LINGUISTIC TOOLS OF EMPOWERMENT AND ALIENATION IN THE CHINESE OFFICIAL PRESS: ACCOUNTS ABOUT THE APRIL 2001 SINO-AMERICAN DIPLOMATIC STANDOFF

Lutgard Lams

Abstract

Attempts at reinvigorating mythical sensations of shared values and cultural identities happen particularly at times of dislocatory events in a community's history, when 'the national Self' is perceived to be threatened by external forces. Such a critical moment for China was the collision between a US surveillance plane and a Chinese F-8 jet fighter on April 1, 2001, and the ensuing diplomatic standoff between the US and China. As the Chinese authorities and the state media viewed this incident in a series of ambiguous incidents involving the US, it was concluded that the collision had been the inevitable outcome of US hegemonism intended to provoke China. It is this concurrence of events, triggering feelings of disempowerment of the Self that causes recurrent flurries of heated anti-Other rhetoric. Boundaries of exclusion/inclusion along cultural, historical and political lines set up the Other as the negative mirror of the Self, which as a consequence is positively reasserted. Informed by insights from Language Pragmatics and Critical Discourse Analysis, this paper sets out to examine linguistic tools of alienation and empowerment in the Chinese official press narratives about the collision, comprising the Chinese-language *Renmin Ribao*, its English equivalent *The People's Daily* and the English-language *China Daily*. It aims to trace processes of meaning generation, in particular discursive practices of an ideological nature, such as antagonistic portrayals of in- and outgroups, hegemonic exercise of power, as well as naturalized conceptualizations of contingent processes, structures and relations.

Keywords: Pragmatics; Discourse analysis; Hegemony; Discursive practices; Antagonistic portrayals; Othering; Alienation; Empowerment; Myth-making; Chinese official media; China Daily accounts; Spy plane collision; US/China diplomatic standoff; EP-III surveillance plane.

0. Introduction

What exactly happened on the morning of April 1, 2001 near Hainan island off the Chinese South-Eastern coast is not known, except perhaps in classified military documents in China and the US. Yet, the collision between the US EP-III surveillance aircraft and the Chinese F-8 fighter triggered ample speculations on responsibility and received wide media coverage on an international scale. These media accounts provide superb data to investigate how language of empowerment and alienation discursively shapes social reality and contributes to disseminating ideological assertions, building and sustaining myths, and portraying the 'Self' and the 'Other' in antagonistic ways.

The present paper is based on the findings of a research project on the dynamics of language and ideology in the media representation of this plane collision in April

2001. The data set for the project comprised articles from the national press in China, Taiwan, US, UK and Belgium. From this larger corpus, the English- and Chinese-language press articles in China are selected to investigate how the Chinese viewed and represented the event, thereby focusing on processes of 'Othering', i.e. group categorization and boundary setting or demarcation between the 'Self' and the 'Other'.[1] The paper thus has a strong focus on media representation practices of in- and outgroups.

Since the 60s, Western media have been criticized in diverse disciplines such as cultural studies and communication studies for a biased, negative representation of the developing world (Galtung & Ruge 1965; Gans 1979; Said 2003; Graber 1989; Van Dijk 1984, 1988; Mowlana 1996; Riggins 1997). In this critique, the model of 'Representation of the Other' is believed to induce social exclusion and oppression. The 'rhetoric of Othering' (Riggins 1997) frames a contrasting image of the Other, often those people who are not my people or one of us, i.e. usually people of a different ethnicity, gender, nationality, etc. (Fursich 2002). The notion of Othering will be further elaborated in section 3.1 (antagonistic group representations). Critique on representations of the Other is considered as one of the most influential topics in cultural studies (Brantlinger 1990). It is indeed largely inspired by postcolonial literature and cultural theorists like Edward Said, who in his seminal work *Orientalism*, first printed in 1978, designated the Other as a form of cultural projection of concepts. According to Said, Orientalism depends for its strategy on a flexible positional superiority, which puts the Westerner in a whole series of possible relationships with the Orient without ever losing him the relative upper hand (Said 2003: 7). It is the nature of this 'flexible positional superiority', which lies at the basis of the 'Othering' process (Edgar & Sedgwick 1999: 266).

Many scholars from the developing world have joined this critical debate in documenting how images of third world nations, peoples and foreign events are often packaged in the Western press as the disadvantaged negative Other. These views have also been promoted by official instances, such as the Chinese CCP Central Propaganda Department, which changed its name into Central Information Department. In their publication for internal propaganda, *Neibu Tongxun*, one can find articles claiming that the US fears a strong China, that talk of freedom and human rights are aimed at keeping China weak, and that neither the US elections nor the US media are free (Brady 2006: 70). The common view in their publications is that "the US and other Western countries possess or control almost all the world's media and, they mostly show the negative side of China to Western audiences" (Foreign Propaganda Reference 2004/4: 12; in Brady 2006).[2] Not unlike Iranian official comment in the 2009 post-electoral demonstrations about Western conspiracy, some Chinese officials have approached this perception of a negative China framing as a "conspiracy between the media and the West (esp. the US government) to contain China" (Huang & Leung 2005: 303).

---

[1] The corpus of media texts was chosen on the basis of accessibility and comprised all narratives in the People's Republic of China (PRC) about the event in the Chinese-language *Renmin Ribao (RMRB)*, the flagship paper of the Chinese Communist Party (123 articles from 02-25 April 2001), 23 articles from the English-language *China Daily (CD)*, equally the mouthpiece of the Chinese Communist Party (05-12 April), and the *Beijing Review*, the official monthly magazine (12 April-17 May), in addition to 170 headlines of the *People's Daily (PD)*, the English-language online-version of the *Renmin Ribao* (2-23 April).

[2] Duiwai Xuanchuan Cankao (Foreign Progaganda Reference, 2004/4: 12) in Brady (2006).

The current study aims to complement this debate by critically assessing the Chinese media performance in representing the Western Other. At the same time, we wish to support Huang & Leung's argument that "scholars of communications and journalists might need to adopt new perspectives and professional routines to defuse the complex dilemma of representing others instead of taking the mainstream critical assumptions of the concept at face value." (Huang & Leung 2005: 303-304).[3] Similarly, while acknowledging the merit of the concept of media representation of the Other, we would like to warn of taking the model's underlying assumption as a given and argue with Huang & Leung that "there are internal contradictions and factors with compelling forces working jointly towards the textual outcome, which commands the analyst's attention" (2005: 305). As Clifford (1988) states, one cannot "ultimately escape procedures of dichotomizing, restructuring and textualizing in the making of interpretive statements about foreign cultures" (1988: 261). Furthermore, construction of the Other in the news does not develop in a vacuum (Beckett 1996; Gamson & Modigliani 1989). Informing the writing process are the frames "sponsored by multiple social actors, including politicians, organizations, and social movements, and in this case the (foreign) country being reported" (Huang & Leung 2005: 305). A more comprehensive perspective and contextual approach to understanding and defusing the complex dilemma of the 'media representation of the Other' process is called for (2005: 302). In the same vein, part two of this paper tries to understand the background of the Chinese perception of the Western Other by contextualizing the accounts in a larger historical framework. Indeed, one can only answer the question of who qualifies as the 'Other' when also examining why and how this process is set in place (Moerman 1974).

The terms 'Othering' and 'otherization' will be used interchangeably to denote the same process of 'heteronomization' (Wodak et al. 1999) or discursively constructing a common denominator for collective identification of a group that is seen as unfamiliar to and different from the constructed 'ingroup' and depicted as a threatening stranger. In the process of Otherization as the 'codificiation of difference' (Said 2003), the Self is ascribed an identity through the often negative attribution of features to the Other. When judging the Other, the emphasis is on what differentiates instead of what connects. As Olausson proposes, processes of inclusion are always relational and require processes of exclusion. The construction of the national 'we' presupposes the simultaneous construction of 'them' (2007: 56). This binary division is a basic dichotomization process that sets up the Self versus the Other.

Preconceptions and presupposed characteristics dominate our encounter with the Other. Socio-cognitive constructions of differences (them) and similarities (us) in the minds and thinking of people are manifested in social interaction and in different types of discourses (Höijer 2007: 39), not in the least media discourse. These cognitive categories are often considered constituents of identity (Jenkins 1996; Höijer 2007). There is no room for the negotiability and fluidity of identities and the dynamic relationship between in/outgroups is rendered in static descriptions. Particular

---

[3] Huang & Leung's study examined the national images of Vietnam and China during the SARS crisis in 2003 in three mainstream Western-led English newspapers and discovered that China received a bad press while Vietnam was cast in a positive light. The authors looked at how that country's approach in a global crisis (SARS) might have affected its media representation and thus explored "the underlying rationales that explain how and why the Other might have received international media treatment differently" (2005: 303).

perceptions get fixed as simplifications which easily become taken-for-granted assumptions through social and discursive exchange. In simplifying the openness of meaning, the foreign Other is reduced to culturist and essentialist stereotypes. The beliefs we have about the Other, the way we symbolically construct an image are important elements of the mediated message. They can easily become 'common sense' characterizations of the Other without any conscious choice-making. However, they can also be instrumental for those in power as ideological arguments to legitimize their perspective. Once this position has become consensual, those who have everything to gain by categorizing the world in a certain way will struggle to keep their meanings mainstream or dominant.

1. Methodology and research questions

A variety of research disciplines can offer methodological tools to look into processes of 'Othering'. Besides framing analysis, widely used in communication studies, we mainly draw on insights from pragmatics, critical linguistics, and critical discourse analysis for analyzing the ideational aspect of a text.

