

2007

# The discourse of disease : the representation of SARS - the China daily and the South China Morning Post

Jie DUAN

Follow this and additional works at: [https://commons.ln.edu.hk/eng\\_etd](https://commons.ln.edu.hk/eng_etd)



Part of the [English Language and Literature Commons](#)

---

## Recommended Citation

Duan, J. (2007). The discourse of disease: The representation of SARS - the China daily and the South China Morning Post (Master's thesis, Lingnan University, Hong Kong). Retrieved from [http://dx.doi.org/10.14793/eng\\_etd.5](http://dx.doi.org/10.14793/eng_etd.5)

This Thesis is brought to you for free and open access by the Department of English at Digital Commons @ Lingnan University. It has been accepted for inclusion in Theses & Dissertations by an authorized administrator of Digital Commons @ Lingnan University.

## **Terms of Use**

The copyright of this thesis is owned by its author. Any reproduction, adaptation, distribution or dissemination of this thesis without express authorization is strictly prohibited.

All rights reserved.

**THE DISCOURSE OF DISEASE:  
THE REPRESENTATION OF SARS –  
THE CHINA DAILY AND THE SOUTH CHINA MORNING POST**

**DUAN JIE**

**MPHIL**

**LINGNAN UNIVERSITY**

**2007**

**THE DISCOURSE OF DISEASE:  
THE REPRESENTATION OF SARS –  
THE CHINA DAILY AND THE SOUTH CHINA MORNING POST**

**By  
DUAN Jie**

**A thesis  
Submitted in partial fulfillment  
of the requirements for the Degree of  
Master of Philosophy in English**

**Lingnan University**

**2007**

## **ABSTRACT**

### **The discourse of Disease: The representation of SARS – The China Daily and the South China Morning Post**

**By**

**DUAN Jie**

**Master of Philosophy**

This thesis is a case study on newspaper discourse representation of SARS. The study uses two representative English newspapers in Asia – the China Daily (“CD”) and the South China Morning Post (“SCMP”). By comparing the discursive construction of the same event – the outbreak of SARS - in the two newspapers, it aims to reveal that the practice of news follows institutional, cultural and political assumptions, and also make visible the two newspapers’ embedded attitudes and ideological positions. The methodology is a critical corpus linguistics (CCL) approach, especially using KWIC format (Key Word in context), word frequency, collocation, and concordance data, which is analyzed according to transitivity systems of systemic functional grammar (SFG). The main approach of the study is achieved by a computer-assisted corpus analysis with the help of software “Wordsmith 3.0” (on line version). Results indicate that through the comparison of the newspapers’ corpora, there are statistically significant differences between the two newspapers’ word patterns. First, in the context of SARS, the CD corpus and the SCMP corpus shows different word choice and words frequency in occupying disease-relevant and human-relevant words. Second, when SARS is situated as the node word, the collocation results discuss the observation that the CD tends to treat the SARS epidemic from a national struggle perspective, while the standpoint of the SCMP is more based on the human health and safety, and its social role as the fourth estate. Moreover, the collocation of the three selected keywords is summarized for finding out the general patterns of their concordance lines. Third, according to further concordancing analysis, the study investigates to what extent critical corpus linguistics and transitivity systems of systemic functional grammar can be mutually reinforced and interpreted within the disease discourse context, textually, culturally

and ideologically. In particular, a power hierarchy model is established and used in the transitivity analysis. Results show that the two selected newspapers discursively constructed the SARS-issue in a different way, and these differences help to understand how the ideologies work in both newspapers.

**Keywords: critical corpus linguistics, disease discourse, SARS, KWIC, collocation, concordancing.**

## DECLARATION

I declare that this is an original work based primarily on my own research,  
and I warrant that all citations of previous research, published or unpublished,  
have been duly acknowledged.

---

(DUAN Jie)

Date

## CONTENTS

LIST OF TABLES	iii
LIST OF FIGURES	iv
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT	v
Chapter	
1. Introduction	1
2. Literature Review	2
2.1 Literature on media discourse analysis	2
2.1.1. Media discourse	2
2.1.2. Critical Linguistics (CL) vs. Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA)	14
2.1.3. Critical Corpus Linguistics (CCL)	19
2.1.4 Systemic Functional Grammar (SFG)	25
2.2 Literature on newspapers	28
2.2.1 Introduction	28
2.2.2 Institutional practice	29
2.2.3 Cultural assumptions	36
2.2.4 Political beliefs	38
3. Methodology	40
3.1. Introduction	40
3.2. Data collection	40
3.3. Corpora analysis	44
3.3.1. Introduction	44
3.3.2. Keyness and Keywords	44
3.3.3. Word groups	47
3.3.4. Collocation	48
3.3.5. Concordance lines	50
4. Keyword-relevant-vocabulary (“KRV”) Analysis	51
4.1 Introduction	51
4.2.Disease-relevant-keyword-relevant-vocabulary(‘DR-KRV’)Analysis	51
4.3.Human-relevant-keyword-relevant-vocabulary (‘HR-KRV’) Analysis	57
4.3.1. Introduction	57
4.3.2. HR-KRV-PE Analysis	58
4.4.4. HR-KRV-SO Analysis	63
5. Collocation Analysis	68
5.1. Introduction	68
5.2. Collocation analysis	68
5.3. Word patterns	69

5.4. Word collocates	74
5.5. Collocation and concordance lines	76
5.5.1. DR-KRV collocation – disease	77
5.5.2. HR-KRV-PE collocation – patients	77
5.5.3. HR-KRV-SO collocation – government	79
6. Concordance lines	81
6.1. Processes Types	81
6.2. Power Hierarchy Model	82
6.3. KRV concordance lines analysis	84
6.3.1. DR-KRV – disease	84
6.3.2. HR-KRV-PE – patients	87
6.3.3. HR-KRV-SO – government.	90
7. Conclusion	96
8. Discussion	101
Reference	119
Appendix	

## LIST OF TABLES

Table 2.1.4.1	Typical functions of group and phrase classes	26
Table 2.1.4.2.	Four process types	27
Table 3.2	The corpora of CD and SCMP established (“SARS” as search word)	43
Table 3.3.2	Keywords and categories in the SC and the SS	46
Table 3.3.3	Second stage of the two-categories of keywords-relevant-vocabulary (“KRV”)	47
Table 4.2.1	DA-KRV and their numbers/percentage among the CDC and the SCMP	51
Table 4.2.2.	DA-KRV alarming degrees in the CDC and the SCMPC	56
Table 4.3.2.1.	HA-KRV-PE and their numbers/percentages among the corpus	58
Table 4.3.2.2.	Three categories of HA-KRV-PE: Human Roles PE, Physical PE and Positive/Negative Emotional PE	59
Table 5.3.1.	Word patterns of SARS in the CDC	63
Table 5.3.2.	Word patterns of the SCMPC	69
Table 5.4.1.	Word collocates in the CDC	72
Table 5.4.2.	Word collocates in the SCMPC	75
Table 5.5.2.1.	Collocates of patients in the CDC	78
Table 5.5.2.2.	Collocates of patients in the SCMPC	78
Table 5.5.3.	Collocates of government in the SCMPC	79
Table 6.2.	Power hierarchy in process clauses and their participants in newspaper discourse	83

## LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 2.1.2.1	Discourse type and discourse analysis procedures	16
Figure 2.1.2.2	Dimensions of discourse and discourse analysis	18
Figure 4.2	DA-KRV frequency % comparison	53
Figure 6.3.1	Relative % of disease in the CDC and the SCMP	84
Figure 6.3.2	Relative % of patients in the CDC and the SCMP	88
Figure 6.3.3	Relative % of government in the CDC and the SCMP	90

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The dissertation would never have been completed without the help offered by Prof. Goatly, Dr. Ingham, and Dr. Ding in the English department of Lingnan University.

## **1. Introduction**

In 2003, the disease known as Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome, “SARS”, occurred in Asia and took hundreds of lives. It first appeared in November 2002 in Guangdong Province, China. Whether one tuned into television news channels, read newspapers or surfed the Internet, throughout the year, there were constantly alternating images of people hurrying through airports wearing surgical masks.

