

# A Sociocognitive Analysis of News Texts in China Daily: Based on the Triangle Theory

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## Abstract

Applying Van Dijk's Discourse-cognition-society Triangle as the theoretical framework, this paper analyzed two news texts published on the website of China Daily concerning the issue of cross-Straits relations. The purpose of analyzing and comparing these two texts from the sociocognitive perspective of the Triangle theory is to show the ideologies and attitudes behind the discourse and to reveal the interrelationship between discursive practice, cognition and society in relation to the cross-Straits issue. Analysis of the two texts from the three dimensions in the Triangle shows that discourse strategies such as lexical selection and semantic polarization in both texts carry implications about underlying beliefs shared by Chinese people in terms of the identity of Taiwan island, under the influence of which the authors of the two texts call for similar social acts (e.g. reunification) as solution to the cross-Straits issue. Comparison of the two texts which were published in different years reveals that the reunification ideology has remained unchanged over the years, which indicates social unity will always be insisted by China. Sociocognitive analysis of the two texts can serve as an example to manifest the problem-oriented goal and society-rectifying attempt of critical discourse studies.

**Keywords:** Sociocognitive analysis, discourse, ideology, cognition, cross-Straits issue

## 1. Introduction

Cross-Straits relation between Taiwan island and Chinese mainland is an issue of social importance in China and one of the main topics for expressing official opinions on the website of China's national newspaper China Daily. This paper analyzed two news texts selected from the China Daily website concerning the cross-Straits issue: one was published in

the “Opinion” Column of its webpage in 2018 (hereafter referred to as Text 1, with 304 words in total, see References for the URL link), and the other was published in the “Opinion” Column of its webpage in 2025 (hereafter referred to as Text 2, with 566 words in total, see References for the URL link). These two texts were chosen because both of them were published after 2016, the year when the Democratic Progressive Party (DPP) became the leading party on Taiwan island, the start of a period in which the cross-Strait relations face more uncertainty, because the DPP on the island tends to be independence-minded, despite the fact that more and more Taiwan people identify themselves as Chinese. Published by China Daily as an official newspaper, the two texts both represent the voice of the Chinese mainland led by the Chinese Communist Party (the CCP) who insists that Taiwan is part of China, thus both texts show similar attitudes towards the cross-Strait issue in terms of Taiwan’s identity. Here “Taiwan’s identity” means the identity of Taiwan, used as a neutral term, while the term “Taiwan identity” in Text 1 means a separate national identity for Taiwan, which is what the author of this text refuted, trying to convince Taiwan readers of the single identity of being Chinese. Text 2 emphasizes the increasing participation of Taiwan people in cross-Strait activities held on the Chinese mainland, which signifies a close bond between the two sides of Taiwan Strait and a possible future of reunification, i.e. a single identity for people on both sides of the Strait. These two texts will be analyzed and compared to find out the similarities and differences between them in terms of discourse strategies used and social cognition reflected. The purpose of making a sociocognitive analysis of the two texts is to reveal the ideology (i.e. system of beliefs) behind the authors’ discourse strategies concerning their perception of Taiwan’s identity and to show the intricate relationship between discursive practice and cognitive operations under the influence of society. It seems that so far there hasn’t been sociocognitive analysis which particularly focuses on news texts concerning the topic of cross-Strait relations, although critical discourse analysis of news texts on other topics can be found in the previous literature in China. In light of the importance of the cross-Strait issue, analysis of texts/discourses on this topic in terms of the revelation of ideology undoubtedly has social significance.

## **2. Theoretical framework: The Discourse-Cognition-Society Triangle**

The analysis of the two chosen texts will be done under the theoretical framework of the discourse-cognition-society Triangle proposed by Van Dijk (2014). It is a sociocognitive approach to critical discourse studies, known as Sociocognitive Discourse Studies (SCDS), which looks into the mind of the language users about what’s behind the discourse they produce and investigates how cognition influences the way they construct texts. According to this theory, cognition not only means mental representations such as ideologies, attitudes and beliefs shared by members of social groups, but also the cognitive processing of individual language users in their production of the texts. Therefore, texts can be studied as a form of discursive interaction to reveal cognitive operations of the authors and mental representations of the social group that they belong to. In other words, the Triangle theory aims to show how cognition is related to discourse structures and social factors. “Society” under this theoretical framework refers to both situational structures at the local level (in terms of individual social participants) and societal structures at the global level (from the perspective of social groups).