While this study does not venture into the various aspects of framing theory and analysis, one discussion on two types of approaches within framing theory is particularly informative for this paper, which also aims to probe into the underlying reasons for certain framing practices. Chan (2002) distinguishes between the symbolic interactionist approach, which ascribes more intentionality and conscious agency to the implicit framing practice of labeling, and the (post)structuralist approach, which perceives framing as a more unconscious practice of activating common sense and culturally determined conventional wisdom within a discursive community, such as a particular environment of journalistic practice. Chan finds the latter approach more convincing, arguing that news discourse originates in practice rather than being a result of strategic attempt by reporters to label. This paper argues, however, that news discourse is a combination of both practices (intentional labeling as well as unconscious action), happening at different levels of the production process. Conscious as well as unconscious preferences underlie the news selection, writing and editorial process. It is especially at the editorial level that intentionality operates via 'home' stylistic guidelines, ideologically inspired proscriptions and prescriptions by the supervising editorial staff and publishers who also have to consider demands of the financial sponsors. Yet, determining intentionality on the part of the utterer remains a difficult challenge for the researcher, even if ethnographic data have been obtained. News workers do not usually admit to intentional framing due to their deontological standards of objectivity.

The current study is not a standard content analysis, which is in essence a systematic and usually more quantitative description of the manifest content of communication. As assessment of thematic structuring is inspired by more than just manifest content, it already involves interpretation at the level of context, co-text and text itself. This is why an analysis of linguistic strategies such as macro and micro-level mechanisms of generalization, rhetorical build-up of arguments, and other manifestations of implied meaning, such as choice in modality markers, semantics on the lexical and syntactical level is essential to look at representational and categorization processes.

Research questions will be dealt with in three separate sections, although separation only serves practical purposes. Obviously all three elements are intertwined in the narratives. Regarding categorization processes and portrayals of the Self/Other, the main question which needs addressing concerns generalization patterns in representation practices of the news outlets. Will any cliché serve to perpetuate the conceptual polarization of us/them and reinforce the social schemata into which they are categorized?

Secondly, identities are constantly negotiated and given competing meanings by different social actors in an environment characterized by 'heteroglossia', the constant interplay between different socio-ideological languages competing for dominance or hegemony (Verschueren 1999: 238). The hegemonic potential of the accounts can be traced when looking at the selection of evidence and sources. Depending on which actors get the floor, different interpretations of social reality are presented. Therefore, the extent to which elite actors found access to public discourse, and their role in the discursive management of the public mind has to be taken into account.

Thirdly, taken-for-granted assumptions and naturalizations of contingent processes, relations and structures will be examined. If there are particular discursive communities, how does their story-telling contribute to a reassessment of themselves as a society or culture? What are the ingredients of the worldview that serve as the starting point for the news accounts? What models of society form the basis of the narratives or what common frames of reference do the newsworkers rely on?

Given the reciprocal relation between a text and the surrounding society, one first needs to contextualize the accounts in order to answer these questions. While environment is affected by textual reproduction/challenging of prevalent perceptions, it also informs text.

2. Contextualization of the Chinese media narratives on the collision

Major findings and examples of the textual analysis are presented in part three along the above-mentioned threefold distinction. This part first contextualizes the accounts in the narrow sense of the collision event itself (2.1.) and further embeds them in a wider discussion of Chinese perceptions of the Other, in this case, the US perpetrator (2.2.). This overview of academic literature on the event tries to present reasons for the largely uniform stance in the Chinese academia, which in this case is consonant with deeply entrenched cultural values and particular representations of the Western 'Other' in Chinese society. To conduct a media text analysis, one obviously has to account for the organizational context in which the journalists and editors finalize the stories. The Chinese press system will be briefly touched upon in section 3.2.1. Since media texts were taken from the *Renmin Ribao*, the CCP's Chinese-language mouthpiece, and the *People's Daily* (its English translated version) as well as the *China Daily*, the mainstream English-language paper, our hypothesis is that the accounts will follow the official Chinese stance in this affair, given they are still the leading national papers.

2.1. *Situational context of the Sino-US standoff*

The collision and ensuing diplomatic stand-off between the US and China gave rise to multiple interpretations by government officials and the media alike. As no hard evidence was offered by either party to the dispute, it is hard to determine responsibility for the collision. The following elements are, however, empirically verifiable: two military planes collided in international airspace[4] above the South China Sea. One was an American Navy EP-3E surveillance aircraft with 24 crew members and the other was a Chinese F-8 jet fighter. After the collision, the American plane plummeted nearly 8,000 feet and had to make an emergency landing on the nearest Chinese military airport on Hainan Island. The Chinese jet crashed into the South China Sea and the pilot, Wang Wei, was not found despite extensive search operations for many days. The only witness to the event was the pilot of the second Chinese interceptor, who landed at the same airport a few minutes before the American plane. As the Chinese authorities had determined guilt instantly –they blamed the American plane for 'ramming and destroying' their jetfighter and illegally intruding into Chinese airspace and landing at the airport without verbal clearance- they demanded a US apology and assumption of full responsibility for the incident. However, the official American position in guilt attribution/avoidance was that no comments and certainly no apologies could be made until the US crew had been heard and a joint investigation into the collision had been set up. American speculations were that the Chinese pilot had caused the accident in a dangerous flight maneuver, based on arguments such as previous instances of near-misses between a Chinese jet, manned by the same pilot, and American surveillance planes[5], the size of the two planes, suggesting that the 'lumbering' US plane did not have the maneuverability as the F-8 and the assumption that it was unlikely the American pilot would have endangered 24 crew members by 'veering' into the Chinese fighter.

The Chinese government held they had clear proof of US responsibility for the collision, based on the second pilot's eye-witness story and the particular damage to the surveillance plane. Other points of contention, based on diametrically opposed arguments motivated by competing political goals, included the question whether the Chinese military had the right to inspect the stranded US plane, considered by the

---

[4] Initially, the precise location of the collision was also a point of contention, where the Chinese argued it had happened in Chinese airspace and the Americans insisted it was above international waters. The difference in position derived from a diverging view on what operations foreign aircraft are allowed to execute in the airspace of the EEZ (Exclusive Economic Zone) of Coastal states. This EEZ extends beyond the 12-nautical mile-zone of a State's territorial sea and goes as far as 200 nautical miles from the coastal state's baseline. The collision happened approximately seventy nautical miles southeast of Hainan Island (PRC Foreign Ministry Press Release, 2001). One of the legal documents which both sides referred to was the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS, Dec. 10, 1982, entered into force Nov. 16, 1994). It provides aircraft with freedom of overflight over EEZs, but does not specify overflight rules, and thus leaves room for interpretation. An extensive survey into the international legal aspects of both the Chinese and American claims is provided by M.K. Lewis (2002).

[5] In an incident in December 2000 a Chinese jet and an American plane came within several meters of each other (Torode 2001). After several of these maneuvers, in which the same pilot, Wang Wei, once had gotten so close to the American plane that he could be seen holding out a card with his e-mail address, the US had lodged complaints with the Chinese government, as explained in the Briefing of Donald Rumsfeld, Secretary of Defense, who then also provided video-taped evidence of these previous near-misses (Available at http://www.defenselink.mil/news/Apr_2001/t04132001_t0413ep3.html   (in Lewis 2002: 1406).

American authorities to have 'sovereign immunity'. The 24 crew members were detained in the military compound on Hainan Island until the American Ambassador delivered the so-called 'letter of apology' to the Chinese Foreign Minister. In the Chinese media its was hailed as an apology, but a language pragmatic analysis of the propositions in the letter reveals a most ambiguous semantic game. The metapragmatic role of the media in constructing the letter's meaning is explored in Lams (2008).

2.2. *Chinese views and perceptions of US actions in general*

The event attracted much scholarly interest from various disciplines ranging from studies looking at the international law dimension (Lewis 2002; Donnelly 2004) over research into aspects of communication and media coverage (Bau 2001; Chan 2002; Hook & Pu 2006; Tian & Chao 2008; Xu Wu 2002; Zhang, X. 2005), and international relations, negotiation and conflict resolution (Chang, D.J. 2001; Kan et al. 2001; Mulvenon 2002; Yee 2004; Zhang, J. et al 2004) to sociology (Cheng & Ngok 2004; Lan 2003), linguistics (Slingerland et al. 2007; Cheng 2002), and cultural studies (Gries & Peng 2002; Zhang, H. 2001). Most Chinese scholars adopt similar underlying assumptions in their analyses, based on implicit premises. With the exception of the studies conducted by Hook & Pu (2006), Gries & Peng (2002), and Yee (2004), these Chinese analyses are grounded on the basic supposition that the US carried full responsibility in the collision and was to blame for its hegemonic attitude.

This basic assumption of US fault may be explained by the culturally entrenched bifurcated image many Chinese hold of the US as a "beautiful imperialist and warmongering hegemon" (Hao & Su 2007). While taking the US as reference point for Chinese modernization, a sizeable part of the Chinese community is thought to also view the US as the 'world police', seeking to undermine China's national security, especially by interfering in China's policy toward Taiwan. In this particular micro-event of a plane collision, the official Chinese reading also adopted a more holistic approach in embedding the event in a postcolonial discourse of the Western powers bullying China from the mid-nineteenth century onwards. This 'victimization' frame of a China being 'humiliated for 150 years' lies at the basis of a growing nationalist sentiment, which also underpinned Chinese media articles on the 1997 Hong Kong handover (Lams 2005).

A look at the larger political context of the plane collision can facilitate a better understanding of how this particular reading of the 'Other' could have originated. The collision occurred at a politically sensitive time when the frequency of US surveillance flights had been increased, and when the new Bush administration was pursuing a National Missile Defense initiative that was viewed by the Chinese as potentially undermining their national security. It was also the very month the Bush administration was to decide on the sales of an impressive arms package to Taiwan. During Bush's presidential campaign, G.W. Bush had also repudiated former President Clinton's China policy of 'engagement' and declared China a strategic 'competitor'.

