

***National Identity or Cultural Opposition: News Media Discourse About  
Controversial High-School Curriculum Guidelines Event in Critical Discourse  
Analysis***

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**Abstract**

This article aims to analyse how the news media reported the Ministry of Education (MOE) implementing minor adjustments to high-school curriculum guidelines event. For example the social sciences and history textbooks, downplaying of the White Terror era, the 2/28 incident, and conceivably using a China-centric focus. This trend has triggered many protests against the government by teachers, students and the masses. This article will use an interdisciplinary framework from Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) as well as analytical tools to examine the press reportage of this event. Linguistics is another method of analytic hierarchy, construction, context, grammar, semantics and words. The print media's use of text, headlines and discourse giving the label for press reportage, also manipulated by journalists to construct a view that best reflects their ideologies and political stances. From the analysis of newspaper schema and statistics, we found the press reportage is not random, but rather is the hidden ideology of the social activists by observing the interaction between social structures and cognition. However, this is not only includes social cognition, but also the government, news media, people's ethnic identity, national identity and history that all contribute to the construal of a linguistic ideology from the CDA (e.g. van Dijk's Ideological Square Analysis). We argue that the social elite and the media shaped the ideologies of their readers or viewers, which is generally symbolic and persuasive and appeared in two ideologically opposed newspapers.

Keyword: Mass Media, Political Media, Critical Discourse Analysis, Ideology, Education1

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|                | Contents | Process | Textbook<br>Selection | Protest<br>actions | Communication | Politics<br>Parties | Other      | Total |
|----------------|----------|---------|-----------------------|--------------------|---------------|---------------------|------------|-------|
| LT<br>(N=353)  | 8.20%    | 12.50%  | 9.10%                 | 27.50%             | 10.50%        | 17.80%              | 14.40<br>% | 100%  |
| UDN<br>(N=111) | 12.60%   | 9.90%   | 10.80%                | 21.60%             | 21.60%        | 9.90%               | 13.50<br>% | 100%  |

### Introduction and Methods

The newspapers report the Ministry of Education (MOE) resolved to implement minor adjustments to high-school Curriculum Guidelines (CG). Is this just an educational debate? How news are represented and constructed? We explore the relationship between language and ideology in Taiwanese news discourse.

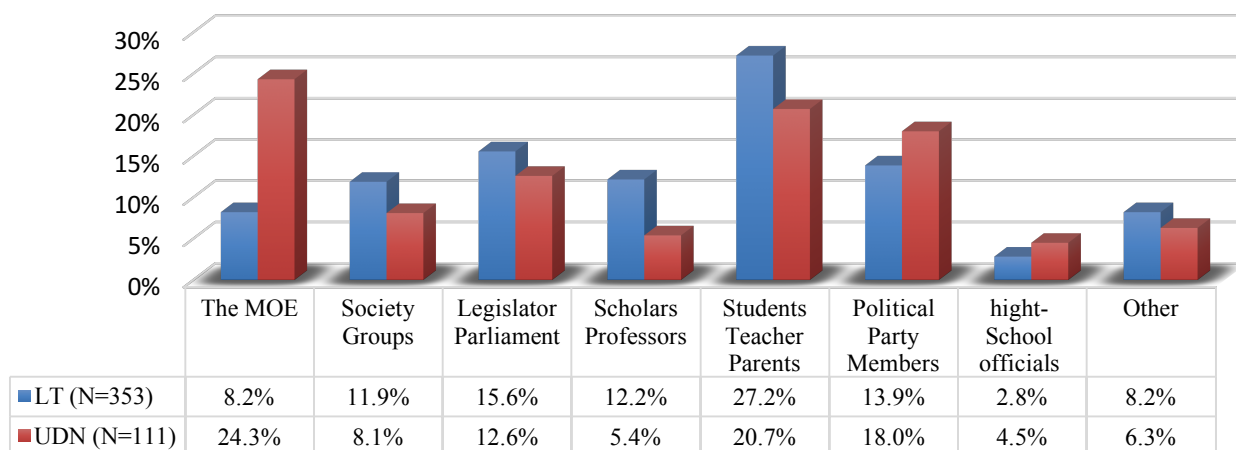
First stage is quantitative analysis of the distribution of categories of news discourses, but the main analytic method undertaken this study is Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA). As van Dijk (1998) has provided the study of the intricate relationships among cognition, discourse, and society, i.e. triangle theory of discourse on production and comprehension, and macro-structure and microstructure of the reports are analyzed. The semantic macrostructure is the main topics (themes) of news discourse, i.e. the news schema. In addition, the various discursive strategies and features used to construct each topic, which is microstructure, includes local coherence, syntax, lexical style and rhetoric, i.e. words and strategic meaning (van Dijk, 1988 & 2008). The analytical methods, we explore implication and presupposition is effected by ideology, which links among the news discourse, ideology and media.

