

Globalised or Glocalized?

A comparison of the linguistic features and actor representation of global news headlines in *The Sun* and *Oriental Daily*[i]

Kenneth C. C. Kong

Hong Kong Baptist University – Hong Kong

Abstract

By analyzing a corpus of newspaper headlines collected from the global news in Britain (from *The Sun*) and Hong Kong (from *Oriental Daily*) during a two-month period in 2009, this paper aims to identify the relative influence of globalization on the discursive practices of news writing in the two countries/regions. English news headlines, usually configured in short phrases, tend to present events as humorous or dramatic adventures through the deployment of imagined quotations, informal words, and creative sound effects such as rhyme and alliteration, whereas Chinese news headlines make greater use of complete sentences and rarely feature quotations or sound effects. In addition to these different linguistic realizations of headlines, actor representation in British newspapers is also found to be more ‘globalized’ with less focus on ‘others,’ whereas Hong Kong’s Chinese-language newspapers appear to provide greater distance from globalization by positioning international actors as ‘others.’ It is argued here that the use of humorous and adventurous voices in English news and the more frequent representation of global actors as ‘others’ in Chinese news are simply different strategies aimed at achieving the same goal of distancing global actors from the local.

Keywords: *globalization, discourse analysis, news headlines, actor representation, cultural relativism*

Introduction

Globalization is a pervasive phenomenon that affects every aspect of our lives, from TV advertisements to even the way in which our job performance is evaluated, with the latter increasingly influenced by global appraisal standards. Although globalization is ubiquitous, we lack an understanding of its relative influence on local discursive practices in different cultures. A particularly important area that should be addressed is the relative influence of globalization on important genres such as global news, which increasingly draw on the symbolic or cultural capital (Bourdieu, 1991) of globalization. Previous research has identified a number of interesting features of globalization in the media (Machin & van Leeuwen, 2003), tourism (Thurlow & Jaworski, 2010) and education (House, 2003), but very little is known about the relative influence of globalization in different cultures. To date, there has been no systematic comparison in this arena, as most previous studies have employed different methodologies and focused on particular regions or countries. Given that even the meaning of the term ‘globalization’ is contested and varies both by individual and country (Garret, 2010), it naturally follows that the phenomenon will exert different degrees of influence on different individuals in different countries. Nevertheless, with globalization an indisputable process, local discursive practices must adjust or reform themselves to fit in with global trends. This tension between globalization and localization has become known as ‘glocalization,’ which is defined as “a bifurcation away from the historically powerful nation state in two directions: one upward towards a world increasingly dominated by multinational corporations and international and supranational entities ... and one downward (as it were) towards regional aspirations, niche marketing, local involvements” (Swales, 2004:11).

International news constitutes an interesting site for an investigation of glocalization because it is exactly where international events have to be reported using local discursive practices. Although numerous studies have examined the discursive practices of different regions or countries using a variety of methodologies, very few have focused on the degree of influence that globalization has on different countries/regions. This paper aims to help fill this gap in the literature by analyzing the relative influence of globalization in Hong Kong and Britain employing a corpus of 110 newspaper headlines collected from the two locales. The news stories to which they apply concern international events unrelated to either country/region.

Literature review

Globalization

Globalization has been defined as “the intensification of worldwide social relations which link localities in such a way that local happenings are shaped by local events occurring many miles away and vice versa” (Giddens, 1990:64). Although our discourse and thinking styles are increasingly globalized and homogenized, the influence or extent of globalization remains debatable. It could be argued that in certain spheres of communication, its influence/extent tends to be strong, whereas in others it tends to be weaker. For example, in a study comparing *Cosmopolitan* published in different countries, Machinand van Leeuwen (2003) found different countries to capitalize on similar cultural resources in portraying the social problems facing women around the globe, although the solutions suggested implied that the cultural values of different countries remain intact. In spheres of communication less subject to globalization, such as institutional meetings and family gatherings, the influence of language on culture seems to be stronger and to have a longer-lasting and more durable effect on how entities are perceived. Wu and Ng (2011) take a similar position concerning journalistic practices in mainland China and Hong Kong. They argue that globalization has had only marginal effects, such as increasing the use of the dialogic story-telling structure, with Chinese values, such as the need for harmony, remaining intact as the normative view of journalism. Sun (2011), in contrast, aligns herself with the view that globalization has a strong influence in her comparison of service calls recorded recently and a decade ago in China. She presents evidence to suggest that these calls now feature a more customer-friendly style of interaction and that salient differences can be found over time in the ways that enterprises identify themselves, in employees’ choice of words and expressions, and in the participation structure of closing sequences. The discrepancy in the degree of influence that the two studies claim for globalization can be explained by the contexts in which their data were collected. Journalistic discourse is more subject to institutional or bureaucratic control than commercial profit-making discourse, with the latter thus enjoying greater flexibility in adjusting itself to the pressures of globalization.

Given its pervasive influence, globalization is of course a hot topic in sociology and cultural studies. Giddens (1990), a contemporary sociologist who has written extensively on the issue, conceptualizes it along the lines of what he calls the ‘dynamism of modernity.’ This dynamism includes the separation of time and space, disembedding mechanisms and institutional reflexivity. The separation of time and space, also known as ‘time-space distanciation,’ refers to “the conditions for the articulation of social relations across wide spans of time-space, up to and including global systems” (Giddens, 1991:20). Distanciation results in disembedding, which “consists of symbolic tokens and expert systems ... separat[ing] interaction from the particularities of locales” (*ibid.*). The final stage is the ‘institutional reflexivity’ of modernity, which refers to “the susceptibility of most aspects of social activity, and material relations with nature, to chronic revision in the light of new information or knowledge” (*ibid.*). In other words, Giddens (1991) argues for a gradual withdrawal of the self from the social networks and other interpersonal influences of post-modernity and for increased reliance on self-identity in the attainment of new information and knowledge, thereby underscoring the phenomenon of what he calls the “reflexive project of the self,” which is “the process whereby self-identity is constituted by the reflexive ordering of self-narratives” (p. 244).