Furthermore, the Chinese authorities and its media viewed this incident in a series of ambiguous incidents involving the US, which were ascribed hostile intent or 'ulterior motives', such as the 1999 'accidental' bombing of the Chinese embassy in Belgrade by the American-led NATO operations in former Yugoslavia, or the US intervention in the Taiwan Strait in 1996 when the Chinese launched missile tests off

the Taiwan coast prior to the presidential elections on Taiwan. As these US acts were perceived as unfriendly toward China, and remained engraved in the collective Chinese memory, it was concluded that the collision incident had been the inevitable outcome of US hegemonism intended to provoke China and thus exacerbated Chinese resentment against the US. It is this concurrence of events, triggering feeling of danger for oneself sparked by particular internal as well as foreign dislocatory events, that causes temporary flurries of heated rhetoric. As Le (2006) contends, "a spiral of anti-Other rhetoric has deep roots in a soil that is periodically fertilized" (Le 2006: 167). A general climate of mutual distrust can thus be built by accumulation of these recurring spirals of nationalist, anti-Other discourse.

Behind the demonization of the Outsider lie discrepancies in perceptions between both world players. As the two sides equally belong to 'communities of practice', which tend to 'communicate with each other in the same terms', over time certain 'interpretative repertoires' (Potter & Wetherell 1987) have been accumulated and may become fossilized. For Moscovici (98: 242) social representations are

> "the product of a whole sequence of elaborations and of changes which occur in the course of time and are the achievement of successive generations. All the systems of classification, all the images and all the descriptions which circulate within a society … imply a link with previous systems and images, a stratification in the collective memory and a reproduction in the language, which invariably reflects past knowledge, and which breaks the bounds of current information".

Journalists, scholars and politicians alike employ pre-existing cultural expectations ('prototypical schematic understandings' (Entman 1991) or 'mental scripts' (Van Dijk 1989)) of Sino-US relations and international affairs.[6] To quote Lippmann (1922: 81) "For the most part, we do not first see, and then define, we define first and then see." Similarly, Clausen states that

> "Culture-bound schemes include ideas about the appropriate time and place for an event to occur and ideas about the minutiae of behaviour expected from the participants. They encompass ideas about the causes of what's good and what's evil, and ways of coping with the everyday questions of life" (Clausen 2005: 113).

Applied to this particular case, the Bush Administration considers its surveillance activities in international waters and airspace in the Asia-Pacific Region legitimate and essential to US efforts in keeping balance and security in the region, whereas in the Chinese 'community of practice' it is believed that the US wants to exploit its superior economic and military strength to promote power politics and

---

[6] The same concept of 'mental images' is used in comparative literature studies in the field of 'image studies' or 'imagology', tracing synchronic and diachronic textual dissemination of cultural representations of nations (see Hoffmann 1980; Pageaux 1983; Dyserinck & Fischer 1985; Stanzel et al. 1999; Siebenmann 2004; Beller & Leerssen 2007). To paraphrase Siebenmann,

> "it takes time to engage in comparative studies, such as these, as one has to first acquire the proper spirit and analytical experience, but it is certainly worthwhile as it moves us a step ahead in a fight we should all engage in against the mortal sin of the prejudice" (author's free translation) ["En efecto, hace falta mucha lectura y una aguda experiencia analitica, condiciones que solo se dan con el tiempo. A pesar de ello, vale la pena adentrarse en este campo, porque significa dar un passo adelante en una batalla que debemos librar entre todos, en la lucha contra aquel pecado, a menudo mortal, que es el prejuicio"] (Siebenmann 2004: 349).

contain China's growing position in the area. The gap in cognition thus exists in the respective interpretation and evaluations of each other's international strategy (Cheng & Ngok 2004). How the anti-US sentiment is perceived by some China scholars in the US is explained in Terrill (2003), who states that "China now shouts its anti-hegemonism just as the China of Mao shouted its anti-imperialism; the tune is identical even if the lyric is adjusted. The song really means that a muscle flexing China itself wants to be the hegemon" (2003: 267). It can be argued that the strong anti-US nationalist feelings since the early 90s are the result of negative US propaganda by the Chinese leadership after the cooling off of Sino-US relations in the wake of the '89 Tiananmen events. Yet, beside the propaganda, disseminated by the state media, one also has to account for the important role a segment of China's young generation of intellectuals plays in shaping perception of the US. Since the mid-90s, they have promoted a strong brand of nationalism and patriotism by publishing a series of bestsellers criticizing the US, e.g. Song Qiang, Qian Bian et al. with their bestseller "China can say no" (96) (Cheng & Ngok 2004).

However, it is especially the state media, with a clear emphasis on its educational role, which disseminates its perspectives to other media outlets and thus contributes to the shaping of perceptions. The institutional role of the media was made explicit in a speech by Liu Yunshan, head of Central Propaganda Department in 2003, as follows: "one of the primary tasks of journalists is to make the people loyal to the party"[7]. In China, official discourses center on the belief of a nation constantly subjected to threat. According to Renwick & Cao (2003), "China's leaders and intelligentsia have repeatedly represented China as the victim of external aggression and exploitation by colonial and capitalist powers" (2003: 63). This humiliation together with the internal forces of disorder and discontent represent a "powerful leitmotif of subordination, resentment and anger in nineteenth- and twentieth-century Chinese social commentary and political discourse" (2003: 63). Highlighting a hostile Other to unite the population has, according to Brady (2006), long been a tactic employed by authoritarian governments both Communist and non-Communist. "Since 1989", the author argues, "anti-US rhetoric has been a constant theme; a tendency strongly encouraged by the Central Propaganda Department through its publication *Neibu Tongxun*" (2006: 70).

In portraying identities in connection with deeply rooted cultural values and representations, as they are promoted by the authorities, media workers may hinder renegotiation of these identities in the international public sphere and thereby restrict opportunities for social change. At the same time, it has to be acknowledged that citizen journalism in China has evolved exponentially and online blogs and discussion have also become the places par excellence for attempts at social change. Unfortunately, fossilized images of the Other do not quickly erode. There only needs to be another conjunction of relevant circumstances to revive a spiral of anti-other rhetoric (Le 2006: 167), e.g. the Chinese outrage at the Western media coverage of the Olympic torch relay in Europe and the US in the run-up to the 2008 Olympics. Inflamed rhetoric in this sense is not caused by clashes of national identities (Huntington 1996), but by different

---

[7] Neibu Tongxun [Internal Report], 2003/15, p.4, News Bureau, CCP Central Propaganda Department (in Brady 2006: 65).

configurations of power relations between national self-esteems and sense of security levels (Le 2006: 167).

3. Discursive analysis of the news narratives

To trace meaning generating processes, this paper focuses on the following three aspects: 1) antagonistic black-and-white portrayals of us/them polarities; 2) hegemonic articulation of different identities into one common project, thereby strengthening unequal power distribution; 3) (re) production of collective imaginaries or myths in the historical, political and cultural realm.

3.1. *Antagonistic group representations*

According to social identity theory (Tajfel 1981), groups tend to draw boundaries of exclusion and inclusion along 'chains of equivalence and difference' (Laclau & Mouffe 1985). The aspect of exclusion characterizes the framing of unities. For Creutz-Kämppi, the "negative aspect of identification appears when the other is depicted as a threatening stranger, not when difference is presented per se" (Creutz-Kämppi 2008: 298). A polarizing discursive activity highlights the negative aspects of the Other and the positive attributes of the Self while marginalizing the positive features of the Other and the negative actions or characteristics of the Self. This discursive formation of polarization corresponds with what Van Dijk has termed the 'ideological square' (Van Dijk 1998: 267). Very often, the negative portrayal of the Other in the media accounts serves as an assertion of the national Self. While the national Other seems to be the direct addressee, it constitutes the negative mirror of the national Self, which is thus indirectly interpellated. The Other does not only serve as a stereotype of the unfamiliar, but also as the opposite in the sense of self-categorization. The 'imagined community' (Anderson 1983) is shaped when it is mirrored against an external collective (Said 2003; Laclau & Mouffe 1985). Outsiders' features must be contrasted unfavourably with our own. But outsiders can also be formed from within the ingroup. As Littlewood & Lipsedge maintain,

> "both internal and external aliens have a role in our society: they demonstrate to the average individual what he should avoid being or even avoid being mistaken for – they define for him the limits of his normality by producing a boundary only inside which he can be secure" (1997: 28).

Since the 'chains of equivalence and difference' are never closed, a full identity is illusory but is presented as a static entity to secure itself against the utterly contingent nature of identities ever at risk of being renegotiated. In China, official discourses center on the belief of a nation constantly subjected to threat. The next subsections offer examples of semantic engineering on the word level (labels, adjectival descriptors), and the sentential level (syntax and semantic roles).

3.1.1. Semantics of Self / Other representation on the lexical level

Stereotyping is a cognitive process of categorization, whereby we simplify diverse phenomena into labeled categories. These labels draw the attention to similar identifying features or distinctive ones, as opposed to many other differences (O'Sullivan et al. 1994). For Billig et al. (1988: 16), "Words are not mere labels which neutrally package up the world. They also express moral evaluations, and such terms frequently come in antithetical opposites which enable opposing moral judgements to be made." In the field of imagology, Siebenmann puts it as follows: "The system of thought which proceeds in images presents an antithetical structure: It primarily delimits what is of oneself in the face of what is foreign. And it always implies an evaluation [author's translation]" (Siebenmann 2004: 340).[8] The polarizing frame that emerges from the accounts is the image of the US 'aggressor' versus the Chinese 'victim'. Evaluative labels (e.g. 'gangsters', 'bandits', '24 pigs'), adjectival descriptors (e.g. 'hegemonic', 'arrogant', 'hypocritical'), choice of verbs with negative connotation for US action (e.g.'abusing' and 'violating' international laws, 'neglecting' facts, 'using rhetoric to fabricate justice'[9]) cumulatively portray the US in a way that elicits moral evaluation. An analysis of 170 headlines in the *People's Daily* (*PD*) from the second to the twenty-third of April shows that the evaluative modifier 'hegemonic' to describe the US is used explicitly in 13% of the headlines.