The purpose of this study is to analyze the discursive construction of the coverage of SARS by two English language newspapers in Asia, the South China Morning Post (“SCMP”) and the China Daily (“CD”). One aspect of this study is to examine the responsibilities and functions of media in covering a spectacular event. Many critics contend that media coverage of SARS in 2003 “has done more to alarm people than inform them about the disease.”<sup>1</sup>

Therefore, another aim of this study is to see what impact news coverage of SARS had in creating and manipulating a sense of fear and panic among people throughout Asia, and in particular those in Hong Kong. While the story can never fully be told in numbers, the death rate from SARS was

---

<sup>1</sup> (<http://www.retirementwithapurpose.com/kmsars.html>.)

extremely low, fewer than five percent of those infected, but from the media accounts, one would have assumed the mortalities to be much higher. While the media in Hong Kong may have blown the dangers of SARS out of proportion, newspapers and other media in China may have been equally counterproductive, but rather than reporting too much information, the media may have reported too little. In China, the media has been criticized for having intentionally suppressed and concealed the seriousness of the SARS virus.

Another aspect of this study is to use the SARS event to highlight how media can often interpret and represent stories differently as a result of institutional, political and cultural factors. However, based on the language perspective (it seems little has been investigated in this respect so far), this study aims to link the language usage in the media with the cultural assumptions and different media industries' attitudes and underlying ideologies in China and Hong Kong.

This study offers another avenue to apply and understand the importance of critical linguistics. It also aims to further spread the understanding of the application of corpus linguistics, including data on word frequency, collocation, concordancing, etc. These devices are designed as a methodology "package" for the critical linguistics analysis in the current

study, since the project will utilize word process software (Wordsmith 3.0) when analyzing the data.

## **2. Literature Review**

### **2.1. Literature on media discourse analysis**

#### **2.1.1. Media Discourse**

Since the well-known Glasgow University Media Group published their first *Bad News* study about TV-news in 1976, and a book called *More Bad News* in 1980, concluding that industrial news is biased in favor of the dominant position of government or factory directors, much research has focused on critical/ideological analysis of the media discourse. Media is described as a major cultural and ideological force, in which the social relations and political issues are the normal focus of production and popular ideologies in the audience are addressed (Hall, 1980). In other words, media discourses, news media for example, are concerned not only with media “texts”, but also “contexts” – phenomena in culture and society, ideologies, power, dominance, discrimination, racism, sexism, media access of elites, the uses and effects of the media with the audience and so on (van Dijk, 1985). These require that news media discourse analysis be applied to various levels and dimensions.

Fowler (1991:4) claims that ‘news is a representation in this sense of construction; it is not a value-free reflection of “facts”, a term which has become a cliché when discussing a topic like press freedom, news bias, or media control’. As Hall puts it (1978), the media do not simply and

transparently report events which are “naturally” newsworthy in themselves. News is ‘the end product of a complex process which begins with a systematic sorting and selecting of events and topics according to a socially constructed set of categories’ (Fowler, 1991:18). According to Eagleton (2004), news is not found or gathered but is a creation of the journalistic process. It is not something that happens, but rather phenomena that can be regarded and presented as “newsworthy”. The criteria for this are known as “news values” and are said to perform a gate-keeping role, filtering and restricting news input. The news values will be discussed in more detail in the second part of literature review, when different newspaper institutions are introduced and compared.

However, while it is true that many have noticed ‘the role of the press as a watchdog for inefficiency, injustice, corruption and scandals’ (Goatly, 2000:247), the fact is those with political and economic power take the press under control. For instance, the newspapers’ dependence on their owner corporations and on advertisers make them profit-making organizations, which have to take responsibility for both the owners and advertisers. Besides, the subjectivity of the editorial policy and different layers of news selection and decision may dispel the myth of objectivity of the media. Thus, to avoid exaggerating the function and uniqueness of the media’s role, it is useful to refer to the media as ‘helping to construct

versions of reality' or as representing reality discursively (Macdonald, 2003).

The study of media news, which has been suggested here, is actually a study on how the world (i.e. world events) is constructed linguistically and discursively.

The classic example of media discourse analysis probably is Trew's (1979) examining news reports of the same events which appeared in the English national daily press. In his influential study, he illustrated how linguistic expression depends on the relationship between newspapers and social ideologies, and demonstrated the linguistics of ideological processes and ideological conflict, particularly in media/news discourse. The event was the coverage of the 1977 Notting Hill Carnival in London. After comparing the headlines of the newspapers reports, Trew suggested that the response to the event was even more varied than the headlines suggest. Then, he chose two representative newspapers to compare, the Sun and the other is the Morning Star. He concluded ultimately that the contrasts between their treatments of the Carnival event are most sharp and clear, due to their different political readership and circulation.

To take their headlines as examples: the Sun's headline is 'INTO BATTLE! Riot shields out as the police storm Carnival mob' and the Morning Star's headline is 'FIGHTING MARS CARNIVAL AFTER A DAY OF PEACE'.

In the Sun's headline, there are three categories of participants, with "police", "mob" and "riot shields", while the Morning Star's includes processes and relations between processes. Furthermore, in terms of the context of the reports, Trew found that not only does the frequency of participants' difference matter, but so too does their distribution as agents or affected, as active or passive in processes of causal transaction. Respective patterns of distribution 'are at the heart of the expression of ideology' (Trew, 1979:123). The terms of "process" and "participant" are used by Halliday as process covers all phenomena to which a specification of time attaches, whether they are events, relations or states and participant covers in the first instance the entities involved in processes.

The methodology was analyzing each sentence from the reports according to their participants and processes. Trew created a matrix box, which is suitable for analyzing texts. The terms on the side of the matrix represent the actors and the affected in transitive processes, and the ones along the top the affected participants. The occurrence of a transitive clause in a text is recorded with a T in the square. The occurrence of an intransitive clause is recorded with an N on the diagonal. The example below shows three clauses. T1 shows 'Youths hit the police', T2 shows 'the police hit the youths' and N shows 'The youths ran', etc.

	Police	Youths
Police		T2
Youths	T1	N

This matrix is a record of every clause in the chosen texts. The author, after his careful analysis, found that these two reports from two newspapers differ in at least two ways in how they present things. In the Sun the processes are presented explicitly as interactions between youths and police. While in the Morning Star the processes are focal, and the participants' interactions are less frequent. Second, he noted how participants are described in the two newspapers and reveals that the Sun employs the lexical item "youth" in many different ways whereas the Star does not have this much variation.

In order to understand these underlying differences, Trew further related the news reports to their corresponding editorials. In the editorial the day after these two news reports, the author again found that in the Morning Star 'the activities are marked out by the use of special vocabulary, but not the people involved' (1979:134). In the Sun editorial, on the other hand, he noted the use of a special and somewhat 'rich' vocabulary for the people participating. Besides the differences in categorizations of participants, the other difference is how the events at the Notting Hill Carnival are related to other specific

events, like disturbances at football matches. These cases all presented as cases of disruption of communal leisure activities, a challenge to the law and a threat to the citizens. According to the editorial analysis, the author claimed that the respective editorials represent an acknowledgement of the existence of ideologies expressed in both newspapers, which are in line with 'the systems of categorizations of participants and processes in the news reports' (1979:138).

Finally, the author indicated that 'the framework of interpretation and selection which characterizes the ideological position of a newspaper is more than a set of terms for report and comment...but the views of various combinations of social forces and practices...(a newspaper) has different degrees of access to and different degrees of influence or control in the determination of the terms in which information is formulated and social reality represented' (1979:140). Since discourse is, in Trew's mind, a field of both ideological processes and linguistic processes, for him 'what the linguistic analysis offers is a reliable grasp of the ideological determinations of discourse, and it shows the marks of its engagement in social processes and of some of the dynamics and stages in the reproductions and transformation of ideology' (1979:156).

Before talking about the linguistic theories of ideological study, the importance of Sontag's influential book *Illness as metaphor* (1991) needs to be mentioned here, especially when the topic of the news texts study is the SARS disease. In the 1880s, the military metaphor first came into wide use in medicine, when bacteria/viruses were identified as causing disease by entering the body (Sontag 1991:67). The military metaphor in medicine, according to Sontag, became popular with 'the identification of bacteria as agents of disease. They were said to "invade" or "infiltrate"'.

Since then military metaphors have more and more come to infuse all aspects of the description of the medical situation. Disease is seen as the invasion of alien organisms, to which the body responds by its own military operations, such as the mobilizing of immunological 'defences', and medicine is 'aggressive' as in most chemotherapies (p.95).