Van Dijk (2014) pointed out that it is at this side of the Triangle that social significance and social consequences of the discursive acts can be identified.

Analysis of each of the three dimensions in the Triangle can be done at both local and global levels (i.e. at micro and macro levels) (Van Dijk 2014). Having integrated cognitive analysis and social analysis into linguistic analysis, the Triangle theory is a multidisciplinary model for problem-oriented critical discourse analysis. Under the sociocognitive framework of this theoretical model, the two chosen texts will be analyzed in terms of the two levels of each dimension, with the interface and interrelationship between the three dimensions shown through the process of analysis.

### **3. Analysis of the Discourse Dimension**

#### *3.1 Discourse Semantics at the Global Level: Semantic Macrostructure*

It is proposed by Van Dijk (2014) to begin critical discourse analysis with an analysis of semantic macrostructures, which means global meanings (i.e. themes), as they are consciously controlled by the author and they express the overall “content” of the author’s mental model about the event. Mental model refers to the authors’ or participants’ subjective construction or representation of the social situation in terms of the event, with their own perspective, evaluation, etc. (Van Dijk 2009). Macrostructures can be inferred from the text through a process of information reduction. As proposed by the Triangle theory, information which is related to the macrostructure is referred to as macroproposition.

Text 1 (2018) can be summed up in the following macropropositions, shortened as MP(a), MP(b) and MP(c). MP (a): A poll conducted in Taiwan showed that more and more young people on Taiwan island were identifying themselves as Chinese, with their sense of a separate “Taiwan identity” hitting a new low, which revealed that what the DPP in Taiwan said of Taiwan people’s inborn propensity for “Taiwan independence” was not true. MP (b): As DPP’s leadership in Taiwan is characterized by separatist ambitions, more than half of the surveyed Taiwan people had no confidence in the island’s future, with more and more young people shifting their attention to the Chinese mainland. MP (c): More and more Taiwan people have been expressing their opposition to “Taiwan independence” and have shown their support for the 1992 Consensus that there is only one China. Therefore, any separatist attempt to create a different identity for Taiwan people will fail.

The overall semantic macrostructure, i.e. the theme of Text 1, can be summarized from the above macropropositions: Taiwan is part of China and all Taiwan residents are Chinese, i.e. there isn’t a separate “Taiwan identity”. Macropropositions listed above all lead to the theme, revealing global coherence. Propositions leading to the theme are direct expression of ideology (Van Dijk 2014). The ideological principle implied by these macropropositions is that there is one single identity for people on both sides of the Taiwan Strait, the Chinese identity. Coherence between the theme and the macropropositions is something consciously controlled by the author so that the content of the text may have a strong impact on the intended recipients of this text, particularly Taiwan people, for them to be convinced of the single identity of being Chinese.

Text 2 (2025) can be summed up in the following macropropositions, shortened as MP(d), MP(e) and MP(f). MP(d): The 17<sup>th</sup> Straits Forum held on the Chinese mainland attracted thousands of participants from Taiwan island, including a delegation of Taiwan students led by the former chairman of the Kuomintang Party in Taiwan, which signifies increasing cross-Straits engagement among the Taiwan younger generation. MP(e): The DPP in Taiwan tried to discourage participation in the Straits Forum, worrying that their “pro-independence” narrative will be weakened by cross-Straits communication. However, the increasing number of participants and the rebounding cross-Straits travel reflect Taiwan people’s growing desire for greater contact with the mainland. MP(f): The close bond between the two sides of the Taiwan Strait is built on blood ties and shared history/culture, and the engagement of Taiwan young people in cross-Straits activities brings fresh hope to a future of peace and cooperation, which indicates that the trend of reunification can never be changed despite DPP’s political maneuvers toward division.