　　Interestingly, a comparison between the Chinese-language *Renmin Ribao* (RMRB) and the *PD,* which is the English version of the *RMRB*, shows that language in the latter is sanitized in that the emotionally loaded verb 'rammed and destroyed' -with the connotation of intentionality- is absent in the entire corpus of English-language headlines, whereas it appears repetitively in the headlines of the *RMRB*.[10] As an example, the headline of the *PD* on 04/04 reads "The Foreign Ministry Spokesman gives full account of the air collision" and the header of the original article in the *RMRB* on 04/04 runs, "The Foreign Ministry Spokesman discusses the fact/truth of the incident and clarifies its position concerning the US spy plane that rammed a Chinese military plane". In comparison with the English version, the Chinese text includes more repetitions of the extra specification of the US plane in the relative clause structure 'that caused the incident', hereby stressing the causality in the event. Similarly, negative evaluative terms like "heinous deed" in Chinese are softened down in the English version to "action".[11] In a *China Daily* commentary of 11/04 intentionality on the US

---

[8] Translation from the original : "El pensamiento que procede en imagenes presenta irremisiblemente una estructura antinomica: ante todo delimita lo proprio frente a lo ajeno. Y siempre implica una valoracion. "

[9] In *RMRB*, 16/04, Report from Foreign Ministry's spokeswoman

[10] Despite the absence of this 'action + result' compounded verb ('rammed so that it destroyed') in the English-language headlines, it does occur in the body text of the *China Daily* accounts (e.g. "Zhou reaffirmed China's solemn stand on the incident, demanding an explanation from the US side for its defiant acts of ramming and damaging a Chinese fighter jet over the south-China sea" (03/04: "Chinese official rebuffs US over air collision demand").

[11] A comparison between the headline "Foreign Ministry Spokesman gives full account of air collision" (*PD*, 04/04) with the headline "Ministry of Foreign Affairs Spokesperson discusses the fact of the incident and clarifies its position / Concerning the US spy plane that rammed a Chinese military plane" (*RMRB*, 04/04) shows that the Chinese-language paper also focuses on the factuality of the event ('fact') and the intentionality of the US 'ramming' the Chinese plane. The Chinese version of this article also uses maxim intensifiers (e.g. 'never'), the assertive strength of which excludes any discussion concerning blame.

part is expressed in the following terms: "That the incident happened at all and became a damaging stalemate, was entirely because of US provocation and its subsequent unrepentance". The identification of the action as well as the instrument itself is more often 'spy mission/plane' than 'reconnaissance routine/plane'. These alternative descriptors come to mind when comparing the press accounts with other narratives in Asian as well as Western sources.[12] The Chinese side, on the other hand, is perceived as the victim of the acting aggressor. The ingroup is endowed with positive traits. Time and again, predications about the Chinese attitude consist of positive adjectives and adverbs, such as 'peaceful', 'constructive', 'consistent', 'sincere', 'humane' treatment of the US crew.

3.1.2. Semantics of Self / Other representation on the sentential and macro-textual level

Given the overwhelming presence in the Chinese state-run press of transitive syntactical structures placing the US in the semantic role of the perpetrator of actions with a negative connotation, implying intentionality (e.g. 'ramming and destroying', 'veering into', 'grossly violating', 'turning hostile'), it can be argued that the Chinese media are carriers of ideological assertions about US responsibility. On the suprasentential level of argumentation and thematic hierarchy, US responsibility is not only one of the major themes in the corpus, but it is also highlighted structurally in the headlines. A heading such as "Jiang calls on US to apologize" in the *China Daily* on 05/04 gives the Chinese leader agency and puts him in a hierarchically higher position by taking the moral high ground to call on the US to apologize. It is stated that Foreign Minister Tang Jiaxuan "summoned" US Ambassador Prueher and lodged protest over Sunday's collision.[13] The former insisted that "China's sovereignty and dignity must be respected. For the Chinese government and the people, safeguarding national sovereignty and dignity is more important than anything else." In Washington, Chinese Ambassador to the US, Yang Jiechi, said there would be no solution until the US accepted responsibility and said a US apology was, of course, very, very important." In a *CD* commentary on 11/04, the ball is put in the US camp. The implicature underlying the following utterance, replete with presuppositions, suggests that the US are insincere, engage in cold war mentality and are provocative in their spy missions to China. The following type of argument sets the overall tone to legitimize the Chinese demand for an apology.

> "Apart from saying sorry, the US politicians should show more sincerity so that bilateral relations do not suffer irreparable damage.[…] To prevent something like this from happening again, the US should relinquish its Cold-War mentality against China and stop the provocative spy missions at China's doorstep".[14]

---

[12] More of these contrasting pairs are 'violation of international law' versus 'emergency landing' or 'international airspace' versus 'exclusive economic zone', 'crew' versus 'hostages or detainees', 'hero' versus 'top-gun' (for the missing Chinese pilot) in the mainstream Chinese and US accounts respectively.

[13] This particular lexical choice may inspire the implicature that the US side was called in to 'testify', and by inference that it had not called in first to report on the events. Yet, as they did not call in to report themselves. Yet, according to US Ambassador Prueher, instant and repeated attempts were made to contact the Chinese authorities but did not receive any official reply until many hours later (Keefe 2002).

[14] "A step forward, no conclusion yet", *CD* commentary, 11/04

Examples abound where US negative agency is highlighted, such as "Zhou reaffirmed China's solemn stand on the incident, demanding an explanation from the US side for its defiant acts of ramming and damaging a Chinese fighter jet over the South-China sea"[15]. Within the same sentence a structural presupposition (possessive pronoun 'its'), the choice of lexis ('ramming') and syntax (transitive verb and positioning of agent/victim) cumulatively naturalize the US as the culprit. In the Chinese-language articles, the most often used action verb to describe the event is a compound, consisting of action and result ('rammed and destroyed') and appears like a recurrent mantra throughout the corpus. The following exemplifies the Chinese attribution of US responsibility as well as intentionality: "Such feelings resurged this week after the US spy plane flew thousands of miles only to cause a mid-air collision with a Chinese fighter jet on China's doorway".[16]

In congruence with the notion of the ideological square (Van Dijk 1989), our Chinese sample reveals a clear pattern of negative other and positive self-presentation. On a macro level, this discursive practice is most salient when examining the *People's Daily's* headlines, which frame China in full control of the action as subject of accusatory speech acts ("rebuffs", "protests"; "condemns") and commissives ("vows", "pledges"). But also on the micro-structural level in the texts across the corpus, most action verbs with positive connotation are reserved for Chinese agency, as in "A peace-minded China cherishes a sincere wish for friendly ties with all countries, including the US"[17] . In a news article of *The China Daily* on 05/04, the Foreign Minister Tang Jiaxuan is reportedly arguing as follows,

> "China has all along been dealing with the incident in a cool, responsible manner and with restraint, but the American side adopted an opposite attitude and methods. It has displayed an arrogant air, used lame arguments, confounded right and wrong and made groundless accusations against China".[18]

Judging from the accumulation of linguistic structures with ideological underpinnings pointing in the same direction, it can be concluded that a pattern emerges of unquestioned meanings concerning the hegemonic character of US activities in the Pacific and the peaceful, constructive and sincere attitude of the Chinese side in dealing with this event. A second finding concerns the divergence between the English- and Chinese-language versions, which could point at the news outlet's divided illocution (Fill 1986) or linguistic maneuvering to satisfy diverse constituents. The imaginary interlocutor for the *RMRB* is the Chinese audience, whereas the *PD* caters to the English-speaking, international community. There seems to be a gradient in outspokenness of the Chinese official line, presented in their news outlets, with the most nationalist and ideologically most explicit language appearing in the printed version of *RMRB* and diminishing in strength in the *RMRB* online, *PD* online, and *CD* respectively.

---

[15] "Chinese official rebuffs US over air collision demand" *China Daily*, 03/04
[16] "From amity to animosity", *China Daily* comment on 05/04
[17] Ibid.
[18] "Jiang calls on US to apologize", *China Daily*, 05/04

3.2. *Hegemonic articulations*

This part examines the hegemonic character of discourse, which is to be understood in a Gramscian sense rather than the political reading of 'hegemony', as it was used in the Chinese discourse about US attitude described above. According to Gramsci (1971), hegemonic construction presents a dominant account of social reality through a set of prevailing codes, symbols, discourses and representations, which appeals to the common sense not only of the power-holders, but also of the wider public. The dominant group has an institutional and ideological advantage in setting the primary terms of reference within the hegemonic framework wherein debate takes place. Once established, or once cultural resonance with the general population has been struck, the initial interpretative framework becomes very difficult to alter fundamentally. Opposition discourses that fall outside the hegemonic framework often run the risk of being defined out of the debate, or labeled as extremist, irrational or disruptive (Hall et al. 1978). Stereotyping, for example, is a typical power strategy, because it shuts down the contingent meanings and potentialities of the Other and is thus used to disempower certain groups.