The discourse has a long history of describing disease, cancer for example. The metaphors in descriptions of cancer are 'drawn...from the language of warfare: every physician and every attentive patient is familiar with, if perhaps inured to, this military terminology'. She said that 'we have had wars against poverty, now replaced by "the war on drugs", as well as wars against specific diseases, such as cancer' (1991:96). Thus, cancer cells do not simply multiply; they are 'invasive'....With the patient's body considered to be under attack ('invasion'), the only treatment is counter-attack' (1991:65). However, the difference is also obvious as Sontag indicated, 'war-making is

one of the few activities that people are not supposed to view “realistically”; that is, with an eye to expense and practical outcome. In all-out war, expenditure is all-out, imprudent –war being defined as an emergency in which no sacrifice is excessive. But the wars against diseases are not just calls for more zeal, and more money to be spent on research. The metaphor implements the way particularly dreaded diseases are envisaged as an alien ‘other’, as enemies are in modern war; and the move from the demonization of the illness to the attribution of fault to the patient is an inevitable one, no matter if patients are thought of as victims’ (1991:97). Sontag’s analysis of the military metaphor in disease in general will be seen as relevant in the latter part of the discussion to the new disease of SARS, where the news coverage also relies on typical military figures of speech.

Goatly (2007) showed that the lexis reflecting Sontag’s military metaphor was widespread in English, by giving details of the metaphor theme DISEASE IS INVASION.

This (the metaphor theme DISEASE IS WAR) constructs disease of any kind (whether caused by bacteria/viruses or not) as an **attack** by **invaders** ‘viruses or bacteria’, or **foreign bodies** from outside. Indeed, a recent TV series *The Body Invaders* ended with a programme about arthritis and rheumatism! The bacteria **invade** ‘enter the body’, and may **strike down** ‘cause illness or death to’ the

victims, if they **succumb** ‘become ill’. However, the body may **defend** itself, **fight, combat** ‘struggle to survive’ the disease, through **resistance** ‘immune response’. Medicine can attempt to **conquer** or **vanquish** ‘eliminate’ a disease once and for all (though the military may keep stocks for biological warfare).  
(Chapter 2)

Thus, metaphorically, the invasion of disease/bacteria “attacks” the human body. The treatment is to “counter-attack” or “resist”. The result would be that either one “defeats” the disease or “is defeated” by it. Moreover, Goatly (2006) described the invasive disease as an outsider invading infiltrating the body. The metaphor DISEASE IS INVASION illustrates the idea that outsiders are normally considered evil, so that we need to defeat them, like an invading army that needs to be repulsed and kept out.

Moreover, Goatly adds that the military metaphor of disease functions when social organization is the body/health, which will be threatened by the external ideology – symbolized as disease. He takes the communist ideology as a good example of this. The spread of communistic ideology, a kind of so-called disease, is symbolized by communist troops’ invasion. Thus, DISEASE AS INVASION is reversed into INVASION IS DISEASE. Given this reversal, it is easy to understand the metaphor where immigrants are treated as invaders/diseases, since they both come from the outside or the

external body. Sontag (1991) found that ‘authoritarian political ideologies have a vested interest in promoting fear, a sense of the imminence of takeover by aliens – and real diseases are useful material. Epidemic diseases usually elicit a call to ban the entry of foreigners/immigrants. And xenophobic propaganda has always depicted immigrants as bearers of disease’ (1991:147).

Coincidentally and interestingly, we do find a similar pattern in the reporting of the SARS outbreak. The underlying Hong Kong ideology determines that as a city of victims, Hong Kong was invaded by the invasive disease from Mainland China, especially when it was realized that the source of SARS came from commonly consumed animals sold in Guangdong province, China. Metaphorically speaking it can be said that a disease bearer did bring disease from the Mainland to Hong Kong. The situation reinforces Hong Kong’s societal negative views on the immigrants, pollution, etc. from Mainland China. Victims suggest innocence. Thus, the innocent Hong Kong people, on the other hand, have to contend with fear, suspicion and discrimination from other foreign countries. They themselves were banned from entering many countries on account of the possibility that they might carry the killer disease – SARS. To this extent, Hong Kong potential disease-carriers were regarded as invaders or outside bacteria and were obviously not welcomed.

What makes SARS reportage even more interesting is that it can also be considered disease media discourse. Fowler's (1991) study on the salmonella-in-eggs affair provides a good example of this nature. He described this affair as "press hysteria", for 'the great egg scare was not a medical phenomenon, not an epidemic; it was a construct of discourse, a formation and transformation of ideas in the public language of the newspapers and television' (148). The situation might not be exactly the same as the SARS outbreak, which was in fact a genuine medical issue by nature, although there was the tendency to either over-report it or under-report it. Fowler found that the discursive output of media in relation to the salmonella affair was massive, and astonishingly complex. The participants that were included in the coverage included the food industry, government departments, government and opposition, experts, press and the people. He observed that this produced an increasing stress in public announcements on the responsibility of 'the consumer' or 'the housewife'. This reminds me of some informative advertisements these days, teaching the public about hygiene or cleaning the house, etc. The dogma of individual responsibility was a central part, or at least one of the central parts of the discourse. Besides, public and media concern continued at a high level, even when the salmonella crisis was over. They were concerned with a particular focus on food production and farming practices at this time.

Linguistically speaking, Fowler indicated that ‘a different discursive strategy for intensifying hysteria is the rhetoric of quantification; and this is really the dominant stylistic feature of the discourse (166)’. The best example was that the number of ‘reported cases’ of either ‘food poisoning’ or ‘salmonella poisoning’ inevitably blurs and subjectively became the impression rather than the figures.

Some patterns emerged, as Fowler shows, in the choice of phrases that frame the food poisoning issue, such as “salmonella outbreak”, “the scare over infected eggs”, “a major epidemic”, “the poisoning episode”, “Britain’s worst water pollution case” and also, “the salmonella crisis”. Fowler considers this as an example of how the media were aware of the journalistic opportunities provided by “the salmonella-in-eggs affair”. He pointed out that ‘the salmonella affair was an essentially trivial matter which could however be aggrandized, diversified and prolonged. Danger and alarm were magnified...offering a “scare” or a “crisis” to the public imagination.’ (180). At this point, Fowler is concerned about some areas of ideology, belief and value that underline the newspapers’ treatment of the “story”.

### **2.1.2. Critical Linguistics vs. Critical Discourse Analysis**

Since discourse is seen as ‘a field of both ideological processes and linguistic processes, and...there is a determinate relation between these two kinds of process’ (Trew, 1979:154), media discourse might be easily treated as texts that can carry ideological meaning, especially through linguistic choices and procedures. In theory, ‘critical linguistics is the name used to describe the application of a particular set of linguistic procedures to texts with a view to uncovering concealed ideological meanings, whether or not intentional’ (O’Halloran, 2003:14). This linguistic procedures analysis, known as critical linguistics, is based upon “systemic” linguistic theory (Halliday 1978, 1985, 1994), and media discourse is one of its main concerns (Fowler, 1991, Trew, 1979).

In terms of media discourse, critical linguistics ‘brings to the analysis of media discourse systemicist views of the text as multifunctional, always simultaneously representing the world (ideational function) and enacting social relations and identities (interpersonal function); seeing texts as built out of choices from within available systems of options in vocabulary, grammar and so forth’ (textual function) (Fairclough, 1995). The functions of ideational, interpersonal and textual are the three overarching functions that language serves, according to Halliday (2004). In the context of the present study, I concentrate on the ideational and textual functions.

By contrast, as Koller and Mauter (1995) have concluded, until well into the 1990s, most projects in critical language analysis drew solely on the theoretical foundations and descriptive resources of the framework known as critical discourse analysis, or CDA for short (cf. Fairclough, 1989, 1992, 1993, 1995a, 1995b; van Dijk, 1991, 1993; Wodak, 1990). CDA, however, is concerned more about the interface between the discourse and the socio-cultural contexts. In other words, how discourses construct or are constructed by reality, social identities or social relationship in society (Fairclough, 1992). In terms of critical media discourse analysis, van Dijk (1988a, 1988b, 1991) has developed a framework for analyzing news (especially in newspapers) as discourse. His main motivation for linking media texts to context is to show in detail how social relationships and processes are accomplished at a micro-level through routine practices, whereas Fairclough's (1995b) major concern is to show how shifting language and discursive practices in the media constitute social and cultural change.

In terms of the processing text analysis, Fairclough (1989, 2001) developed a model of text interpretation, which attempts to integrate Hallidayan notions of social context and pragmatic theory into a model of communication (Goatly, 1997). The model was modified and developed especially so that the

four aspects of the discourse type – content, subjects, relations and connections - correspond to the features of situation, Halliday’s categories of ‘field (activity/subject matter), tenor (interpersonal roles and positions of participants in the discourse) and mode (the rhetorical role the language is playing in the interaction, including the choice of medium and channel)’ respectively (Goatly, 2002: 5, Goatly, 1997: 287).