Although Giddens is probably right in describing the current situation of globalization in the First World, or more precisely in Anglo-American society, what remains unknown or at least less clear is the extent to which the ‘dynamism of modernity’ is applicable to the rest of the world. There are at least three positions

concerning the influence of globalization on the rest of the world: the hyperglobalist, skeptical and transformationalist perspectives (Held et al., 1999). The hyperglobalizer believes in the ultimate succumbing of the entire world to a global market economy in which most social, political and economic networks are transnational, thus ultimately leading to greater homogeneity. The skeptic holds the view that national governments or cultures have the power of regulation and that any interdependence is superficial. Finally, the transformationalist regards globalization as the driving force responsible for fundamental social, political and social transformations in the current status quo (Giddens, 2002). Previous research on the discursive influence of globalization can be roughly mapped along the lines of these three positions. Machin and van Leeuwen (2003), for example, adopt the transformational perspective, Wu and Ng (2011) the skeptical position and Sun (2011) the hyperglobal perspective. Of the three positions, the transformationalist obviously has the greatest currency but it unclear about *when, how, for whom* and *to what degree* the transformation takes place, and most studies of globalization are based on abstract sociological concepts far removed from what is actual happening in our daily lives. As language mediates and transcends most human experience, a language-based approach is probably the solution to the problem. In addition, although sociology and discourse analysis are distinct disciplines, the cross-fertilization of ideas between them is not only fruitful, but indispensable to an understanding of large-scale social issues such as globalization.

International news

The international or global news that appears in local newspapers constitutes an invaluable avenue for an investigation of the interface between globalization and localization because the news, in order to appeal to local audiences, has to be ‘domesticated’ (Pan et al., 1999) in a way that suits the interests and expectations of those audiences and sometimes, in the case of countries with state-controlled media, even national foreign policy. Most of the actual content of international news is obtained from news agencies (such as Reuters) rather than collected via first-hand reporting. Journalists’ selection of such external information sources is part of the construction of news, as that selection is based on what is regarded as newsworthy or in line with news values, including recency (or immediacy), negativity, proximity, lack of ambiguity, novelty, personalization, size and quantity, references to elite news actors, predictability and continuity (Bell, 1991; Ungerer, 2000). Nevertheless, Ungerer (2000) argues that, as newspapers are at a disadvantage when competing with other media in terms of the most important news value – that is, recency – journalists have begun to use extracted topics and the package approach, in which the news focus is not on the main event, which is probably already known to the audience, but rather on other non-central elements, such as the consequences of that event and the reaction of the participants in it. Furthermore, news values have been shown to be the product of the way in which events are constructed by journalists rather than being inherent characteristics of the events being reported (Harcup and O’Neil, 2001). Also, as Richardson (2007) argues, news meaning is “communicated as much by absence as by presence; as much by what is missing or excluded as by what is remembered and present” (p. 93), thus positioning the nature of news values as contested and negotiable instead of fixed and stable. This view certainly applies to the news value of proximity, which traditionally posits that the closer the news event is to the target audience, the greater the value it carries. However, this view ignores both that proximity is a relative concept and that remoteness can also be a news value in itself. What matters is not where an event takes place, but how the journalist highlights the relevance of that event or the way in which a remote event can be packaged as a special or ‘exotic’ news item.

Chinese and English discourse structures

Connor (2002:506) has issued a call for contrastive rhetoric research to “look for patterns across text genres in a given culture.” As texts are constructed within social and cultural conventions and constraints, genres represent cultural expectations, thus resulting in different discourse patterns and styles (Upton & Connor, 2001). Accordingly, contrastive discourse analysis is not merely a sub-branch of linguistics, but has also been shown to have very useful applications in intercultural communication and in language learning and acquisition.

Chinese and English are very different languages, and comparisons have been made between their different genres and registers in, for example, research article introductions (Taylor and Chen, 1991), research articles (Kong, 2006), business request letters (Kong, 1998), promotional materials (Lee, 2005) and newspaper articles (Scollon, Scollon & Kirkpatrick, 2000). The two languages have also been found

to differ in their discourse structures (Scollon, Scollon & Kirkpatrick, 2000), use of politeness strategies (Kong, 1998) and use of evaluation in meaning-making (Kong, 2006). These differences are attributed to two major factors: (1) the inherent discourse structures of the two languages, i.e., the topic-comment structure of Chinese and the subject-predicate structure of English, and (2) the socio-pragmatic considerations of the writers/speakers. For example, it has been found that Chinese writers tend to delay the main point in their messages relative to their English-language counterparts because of the different expectations of writers and readers in the two cultures (Kong, 1998; Scollon & Scollon, 2001), although it remains unclear whether this is due to the languages' inherent linguistic structures and/or socio-pragmatic considerations. In her comparative study of Chinese and English newspaper headlines, Peng (2006) observes that the former make more frequent use of rhetorical devices, such as a parallel structure and metaphor, whereas the latter are more factual and focus more on the event itself. However, Peng's findings were based only on intuition, with no clearly defined corpus of data. It is important that any data for comparison are similar in nature, such as, in the case of the current study, being intended for similar audiences. Another complication is the fact that Chinese has a large number of dialects that may affect the manifestation of form and style. Hong Kong being part of Southern China is distinct in its culture and dialect that may affect the style of language use.

Methodology

Social actor analysis

Although globalization essentially concerns time-place compression (Harvey, 1990), the way in which actors are represented in international news events has surprisingly seldom been made the focus of attention in globalization research. Van Leeuwen (2009) refers to such analysis as 'social actor analysis,' which provides a systematic socio-semantic framework in which to trace how different categories of participant can be retrieved in a text. The ways in which an actor can be identified include inclusion/exclusion, role allocation, generic and specific reference, assimilation, association and dissociation, indetermination and differentiation, nomination and categorization, functionalization and identification, personalization and impersonalization, and overdetermination (van Leeuwen, 2009). In his comparative study of two UK newspapers, *The Times* (a broadsheet newspaper aimed at the middle class) and *The Sun* (a tabloid newspaper aimed at the working class), van Leeuwen (2009) found them to have different ways of representing ordinary people, which, in turn, positioned their audiences in different ways: *The Times* focuses more on "objectivation, functionalization, anonymization and collectivization of ordinary people" (p. 291), whereas *The Sun* tends to exhibit a more sexist and racist bias in its actor representation.