The very object of critical discourse analysis and critical linguistics is precisely discourse in which relations of power, dominance and inequality are instantiated. Power means doing things, creating space for certain forms of action and omitting others. While drawing on but also reformulating neo-Marxist notions, such as "hegemonic construction", discourse theorists argue that hegemonic, powerful articulations in texts are said to (re)produce unequal relations between people. A particular selection of evidence or source quotation is an operational framing tactic to ignore, background or perhaps even withhold key evidence or elements. Providing an unbalanced forum to news sources and elite actors strengthen unequal power distribution. The hegemonic potential of media texts is therefore determined through their monoglossic nature (Simon-Vandenbergen et al. 2007). Depending on which actors are heard, interpretations of social reality vary. Our study traces reporting processes and voices given to news actors and examines the extent to which a 'polyphone discourse' (Bakhtin 1986: 91) underlies the accounts. As Morson & Emerson (1990) explain:

> "In a monologic work, only the author, as the "ultimate semantic authority," retains the power to express a truth directly. The truth of the work is his or her truth, and all other truths are merely "represented," like "words of the second type." . . . By contrast, in a polyphonic work the form-shaping ideology itself demands that the author cease to exercise monologic control. . . . Polyphony demands a work in which several consciousnesses meet as equals and engage in a dialogue that is in principle unfinalizable" (1990: 238-239).

We can speak of a reductive character of a text when the authorship is monological rather than dialogical. In monological discourse, only one logic is discussed. A dialogical text juxtaposes different positions and adopts a structure in which arguments are followed by counterarguments. Different logics not only coexist but also inform each other.

3.2.1. Hegemonic potential of selective quoting

Selectively reconstructed frames reach their hegemonic potential when they are rationalized and represented as commonly accepted as 'natural'. Naturalization of particular voices and silencing of dissonant ones works to eliminate differences in perspectives. In China, when it comes to sensitive international affairs, foreign policy, diplomatic activities and government press conferences, only the national Chinese press agency, Xinhua, is allowed to report and spread information to the Chinese media. As the foreign policy coverage is controlled by the Party, narratives tend to be univocal, echoing the official position.[19] The monolithic construction of the collision event across the Chinese press is discussed in Bau (2001) as follows:

> "In China, when all the media use the same voice to speak, there must be someone who wants to dress up or cover up something, or somebody wants to impose some idea onto others to destroy the "wrong/incorrect" fact and to spread the "right/correct truth". The method is to intensify the bombardment of the 'correct' truth narratives, then nobody can ever see the so-called 'incorrect fact' any more. In this case, you need to be a Saint not to believe the 'truth' which has been repeated thousands of times" (2001: 75) [author's translation].

Supporting Bau's argument, findings in the present study indicate that the Chinese corpus gives an extensive forum to voices reverberating the national line. In a ventriloquizing fashion, the media narratives only incorporate other voices that legitimate their own position. Since the involvement of other participants is restricted to those in line with the official stance, the Bakhtinian concept of 'polyphonic discourse' does not hold for the Chinese narratives. The various perspectives to the event and ensuing diplomatic impasse, as can be gleaned from other Asian as well as Western sources, are absent and thus present a monoglossic account closed to interpretation.

Direct and indirect quotes of angry Chinese citizens (in China and abroad) abound, many of them asserting that the US initial expressions of regret are not equivalent to an apology. A selection of statements from foreign statesmen in the foreign media opens the floor to accusatory speech acts against the US, laudatory comments for the Chinese handling of the affair, and directive speech acts for the US to change their hegemonic attitude and show humility in apologizing. No dissenting voice is heard nor any direct quote from the US position.[20] The initial US offer for help to search the missing pilot does not appear in the corpus.

---

[19] The focus in the paper is foreign policy discourse, as articulated in the official mainstream press. In these media outlets content and style of political news reports and official speeches have remained fairly constant over the last decade. In contrast, new dynamics have changed the face of the overall Chinese media landscape in terms of commercial liberalisation, freedom to manage 'space', and formal features such as programme format and newspaper layout, technological advancements, internet discussion forums and blogging activities. Apart from official government news one can now also find advertising and plenty of entertainment and foreign programmes, giving rise to a remarkable diversification of information. Media professionals and semi-official interest groups are now allowed to play a larger role besides government representatives in the non-mainstream media units. (Lams 2007).

[20] Out of 123 articles, the *Renmin Ribao* only quotes US reactions directly in three news articles (2.4%) of the corpus. Chinese official quotes feature in 23 articles (18.6%), popular reactions get the floor in 46.2% of the news articles (incl. Chinese vox-pop interviews, expert reaction, domestic media comments and PLA quotes (22.7%), foreign reactions (23.5%)). The remainder consists of op-eds (7.3%),

Indicative of the power of foreign media on Chinese self-perception is the extensive attention to only those foreign media accounts, which publish accusatory speech acts of political leaders, such as Saddam Hussein and Fidel Castro, against the US. Only a glimpse at the headlines in the *RMRB* shows how an effort is made to give an impression of global support for the Chinese position by publishing comments from foreign dignitaries and media from various continents. On 5 April, the paper opened a column entitled "World Reaction to spy-plane collision', which ran on a daily basis to the end of April. Inclusion of international condemnation strategically validates the newspaper's stance. Great care is taken that the press articles referred to originate in the four corners of the world. Not a single media article that adopts either a more balanced or a purely pro-US viewpoint is published. However, a comparative analysis of Chinese, other Asian and Western press articles reveals that not every news outlet in the world shares the Chinese position on the matter. Having a fair knowledge of international relations, global diplomacy, and of which nations are perceived to be 'China friends' and 'US foes' facilitates interpretation of this particular choice of sources. A glance at the headlines of the three corpora may suffice to notice a particular selection of the same countries: United Arab Emirates, Saudi Arabia, Iran, Iraq, Syria, Libya, Tunisia, Kenya, Nigeria, Sudan, Togo, Tanzania, Cuba, Mexico, Costa Rica, Panama, Madagascar, Russia, Belarus, Greece, Thailand, Indonesia, Cambodia, Malaysia, Singapore, Pakistan.[21]

3.2.2. Hegemonic potential of emphasis on epistemological stance and selective use in modal structures

The monoglossic nature of a text is not only evident from selective quotation strategies but can also be gleaned from the epistemic and deontic modality markers in the narratives. We thus also look into the mode of assertions, declarations, metapragmatic references to epistemologies of 'truth and factuality' and maxim intensifiers, such as the modal adverbs and/or the relative frequence of hedging devices used by the journalists to express their stance toward the truth value of their utterances. Besides directive speech acts, the accounts are replete with Chinese voices uttering deontic modality markers like 'should', 'must' in combination with 'apologize', 'bear full responsibility', 'learn to be humble'. The same strategy holds for the headlines, in which China is put in the acting role of asserting authority ("urges", "demands"). Modal epistemic adverbs, such as 'dangran' [surely] stress the commonsensical and evidential nature of Chinese claims.

These admonishments are premised on the assumption of US responsibility, before guilt was determined, and contribute to building up a general sense that a formal US apology is the only way this problem can be resolved. A strong emphasis on 'facts'

---

human interest stories with sentimental reactions of relatives (5.6%) and factual news reports with figures of search operations (19.5%).

[21] Here are some examples of references to foreign articles: "UAE paper slams US handling of spy plane crisis"; "Mexican public denounces US hegemonist act"; Madagascar Tribune condemns US for plane collision"; "Thailand newspaper urges US to change hegemonist attitude"; "Nouvelles d'Europe denounces US hegemonist act"; "China has right to demand US apology for air collision: Syrian Daily"; "Libya newspaper condemns US invasive act"; "Castro denounces US hegemonism"; "Malaysian PM laments US spying on China"; "Lebanese Parliament speaker lauds China's stance on plane collision"; "Saddam urges countries worldwide to condemn US hegemony".

prevails in the entire corpus. The US side is criticized as 'twisting the facts', 'neglecting' facts, 'using rhetoric to fabricate justice'.[22] The following quotes illustrate this strong epistemic stance:

> "Foreign Ministry spokeswoman Zhang Qiyue said in a statement that the US side, disregarding the facts, continued to "confuse right and wrong and even falsely accuse the Chinese side" in irresponsible comments made successively by high-ranking members of the US administration in the last few days, in an attempt to shirk its responsibility. The collision incident is a serious one, for which the US side is fully responsible, Zhang said" (PD, 14/4).[23]

Emphasis on 'truth' and 'evidence' can equally be read in the following quote from the same article:

> *"We have enough evidence to prove that it was the US plane that violated flight rules by suddenly veering in a wide angle at the Chinese plane in normal flight, rammed into and damaged it, resulting in the loss of the Chinese pilot," Zhang said. "After the collision, the US spy plane intruded into China's airspace and landed at a Chinese airport without permission from the Chinese side," she said. "These facts are manifest and we have irrefutable evidence that the US side cannot deny," she added" (PD, 14/4).*

Naturalization of background assumptions, such as the belief that the US wants to block China's economic and strategic interests can have the effect of eliminating alternative perspectives on political and socio-historical relations in the East-Asian Pacific Region.

The cumulative effect of naturalization strategies and unflattering evaluative descriptions of the US acts and attitude is likely to contribute to shaping social perception. That the narrative frameworks created by the media can discursively manage the public mind and influence perception and subsequent responses to events is evidenced by results of opinion polls (e.g. Gallup polls in US between April 6-8) and messages posted on internet forums in both China and the US. The virtual Chinese-US cyber-war on *CNN*'s 'China Forum' and the *People's Daily's* 'Qiangguo [Strong Country] forum' that followed the collision shows that the Internet can contribute extensively to increasing hostility toward the Other, given the platform it offers for extremist sentiment, stereotypes, and inflammatory rhetoric (Kluver 2002).[24] Both governments were constrained in their foreign policy decisions by angry domestic public opinion, which was affected by media portrayals of the Other (Kluver 2002; Yee

---

[22] "Recent statement of US officials concerning the incident with two planes: Foreign Ministry's spokeswoman publishes her speech [author's translation]", *RMRB*, 16/04

[23] "China refutes irresponsible comments of US side on collision incident", *PD* 14/04

[24] Kluver presents the following examples of postings on *CNN's 'China Forum'* carrying distorted images of China: "When purchasing something "Made in China" supports a communist dictatorship that suppresses freedoms, tortures and murders dissidents, and bullies its neighbors with military threats then that's something I would call 'un-American' ". *Qiangguo Forum (People's Daily)* hosted articles with titles like "Showing the Ugly Face of American Hegemony', 'Never Bully the Chinese People' (Kluver 2002).