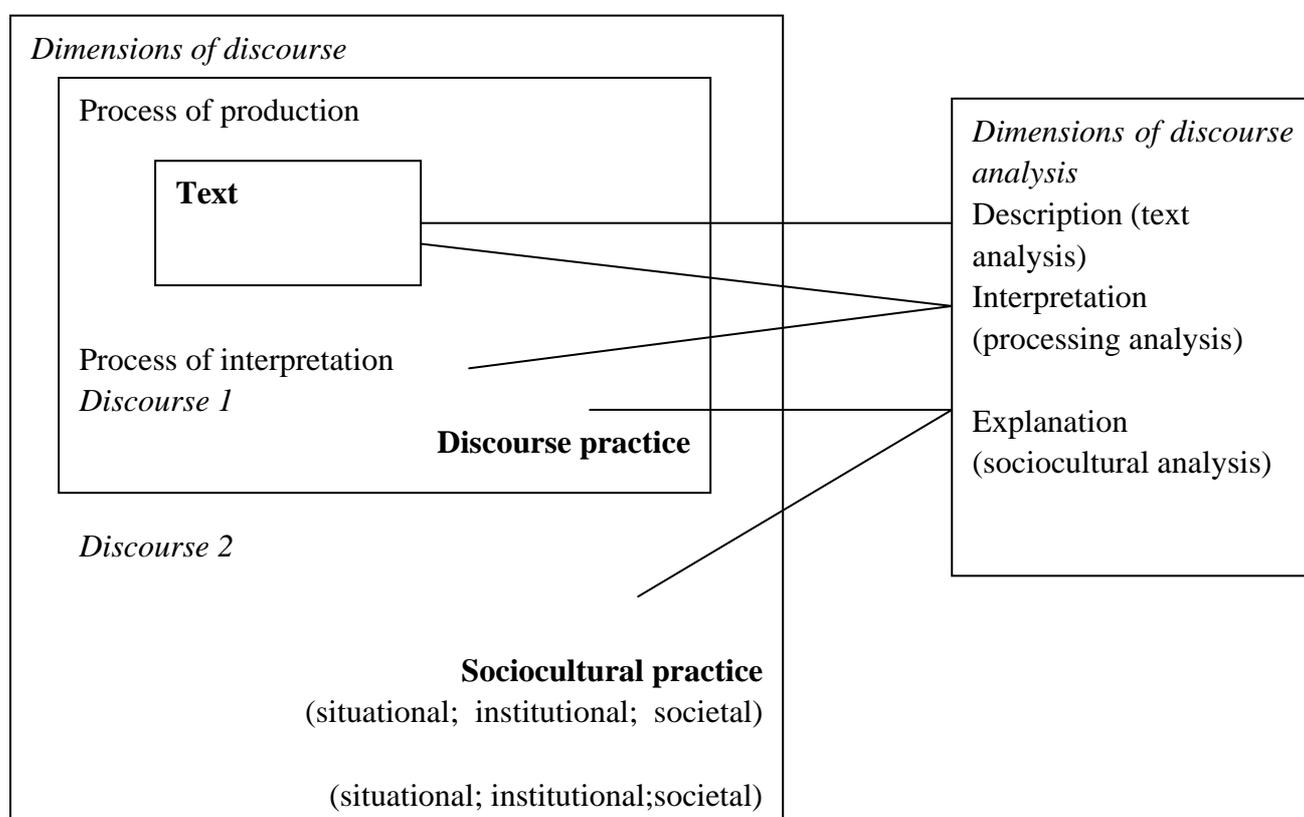


Figure 2.1.2.1. Discourse type and discourse analysis procedures  
 Source: Adapted from Fairclough 1995b: 98 and O’Halloran 2003: 10.

In the figure 2.1.2.1., with regard to text, three stages of discourse analysis – *description*, *interpretation* and *explanation* – are involved. These three stages interact and relate to each other. The stage of *description* is systematically describing what linguistic features are in a text. The second stage –

*interpretation* concerns the analysis of the relationship between readers and the texts being read. In terms of *explanation*, the wider social and cultural context is used to explain how they might shape the production of text and the interpretation of a text. Discourse practice refers to the activity of reading and understanding a text, and the sociocultural practice involves how situational, institutional; societal contexts might shape the reading of a text (O'Halloran, 2003). The idea of these dimensions of discourse analysis will be using to explain, interpret, and describe the news text.

According to van Dijk's recent definition it is 'a type of discourse analytical research that primarily studies the way social power abuse, dominance, and inequality are enacted, reproduced, and resisted by text and talk in social and political contexts since the enterprise of critical discourse analysis is an attempt to discover the ideology in and behind texts' (Goatly, 2004:116). He distinguishes between critical linguistics and critical discourse analysis, depending on the way in which ideology is expressed, presented, or encoded. Critical linguistics is only taken up with those texts with ideological presentations being 'semantically encoded', while CDA embraces both 'semantic encoding' and 'pragmatic inference/propositional attitude' (Goatly, 2004, Fairclough, 1989). That is to say the pragmatic elements that are involved in CDA are not involved in critical linguistics. In terms of news

critical linguistics, the major approach adopted in this thesis, most of its ideological representations can be semantically decoded from news texts.

As this part of review, I am using critical linguistics, which has little place for pragmatics, but jumps straight from description (linguistic analysis of text) to explanation. Critical discourse analysis, as defined here, will involve pragmatics, interpretative processes like determining propositional attitude, inferencing, etc. O'Halloran (2003) points out that the difference by showing how much critical linguistics (or even CDA) ignores the cognitive or pragmatic element in interpretation. Fairclough's first model in *interpretation* (figure 2.1.2.1) and the second model (figure 2.1.2.2), at level 2b and 3 allow a place for pragmatics. I apply critical linguistics methods involving word frequency counts, etc., which cannot go beyond semantics or de-coding (level 2a).

The figure 2.1.2.2 is adapted from Fairclough 1989:146, fig6.11 and Goatly 1997:289, fig 10.2. Level 2a and Level 2b in the text/utterance box are considered on the same level, but involve a different interpretation procedure. This is a model that interprets text and context, text at the levels 1-4, and context at levels 5 and 6. Three columns are divided. On the right is a list of areas which need interpretation. On the left are the interpretative procedures (members' resources) which are available to the readers. Then the act of

interpretation is supposed to take place in the middle column. The resources come from different sources: experience as members of society/institutions (level 6); readers of texts (level 5); the discursive activities (level 4); pragmatic principles (levels 2b and 3); and knowledge of a particular language (levels 1 and 2a).

Interpretative procedures  
(members' resources)

Interpreting

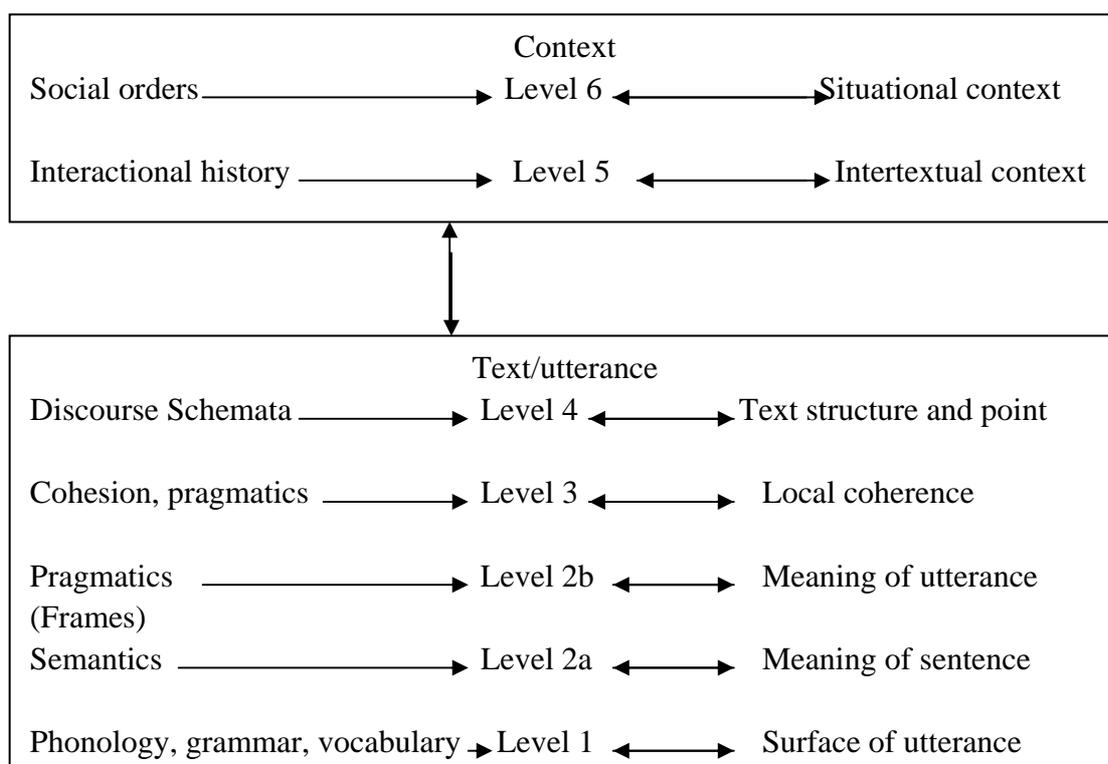


Figure 2.1.2.2 A model of text interpretation

Source: Adapted from Fairclough 1989:146, fig. 6.11 and Goatly 1997:289, figure 10.2