### Database and Analysis

The data for this study were collected from a online corpus of two newspaper in Taiwan, The United Daily News (UDN) and The Liberty Times (LT) — two ideological opposed newspapers (Kuo, 2005 & 2007; Sung, 2012). The news is from 16th January 2014 to 31th August 2015. We sifted the data carefully as show in table 1-1, each newspaper has their own favorite topic of coverage.

### Table 1-1 Categories of News Discourse & Percentage of Items

As can be seen from Figure 1-1, the newspapers select news sources, topics and report newsworthy-ness, which happen to favor attention to and the interests of various elite actors, persons, groups, classes, institutions, nations. This processes not only the ideologies about news, but also the social power reconstructions by the news media. The LT's journalist covered students on protestation; the UND reported the messages from the MOE and official.

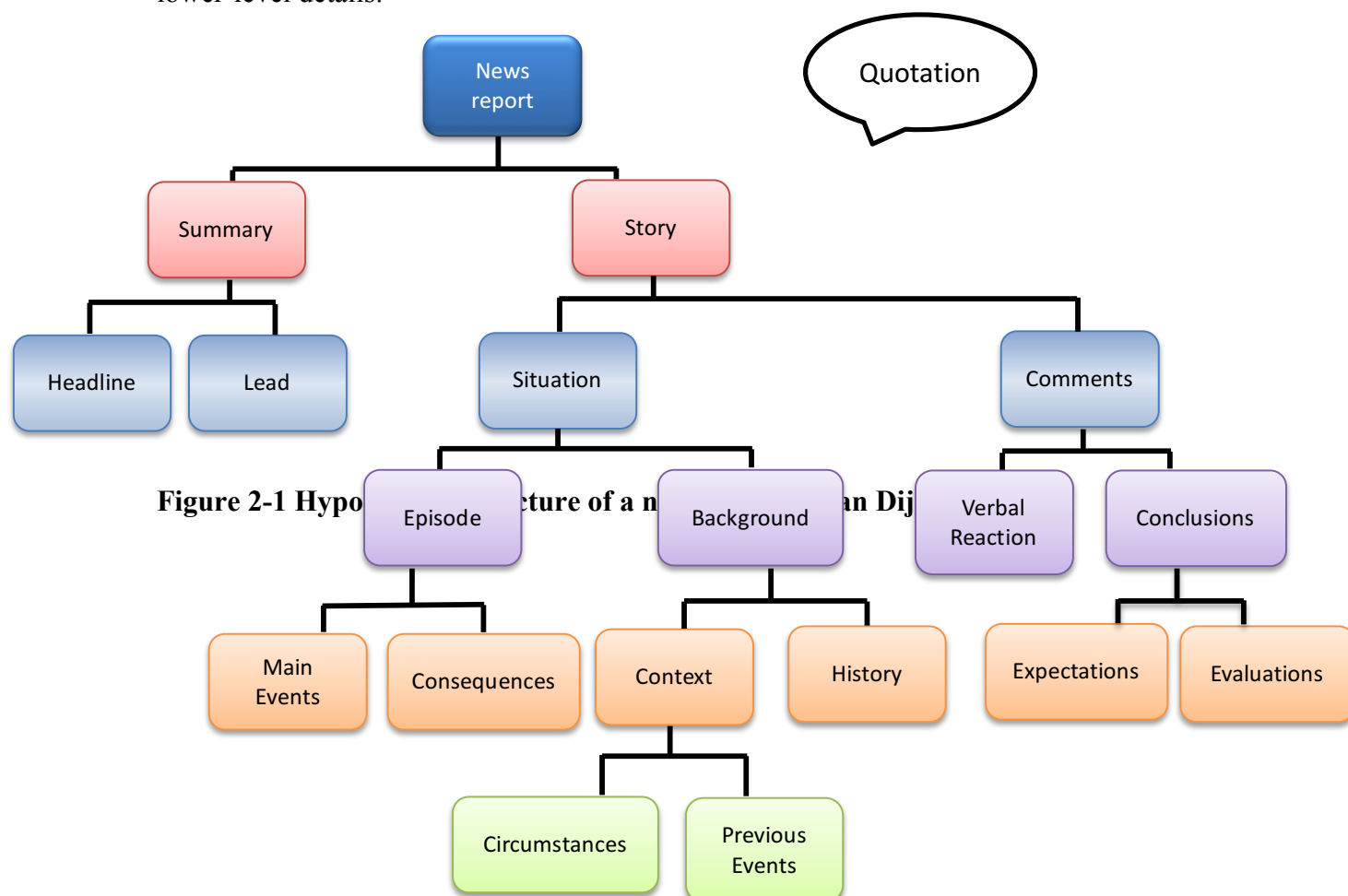


**Figure 1-1 Percentage of Distribution of Different News Sources**

## Discourse Analysis

### 1. Macrostructure

The news schema is a hierarchical structure (Figure 2-1). It is top-down and relevance-controlled. The particular writing style constructs an 'inverted pyramid'. A top-down realization occurs, if this top-down organization of general to particular also coincides with the important—less important dimension case. When the important information of other topics has need expressed, earlier topics are reintroduced with lower-level details.