2004).[25] The opinions expressed on the internet largely followed the messages spread by news organizations. In the Chinese case, the emotional discourse from the state-run and especially the military press articles (editorials and news stories including interviews) was paralleled in web discussion forums.

3.3. *Naturalized conceptualizations of contingent processes, structures and relations*

This section looks at how particular interpretations are generalized in essentialist constructions with a mystifying effect on the openness of meaning. The fixing of identities and relations also blocks transformational historical processes. Totalizing conceptualizations can be exposed by juxtaposition of texts in a comparative study and by alternative readings. The naturalization tactic is an important mode of ideological operation in discursive practices, just as the legitimation strategy, which readily employs arguments from the legal domain, academic sources and references to law. The phrase "in accordance with the law" is a stock phrase in official Chinese discourse. The section first outlines mystification and naturalization processes in the historical field, then moves on to political perspectives to end with cultural projection of social harmony and collectivity.

3.3.1. Historical realm

In the Chinese corpus, a micro-event is placed in a macro context with highly ideological perspectives on the past and the future. A complicated incident involving abstract issues of international law, rules governing rights of aircraft in difficulties, technical details in responsibility assignment, is compressed to a single emotionally loaded image of an arrogant hegemon breaking into the Chinese home without any hint of remorse. As Slingerland et al. argue, once the metaphorical definitions settle into public consciousness, it is easy to follow the rationale that some form of repentance is required (2007: 69). The idea is literally expressed in a *New York Times* article contending that "for the Chinese, the little plane became the metaphor for 150 years of imperialist victimizing of China".[26] Examples of inserting this incident in a larger frame are the multiple references to the NATO Belgrade bombing of the Chinese embassy in 1999.

3.3.2. Political realm

In the discussion of 'Othering' as a form of boundary making, nationalism is a central ideological aspect. It can be conceived of as a "mental structure that organizes our thoughts, the central task being to categorize the complexity of reality" (Creutz-Kämppi 2008: 298). It has often been argued that nationalism has been on the rise in China and it

---

[25] According to Kluver, polls indicated that attitudes toward China had hardened among the American people with an increase of 9% -from 61 to 70%- in the number of people who viewed China as either an 'adversary' or a 'serious problem' compared to poll results of March 2000 (Ibid).

[26] Weisman, S.R. (2001) "The art and artifice of apologizing to China", *New York Times*, 13 April, A16

is especially in dislocatory times of crises, when the self feels it is being challenged by external forces that nationalist discourse resurfaces. Dai (2001), for example, states that in times of upheaval of the country and inherent social and economic divisions between rural and urban Chinese, society needs a distraction, "a common enemy – an image of the other- to bear China's agony during its historic transformation" (2001: 183). For Dai, "nationalism, without a doubt, became one of the only legitimate banners that could be summoned to remobilize the Chinese people" (2001: 184). Along the same lines, Lee (2003) maintains that state authorities desperately want to preserve ideological domination but the only ideology left is nationalism, which they try "to nurture and exploit by appeals to patriotic sentimentality and its associated practices" (2003: 60). Pugsley (2006) sees this return to familiar ideological territory as a "deliberate and considered means of operationalising existing frameworks for the control of mass audiences" (2006: 78). In the age of changing media technologies which have altered the Chinese media landscape, the discursive strategies of communication with the public "continue to rely on storytelling structures and moral tales with a long history in Chinese culture, but most successfully utilised during the Mao years" (2006: 78). Following the outrage at the accidental NATO bombing of the Chinese embassy in Belgrade in 1999, the collision presented one more occasion for the Chinese media to reinforce the image of a united China crying out at being 'bullied' by the Other.[27] Besides condemnatory diatribes against the threatening Other and laudatory predications about the Self, a general atmosphere of mourning for the lost pilot is constructed, in which the latter is glorified as a hero.[28]

The media are the arena par excellence for the reification by the PRC military sector of the missing Chinese pilot as a martyr-hero[29]. The public attention given to the missing Chinese pilot and the accompanying patriotic and anti-US sentiment is also reflected in online contributions, as can be seen in the following extract from a poem by Xiaotian, posted on the *People's Daily's* online Qiangguo [strong country] forum:

> "Wang Wei, where are you? Do you know? The bandits are going home, With hegemonic fierce. They hypocrites again will celebrate the victory of human rights, the greatness of democracy, the holiness of freedom, with lips wet with your heroic blood. The devil once again succeeds in realizing its universal value, Through trampling over the dignity of our motherland and the soul of mankind" (Shen 2007: 239).

Nationalist exhortations can be found across the corpus. An obvious example is the headline of a commentary in the *People's Daily* on 11 April: "Turn patriotic enthusiasm into strength to build a powerful nation". The rest of the article is a school example of nationalist discourse. Some extracts:

> "In handling the issue, the Chinese government has adhered to the principled stance of safeguarding state sovereignty and national dignity and opposing hegemonism and power politics, it says. […]

---

[27] Examples of anti-US diatribes as part of the 'martyr-worship' campaign for the journalists who died in the '99 bombing of the Chinese embassy in Belgrade can be found in the commemoration section of the homepage of *Guangming Daily* (Shen 2007; Gries 2001).

[28] For further information on how the hero is constructed, see Pugsley (2006).

[29] The CCP Committee of the Chinese Navy launched an official educational campaign for naval troops to 'learn from Wang' to "*make a new contribution to safeguarding state sovereignty, national dignity and realizing the reunification of the motherland*" (*PD* online, 25 April, in Shen 2007).

> The Chinese government has voiced solemn and just requests and protests to the US side and carried out a justified, advantageous and restrained struggle against US hegemonism, which has once again displayed the ability to cope with complicated situations and to handle complicated issues of the Communist Party of China (CPC) Central Committee with Jiang Zemin at the core, commentary says.[…]
> The Chinese nation is a great nation which advocates justice and fears no powers, it stresses […]
> A strong will has formed to strenuously prosper the nation, strengthen the Chinese nation, and strengthen national power, it says. […]
> It goes on to say that China has won initial success in its struggle, which still continues, noting that the struggle between the pursuers and opponents of hegemony and the uni-polar world and the multi-polar world is a long-term and complicated one and it will not be completed through one event or one round of encounters. […]
> China believes in the irresistible historic trend that justice and truth will win, it says."
> (*PD*, 11/04)

Historical materialism in the Marxist-Leninist mode of thinking still underlies these arguments. The past and the future are linked in the great assertive narrative of an unwavering belief in the inevitability of the course of history and destiny of the Chinese nation. The collective Chinese citizenry as well as foreign voices are mobilized to be part of this narrative.

3.3.3. Cultural realm

The choice to highlight some values, norms and cultural attributes gives rise to a construction of a common denominator for collective identification, which creates meaning beyond the explicit content (Creutz-Kämppi 2008: 298). This part concentrates on the construction of the Chinese cultural Self. Discursive framings about the cultural in the PRC mostly centre around unity and social solidarity. As Wodak et al. (1999) argue, "the notion of 'sameness' nourishes national identity positions." (1999: 11). Individual variability or cleavages among the Chinese society are downplayed and 'China' is constructed as a homogeneous collective, thriving with social solidarity. Just as generalization creates the monolithic Other, an essentialist, yet nebulous notion of "Chineseness" and the Self disavows any recognition of specificities within the various Chinese communities. Collective imaginaries of an ideological nature, identifiable at textual and sub-textual level, are rhetorically developed through repeated confirmations of initial unquestioned assumptions about the nature of the Self ('peace-loving') and the Other ('aggressive' and 'hegemonic').

The Chinese media accounts extensively report the condemnation of US hegemonism by Chinese people 'from all walks of life', including international law experts, academics, students, cadres and foreign affairs specialists. An extract from the above-mentioned commentary "Turn Patriotic Enthusiasm into Strength to Build a powerful Nation: Commentary" in the *RMRB* and *PD* online on 11/04 illustrates this generalization:

> "The commentary points out that all Chinese people from every ethnic group firmly support the solemn and just stance of the Chinese government and have shown strong patriotic enthusiasm and high spirits. […] Through the struggle, all Chinese people from all ethnic groups have further reached a common understanding that China needs

development, the nation needs reinvigoration, and society needs stability, the commentary says".

The scalar notions involved in the choice of the universal quantifier 'all', 'every' contribute to the overwhelming sense of a people united in common struggle against the perpetrator and the common will to build a strong nation.

We note a remarkable divergence between the Chinese-language comment in the *RMRB* "Turn patriotic enthusiasm into strength to build powerful nation: Commentary" (12/04) and the English-language report announcing this comment in the *PD* (11/04). Whilst the Chinese-language comment consistently employs the deictic references 'my', 'our' to more intensely involve the Chinese readership in the construction of a common Chinese spirit and fate, the English report uses the referential name 'China' / 'Chinese' more often. In addition to this arguably nationalist framing, cultural elements as well as the type of intended audience underlie this divergence. Clearly, the English version, an extract of which follows beneath, targets another type of readership.