The double-headed arrows at each level, and linking the context and text/utterance, indicate that the levels do not operate in isolation. According to Goatly, 'relevance, one of the pragmatic principles operating at levels 2 and 3, will be computed in different ways depending on the situational context – the purposes inherent in the Field and Tenor and the processing

time available as an aspect of Mode, which are part of the situational context operating at level 6' (1997:289).

### **2.1.3. Critical Corpus Linguistics (CCL)**

The debate on critical discourse analysis in relation to the role of corpus linguistics and the role of pragmatics is worthy of discussion at this point. Widdowson's (1998:150) review on theory and practice of critical discourse analysis claims that being 'critical about discourse is to be aware of essential instability of language and the necessary indeterminacy of all meaning which must always give rise to a plurality of possible interpretations of text' (Fairclough,1995; Caldas-Couthard & Coulthard, 1996; Hodge & Kress, 1993).

Corpus linguistics, according to Widdowson (2000), as a computational quantitative analysis, does reveal a reality about language usage by frequencies of occurrence of words, regular patterns of collocational co-occurrence, and concordances. However, its limitation is also obvious. It is an enquiry to reveal the reality of language, that is, it is able to reveal the properties of text, but it fails to reveal the reality of first person awareness or intuition. Thus, the analysis of its results cannot account for the complex interplay of linguistic and contextual factors whereby discourse is enacted. To this extent, corpus linguistics does not necessarily account for the whole

picture of language behavior, for it is decontextualized language and is only partially real. He suggests that 'if the language is to be realized as use, it has to be recontextualized' (Widdowson, 2000:7).

While Widdowson doubted of the critical linguistics model and the assumption that the meanings can be semantically encoded in the language, Stubbs (2001) developed a counter argument and claimed that quantitative evidence can make corpus analysis valid, which was objected to by Widdowson. For example, according to Stubbs, in any individual text, 'neither repeated syntagmatic relations, nor any paradigmatic relations at all, are observable' (152). However, concordance lines make it possible to observe repetition or routines of language use, and how much constraint there is on the paradigmatic choices.

As Goatly indicated, Widdowson (2000) in fact put emphasis on the role of pragmatics, which doubts whether meanings can really be interpreted or decoded from the surface of the text. This is obviously a counter argument from both Hallidayan analysis and concordance analysis. However, as Goatly pointed out that 'it's not that SFG [systemic functional grammar] ignores generic context, of course, but it shows a lack of interest in the inferential processes that rely on mental contexts or the pragmatics that make these work' (2004:151).

As suggested by Goatly (2004), the CCL techniques have ‘the potential to skew critical discourse analysis in the direction of critical linguistics.’ These mentioned processes determine that critical corpus linguistics (CCL) is in accordance with the approach of critical linguistics rather than with critical discourse analysis, especially when it applies similar techniques that critical linguistics does (Goatly, 2004).

This study, using CCL aims to analyze a large body of texts, and shares with critical linguistics the same premise that text is assumed to be the main vehicle for the creation of meaning. The quantitative nature of the selected data determines that it has no alternative but to use decontextualised concordance lines or, especially word frequency data or collocation. However, the biggest argument against the CCL approach is that irony and metaphor can only be understood through pragmatics. However, most collective data in this study belong to the genre of news, the nature of which determines that it might not involve much irony or metaphor. At least there is not usually much irony or metaphor within news articles as there is in poems, drama or fictions.

Before defining critical corpus linguistics, we need to examine the phenomenon of the corpus itself. Usually, the corpus is understood to be ‘a collection of samples of running text,’ (McEnery & Wilson, 2001). Given

that a corpus is a collection of texts or ‘the suitable sample of discourse’ (Teubert, 2004), the aim of corpus linguistics can be seen as the analysis and the description of language use, as realized in text/discourse. Strictly speaking, a corpus by itself is nothing more than a collection of used language. However, corpus access software offers many possibilities and techniques so that corpus can be re-sorted, re-arranged and examined. Many available software packages process data from a corpus – search for a particular word or the sequence of it, calculate frequency, sort key-word lists, measure collocation, and present concordance lines, etc. Each of these will be defined as follows:

#### Frequency wordlist

“Frequency” refers to the words forms that are arranged in order of their number of occurrences in the corpus. A frequency list is the list of all the words, which can be displayed in frequency order, in alphabetical order, or in the order of the first occurrence in the corpus. Comparing the frequency list for two corpora brings interesting insights of the differences, especially when specialized corpora – texts of a particular type for example print news – are being compared (Hunston, 2002).

#### Keywords

Words which are significantly more frequent in one corpus than another are sometimes known as “keywords”. The corpus investigation package,

Wordsmith Tools, includes a program which automatically compares two corpora. The result is the list of the significantly different lexis, which turns out to be a useful starting point in illustrating and highlighting the lexical difference (Hunston, 2002).

### Collocation

The notion of “collocation” refers to the lexical tendency of a word to co-occur with another word or of one word to attract another. “Collocates<sup>2</sup>”, are the words which occur in the neighborhood of your search word. Collocates of *letter* might include *post*, *stamp*, *envelope*, etc. However, very common words like *the*, *a*, *this*, will also collocate or just co-occur with *letter*. By examining “collocates” you can find out more about “the company the word keeps”, which helps to show its meaning and its usage.

In fact, Carter (1989) indicated two distinct traditions of collocation. The first is known as “grammatical collocation”, involving relations along the syntactic strings of words (e.g. the relationship between *depend* and *on*). It develops “word patterns” that operate within particular ranges. The second is “lexical collocation” and examines lexis as a linguistic level, which is independent from the grammar and relates to the grammar in an analogical way (e.g. *letter* with *envelope*, *stamp*, and *post*). However, both of the

---

<sup>2</sup> WordSmith Tools Help (c) Mike Scott

introduced clusters represent a tighter relationship than collocates, more like groups or phrases. The collocation grids, or pattern function in Wordsmith, for example, generally refer to the node/search word and those which are most frequently-occurring items 1<sup>st</sup> left, 2<sup>nd</sup> left, etc. However, the corpus access software normally lists all the co-occurrent words that appear with the search word within the span. The problem with such software is that collocates are listed whether there is any grammatical, lexical or colligational relationship between the words of the text or not, for example the last word of a sentence will be computed as the 1 left collocate of the first word of the next sentence; it is a collocate but not a colligate. This shows up the crude nature of corpus analysis tools.

#### Concordance lines

Producing concordance lines is perhaps the commonest way of processing corpus information, and many corpus linguistic analyses have been established upon concordances and their interpretation. These unnatural lines are the results of searching a corpus for a selected word or phrase, thereby illustrating every instance of the node word – single word or phrase – in the centre of the screen, with the relevant items appearing to the left and right. Usually, these concordance lines are grouped and shown to illustrate a particular behavior of the node word or its frequent collocates or observe

distinguishing meanings and patterns, which can exemplify detailed behavior of language.

#### **2.1.4. Systemic Functional Grammar**

As mentioned, Halliday defined critical linguistics as a type of discourse analysis which was based upon systemic linguistic theory (1978, 1985, 1994) and Fairclough (1995) considered that representations, identities and relations are of relevance to answering questions on the ideological work of media language. In fact, some of the most revealing analyses concern the “ideational” function, that is, how events and the people and objects involved in them are represented in the grammar of clauses, like the distinct process and participant types. The basic premise is that if those grammatical choices contained systematic tendencies, they might be potentially ideologically significant (Fairclough, 1995).