In this paper, we are concerned less with the issue of fair representation than with the way in which the locations or origins of international actors are included or excluded in actor representation. Van Leeuwen's aforementioned comparison is also useful in highlighting the importance of choosing the appropriate newspapers for a comparative study. As my aim in this study was to compare the influence of globalization on the discursive practices of local newspapers in Hong Kong and Britain, I had to select two newspapers with similar audiences; otherwise, the findings would be biased by inherent audience differences. Accordingly, I chose the *Oriental Daily* and *The Sun* as my data sources for two reasons. First, the intended audience of both is the working class (and both thus fall into the tabloid newspaper category) and, second, both enjoy the largest circulation in their respective countries/regions according to sales figures.

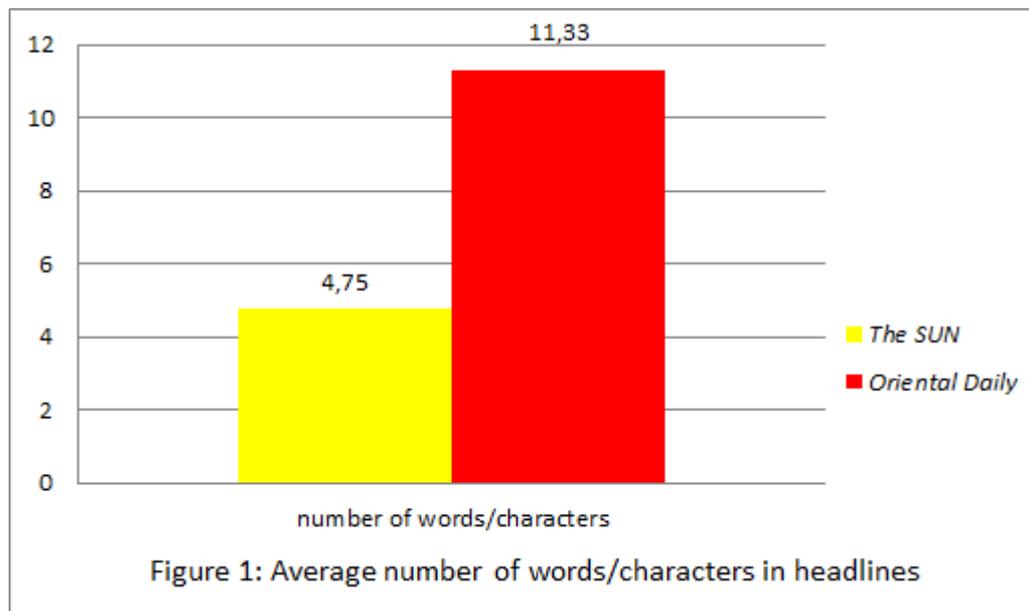
The data employed in this study came from a larger research project comparing the multimodality of Chinese and English newspapers. During a two-month period at the beginning of 2009, all of the international news stories in the two papers were selected and paired up. Only those news items that appeared in both newspapers and were unrelated geographically to either Hong Kong or Britain were selected, so as to ensure that only truly 'international news' was being analyzed. The final corpus comprised 110 news items (55 from each newspaper).

Findings and discussion

The following analysis is divided into two parts: linguistic analysis, which sheds light on such features as headline length, mood structure, use of quotations and sound effects, and actor representation analysis, which delves into the representation of news participants' geographical locations.

Linguistic analysis

The English headlines examined in this study tended to be shorter and more condensed, with an average of only 4.75 words each, relative to the longer and more informative Chinese headlines, which had an average of 11.33 characters per headline (refer to Figure 1). It should be noted, however, that Chinese words can be made up of more than one character, for example, 英雄 has two characters, but refers to the single entity *hero*. Again, the single word *fisherman* in Chinese, 漁民, comprises two characters.



Having said that, the inherent differences in word boundaries between the two languages are insufficient to explain the large gap in the average number of words/characters in the headlines. Other factors are involved, for example, the headlines' information density. English headlines tend to represent an event by capturing one particular value of a news event, whereas Chinese headlines attempt to summarize the entire event in a single sentence. Compare the following.

English version: *HEIGHT VAN MAN*

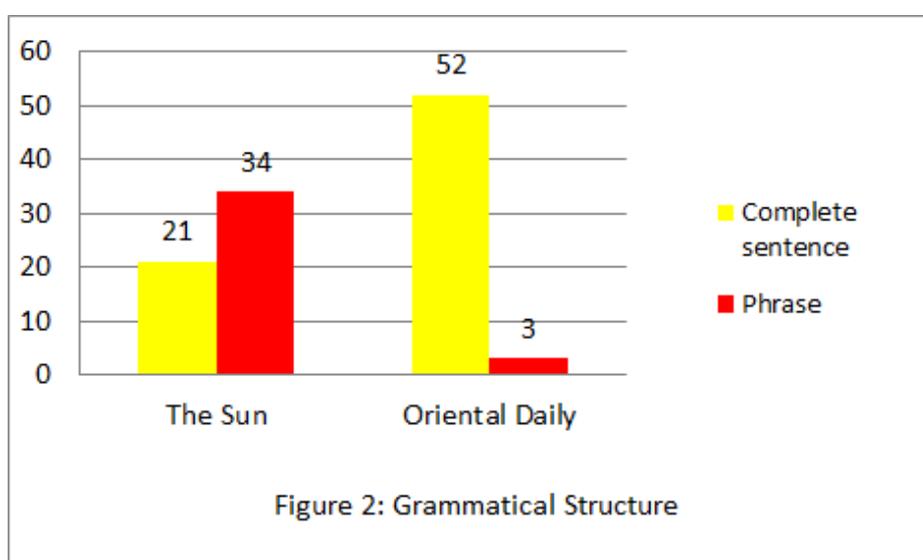
Chinese version:

美	漢	客 貨 車	跌落	峽谷	大石	半天吊
America	Man	Van	Fall into	Canyon	Boulder	Hang precariously
(which translates as 'American man's van falls into a canyon and hangs precariously on a boulder')						

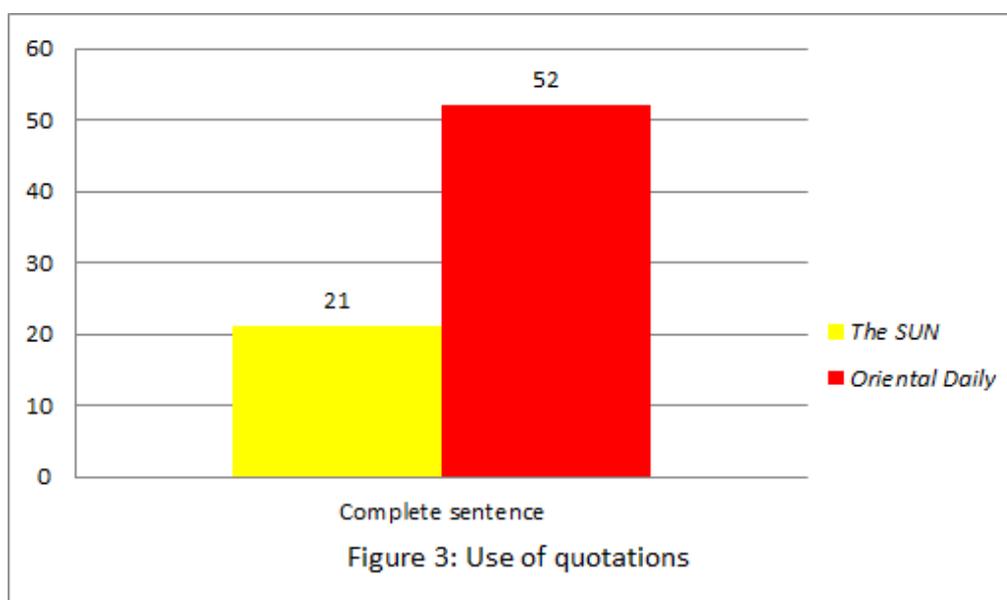
More than half of the English headlines examined in this study (34 out of 55) employed such precision of information and were realized in a single-phrase structure. The pattern is illustrated in Figure 2. Most of the Chinese headlines, in contrast, were complete sentences, with only three constituting short phrases such as the following.

女	機械人
Woman	Robot
(which translates as 'Female robot')	

This finding coincides with the more frequent use of verbs in Chinese news headlines, compared with their English counterparts, which usually contain fewer verbs but more nominal and adjectival phrases. It is also consistent with Peng's (2005) observation that English headlines contain more phrases and Chinese headlines more verbs.



Another interesting finding is the use of quotations in English headlines. They appear in 16 of *The Sun* headlines, compared with only two of those in the *Oriental Daily* (Figure 3).



The following are examples of headlines employing quotations taken from the British newspaper.

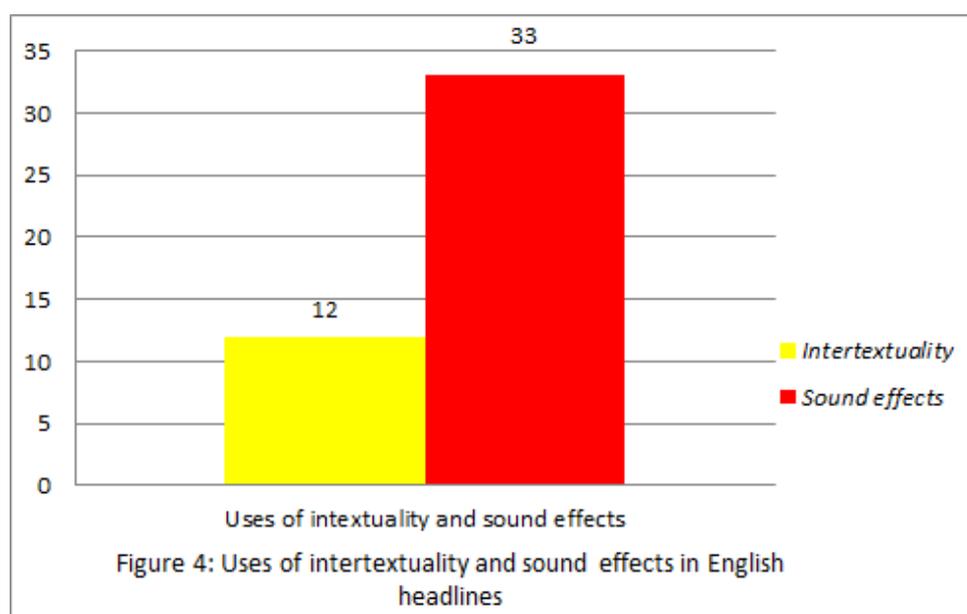
Barack: Let's get US back on track

Dad's just what I always wanted

Mum: I burst into tears as No 8 arrived

The use of the pronouns 'I' and 'Us' are clear signals that it is the protagonists' rather than reporters' speech that is being referred to. What is unclear, however, is whether the headlines constitute direct or indirect quotes. In the corpus examined here, quotation marks ("...") – the usual way of representing direct speech – are never used. Instead, there is an unclear boundary between direct and indirect speech. The question is how the reader knows whether the quotation is an accurate representation of the participant's voice or simply a dialogue constructed by the reporter. This problem becomes less serious if one considers it along the continuum of reportability. In her study of conversational quotations, Tannen (2007) argues that all dialogue is constructed, regardless of whether it is direct or indirect speech: "when speech uttered in one context is repeated in another, it is fundamentally changed even if 'reported' accurately" (p. 112). In other words, the use of quotations constitutes a strategy that Silverstein and Urban (1996) call 'entextualization,' in which original instances of discourse are "lifted out of their original contexts and transmitted, by quoting or echoing them, by writing them down, by inserting them into another discourse, by using them as examples" (Blommaert, 2005:47). According to Tannen (2007), quotations can be represented as "dialogue representing what wasn't said, dialogue as instantiation, summarizing dialogue, choral dialogue, dialogue as inner speech, the inner speech of others, dialogue constructed by [the] listener (or reported in the case of news reports), dialogue fading from indirect to direct, dialogues including vague referents, and dialogue cast in the persona of a non-human speaker" (p. 112). Many of the quotations found in this study's corpus can be said to have the function of summarizing the event and instantiating the speech of the protagonists. Although it is difficult to identify the degree to which a quote is made up by a reporter, some of the quotations are unlikely to have been uttered by the protagonists. For example, the quotation in the headline, "Do you mind! I'm trying to take a bath" is the made-up speech of a koala. It is likely that the headline quotes are constructed in certain ways (for example, by highlighting intertextual references and sound effects, as discussed below) to portray the event in question in a more playful or dramatic manner.