**Figure 2-1 Hypothesis of a news structure**

The journalists are able to construct a real discourse, which chooses topics, sources, and arranges quotations of elite that serves news ideologies and interests. The UDN is a traditional schema and describe CG's History and Previous Events. There are 3 quotations of the MOE's public official and just one civil deputation's indirect quotation. In order to balance their report, they quote a professor Lee's proposal opinion at the end of text (Fig.2-2).

In contrast example (on 28 January 2014), the LT divides three sub-topics as a summary: meeting, minor adjustment of content and protest but no mention of previous events. There were 3 scholars of the quotations, rather than deputations. The LT's report strategically constructs an atmosphere of opposition between government and the social activists (Fig.2-3). The following analysis, expose the news stations' position by investigating the microstructures of the political events.

## **2. Microstructure: Headlines and Content**

Headlines are brief, 'printed on top', large bold type, and summarizing the most important information of the report. It is used by the reader to construct the overall meaning of the news to process of understanding, and have cognitive and ideological functions (van Dijk,1988).

We found two newspapers represent different topics and focus through their headlines of "lexical style", the LT's words are mangan, qiangdu "to force and gao "to spoof", to emphasize the MOE's behavior is illegal and even is a hegemony. Compared with the UDN choice of guoguan "to pass", dingan "verdict", and the MOE's minister said it is legitimate. The UDN is no any negative lexical, whereas the LT tendency to describe the MOE's negative position. Although two newspapers describe PROTESTERS, use verb kangyi "to protest", but the LT's yongshi "warrior" and rexiasheng "fiery-spirited" to highlight high-school students, but the UDN seeks