Comparing the macropropositions MP(a)-MP(f), one similarity that can be found between the two texts is that both of them put the focus on the younger generation of Taiwan, who are perceived as representing the future of cross-Straits relations. Another similarity we can find is in the attitudes of the authors in terms of the identity issue, that is, they both either claim or imply that Taiwan is part of China and any effort to separate Taiwan island from Chinese mainland will fail, which is a common theme shared by the two texts. As the Triangle theory pointed out, macropropositions made by the authors can reveal their mental models, attitudes, and ideologies, under the influence of which they produce the texts. As both texts are taken from the official newspaper China Daily, their authors meant to convey the opinion of the Chinese Government who upholds the One-China principle and calls for reunification. Comparison of the two texts (published in 2018 and 2025) shows that the reunification ideology has remained unchanged over the years, and it will always be upheld. The authors’ deployment of the overall semantic macrostructure (the global topic/theme) is aimed to construct their mental models of the event and thus influence the mental models of the readers and their perception of Taiwan’s identity. It is in this sense that theme as the semantic macrostructure is a very significant structure to be analyzed (Van Dijk 2014).

### *3.2 Discourse Semantics at the Local Level: Semantic Microstructure*

In contrast to semantic macrostructure which means global meaning or overall theme, semantic microstructure is the local meaning, which refers to the meaning of words, the coherence and other relations between propositions, e.g. implications, presuppositions, and so on. As the Triangle theory suggests, under the control of the global meaning, local meaning is the kind of information that has the most direct impact on the mental models of the readers, hence it may have the most obvious social influence. This can be most directly reflected from the two texts as a kind of institutional discourse, published by China Daily as a powerful media organization. Texts which appear in China Daily as a national newspaper are able to reach millions of readers and possibly influence their opinions. The Triangle theory proposes that most institutional discourses are controlled by the aims of the institutional organization. The two texts which were posted on the website of China Daily clearly tried to convey the opinion of the Chinese Government and make all Chinese in and outside China recognize the

One-China fact, with the aim to bring about the social act of reunification. This institutional aim is expressed through discourse strategies like lexical selection, implication and semantic polarization.

### 3.2.1 Lexical Selection

Text 1 repeated the use of the word “lie” (as shown in the following two sentences: “The poll is enough to lay bare the sheer lie that the DPP has been trying to peddle” and “The ever-growing dissatisfaction among Taiwan people with the leadership of the DPP has exposed the lie of its separatist ambitions”). The author of this text claimed that the DPP in Taiwan who said that Taiwan young people have an inborn propensity for “Taiwan independence” was telling a lie. This claim is based on evidence from the poll which showed that Taiwan young people's sense of a separate "Taiwan identity" had hit a new low and more and more of them identified themselves as Chinese. The choice of the word “lie” reflects not only subjective feelings against the DPP but also objective facts from the poll. As the Triangle theory points out, word choice is the intentional lexical selection made by the authors to reveal their mental models of the event and influence the mental models of the readers. By referring to what the DPP said as a “lie”, Text 1 aimed to make Taiwan people turn away from the independence-minded DPP and bring them around to the truth: the single identity of being Chinese. The idea of reunification is thus the underlying ideology embedded in this text to convey to the readers.

In Text 2, words that are used repeatedly are “participation/participants (5 times), exchanges (4 times), dialogue (4 times), understanding (4 times), engagement (3 times), communication (3 times), and future (4 times)” and synonyms of these words (e.g. involvement, contact, interaction, cooperation, connection, etc.) as shown in the following sentences: “The involvement of youth brings fresh hope to a relationship often weighed down by the DPP authorities. Unlike older generations, today's young people are more globally minded, pragmatic and open to engagement. Their participation in dialogue paves the way for a future defined not by confrontation, but by cooperation”. The purpose of using these words is to convince the readers that the increasing participation and engagement of Taiwan young people in cross-Straits activities on the Chinese mainland indicates a future of communication, cooperation and reunification.

Comparison of the two texts shows that generally more negative terms (such as hostility, divorce, lie, separatist, etc.) were used in Text 1, basically to refer to the DPP, but in Text 2, generally more positive terms were used, describing cross-Straits activities attended by Taiwan people. This shows different lexical strategies to influence the mental models of the readers, with Text 1 trying to make the readers turn away from the independence-minded DPP and Text 2 trying to win the readers’ support for cross-Straits communication. It can be seen that differences in lexical selection between the two texts actually lead to the same aim: reunification.