The frequent occurrence of quotations in English-language newspapers is accompanied by the frequent use of intertextual references and sound effects. In this study, only a few such occurrences were found in the Chinese newspaper. Figure 4 illustrates the distribution of intertextual references and sound effects in *The Sun*.



Intertextuality refers to the invoking of familiar references from outside the text. In other words, the news writer tries to draw on readers' shared background knowledge to present the news as being worthwhile to read. Compare the following headlines.

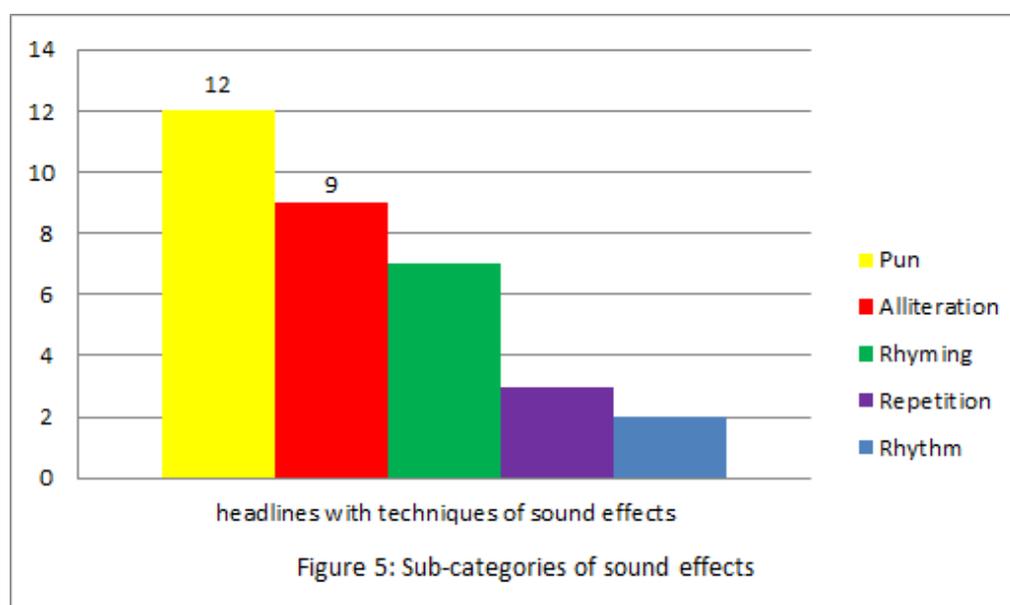
Chinese version:

泰	環保	寺廟	150萬	個	酒	樽	作	建材
Thai	environmental friendly	temple	1.5 million	piece	beer	bottle	as	construction materials

(which translates as ‘Thailand’s environmentally friendly temple is made of 1.5 million beer bottles’)

These English and Chinese headlines make use of totally different strategies, although they refer to the same news event. The former draws on readers’ knowledge of the well-known beer brand Budweiser (often shortened to ‘Bud’), which plays on the word ‘Buddha.’ This intertextual effect is further strengthened by the use of the same color and font as the Budweiser brand. The Chinese headline, in contrast, tries to capture the entire event by summarizing it. Other examples of intertextuality in the English headlines include ‘THE EMPIRE STRIKES BARACK,’ which draws on the famous film *Star Wars: The Empire Strikes Back*, ‘Rocky Bal Boa,’ which draws on the Rocky Balboa character from the film *Rocky*, and ‘TERMinator,’ which draws on the film *The Terminator*. The use of such intertextual references is absent from the Chinese headline corpus.

In addition to their frequent use of intertextual references, English news headlines, unlike their Chinese counterparts, also make frequent use of sound effects to increase their attractiveness to readers. Among the most frequently used such effects are rhyming, alliteration and puns (Figure 5). For example, rhyming is found in the headline ‘Barack: Let’s get US **back** on **track**,’ alliteration in ‘**A**live, **a**fter ... **a**drift’ and ‘**F**at to **f**it,’ and a pun in ‘Must be something I **eight**’ (the headline for a news item about a woman who has given birth to octuplets), in which the word ‘eight’ has the same pronunciation as the word ‘ate.’



Sound effects are rarely used in the Chinese corpus of headlines, with only one instance of a pun found:

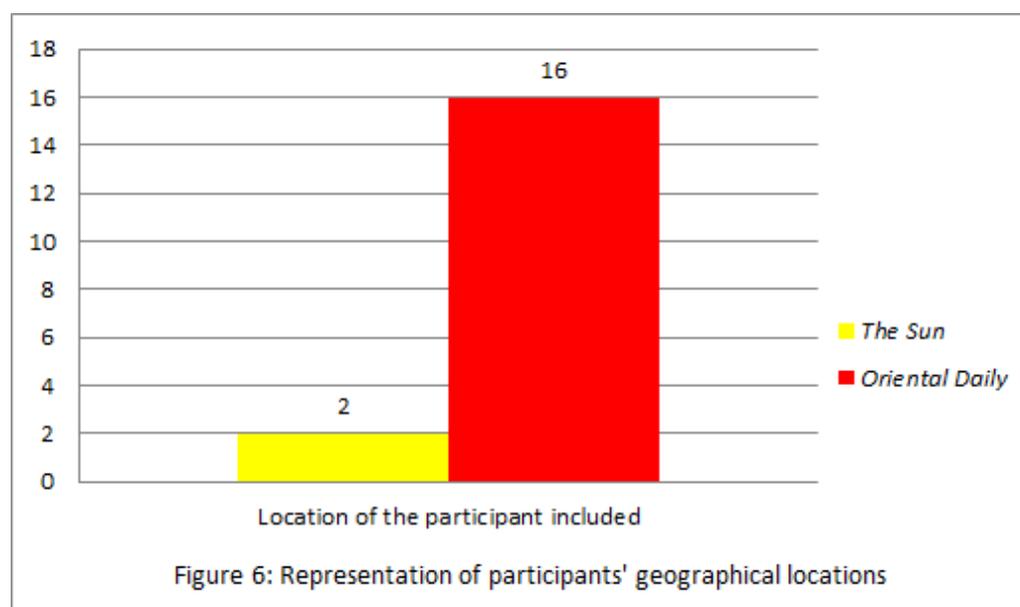
電視	名	猩	發狂	傷人	遭	射殺
TV	popular	gorilla	becoming insane	attacking people	was	shot

(which translates as ‘A TV gorilla celebrity was shot after going insane and attacking people ‘)

In this headline, the word ‘gorilla’ rhymes with ‘celebrity’ (明星) in Cantonese.

Actor representation

More than a quarter (16) of the Chinese headlines identify the geographical locations of the actors involved in news stories, whereas only two of the English headlines do so (Figure 6). Van Leeuwen (1996) makes a distinction between the indetermination and differentiation of social actors. Indetermination occurs when social actors are presented as “unspecified, ‘anonymous’ individuals or groups, [and] determination when their identity is, one way or another, specified” (p. 51). Geographical or national identity is a useful way of differentiating between ‘us’ and ‘them.’



Although indetermination is most frequently used in representing the actors in global news, Chinese headlines seem to insulate local identities more frequently by representing these actors as ‘other’ compared with English headlines:

Chinese:

美	婦	年初一		喜	誕	八胞胎
America	woman	Chinese New Year		happily	deliver	octuplets

(which translates as ‘**American** woman delivers octuplets at Chinese New Year’)

English:

It's a boy It's a girl It's a boy It's a girl It's a boy It's a boy It's a boy ... oh and it's another boy

Compare the following headlines in the two languages:

Chinese:

澳	總理	斥	火劫	「	這	是	集體	謀殺	」
Australia	Prime Minister	condemn	fire	“	this	is	mass	murder	”

(which translates as ‘The Prime Minister of **Australia** condemns fire as “mass murder”’)

English:

They’re all dead here

Chinese:

意	拘	易服癖	黑手黨	教父
Italy	arrest	Transvestic	Mafia	Godfather

(which translates as ‘Transvestite Mafia godfather arrested in Italy’)

English:

Donna Corleone[[ii](#)]

From the perspective of theme (Halliday, 1994) as the “element which comes in the first position” (p. 38), the mention of geographical locations in the Chinese headlines is more than explication; the locations are made the theme, that is, they become the focus of the headline or the news story to which it is attached. Li (2007) argues that, in Chinese, a circumstantial adjunct is usually preceded by a coverb, for example, *zai* (at), which can be omitted when the circumstance is thematized. In the first two of the foregoing examples, the circumstances of location (America and Australia) are in fact parts of the noun phrases, that is, pre-modifiers. Hence, they are not circumstantial adjuncts standing alone as themes, but are instead used tactfully to highlight the circumstances (locations) as themes. Of course, their use could simply be interpreted as a feature of topic-comment languages such as Chinese, in which contextual information has to be foregrounded, but this explanation does not explain why such information is completely absent from the English headlines (‘Donna Corleone,’ for example, fails to mention Italy at all). I argue instead that the explicit inclusion of geographical locations in the Chinese headlines is in line with the argument that foreignness or exoticity can be presented as a news value or as representative of something important, contrary to the arguments of some previous researchers (Bell, 1991).

Conclusion

Geographical proximity is never an inherent news value. As Livingston and van Belle argue (2005), “[r]emoteness is not what it used to be in a world shrunk by advanced media technology” (p. 58) and “[a]s technology advances, one would expect the threshold of what is regarded as important to be lowered” (p. 51). As the analysis in this paper shows, neither proximity nor remoteness seems to be a dominant news value in today’s increasingly event-driven news-making world, which is made possible by satellite technology (Livingston & Bennett, 2003). On the one hand, proximity can be highlighted by suppressing the remoteness of most news (in both Chinese and English) when the experience of others is conceived of as seemingly the same as ours. On the other hand, others’ experience can be presented as unique and exotic, as seen in some of the Chinese headlines.

Following this line of argument, it could be assumed that as our experiences are globalized they will become more homogeneous. However, this is a dangerous assumption, given the multitude of ways of

construing experience across cultures. As Giddens argues (1990), modernity is not peculiarly Western in terms of its effects and tendencies, “since we are speaking here of emergent forms of world interdependence and consciousness” (p. 175). As seen in the foregoing analysis, Chinese and English news tends to employ different strategies in representing globalization. There are more Chinese than English headlines that distance the reader from the experiences of ‘the other’ and emphasize the difference between ‘us’ and ‘them.’ Chinese news headlines also tend to represent events in a more factual and informative manner by highlighting the *where*, *when*, *who* and *what* of events. English headlines, in contrast, tend to focus on one particular aspect of a story and present global events as humorous or dramatic ‘adventures’ (Chouliaraki, 2010) through the more frequent deployment of intertextual references, informal words, imagined quotations and creative sound effects that are familiar from the more informal daily use of language. The presentation of global news as decontextualized adventure stories has the function of “suppressing emotional engagement and reducing moral agency towards distant suffering” (Chouliaraki, 2010:620). In other words, both Chinese and English newspapers have their own strategies for distancing global events from the local, as “emotion is a scarce resource and that part of the capacity of news to represent the globe is its capacity to reserve the potential for emotion for some ... [and] locate others outside our own community of belonging” (*ibid.*:614).[iii] Nevertheless, the present research is limited in the sense that headlines alone are considered; more detailed analysis can be conducted on the content of the news – both the verbal and visual realizations. Another limitation is the fact that both newspapers under investigation are tabloid newspapers. What if the news is from broadsheet newspapers? It is predicted that different globalization strategies may be employed in broadsheet news. In the future, a broader corpus that includes online news and other non-tabloid news would allow a more rigorous discussion of this issue.