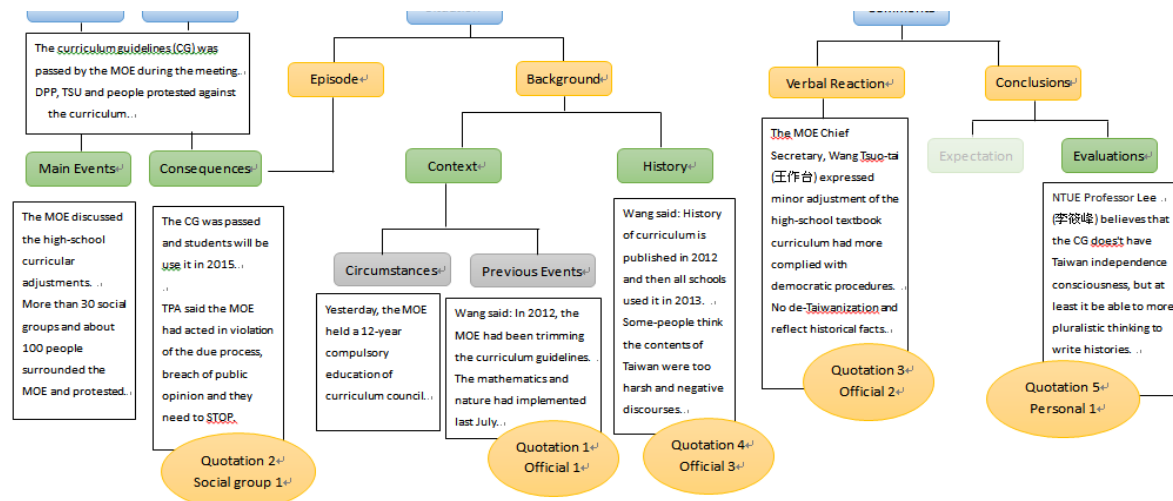


Figure 2-2 The schematic structure of the UDN News report on people protest the CG was passed (28<sup>th</sup> January 2014)

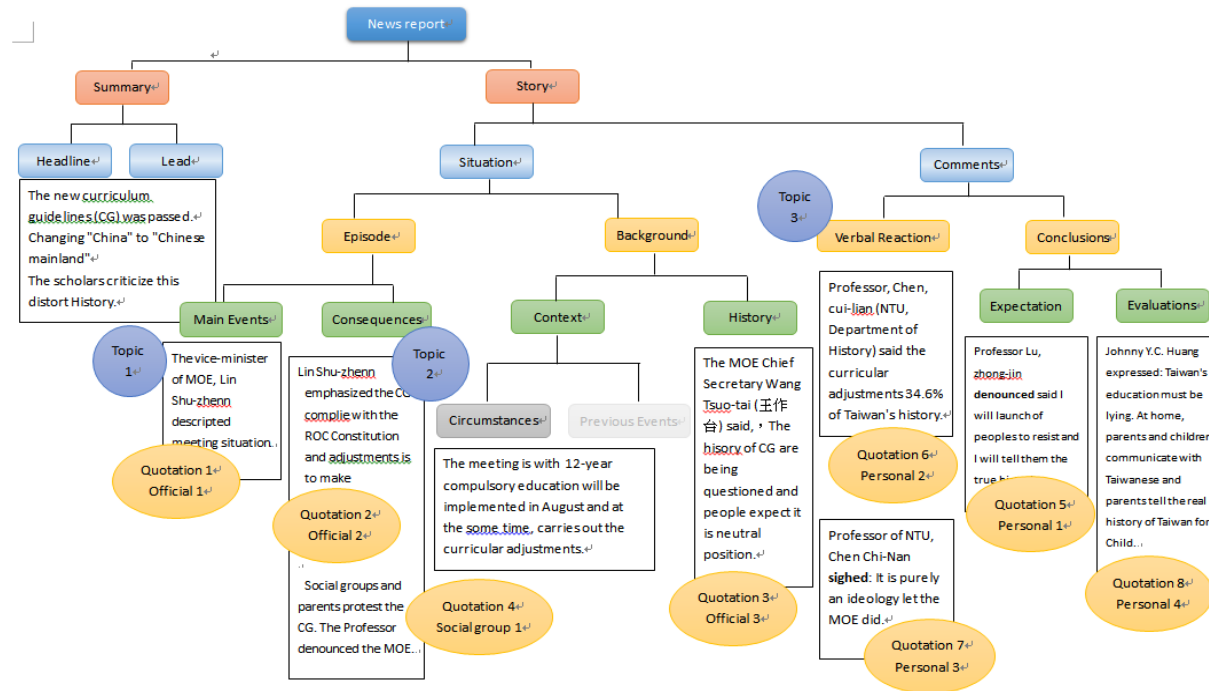


Figure 2-3 The schematic structure of the LT News report on people protest the CG was passed (28<sup>th</sup> January 2014)

to downplay or ignore (appendix A). The use of words in newspaper headlines is never neutral but has ideological implications.

Local coherence in discourse is linking meaning between sentences (propositions), also is an extension or enhancement of functional syntax (Fairclough, 1995). This is not only help reader's comprehension, in fact, to explore the hidden language of news reports and ideological prejudices. The same example, the UDN—"although people protest ...BUT, At LEAST, STILL (the MOE) passed the CG..."; and "The MOE was surrounded by protesters" of passive structure (被 bei) to emphasize the negative effect of the protest. Whereas the LT—"Young man to roar with fury in front of the MOE (on 29 April 2015)" is active. In the CDA, active-passive transformation is one of the syntactic variations which may represent underlying ideology.