The analysis of newspaper disease discourse will, therefore, be situated within critical corpus linguistics. A key concept – *transitivity* – was absorbed from Hallidayan functional grammar and will be useful for part of the concordancing analysis.

Systemic functional grammar is especially useful as a tool for critical linguistics and the analysis of representational functions of discourse. Hence, Michael Halliday’s transitivity model of systemic functional grammar (SFG)

is adopted for the analysis of the concordance lines of the corpus. Kress categorizes “transitivity” as the representation in language of “process”, the “participants” therein, and the “circumstantial” features associated with them (1976). Thus, the transitivity grammatical model can also be viewed as representing the power relationship between the referents of the lexical participants in the clause.

Halliday (2004) distinguishes four major process types: relational, material, mental and verbal. Corresponding to these process types, there are different participants. Goatly (2002) applied Halliday’s (1994) principle for modeling experience namely the principle that reality is made up of PROCESSES and PARTICIPANTS in those processes. Generally, a clause involves three components, that is, the PROCESS itself, PARTICIPANTS in the process, and CIRCUMSTANCES associated with the process. As to the realization form in the clause, normally, the PROCESS is realized by the verbal group, the PARTICIPANTS are realized by the nominal group, and the circumstance is realized by adverbial group or prepositional phrase, as shown in table 2.1.4:

Table 2.1.4.1 Typical functions of group and phrase classes	
Type of element	Typically realized by
(i) process	Verbal group
(ii) participant	Nominal group
(iii) circumstance	Adverbial group or prepositional phrase

The transitivity process of a clause, according to Halliday's division, can be defined as six types, including "behavioral", "mental", "verbal", "relational", "existential" and "material". These six process types actually may sometimes belong to more than one or are at intermediate positions between two PROCESS. Halliday himself pointed out that "material", "mental", and "relational" are the three principal types of process in the English clauses, which present three discrete kinds of structural configuration, while processes with "behavioral" verb groups, "verbal" verb groups and "existential" verb groups are three subsidiary process types (Halliday, 1994:138). Table 2.1.4.2 shows the basic types and participants that are relevant to the following analysis.

The choice of which process types system will be adopted in the current paper mainly depends on the purpose of the concordance lines analysis and frequency study. The process types can clearly define and measure the power of keywords according to the PROCESS, and their roles as PARTICIPANTS or CIRCUMSTANCES in the clauses of the concordance lines. The concordance line analysis of the keywords proposes to focus on the keywords' powerfulness relation so that a power hierarchy will be drawn. The keywords were categorized previously as disease-relevant and human-relevant ones and according to either personal entities or social organization divisions.

Table 2.1.4.2. Four process types			
	Definition	Processes	Participants
Material	Outer experience, the processes of the external world	Process of doing:	1) actor and 2) Affected
Mental	Inner experience, the processes of consciousness	Process of sensing:	1) sensor 2) phenomenon
Relational/existential	Inner classifying and identifying outer experience	Process of being:	1) token; 2) value
Verbal	Symbolic relationship b/w human consciousness and outer experience constructed in language or meaning	Process of saying:	1) sayer; 2) receiver; 3) Verbiage

## 2.2 Literature on newspapers

### 2.2.1 Introduction

From the viewpoint of critical linguistic analysis (fig. 2.1.2.1), discourse, including news discourse, is socially, culturally, and institutionally constructed; news discourse is regarded as a social product and a social practice. This implies a dialectical relationship between a particular discursive event and the situation, institution and social structure that frame it.

This study aims to find out the variations of the discursive construction of the same news event – SARS – by newspapers from different institutional, cultural and political backgrounds and to examine the relations between the

differences in coverage and the underlying ideological position. Two English newspapers in Asia – the China Daily (CD) and the South China Morning Post (SCMP) – were chosen as the sources of the corpus database. The researcher believes these are relevant newspapers for comparison because firstly the major target readers of the two newspapers are educated Chinese (Hong Kong) people, and secondly newspapers' different backgrounds in institutional practices, cultural assumptions and political beliefs determine the dissimilarities in news coverage, even if they deal with the same event, in this case, SARS.

Besides, since the texts that reflect the different societies are considered to be sites of ideological conflicts, with different countries contrasting conceptions of east and west, communism and capitalism, the developing and the developed communities. However, the contexts of these discourses in the present study are contained within a single country. Since the nature of the disease known as SARS is mainly perceived as an Asian-related disease, it would be an interesting enquiry to see how news coverage differs in the two newspapers in question.

### **2.2.2. Institutional practice**

The China Daily is the most widely read English newspaper in Mainland China and the official newspaper of the Chinese government. Established in

1981, it is the only national English-language newspaper in China. The average daily circulation is more than 200,000. If the mission of this national newspaper is fulfilled, it may be found that it is overwhelmingly pro-government. It sees itself thus:

Committed to helping the world know more about China and the country's integration with the international community, China Daily is regarded as one of the country's most authoritative English media outlets and an important source of information on Chinese politics, economy, society and culture. It is often called the "Voice of China" or "Window to China."...<sup>3</sup>.

Therefore, the CD is a pro-government newspaper and its editorial policy is in accordance with the central government's line (Pan, 2003). Its main function is as a political propaganda machine. In 1993, the CD launched its first Hong Kong edition, which aimed to promote the communist party and patriotism among Hong Kong people, especially the educated. According to the author's observation, the Hong Kong edition of China Daily, like most of the Chinese press, adopts a positive reporting policy, which contrasts the often more negative reporting policy towards China prevalent in the western media. The reason for the positive style of the reporting policy is that it is

---

<sup>3</sup> <http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/home/index.html>

meant to promote the Party and ensure the order and stability of society (Zhang, 1997).

Nevertheless, the Chinese Communist Party press has undergone some gradual and significant transformations in the last few years: the newspapers, including those run directly by the party-state, in the mainland are no longer pure propaganda methods or mouthpieces, but option enterprises (He, 1998). Option enterprises under this circumstance refer to certain newspaper institutions which report news in an operational way, both in style and content. Generally, it is understood that there are routines or underlying rules within the institutions. However, sometimes reporters or editors might run the risk of offending against these rules but report certain information that cannot normally be released to the public. The reason on the appearance of these option enterprises and their different ways of testing the bottom lines of what can be reported and what cannot is mainly because these newspaper organizations are engaged in “marketization” in one way or another. The fact that they are ‘pressured to be financially self-sufficient’ has determined newspapers’ escalating competition environment and their increasing responsiveness to the audience (He, 1993).

Therefore, the definition of the media as ‘instruments of class struggle’ was officially dropped. The concept of ‘instruments of economic and cultural

construction' replaced the earlier definition, with the growing stress placed on business information and entertainment. Moreover, with the journalism laws and western media concepts imported, the Chinese media calls for recognition of the internal logics of news discourse and for the relative autonomy of journalism practices (Zhao, 1998).

However, the option enterprises' arguments were couched in the context of the Party's own agenda to 'preserve political stability and its authority'. They asserted that the party's principle (*dang xing*) is aligned with the people's principle (*renmin xing*); by this means the party's newspapers are also the papers of the people. The party has not changed its way of controlling the media, as the recent Cheong Ching "spying" case exemplifies. The official press has never changed its underlying function as a political propaganda machine, evidenced by its unquestionable political affiliation and ideological orientation. News reports in the major media, like the CD here, remained typically monolithic, positive, and highly predictable (Zhao, 1998).

The SCMP is a top English-language daily in Hong Kong; possessing a long history (established in 1903). It is 'ranked the most credible Hong Kong Newspaper in a recent Chinese University survey of readers' (Law, 1999). By comparison, the SCMP like most of the mainstream media in Hong Kong is privately run. Therefore, the SCMP shares many characteristics with other

branches of Hong Kong's media, being more market-orientated and far more critical towards the government. Due to its obvious market-driven orientation, the SCMP, or Hong Kong media in general, shares with the west a conflict-driven approach to covering news and events. Jonathan Fenby, the former chief editor of the SCMP once said, "News is conflict. News is where there is disagreement.... News is where someone puts up something and someone else on the other side says where they have problems with it" (Knight & Nakano, 1999).