> "What the United States has done is against international laws and commonly recognized principles on international relations, and has infringed China's laws and regulations, invaded China's territorial space and violated China's sovereignty, and damaged China's national security interests, the commentary says […].[30] Human life is the most valuable thing on earth, the commentary emphasizes. The safety of the missing pilot is what the CPC and the Chinese government care most about and what millions of Chinese people have been worrying about".[31] [author's marks]

To conclude this discussion on the construction of collective imaginaries in the three corpora, it can be argued that myths belonging to historical, political, and cultural spheres serve to forge consensus. The micro-event is generally presented in a larger historical framework of the foreign aggressor against the victimized Chinese society. Single events are thus employed metonymically for Western imperialism. Selective choice of sources and voices who unanimously support the official stance contribute to a general sense of Chinese legitimacy in its position. Through reiteration of certain assumptions, a process of habituation sets in, which subtly serves to preclude more explicit forms of persuasion. While fixed conceptualizations of transitory socio-political and historical processes in reality correspond with the particular ideological values favored by the Chinese leadership, and endorsed by its official media, they are presented as common-sense universals.

4. Conclusion

This paper has been tracing how a nation like China imagines the Self and the Other, and how the interaction between imaginings and representations, disseminated through the media, shape and transform social reality. The overall nationalist tone and assertiveness in epistemic modality in the media narratives exemplify the language of

---

[30] The Chinese equivalent here reads: "our laws and regulations", "our territorial space", "our sovereignty", "our national security interests" (*Renmin ribao* 12 April, 2001).

[31] The Chinese text goes as follows: "The security of 'our' missing pilot, Wang Wei, is a priority for 'our' party and government and has an influence on hundreds of millions of people of 'our' population." (Ibid.)

empowerment while structures of alienation can be found in the antagonistic portrayals of the Other as negative mirror or antipode of the Self.

Just as one can find scholarly and media debates in the West in a positivist epistemology arguing over 'What China precisely is', plenty of discussions in China abound about 'What the US represents'. Just as the 'China threat' argument is said to be a US discursive construction of the Other, predicated on the predominant way in which the US imagines itself as the indispensable nation-state in constant need of absolute security and certainty (Pan 2004), one can argue that the 'US hegemonic threat' argument is a Chinese construct of the Other, based on the way China frames itself as the nation-state in need of protection of its territorial sovereignty and integrity. Construction of a particular Self and its Other is always mutually reinforcing (Pan 2004; Laclau & Mouffe 1985). One can thus extrapolate Pan's critical argument about some US scholars' unreflective scholarship to a more general feature of media and scholarly debate in any nation, imagining being threatened by the Other and therefore constructing a reductionist representation coming at the expense of understanding the Other as a dynamic, multifaceted amalgam of different and varying components. As Pan argues, the threat of the Other is not an external reality but a ready-made category of thought within a particular way of a nation's self-imagination.

Given the overwhelming presence in the Chinese state-run press of transitive syntactical structures placing the US in the semantic role of the perpetrator of actions with a negative connotation, as well as negative evaluative labels and adjectival descriptors for the US, it can be argued that the Chinese media are carriers of ideological assertions about US responsibility in this particular event. The stereotypes propagated lead to divisive Otherization, a symbolic construction in which the binaries of postcolonial critique based on the paradigm of 'villain' and victim' form the red thread across the corpus. The accounts reduce the US to the hegemonic aggressor in their totalizing objectifications of the Other. The fluidity and contingency of identities belonging to the outgroup are fixed as absolute differences from the ingroup. A contrastive Other is thus used to define the identity of the Self. This is how the characterization of the US as 'hegemonic world police' acquires a social meaning, which cannot be disconnected from self-construction of those nations vying for global power.

Structural evidence in the collision accounts suggests that the Chinese media are used as a tool to convey a mythical sense of social harmony, patriotism and uniformity of sentiments about Chinese victimhood at the hands of foreign aggressors among all people of Chinese descent across the globe, joining each other in their outrage about this latest example of US hegemonic behavior. Different from the propaganda system before the reform era, the new market formula of the Chinese media no longer allows the researcher easy inference of any collusion between media workers and the Chinese leadership or conscious deliberation to vilify the Other and glorify the Self. As explained above, it is hard to determine intentionality, but this paper argues that both conscious and unconscious processes are at work. Surely, one has to account for the 'unconscious disposition of reporters' (Chan 2002), who have an intuitive understanding of their readers and who know what representation of the Other will appeal to the domestic readership. The systematic use of words could have an intentional origin but it may also derive from activation of 'common sense' or 'habits of mind' (Chan 2002), lying beneath their consciousness. The origin of the journalists' frames about this event lies in the combination of several factors: 1) the descriptions of

the event constructed by the PLA military who forwarded the story to the Chinese leadership on the one hand, and by the US Pentagon and State Department on the other hand; 2) the journalists' pre-existing cultural expectations or 'mental scripts' (Van Dijk 1989) of Sino-US relations and international affairs. Schema theory from cognitive psychology helps us explain meaning generation in media narratives as individual and socially shared knowledge, embedded in cultural models in the mind. As Clausen puts it,

> "In understanding the world, we pick out what our culture has already defined for us and we tend to perceive that which we have picked out in the form stereotyped for us by our culture. […] Culturally provided explanations are often relied upon to explain situations or events, as it takes more effort to break out of cultural norms" (2005: 115).

We conclude with reference to Chan (2002) and Entman (1993) that no matter how unconscious the process of activating the 'habits of mind' may be, it can exert invisible influence or domination upon readers with respect to problem definition, causal interpretation, moral evaluation and treatment recommendation.

References

Anderson, B. (1983) *Imagined communities: Reflections of the origin and spread of nationalism*. London: Verso.

Bau, B. (2001) Dzai Jungmei zhuangji shijian yingchi de jiching beihou: meiti chaujung he minyi kungzhi [Behind the emotion after the Sino-Am. EP3 collision: media manipulation and public opinion control]. *Dandai Zhongguo yanjiu* [Contemp. Chinese Studies] 2.73: 74-76.

Bakhtin, M. (1986) *Speech genres and other late essays* (V.W. McGee, Trans). Austin: University of Texas Press.

Beckett, K. (1996) Culture and the politics of signification: The case of child sexual abuse. *Social Problems* 43: 57-76.

Beller, M., and J. Leerssen (eds.) (2007) *Imagology: The cultural construction and literary representation of national characters. A critical survey*. Amsterdam: Rodopi.

Billig, M., S. Condor, D. Edwards, M. Gane, D. Middleton, and A. Radley (1988) *Ideological dilemmas*. London: Sage.

Brady, A.M. (2006) Guiding hand: The role of the CCP Central Propaganda department in the current era. *Westminster Papers in Communication and Culture* 3.1: 57-77.

Brantlinger, P. (1990) *Crusoe's footprints: Cultural studies in Britain and America*. London: Routledge.

Chan, W.S. (2002) Media discourse and image construction: A study of New York Times's reports about the Hainan spy-pane collision incident. *Hong Kong Journal of Sociology* 3: 123-146.

Chang, D.J. (2001) Tsung hungkuan hishi shiye jiedu mei "jung" chunji pengzhuang shigu [Interpreting/decoding the 'Sino'-American EP3 collision incident from a macro-historical point of view]. *Chinese Communist Party Studies* 27.5: 104-106.

Cheng, M. (2002) The Standoff- what is unsaid? A pragmatic analysis of the conditional marker 'if'.*Discourse & Society* 13.3: 309-317.

Cheng, J.Y.S., and K.L Ngok (2004) The 2001 "Spy" plane incident revisited: The Chinese perspective. *The Journal of Chinese Political Science* 9.1: 63-83.

Clausen, L. (2005) Intercultural encounters in the global transmission of news: the perception and production of cultural images. *Nordicom Review* 26.2: 103-131.

Clifford, J. (1988) *The predicament of culture: Twentieth-Century ethnography, literature, and art.* Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Creutz-Kämppi, K. (2008) The Othering of Islam in a European context. *Nordicom Review* 29.2: 295-308.

Dai, J.H. (2001) Behind global spectacle and national image making. *Positions: East Asia Cultures Critique* 9.1: 161-186.

Donnelly, E. (2004) The US-China EP-3 incident: Legality and realpolitik. *Journal of Conflict and Security Law* 9.1: 25-42.

Dyserinck, H., and M. Fischer (eds.) (1985) *Internationale Bibliographie zur Geschichte und Theorie der Komparatistik.* Stuttgart: Anton-Hiersemann.

Edgar, A., and P. Sedgwick (1999) *Key concepts in cultural theory.* London: Routledge.

Entman, R.M. (1991) Framing US coverage of international news: Contrasts in narratives of the KAL and Iran Air Incidents? *Journal of Communications* 41.4: 6-27.

Entman, R.M. (1993) Framing: Toward clarification of a fractured paradigm. *Journal of Communication* 43.4: 51-58.

Fill, A. (1986) 'Divided illocution' in conversational and other situations – and some of its implications. *International Review of Applied Linguistics in Language Teaching* 24.1: 27-34.

Fursich, E (2002) How can global journalists represent the 'other'? *Journalism* 3.1: 57-84.

Galtung, J., and M.H. Ruge (1965) *The structure of foreign news. Journal of Peace Research* 1: 64-90.

Gamson, W., and A. Modigliani (1989) Media discourse as a symbolic contest: Constructionist approach. *American Journal of Sociology* 95: 1-37.

Gans, H.J. (1979) *Deciding what's news.* NY: Pantheon.

Graber, D.A. (1989) *Mass media and American politics.* Washington, DC: Congressional Quarterly.

Gramsci, A. (1971) *Prison notebooks.* London: Lawrence and Wishart.

Gries, P.H. (2001) Tears of rage: Chinese nationalist reactions to the Belgrade embassy bombing. *The China Journal* 46, July: 25-43.

Gries, P.H., and K.P. Peng (2002) Culture clash? Apologies East and West" in *Journal of Contemporary China* 11.30: 173-178.

Hall, S., T. Jefferson, J. Clarke, and B. Roberts (1978) *Policing the crisis: Mugging, the state, and law and order.* New York: Holmes and Meier.

Hao, Y.F., and L. Su (2007) Beautiful imperialist or warmongering hegemon? Contemporary Chinese views of the US. In D. Farber (ed.), *What they think of us: International perceptions of the U.S. since 9/11*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, pp. 74-94.