### **Conclusions**

The educational news usually focuses on quotations of governmental officials (the UDN) and academics (the LT), and a same news are reported and used specific discourse structure or lexical choices. At the same time, news discourse is constructed by social cognition and then comprehended. We have found this is not arbitrary but are well motivated by their underlying ideologies and strengthen the powers of 'somebody'. van Dijk's (1995, 1998) 'ideological square': positive in-group description and negative out-group description, provides a plausible explanation for our findings.

In conclusion, media discourse is biased and it shouldn't just a 'news', but the social elite and media discourse of 'politic' representation, and reflect the conflicting opinions held within the Taiwanese society.

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|      | 「da zhong guo shi guan 」 xi nao<br><br>To force the HCG pass in a chamber, it is a brainwash to "great Chinese History".<br>(LT16,01/28/2014)  |      | yi sheng zhong guo guan<br><br>The new HCG of Language and Social Sciences of high-school amid protesting in a trick.<br>(UND3,01/28/2014)   |
| (2a) | tou du ke gang an li wei yao Jiang Wei-Ning xia tai<br><br>Smuggling the HCG case, legislator want to Chiang Wei-ling stepping down.<br>(LT26,02/07/2014)  | (2b) | jiao yu bu zhang Jiang Wei-Ning ding diao :<br>“ke gang wei diao he xian 、 he fa 、 he cheng xu ”<br><br>The MOE’s minister Jiang Wei-Ning call the tune: “curricular adjustments is constitutionality, legitimate and lawful process”.<br>(UND10,02/07/2014) |
| (3a) | jiao bu man gan gong gao da zhong guo shi guan ke gang<br><br>The MOE announcements great Chinese History's HCG in force.<br>(LT44,02/11/2014)   | (3b) | -  |
| (4a) | ke gang wei diao gao hei xiang ?<br>Tang Zhi-Min : quan ze zai jiao yu bu<br><br>Spoofing curricular adjustments like a black-box? Tang Zhi-Min : powers and responsibilities of the MOE<br>(LT130,02/14/2015) | (4b) | chi hei xiang Tang Zhi-Min : hui yi xian chang you kai piao<br><br>Tang Zhi-Min denounces black-box and say: Have Billing results at the meeting scene.<br>(UND165,08/04/2015*)  |
| (5a) | ji e 28xiao shi gong min jiao shi jin shi kang yi xi nao ke gang<br><br>Hunger 28 hours, civil teachers fast and protest to the brainwashing HCG.<br>(LT83,03/01/2014)   | (5b) | fan ke gang wei diao 5 gong min shi ji e jing zuo<br><br>Against curricular adjustments, there are 5 teachers fast and sit still with a peaceful mind.<br>(UND32,03/01/2014)   |
| (6a) | jiao zhang qie zhan tao zhu miao xue zi yu chuann gong<br><br>The MOE is funk, Students say  | (6b) | Wu Si-Hua : shen qie fan sheng<br><br>Wu Si-Hua: Deeply introspect it.<br>(UND194,08/08,2015*)   |



|      |  |      |   |
|------|--|------|---|
|      | curriculum protests in the streets.<br>(LT289,07/09/2015*)   |      |   |
| (8a) | <p>jiao zhang cheng nuo po gong ke<br/>shen wei yuan ming dan bu gong<br/>bu</p> <p>Minister Broken his promises<br/>because He did not publish a list of<br/>review members.<br/>(LT432,08/14,2015)</p> | (8b) | <p>ke gang zheng yi Wu Si-Hua : fu wan quan ze<br/>ren</p> <p>The curriculum protests, Wu Si-Hua: I will fully<br/>responsible for it.<br/>(UND121,07/31,2015)</p>                    |
| (9a) | <p>huan dao fan ke gang yong shi jin<br/>fan zhong dian jiao bu</p> <p>A warrior around the island to<br/>against the HCG, Will go back to<br/>the end of the MOE, today.<br/>(LT442,08/18/2015)</p>     | (9b) | <p>fan hei xiang ke gang 2 gao-zhong sheng tu bu<br/>huan dao</p> <p>Two high-school students gainst the HCG of<br/>black-box, Walking around the island.<br/>(UND99,07/26/2015*)</p> |