By and large, other western journalism concepts are shared and practiced in Hong Kong, for this city contains the characteristics of a free or independent press. First, there exists a system of law that provides meaningful protection to individual civil liberties and property rights. The Basic Law of Hong Kong, which authorized the freedom of press<sup>4</sup>, is a good instance of this. Second, sufficient capital or private enterprise to support media of news communication, for example, the SCMP Limited belongs to one of the biggest media enterprises in Hong Kong – the SCMP Group Limited, headed by Kuok Khoon Ean. The third is the city's economic and political maturity

---

<sup>4</sup> The Basic Law of HKSAR: Article 27: The Hong Kong residents shall have freedom of speech, of the press and of publication; freedom of association, of assembly, of procession and of demonstration; and the right and freedom to form and join trade unions, and to strike.

and journalistic traditions. Hong Kong enjoys a high level of average per capita income and an established tradition of independent journalism. Though many have criticized its governance for falling short of a constitutional parliamentary democracy, at least Hong Kong has legitimate political opposition. All these characteristics make sure that the press in Hong Kong meets the accepted criteria for a free press. According to the western concepts of journalism, only news media free of official restraints will be credible to its readers or viewers.

Still, any free press might still suffer from examples of the western news media's shortcomings, like commercialism, concentration of ownership and entertainment orientation, etc. The freedom here only refers to political freedom, and does not preclude economic and corporate interference with journalistic practices. For example, any privately owned media enterprise will be somewhat restricted by the interests and concerns of its owners (Hachten, 1996). Goatly (2000) has discussed the freedom of the press as a myth in four respects, including the ownership of the press and newspapers' dependence on advertising. This shows that the myth of media freedom is precisely broken, for it is not free from economic or corporation-driven interference.

The position of the atmosphere of Hong Kong media is obviously not as simple that of members of the westernized international press establishment. It is often assumed that the free press is being and has been threatened simply on account of the return of Hong Kong to Chinese sovereignty. As for the SCMP, it is believed that great changes took place in the newspaper around the time of the change of sovereignty in July 1997. The pressure was not from written news policies or directly from the central government. According to Vittachi (2001), self-censorship caused some Beijing-sensitive material to be removed. Meanwhile, it is suggested that the proprietor of the newspaper may function in shaping news by exerting influence over the editor-in-chief (Pan, 2003). When Jonathan Fenby was asked this question, he denied that he had been put under pressure to moderate the news (Knight & Nakano, 1999), and said once in an interview in 1999 that he did not have to report politicians or businessmen “positively” in the SCMP and was not given any directions to do that. However, in 2002, he published a book titled *Dealing with the dragon: A year in the new Hong Kong*, in which he alleged that Kuok Khoon Ean, the proprietor of the SCMP, had made regular attempts at interfering with editorial freedom.

Other issues raised by Goatly include the selection of news and the source of news. According to his study, news values determine what kind of news is selected, including negativity, frequency, meaningfulness, person,

consonance, unexpectedness, continuity, composition, threshold, elite nations, and elite persons. In terms of the sources of news, he claims that the dominant members of society and the most rich and powerful countries are getting in the news. Accordingly he analyzed and quantified whose voices in the news were quoted, and listed the categories of Sayers in the sample newspapers. The findings show that though the news is supposed to serve the interests of the public, the public voice does not get heard as much as those elite persons. In terms of the identity of “Sayers”, 80 percent of the Sayers actually are those powerful individuals, institutions, organizations and governments (2000:259).

These different downsides of news and the media can be summarized in the maxim that news is not “found” or even “gathered” so much as made. As Hall (1978) puts it, news is the end product of a complex process which begins with a systematic sorting and selecting of events and topics according to a socially constructed set of categories.

Fowler (1991) indicated a widely accepted analysis of news values lists.

They are:

(F1) Frequency – an event is more likely to be reported if its duration is close to the publication frequency of the news medium.

(F2) threshold – ‘size’ or ‘volume’ needed for an event to become newsworthy

(f2.1) absolute intensity

(f2.2) intensity increase

(F3) unambiguity - the reader’s or viewer’s facility in making sense of an event

(F4) meaningfulness

(F4.1) cultural proximity

(F4.2) relevance

(F5) consonance – categories of events which people either expect to happen or want to happen

(F5.1) predictability

(F5.2) demand

(F6) unexpectedness – an event is even more newsworthy if it happens without warning and/or is unusual

(F6.1) unpredictability

(F6.2) scarcity

(F7) continuity – once something has hit the headlines and has been defined as news, then it will continue to be defined as news for some time even if the amplitude is drastically reduced

(F8) composition – balance or make-up of a news bulletin

(F9) reference to elite nations

(F10) reference to elite people

(F11) reference to persons

(F12) reference to something negative

These are the selection criteria for newsworthiness in the media.

### **2.2.3. Cultural Assumptions**

Chinese culture is characterized by its long history of civilization, though experiencing ups and downs for thousands of years. Probably, Confucian philosophy, which has dominated China along with its civilization and development, would provide some explanation for the miracle. The central idea of Confucianism is harmony. Extremes or conflicts are usually discouraged as unhealthy. As Goatly (2007) indicates, ‘in Chinese culture...there is a tradition of attempting to solve disputes by negotiation or conciliation rather than arbitration or legislation, and this tradition has survived into the present’. (Chapter 2) Since this philosophy is so deep-rooted and valid in present China, we might argue that Chinese culture is striving for harmony and avoiding open expression of disagreement and conflict (Tannen, 1998).

Second, collectivism, or to say emphasis on group life, not individualism, is strongly promoted in Chinese culture. Many argue that the communistic ideal strengthens the concept of collectivism even further in Chinese society.

Goatly (1999) discussed a debate on the Singapore government's core value in which the constructed opposition is that western values are more individualistic, and eastern values are more communitarian. The concept of communitarianism implies that the community is more than the sum of its individuals and requires explicit definition of its needs and priority (Lodge&Vogel, 1987:10). As a result, individual interest is usually suppressed whenever it is in conflict with the collective interest.

Third, in accordance with its Confucian heritage, Chinese culture is featured as extremely respectful, if not reverential, towards the "superior" – especially people with political power. As a result, a nationwide government newspaper, like the CD, would try to preserve a consistently positive image of government.

Hong Kong, a place that has experienced more than 150 years' of colonial rule, is defined as a territory where western values meet the traditional Chinese cultural heritage. It is an interesting phenomenon to see the way that Hong Kong society and people seem to cope with and compromise between these two streams of opposing values and cultures. Hong Kong, the finance center, is the world's 11th largest trading entity and 13th largest banking center. It has one of the least restricted economies in the world<sup>5</sup>. Thereby, the

---

<sup>5</sup> [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hong\\_Kong](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hong_Kong)

other assumption is its business-orientation, which has engaged many inhabitants to demonstrate an overwhelming interest in making money and in business (Flowerdew, 1998).

#### **2.2.4. Political beliefs**

In China, the emphasis on central authority has not looked likely to give way to the rule of law so far. Though some argue some transformation has occurred, the rule of law is not deeply-rooted in the Chinese political system, as it is in the western capitalist countries (Sheridan, 1999). The best evidence would be the way that the judiciary in China is subordinate to the government at all levels. However, in western countries the separation of executive and judiciary is seen as a crucial component of a fair and accountable government and an essential content of democracy (Pan, 2003). This might have something to do with the one-party state situation in China. This is not a society which contains different legitimate political oppositions, and the party is the only decision-maker in policies. This probably also agrees with the previous point about avoiding open disagreement in Confucianism China. Thus, in modern China, the sophisticated laws still cannot be instituted within the framework of the political system.

In Hong Kong, obviously, the long history of colonial rule has influenced this Chinese society a lot with western political beliefs. Even though the

territory was handed over to the PRC in 1997, the spirit of an independent judiciary and the system of British jurisdiction are still essential elements of Hong Kong. People in Hong Kong, feeling nostalgic about the past golden times, seem to fear losing these benefits and make every effort to prevent their political and democratic beliefs from being restricted or overturned.

Thus, the sociocultural practice will be explained in the context of these three contrasting aspects, including institutional, cultural and political domains, while the discourse practice and texts will be described and explained through linguistic theories, such as transitivity, with the help of software. The detailed methods of analysis are targeted at both of these two practices.

### **3. Methodology**

#### **3.1. Introduction**

The present study is interested mainly in how news discourse is differently realized when reporting on disease. The digital news of SARS was collected and the corpora were set up so that different programs of the corpus access software – Wordsmith 4.0 on line version could be applied, including the frequency list, keywords search (keyness), collocation and concordancing. The corpus analysis was supported by other research methods, including questionnaire and survey.