As proposed by Van Dijk (2014), lexical selection not only expresses explicit meanings, but also carries implied or presupposed meanings, and may create semantic polarization between the two sides. These will be shown in the following sections.

### 3.2.2 Implication

Apart from the macropropositions listed in Section 3.1, there are some other propositions embedded in each text, which are implied or presupposed, instead of explicitly asserted.

In Text 1, the following two sentences (“71.6% of those surveyed were pessimistic about Taiwan’s economic prospects” and “more and more young people in Taiwan have shifted their attention to the mainland”) imply that the Chinese mainland’s economic prospects are better than the economic prospects of Taiwan island and this may get some Taiwan people to turn to the mainland for career development. In Text 2, the sentence “The DPP authorities have sought to discourage participation in the Straits Forum, fearing that such engagement might reveal the mainland’s real development momentum and goodwill, and weaken their pro-independence narrative” also implies that the Chinese mainland’s economic development may attract Taiwan people to engage in cross-strait communication and support the One-China fact.

Text 1 used the word “divorce” in the sentence “it (the DPP) has sought to spark hostility toward the mainland in an attempt to divorce the island from China”, which implies that the Chinese mainland and Taiwan island were originally one family, which shouldn’t be separated. In Text 2, the use of the word “motherland” in the sentence “Their (DPP’s) concern lies in the Forum’s potential to foster deeper understanding and connection, undermining their efforts to isolate the island from its motherland” also implies that Taiwan island and the Chinese mainland is a family. The implication of the use of “motherland” is that DPP’s efforts to isolate Taiwan from the Chinese mainland is not right, just like it is not right to separate the child from his/her mother. Lexical choice may carry various implications and convey the ideological perspective of the author (Van Dijk 2014). In other words, the implicit meanings of words and propositions are related to underlying beliefs such as ideology. The implied meanings mentioned above show that the ideological objective behind these two texts is reunification, just like the reunion of a family. The idea of reunification is also implied in the final sentence of Text 2 which says “As long as these bridges of communication remain open, there is hope for a peaceful and prosperous future shared by both sides of the Strait”. A future shared by both sides of the Strait is a future when both sides of the Strait is reunified and share the same identity of being Chinese.

The word “identity” is a high-frequency word in Text 1, and the idea of a single Chinese identity is also explicitly expressed in this text, but in Text 2, the word “identity” is not used, and the idea of a single Chinese identity is implied instead of clearly stated, through the use of words such as “the shared history and culture” and “the blood ties” in the following sentence: “The shared history, culture and blood ties between both sides of the Strait are inherently close and cannot be changed by any force”.

From the above, it can be seen that expressions and word choices in the texts may carry implied meanings, which are meant to influence the ideological beliefs of Taiwan readers in terms of their self-perception of identity. The underlying ideologies are embedded in the texts through the use of language by the authors, who consciously control the intended meanings of words and propositions. The authors’ ideological beliefs clearly have influence on their



way of word selection and discourse production.

### 3.2.3 Semantic Polarization

As proposed by the Triangle theory, lexical selection as a discourse strategy can be used to create negative other-presentation and positive self-presentation. For example, the advocacy of independence by the DPP in Taiwan was referred to in negative terms by the author of Text 1 through the repeated use of the word “lie” (as mentioned in Section 3.2.1). In this way the author has created a negative image of DPP, which indicates that the opposite side (the CCP on the Chinese mainland) is the truth holder, based on evidence from the poll. Creation of the semantic polarization between DPP and CCP has intended functions: to influence the readers’ position and to win them over to the truth. In Text 2, it referred to DPP’s actions as political maneuvers, as shown in the following sentence: “Despite the DPP’s political maneuvers, this historical trend cannot be reversed”. The use of the word “maneuver” also carries negative implication and creates semantic polarization. It implies that DPP’s actions have ill-intentioned goal such as separating Taiwan from its motherland. The negative image of DPP is thus created. It can be seen that the authors of both texts (conveying the opinion of the CCP) tried to use words which contribute to the polarization, by emphasizing the negative aspects of the opponents and the positive aspects of their own side. Linguistic forms that the authors selected to create semantic polarization reveal the underlying belief embedded in these two texts: One-China principle held by the CCP is the right thing to abide by. Analysis of the discourse semantics may contribute to our understanding of the ideology (Xin, 2017). The authors’ choice of linguistic forms to create semantic polarization is clearly the result of influence from ideology as a kind of underlying belief.