Höijer, B. (2007) A socio-cognitive perspective on ideological horizons in meaning-making. In B. Höijer (ed.), *Ideological horizons in media and citizen discourses*. Göteborg: Nordicom, pp. 33-49.

Hoffmann, J. (1980) *Völkerbilder in Ost und West. Auswahlbibliographie*. Dortmund: Rheinländisch Westfälische Auslandsgesellschaft.

Hook, S.W., and X.Y. Pu (2006) Framing Sino-American relations under stress: A re-examination of news coverage of the 2001 spy plane crisis. *Asian Affairs: an American Review* 33.3: 167-183.

Huang, Y., and S.M. Leung (2005) Western-led press coverage of mainland China and Vietnam during the SARS crisis: Reassessing the concept of 'Media representation of the Other'. *Asian Journal of Communication* 15.3: 302-318.

Jenkins, R. (1996) *Social identity*. London: Routledge.

Kan, S.A., R. Best, C. Bolkcom, R. Chapman, R. Cronin, K. Dumbaugh, S. Goldman, M. Manyin, W. Morrison, R. O'Rourke, and D. Ackerman (2001) China-US aircraft collision incident of April 2001: Assessments and policy implications. *Congressional Research Service Report for Congress*, October 10, 1-37.

Keefe, J. (2002) A tale of 'two very sorries' redux. *Far Eastern Economic Review*, March 21, 30-33.

Kluver, A.R. (2002) The logic of new media in international affairs. *New Media & Society* 4.4: 499-517.

Laclau E., and C. Mouffe (1985) *Hegemony and socialist strategy: Toward a radical democratic politics.* London: Verso.

Lams, L. (2005) Language and politics in the Chinese English-language newspaper The China Daily. *The Stockholm Journal of East-Asian Studies* 15: 109-137.

Lams, L. (2007) Continuity or change in language practices of the Chinese official and media discourse since the late 1990s? Paper presented at International Conference "Defining the Field: Themes in Contemporary China Studies", Centre for Research in the Arts,Cambridge University,13-15April..

Lams, L. (2008) From collision to compromise: "We are sorry" – one utterance, two interpretations. A discourse-analytical approach to the official rhetoric and the international media coverage of the US surveillance plane collision with the Chinese jet fighter. Paper presented at IAMCR International Media Research Congress, Stockholm, 20-25 July.

Lan, P.F. (2003) Rational reflections on the plane collision incident. *Chinese education and Society* 36.1: 73-78.

Le, E. (2006) *The spiral of 'anti-other rhetoric': Discourses of identity and the international media echo.* Amsterdam/Philadelphia: John Benjamins Publishing Company.

Lee, G.B. (2003) Re-taking tiger mountain by television: Televisual socialization of the contemporary Chinese consumer". In G.B. Lee (ed.), *Chinas unlimited: Making the imaginaries of China and Chineseness*. London: RoutledgeCurzon, pp. 55-78.

Lewis, M.K. (2002) An analysis of state responsibility for the Chinese-American airplane collision incident. *The New York University Law Review* 77 (Nov.): 1404-1441.

Littlewood, R., and M. Lipsedge (1997) *Aliens and Alienists: Ethnic minorities and psychiatry.* London: Routledge, 3rd ed.

Lippmann, W. (1922) *Public opinion*. New York: McMillan.

Moerman, M. (1974) Accomplishing ethnicity. In R. Turner (ed.), *Ethnomethodology*. Penguin, Harmondsworth, pp. 54-68.

Mowlana, H. (1996) *Global communication in transition: The end of diversity*? London: Sage.

Morson, G.S., and C. Emerson (1990) *Mikhail Bakhtin: Creation of a prosaics*. Stanford: Stanford University Press.

Moscovici, S. (1998) The history and actuality of social representations. In U. Flick (ed.), *The psychology of the social.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, pp. 209-247.

Mulvenon, J. (2002) Civil-Military relations and the EP-3 crisis: A content analysis. *China Leadership Monitor* 1 (winter): 1-11.

Neibu tongxun [Internal Report]. News Bureau, CCP Central Propaganda Department, 2003/15: 4.

Olausson, U. (2007) The ideological horizons of citizenship. National media as discursive bridge. In B. Höijer (ed.), *Ideological horizons in media and citizen discourses*. Göteborg: Nordicom, pp. 51-75.

O'Sullivan, T., J. Hartley, D. Saunders, M. Montgomery, M. and J. Fiske (1994) *Key concepts in communication and cultural studies*. London: Routledge.

Pageaux, D.H. (1983) *La recherche en littérature comparé en France. Aspects et problèmes*. Paris: S.F.L.G.C.

Pan, C.X. (2004) The 'China threat' in American self-imagination: The discursive construction of 'other' as power politics. *Alternatives* 29: 305-331.

Potter, J., and M. Wetherell (1992) *Discourse and the legitimation of exploitation*. New York: Columbia University Press.

PRC Foreign Ministry Press Release (2001) Spokesman on Chinese military airplane bumped by a U.S. military surveillance plane, April 1, 2001. Available at http://www.fmprc.gov.cn/eng/9519.html (accessed on 10/04/2001).

Pugsley, P.C. (2006) Constructing the hero: Nationalistic news narratives in contemporary China. *Westminster Papers in Communication and Culture* 3.1: 77-92.

Renwick, N., and Q. Cao (2003) Modern political communication in China. In G.D.Rawnsley & M.Y. Rawnsley (eds.), *Political Communications in Greater China*. London: RoutledgeCurzon, pp. 62-82.

Riggins, S.H. (ed.) (1997) *The language and politics of exclusion*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Said, E.W. (2003) [1978] *Orientalism*. London: Penguin Books.

Shen, S. (2007) "Holding nationalist flags against red flags" – anti-American icons in contemporary China and their reconstruction by the public (1999-2003). *East Asia* 24: 229-250.

Slingerland, E., E.M. Blanchard, and L. Boyd-Judson (2007) Collision with China: conceptual metaphor analysis, somatic marking, and the EP-3 Incident. *International Studies Quarterly* 51.1: 53-77.

Simon-Vandenbergen, A.M., P.R.R. White, and K. Aijmer (2007) Presupposition and 'taking-for-granted' in mass communicated political argument. In A. Fetzer & G.E. Lauerbach (eds.), *Political Discourse in the Media*. Amsterdam/Philadelphia: John Benjamins Publishing Company. Pp. 31-74.

Siebenmann, G. (2004) La investigación de las imágenes mentales - Aspectos metodológicos. In J.M.López de Abiada & A. López Bernasocchi (eds.), *Imágenes de España en culturas y literaturas europeas (siglos XVII-XVIII)*. Madrid: Verbum, pp. 339-349.

Stanzel, F.K., I. Weiler, and W. Zacharasiewicz (eds.) (1999) *Europäischer Völkerspiegel. Imagologisch-ethnographische Studien zu den Völkertafeln des fruühen 18. Jahrhunderts*. Heidelberg: Universitätsverlag Carl Winter.

Tajfel, H. (1981) *Human groups and social categories studies in social psychology*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Terrill, R. (2003) *The new Chinese empire and what it means for the US*. New York: Basic Books.

Tian, D.X., and C.C. Chao (2008) The American hegemonic responses to the US-China mid-air plane collision. In *International Journal of Communication* 2: 1-19.

Torode, G. (2001) Sides knew risk of close encounters, *South China Morning Post*, April 6, p.7

Van Dijk, T.A. (1984) *Structures of international news: A case study of the world's press*. Amsterdam: University of Amsterdam.

Van Dijk, T.A. (1988) *A news analysis: Case studies of international and national news in the Press*. Hillsdale: Lawrence Erlbaum.

Van Dijk, T.A. (1989) Social cognition and discourse. In H.Giles and R.P. Robinson (eds.), *Handbook of social psychology and language*. Chichester: Wiley, pp. 163-183.

Verschueren, J. (1999) *Understanding pragmatics*. London: Arnold

Weisman, S.R. (2001) The art and artifice of apologizing to China. In *The New York Times*, 13 April, A16.

Wodak, R., R. de Cillia, M. Resigi, and K. Liebhart (1999) *The discursive construction of national identity*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press.

Xu Wu (2002) Another collision: How mainstream Chinese and American newspapers framed the Sino-US spy plane collision. M.A. thesis, University of Florida.

Yee, A.S. (2004) Semantic ambiguity and joint deflections in the Hainan negotiation. *China: An International Journal* 2.1: 53-82.

Zhang, H. (2001) Culture and apology: The Hainan island incident. *World Englishes* 20.3: 383-391.

Zhang, J.Y., Q. Qiu, and G.T. Cameron (2004) A contingency approach to the Sino-US conflict Resolution. *Public Relations Review* 30: 391-399.

Zhang, X.L. (2005) News framing: A comparison of the New York Times and the People's Daily coverage of Sino-US spy plane collision of April 1, 2001. M.A. thesis, University of Florida.

LUTGARD LAMS is Associate Professor in Pragmatics, Media Discourse Analysis and Intercultural Communication at the College-University Brussel (HUB) and also teaches "Language and Politics in China" at the Sinology Department of the Catholic University of Louvain (KU Leuven). Her areas of scholarly interest include political communication and the pragmatics of language and ideology in media discourse. Given her extensive teaching experience in East-Asia, she focuses her case studies on discourses in and about the greater Chinese region, for which she is currently establishing a Brussels

Center on Chinese Discourse Studies. She has published various articles on identity politics and nationalism in China and Taiwan, Chinese official discourse, and cross-Strait relations as represented in Chinese/Taiwanese media discourses.

Address: University-College Brussels, Department of Languages and Literature, 1030 Brussels, Belgium.
E-mail: lut.lams@hubrussel.be