References

- Bell, A. (1991) *The Language of News Media*. Oxford: Blackwell.
- Blommaert, J. (2005) *Discourse*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Bourdieu, P. (1991) *Language and Symbolic Power*. Translated by G. Raymond & M. Adamson. Oxford: Blackwell.
- Chouliaraki, L. (2010) ‘Global representations of distant suffering’. In N. Coupland (ed.), *The Handbook of Language and Globalization*. Chichester, UK: John Wiley & Sons, pp. 608-624.
- Connor, U. (2002) ‘New directions in contrastive rhetoric’. *TESOL Quarterly*, 36(4): 493-510.
- Garret, P. (2010) ‘Meanings of “globalization”: East and West’. In N. Coupland (ed.), *The Handbook of Language and Globalization*. Chichester, UK: John Wiley & Sons, pp. 447-474.
- Giddens, A. (1990) *The Consequences of Modernity*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.
- Giddens, A. (1991) *Modernity and Self-Identity*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.
- Halliday, M.A.K. (1994) *Introduction to Functional Grammar*, 2nd ed. London: Edward Arnold.
- Harcup, T. & O’Neil, D. (2001) ‘What is news? Galtung and Ruge revisited’. *Journalism Studies*, 2(2): 261-280.
- Harvey, D. (1990) *The Condition of Postmodernity: An Enquiry into the Origins of Cultural Change*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Held, D., McGrew, A., Goldblatt, D. & Perraton, J. (1999) *Global Transformations: Politics, Economics and Culture*. Cambridge: Polity Press.

House, J. (2003) 'English as a lingua franca: A threat to multilingualism?' *Journal of Sociolinguistics*, 7(4): 556-578.

Kong, C. C. Kenneth (1998) 'Politeness of service encounters in Hong Kong'. *Pragmatics*, 8(4): 555-575.

Kong, C. C. Kenneth (2006) 'Evaluative resources in English and Chinese research articles'. *Multilingua*, 24(3): 275-308.

Lee, M. (2005) 'Uniqueness of Asian promotion discourse: A contrastive study of Hong Kong bilingual texts and native English texts'. In F. Bargiela-Chiappini & M. Gotti (eds.), *Asian Business Discourse(s)*. Bern: Peter Lang, pp. 77-101.

Li, Eden S. H. (2007) *A Systemic Functional Grammar of Chinese*. London: Continuum.

Livingston, S. & Bennett, W. L. (2003) 'Gatekeeping, indexing, and live-event news: Is technology altering the construction of news?' *Political Communication*, 20: 363-380.

Livingston, S. & van Belle, A. (2005) 'The effect of satellite technology on newsgathering'. *Political Communication*, 22: 45-62.

Machin, D. & van Leeuwen, T. (2003) *Global Media Discourse: A Critical Introduction*. Abington, UK: Routledge.

Pan, Z., Lee, C.-C., Chan, J. M. & So, C. Y. K. (1999) 'One event, three stories: Media narratives of the handover of Hong Kong in cultural China'. *International Communication Gazette*, 61(2): 99-112.

Peng, M. (2006) 'Comparison between Chinese and English headlines and the translation from English headlines to Chinese headlines'. *Cross-cultural Communication*, 1(2): 69-72.

Richardson, J. E. (2007) *Analysing Newspapers: An Approach from Critical Discourse Analysis*. Basingstoke, UK: Palgrave.

Scollon, R. & Scollon, S. W. (2001) *Intercultural Communication: A Discourse Approach*. Oxford: Blackwell.

Scollon, R., Scollon, S. & Kirkpatrick, A. (2000) *Contrastive Discourse in Chinese and English: A Critical Appraisal*. Beijing: Foreign Language Teaching and Research Press.

Silverstein, M. & Urban, G. (1996) 'The natural history of discourse'. In M. Silverstein & G. Urban (eds.), *Natural Histories of Discourse*. Chicago: Chicago University Press, pp. 1-17.

Sun, H. (2011) 'Customer-employee interaction from a diachronic perspective'. In P. Yuling & D. Z. Kádár (eds.), *Chinese Discourse and Interaction: Theory and Practice*. London: Equinox, publication details pending.

Swales, J. (2004) *Research Genres*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Tannen, D. (2007) *Talking Voices: Repetition, Dialogue and Imagery in Conversational Discourse*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Taylor, G. & Chen, T. (1991) 'Linguistic, cultural and sub-cultural issues in contrastive discourse analysis: Anglo-American and Chinese scientific texts'. *Applied Linguistics*, 12(3): 319-336.

Thurlow, C. & Jaworski, A. (2010) *Tourism Discourse: Language and Global Mobility*. Basingstoke, UK: Palgrave.

Ungerer, F. (2000) *English Media Texts*. Amsterdam: John Benjamins.

Upton, T.A. & Connor, U. (2001) 'Using computerized corpus analysis to investigate textlinguistic discourse moves of a genre'. *English for Specific Purposes*, 20: 313-319.

Van Leeuwen, T. (1996) 'The representation of social actors'. In C. R. Caldas & M. Coulthard (eds.), *Texts and Practices: Readings in Critical Discourse Analysis*. London: Routledge, pp. 32-70.

Van Leeuwen, T. (2009) 'Critical discourse analysis'. In J. Renkema (ed.), *Discourse, of Course: An Overview of Research in Discourse Studies*. Amsterdam: John Benjamins, pp. 277-292.

Wu, D. & Ng, P. (2011) 'Becoming global, remaining local: The discourses of international news reporting by CCTV-4 and Phoenix TV Hong Kong'. *Critical Arts: A Journal of South-North Cultural and Media Studies*, 25(1):73-87.