In short, the authors of both Text 1 and Text 2 intentionally used discourse strategies to create a polarized relationship between the two parties (via negative other-presentation and positive self-presentation), the purpose of which is to influence the mental models of the readers and win them over to the author’s side (representing the Chinese Government led by the CCP).

Van Dijk’s earlier studies in 1988 pointed out that news in the press is a specific type of discourse, the analysis of which may be conducted according to two components: a textual component and a contextual component. The above section (Section 3) is a textual analysis focusing on the properties of discourse as a linguistic dimension. According to him, analysis of the linguistic aspect of news texts as a particular type of discourse should especially go along with analysis of the context of its production and interpretation, and contextual analysis involves the cognitive and social dimension, which will be discussed in the following sections.

## 4. Analysis of the Cognitive Dimension

The sociocognitive approach (to critical discourse studies) developed by Van Dijk (2014) emphasizes that cognition is the interface between discursive practice and social situation. Cognition is related to cognitive operations and mental representations in terms of the mind of language users. Social cognition refers to the shared beliefs or mental representations of the social group that the language users belong to (Van Dijk 2014). As proposed by his

theoretical framework, there are different types of mental representations, including knowledge, attitudes, values, ideologies, and other forms of mental representations such as event models, which can reflect the cognitive processing of language users in producing or comprehending the discourse and may reveal the influence of socially shared beliefs on the cognitive operations of language users. This part of the analysis will try to reveal social cognition behind the discourse and the relationship between discourse production and event model.

#### *4.1 Social Cognition in Terms of Ideologies and Attitudes*

Van Dijk (2011) defined ideologies as systems of beliefs held by members of a social group. According to him, ideologies serve as the basis for specific ideological conduct of group members. He pointed out that ideologies are typically expressed and reproduced by discourse. We can perceive the ideological attitude of the author as a group member by analyzing the way a discourse is produced or constructed. Fowler has always valued ideological analysis for different types of discourses in terms of their underlying belief systems (Li 2005). The sociocognitive approach of discourse analysis can show how cognitive representations that underlie discourse production reveal ideologies (Van Dijk 1988).

The author of Text 1 clearly expressed his/her attitude towards Taiwan's identity, that is, all Taiwan residents are Chinese, implying that there isn't a separate "Taiwan identity". This attitude results from the socially shared belief of the group (i.e. Chinese people on the mainland under the leadership of CCP) that there is only one China. This text also implicitly expressed the belief that Chinese mainland and Taiwan island belong to one family which shouldn't be "divorced". Behind such lexical selection is the reunification ideology, a kind of mental belief which insists on a single identity for people on both sides of the Taiwan Strait. The implied idea of being one family indicates that the author was resorting to the membership device to include all Taiwan people into the family and to influence their mental representation in terms of identity perception. In Text 2, a high-frequency word is "peace/peaceful" (used altogether 5 times), which conveys the idea that CCP believes in a future of peaceful communication between the two sides of the Strait and implies a future of peaceful reunification. Reunification through peaceful means is also a socially shared belief in China, based on the fact that both sides of the Strait have shared history and culture. Comparing the two texts which were published in different years, we can see that the social cognition embedded in the two texts hasn't changed, reflecting the shared beliefs of Chinese people as a social group.

The Triangle theory suggests that the beliefs of an ideology will turn into specific attitudes, which in turn may influence specific event models. This will be discussed in the following section.

