the Chinese news reports is supported by the employment of the word *peace* (N=138) occurring as the top 5 most used evaluative word in the Chinese news reports. How these two countries are represented through the news reports, each country being portrayed to be the victim or the oppressed by the other country in their respective country's news reports mirrors the media discursive study done by Tai-

wo and Igwebuikwe (2015) on the Bakassi Peninsula conflict in Nigeria and Cameroon. The newspapers from each country assessed portrayed favorable images favoring their own countries.

The findings generated from this cross-cultural study of the representations of the South China Sea disputes in the Philippine and China news media reveal striking semblance and disparity between the two cultures. In terms of sameness, both the Philippine and Chinese media employ a great number of evaluative language specifically appreciation (valuation) to be able to express implied opinion or stance on the South China Sea issue while at the same time, conform to the conventions of news reporting. Regarding the distinctiveness between the two, the Chinese news reports lean towards a more diplomatic stance through the noteworthy use of evaluative affect and appreciation resources that underscore enhancement of relationship, partnership and accord while the Philippine news reports are more inclined to express implied negative subjective attitudinal stance on the issue. Indeed, just as how Heffer (2007) found the "...subjectively evaluative narrative construction" (p. 175) in a courtroom discourse, news reports which are expected to portray objectivity also exhibit such biased evaluative stance.

CONCLUSION

In exploring the textual representations in the use of evaluative language in the Philippine and Chinese popular media regarding the South China Sea disputes, patterns of interpersonal meaning were identified. Findings reveal that the attitudinal stance of the Philippine and Chinese news reports are manifested mostly using lexical expressions of attitudinal appreciation highlighting the value or significance of the event or phenomenon. The use of appreciation resources provides a subtle or indirect expressions of behavioral judgment in the course of journalistic writing where conventions relating to objectivity are a must. Even if dominated by appreciation evaluative language that construes value of phenomenon relating to aspects of the disputes, affect (manifesting emotions) and judgment (relating to behavior) evaluative resources are employed to reflect or represent the socio-cultural and political contexts in which the news reports are written. These attitudinal expressions used in the news reports reflect the political happening, government policy and even capture the local sentiment.

In terms of the sameness in the representations between the two countries, both countries employed mostly appreciation evaluative linguistic resources. The unlikeness between the two news reports on the South China Sea disputes employed by the Chinese media display the politic position of China; for the Philippines, a negative biased stance.

This paper set out the significance of language in framing positions, sentiments, opinions and policies in which meanings are construed in news reports. Examining media discourse from the lens of the appraisal system or evaluative language underscores how subjectivity occurs where beliefs, notions and values in a society are generated.

Future studies can focus on headlines using the same appraisal framework. The use of headlines can be a source of

rich data in identifying the interpersonal meanings as well. Moreover, the perception of the readers with regard to the attitudinal lexes figured out can be included to further validate the interpersonal meanings generated from the items.

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