Appendix: Headlines

The numbering in the English and Chinese sections corresponds to the same news item reported in the 2 languages

English Corpus

1. Barack: Let's get US back on track
2. Fat to Fit
3. KNITTY CITY
4. ALIVE AFTER 25 DAYS ADRIFT IN AN ICEBOX
5. They think it's your Oval. It is now!
6. TV TERROR OF WATER TRICK GIRL
7. THE EMPIRE STRIKES BARACK
8. OUR SUPER FLY GUY
9. FACE OF CRECHE KILLER
10. Jellyfish that lives forever is invading
11. Crash in the attic
12. It's a boy It's a girl It's a boy It's a girl It's a boy It's a boy It's a boy ... oh and it's another boy
13. OCTUPLETS MUM HAS ALREADY GOT 6 KIDS
14. HEIGHT VAN MAN
15. DAD THROWS GIRL, 4, TO DEATH OFF BRIDGE
16. Dad's just what I always wanted
17. Swim star Phelps: Bong was wrong
18. ART 2-D2
19. 2 peckers in pants
20. Do you mind! I'm trying to take a bath
21. Rocky Bal-Boa
22. Back in the air
23. My 8 babies make up for being lonely
24. Thwack Obama
25. They're all dead here
26. Mum: I burst into tears as No 8 arrived

27. Gandhi's sandals for £30K
28. Must be something I eight
29. Cows my driving?
30. Donna Corleone
31. ZZ TOT
32. Boozy celeb chimp killed after eating lady's hands
33. The big zipper
34. Bottle of Bud-dha
35. Tourist dead as shops hit by a bomber
36. Shotgun boy, 11, kills dad's pregnant lover
37. WED 23 TIMES
38. 7 shot as maniacs mar the Mardi Gras
39. Mermade My Day
40. Splash & grab angler
41. The TERMintator
42. Was it really an accident, Mugabe?
43. First lady's first fella
44. Trucking Stupid
45. Brave Cody takes giant step
46. Beware: Fin ice
47. Are you all dead yet?
48. Madoff to jail
49. German Gun Teenager No 2
50. Live on Mars
51. Riots rock Pakistan
52. Snake eat dog world
53. Hot Totty Robotty
54. He came, he raped, he left
55. Sitting alone in the middle of court, Fritzl listened as Elisabeth gave jury a glimpse of her hell

Chinese Corpus

1. 奧巴馬揭開負責任新時代
2. 630磅胖漢變靚仔健身教練
3. 毛冷代噴漆 造出另類塗鴉
4. 沉船兩漁民 坐冰箱漂流25日
5. 奧巴馬總統第一天 內閣未完班
6. 電視節目玩命 魔術師險淹死
7. 疑似UFO 就職日到場觀禮
8. 降河客機師返鄉 獲英雄式歡迎
9. 託兒所血案粉絲殺人悼「小丑」
10. 神奇水螅蟲 擁返老還童不死身
11. 汽車失控 飛插9米屋頂
12. 美婦年初一 喜誕八胞胎

13. 美婦拒放棄孩子 誕八胞胎
14. 美漢客貨車跌落峽谷大石半天吊
15. 爭撫養權 狠父掙女落橋
16. 慈父藏禮物盒賀兒子生日
17. 新水怪疑吸大麻毀前程
18. 《最後的晚餐》變「星戰油畫」
19. 遊杜拜漢藏兩活鴿回澳
20. 小樹熊沖涼照熱爆網絡
21. 六千萬年前蟒蛇王長逾13米
22. 英雄機長講述迫降海面細節
23. 誕八胎婦曝光大談生仔經
24. 錯估直升機門高度奧巴馬撞頭
25. 澳總理斥火劫「這是集體謀殺」
26. 美八胞胎照片首次曝光
27. 美拍賣甘地遺物曾孫斥「侮辱」
28. 八胞胎之母懷孕照
29. 兩小牛塞後座農夫被責虐畜
30. 意拘易服癖黑手黨教父
31. 六歲小施丹球會爭住要
32. 電視名「猩」發狂傷人遭射殺
33. 120條拉鏈組成海嘯百變時裝
34. 泰環保寺廟150萬個酒樽作建材
35. 血洗開羅景點炸死法少女
36. 爭寵成恨11歲童槍殺父女友
37. 美婦23段婚姻登紀錄大全
38. 新奧爾良槍戰 子彈擦傷嬰兒
39. 無腳婦化身美人魚
40. 由直升機跳入海捕魚挑戰高難度
41. 機械女教師東京小學任教
42. 津巴布韋總理車禍妻慘死
43. 美第一夫人初戀情史曝光
44. 舞王揸車
45. 沒雙腿的人生一樣精彩
46. 紀錄保持者徒手潛冰湖52米
47. 獨行槍手大屠殺
48. 馬多夫「新家」小如衣櫥
49. 青年藏武器 疑希魔忌辰屠殺
50. Google Mars火星影像傳送用家
51. 巴國前總理率眾示威爆衝突

52. 10公斤蟒蛇吞5.8公斤狗
53. 女機械人
54. 禁室亂倫案開審獸父認部分罪
55. 奧獸父逼女兒模仿色情片性交

About the author

Kenneth C. C. Kong is teaching and researching discourse analysis, multimodal analysis and intercultural communication at the English Department of Hong Kong Baptist University. He has published extensively in those areas and is currently working on two book projects, one is on professional discourse and the other on history of professions in China and the West and their influence on our personal identities.

Author's Address

Kenneth C. C. Kong
Department of English Language and Literature
Hong Kong Baptist University
Waterloo Road
Kowloon
Hong Kong

Email: kkong@hkbu.edu.hk

[i] I would like to thank the Hong Kong Research Grant Council for their generous funding which made this research possible (GRF *HKBU 242308*).

[ii] Don Corleone is a macho figure in the famous film *The Godfather*. 'Donna' suggests femininity.

[iii] It should be noted that *The Sun* is considered as an extremely informal newspaper in Britain, well-known for its humorous tone. As the criterion for selecting newspapers in the present study is solely based on their sales figures, it would be fruitful to make comparison between *The Sun* and other newspapers.