#### *4.2 Cognitive Approach to Discourse Meaning: Event Model*

As Van Dijk (2014) pointed out, what's crucial to a theory of discourse is its semantics, i.e. discourse meaning and interpretation, which may be defined in terms of cognitive operations. He held that a semantically coherent discourse is produced through the construction of a



mental model by the text producer (i.e. author). The mental model subjectively represents the event that the discourse refers to, thus he named it an event model, which is a cognitive device to show the text producers' mental perception of the situation. Event models are semantic mental models, because they contribute to semantic coherence between propositions. Coherence in meaning is controlled by the text producers according to their intention, interpretation and understanding of the event, which might be characterized by subjectivity. The event model subjectively defines the situation that controls discourse production and it adapts the discourse to the social environment. Subjective mental representations like ideologies and attitudes influence the cognitive process of discourse production in terms of the event. Here we can see the interrelationship between ideology and event model.

Under the framework of the Triangle theory, event models have a structure in terms of categories such as setting, participants, and actions. These will serve as the elements for analyzing the event models in the two chosen texts.

For both Text 1 and the Text 2, they have the same political setting: the independence-minded DPP in Taiwan tends to defy the One-China claim made by the CCP. Authors of the two texts both expressed their attitudes towards Taiwan's identity with a view to this political setting, holding on to the One-China principle. Participants in Text 1 were Taiwan people who took part in the poll. Participants in Text 2 were Taiwan people who took part in cross-strait forum or other cross-strait activities on the mainland. Through the description of these events both Text 1 and Text 2 aimed to make the readers accept the mental models constructed in the texts which explicitly or implicitly call for the action of peaceful reunification. Text 1 based its arguments on evidence from the poll that more and more Taiwan people identify themselves as Chinese and show opposition to "Taiwan independence". Text 2 based its arguments on the fact that more and more Taiwan people are engaging in cross-strait activities on the mainland and yearning for a future of communication and cooperation between the two sides of the Strait.

The event model is shaped by the authors' ideological perspectives and may result in ideological propositions (attitudes such as pro-reunification). Propositions in each text are closely related to each other in meaning and thus contribute to the coherence of the text and the construction of the event model. It can be seen that similarity in the attitude of both texts toward Taiwan's identity was brought about by the influence of socially shared belief (i.e. ideology of the social group that the authors belong to). Both authors tried to construct the text in an argumentative way so that their mental models of the event might have a strong impact on the readers.

The above section is a description of the local context of the two texts from the perspective of event model. Society is the global context of discourse. The following will be a contextual analysis of society as the third dimension under the sociocognitive framework of Triangle theory.

## **5. Analysis of the Social Dimension**

The Triangle theory proposes that discourse is a multidimensional social phenomenon. It tried

to explain how social structures may affect (and be affected by) discourse structures via social cognition. Van Dijk (2011) emphasized the sociocognitive nature of ideologies as the basis of shared social representations of groups, which in turn will control the social practices of members in the group. As ideologies control social practices (including discourse and other practices), how ideologies may be expressed in discourse and how social contexts influence discursive practices such as texts/talks are worth analyzing. Just as Fairclough (2014) pointed out, critical discourse analysis focuses not just on discourse, but on the relations between semiotics and other social elements. From his perspective, discourse/text can be deemed as a kind of semiotic realization of social reality.

### *5.1 Microstructures of Society: Individual Social Actors and Their Action*

As proposed by the Triangle theory, social structures are produced in the discourse by members of the society as individual social actors, so at the local level the microstructures of the society (or situational structures of the society) refer to individual social actors and their actions in relation to the social situation. In this sense, discourse can be regarded as a ‘micro’ dimension of society, and there are two aspects of social situation for the analysis of a discourse: actors and action.

Actors in the discourses are participants in various roles. For example, the social role of the author of Text 1 is the opponent of independence-minded DPP in Taiwan and the defender of the 1992 Consensus which claims there is only one China. The social role of the author of Text 2 is more a friend to the intended recipients, promoting communication and cooperation, emphasizing cultural bonds and shared history. Both authors used evidence to express an ideological attitude which is geared towards reunification, to win over Taiwan people to the fact of a single identity of being Chinese. The roles of the authors as individual group members and individual social actors are the micro dimension of the society. Their roles affect how they construct the texts and how they create the event models, which in turn reveal their social intentions and underlying ideologies. Analysis of the microstructures of society may make us understand how their personal beliefs are combined with shared social beliefs of the group.

In terms of action, the Triangle theory points out that a large number of social acts are the consequences of discursive action, and speech acts in the discourse such as assertion, accusation, agreement and disagreement etc. may have socio-political meaning. Take Text 1 as an example, the discursive action of assertion in the final two paragraphs which claimed that “all Taiwan residents are Chinese, that’s an unalterable fact” is a specific speech act to show the Chinese identity of Taiwan people and to indicate their membership in China as a big family. This speech act is thus both a social act and a political act. Apart from the assertion, Text 1 also revealed strong disagreement with independence-minded DPP in Taiwan. The speech act of disagreement creates semantic polarization which emphasizes the negative side of DPP so as to win Taiwan people over to Chinese identity. The assertion made by the author of Text 2 is that the historical trend cannot be reversed. This assertion is also a social act to show the confidence of the CCP in uniting the two sides of the Strait. One similarity between the two texts is the firmness of attitude in their claims which convey the

idea of “unalterable/unchangeable” by saying “that’s an unalterable fact” (in Text 1) and “The shared history, culture and blood ties between both sides of the Strait cannot be changed by any force” (in Text 2). The firm assertions in the two texts reflect steadfast determination of the CCP in upholding national unity. It can be seen that discursive action in the texts carry socio-political significance.

### *5.2 Macrostructures of Society in the Form of Social Groups*

At the global level the Triangle theory suggests analyzing the macrostructures of the society, which refer to societal structures such as social groups/institutions as a community. Although the texts are produced by authors as individual members, the ideologies that are revealed in the texts are the result of social representations shared by the social group that they belong to. It is in this sense that discourse is a kind of discursive reproduction of societal structure.

Both texts were published on the official website of China Daily, a national newspaper which has a strong influence on Chinese readers in and outside China. Statements which appear on the webpage of China Daily mostly reveal opinions and ideologies on the national level, from the perspective of Chinese Government as an official institution and from the perspective of Chinese people as a big social group.

In both texts, the authors constructed the texts in the position as a member of the social group, and discursive actions in the texts aimed to realize larger societal acts such as reunification. The authors’ negative opinion about the independence-minded DPP is the result of the reunification ideology held by China. The mental representations of the authors are derived from the socially shared representations of Chinese people as a social group. In this sense, the ideology embedded in the two texts is linked to larger societal actions that lead to social unity, which is supported by the CCP and all the Chinese people. Authors of both texts tried to make their mental model socially acceptable to readers through cognitive manipulation on the theme of the discourse and through constant adaptation to the social situation.

Critical discourse analysis regards texts as the result of the authors making choices in terms of textual structure and social ideology (Tang & Yang 2008). It can be seen from the above analysis that ideologies as shared social representations are expressed or presupposed by the authors through the construction of discourse. Roles of authors as social actors and members of the community control the way they construct the texts, and the underlying beliefs embedded in the texts are actually shaped by the social group that they belong to.

## **6. Conclusion**

From the perspective of the Triangle theory, discourse analysis involves not only the linguistic dimension, but also a cognitive dimension and a social dimension, which indicates that by studying the cognitive operations of the text producers we may understand how they manipulate language to convey underlying ideologies and address social problems. As the theoretical framework shows, the three dimensions are multiply integrated, therefore, analysis of each dimension is actually intertwined with analysis of the other two dimensions.

Based on the Triangle theory, this paper makes a sociocognitive analysis of two news texts

selected from China Daily by focusing on both the discourse properties of them and the social representations reflected from them. The above analysis reveals how the two texts conveyed Chinese Government's voice on the cross-Strait issue, and we may have some idea about the role that discourse strategies play in the reproduction of ideologies in the society. It can be seen that the authors of both texts either explicitly or implicitly call for the social act of reunification, which reveals similarity in ideologies behind these two texts and consistency in attitudes of China towards the cross-Strait issue. National unity in terms of cross-Strait relations is an issue of great significance to China. Therefore, more discourses produced on the national level such as what are published in China Daily need to be studied in order to promote Taiwan people's sense of shared identity as being Chinese. This paper has chosen only two texts as the sample for sociocognitive analysis. More analyses of texts on related topics are needed in order to exemplify the problem-oriented goal and society-rectifying attempt of critical discourse analysis.

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