#### **3.2. Data collection**

Baker's (2004) study on the discourses of homosexuality within the House of Lords debates on gay male law reform provides a good example of how keyness works when the researcher wants to determine the contrasts and differences of the particular discourse. He studied the debate over the equality in the age of sexual consent for gay men with the age of consent for heterosexual sex at 16. He discovered that the main lexical differences between oppositional stances was that those who were for the law reform focused on a discourse of *equality* and *tolerance*, while those who were against law reform constructed homosexuality by relating it to *danger*, *ill health*, *crime* and *unnatural behavior*. This way of using keyness in the

corpus discourse study and connecting the words with their keyness is a precedent for my.

As established above, the research is set up to investigate the variations in discursive construction of SARS news by newspapers from different institutional, cultural and political backgrounds. Two Asian English newspapers – the China Daily (“CD”) and the South China Morning Post (“SCMP”) – were chosen as the sources of the corpus database. The CD is the most widely read English newspaper in Mainland China, and the SCMP is a top English-language daily in Hong Kong with the longest history and greatest international credibility of all Hong Kong newspapers, not just because it is dedicated to balanced reporting and is a “quality” up-market newspaper, but also, importantly, because it is published in English. The newspaper corpus includes hard news, features, editorials and letters from the readers from both newspapers on-line edition.

According to the analytical need, corpus databases were drawn from Wisenews, which is a news clippings search engine. The corpus was searched and obtained by use of the keyword “SARS”. The corpus is based on news reports in which “SARS” occurred. In order to ensure the completeness of the two diseases newspapers record, I obtained the following results after Wisenews search:

a) The first official announcement made by CEIN (China Economic

Information Network) about SARS in Mainland China was on 2003-02-12, which admitted several cases of the pneumonia-like virus (SARS) were found to have killed people in the Canton area.

b) The first report that the CD released about SARS was “Mystery virus a suspect in pneumonia cases”, which appeared in CD on 2003-02-15.

c) The first official announcement about SARS in Hong Kong was on 2003-02-12, and actually a transcript of the remarks made by the Secretary for Health, Welfare and Food, Dr Yeoh Eng-kiong, at the Central Government Offices of HKSAR on February 11, 2003. At the time of this announcement, there had been altogether about 300 cases of which there were five fatalities.

d) The report, which was actually the earliest printed media record, on SARS was released on 2003-02-11 entitled “Panic grips Guangdong as mystery pneumonia-like virus kills 6” by the SCMP.

e) On 2003-02-21, the SCMP reported: officials’ confirmation that a Hong Kong man, who had contracted pneumonia after traveling to Fujian, died on the 20<sup>th</sup>. The last story related to Atypical Pneumonia was released on 2004-10-28 and entitled ‘Hospitals still find it hard screening out SARS patients’.

The SARS story did have its concluding chapter in Hong Kong. The last official release relating to SARS was recorded on 2004-09-26; and mainly

the issue referred mainly to the matter of Dr. Yeoh's (the Health Secretary's) replacement. 2004-10-28 is generally set as the ending point of both corpora of SARS disease, since that was the last day on which the SCMP referred to the outbreak of SARS.

Given these logical start and end points for research of the corpus, the following corpora were obtained from the CD and the SCMP. "SARS" is the search word.

Table 3.2 The corpora of CD and SCMP established				
Corpus Title	Definition	Article numbers	Word count	Time period
CD corpus ("CDC")	SARS-related news discourse in the CD	1747	537,000	2003-2-15 to 2005-02-26
SCMP corpus ("SCMPC")	SARS-related news discourse in the SCMP	1002	531,000	2003-2-11 to 2004-10-28

The corpora were established from SARS-related coverage appearing in the two newspapers. In the table 3.2, the corpora were named "CDC" and "SCMPC" and the search word in both cases was "SARS". They refer to the SARS-related news discourse in both newspapers. The SCMPC contains 1002 articles from the SCMP Wisenews version and is about 531,000 words in all, dating from 2003-2-11 to 2004-10-28. The CDC has 1747 documents

from the China Daily web version, dated between 2003-2-11 and 2005-02-06. Its size is around 537,000 words. Thus, two specified corpora with the similar size were obtained, which ensured a good basis for comparison.

### **3.3. Corpus analysis**

#### **3.3.1. Introduction**

The software of Wordsmith (4.0) on line version was used to apply to the corpora: the SCMPC and the CDC. Before the rationale for selecting and grouping words is explained, one concept – “Keyness” – should be introduced in advance. In fact, “Keyness” is a device in the software “Oxford Wordsmith Tools 4.0”, which functions as showing the most contrasting words that occur in two frequency wordlists. The degree of “Keyness” of the words would be reported based on all words which appear significantly more often in one wordlist than the other, including those which appear many times in one even if they do not appear at all in the other.

#### **3.3.2. Keyness and Keywords**

Baker's (2004) study on the discourses of homosexuality within the House of Lords debates on gay male law reform gives a good example of how keyness works when the researcher wants to find out the contrasts and difference of the particular discourse. In his study, a corpus-based keywords analysis established and based on the keyness – word is therefore key if it appears unusually more frequently in one text, when compared to the other. He studied the debate over the equalization of the age of sexual consent for gay men with the consent of heterosexual sex at their sixteen, He found out that the main lexical differences between oppositional stances was that those who were for the law reform focused on a discourse of *equality* and *tolerance*, while those who were against law reform constructed homosexuality by relating it to *danger*, *ill health*, *crime* and *unnatural behavior*. The findings were not surprising me, however, the way of using keyness in the corpus discourse study and connecting the words with their keyness reminded me of a similar approach.

In the case of the current study, the researcher randomly chose two sample data files - 30 articles each - from the CDC and the SCMPC. They are named as the sample CDC (“SC”) and the sample SCMPC (“SS”). Firstly, they were loaded into the wordlist device of the software separately. After applying the software's automatic processing, by the software two independent wordlists resulted, displaying all of the words with their frequency of appearance in

each corpus. They are the wordlist of sample CDC (“WSC”) and the wordlist of sample SCMPC (“WSS”). The WSC and the WSS were located in the “Keyness” device and I compared the WSC and the WSS, resulting in Table 3.3.2. which shows several words with the most contrasting frequency. The results of keyness test on the WSC and the WSS identified eight words, including *disease*, *government*, *epidemic*, *the*, *SAR*, *staff*, *we* and *Mr.*, with significant contrasting frequency. Among them, only *staff*, *Mr.* and *we* are significantly much more in the SCMP than these in the CD. This also means that these eight words contain a high degree of keyness – a high contrast of word frequency.

Generally, these eight words with high keyness degrees mean that they share contrasting frequency in appearing in the two newspapers. The words *the* and *Mr.*, are clearly not relevant to this study. The other six words, however, are crucial in this study because they were used as a key to set up two-categories of words for further study. As has been introduced in the literature review, words which are significantly more frequent in one corpus than another are known as “keywords”. We call these six words “keywords”. To be more specific, the keywords can be further divided into two categories: disease-relevant and human relevant. Further, human-relevant keywords were subdivided into two categories. Keywords *government* and *SAR* belong

to the social organizations, and *we* and *staff*, since they refer to humans/people are in the category of personal entities.

Table 3.3.2. Keywords and categories in the <b>SC</b> and the <b>SS</b>			
	Type of word categories		Keywords
(I)	Disease-associated (DA)		Disease
			Epidemic
(II)	Human-associated (HA)	Social organizations	Government
			SAR
		Personal entities	<i>we</i>
			Staff

*Disease* and *epidemic* seem to be disease-relevant, and *staff* and *we* sound more human-associated-personal entities. The keywords *government* and *SAR* may refer to the HKSAR government, which is composed of the major political elites and administrative entities of HK, including all ranks of public officials, especially ex-chief executive Tung Chee Hwa. Also, since *government* is collocated with words like *Beijing*, *central*, or *US*, etc., the *government* may refer to any highest level political entity in the world. However, no matter what *government* means exactly in the context of the corpus, as long as people are the basic elements of *government*, it is categorized as the human-associated-social organization. So it is with the keyword *SAR*. Based on the above analysis, this diagrammatically establishes the keywords and their categories.

### 3.3.3 Word groups

However, only depending on the six keywords would not be sufficient in this study at all. The researcher secondly loaded both the corpora of both CD and SCMP, known as the CDC and the SCMPC into the wordlist device of the Wordsmith 4.0. This corpus access software, of course, displayed two independent frequency wordlists. Since they are the words from the CDC and the SCMPC, the wordlists were named as the wordlist of CDC (“WCDC”) and the wordlist of SCMPC (“WSCMP”). The definition of a frequency wordlist is the list of all the word forms, which can be displayed in frequency order in the corpus.

Table 3.3.3. Second stage of the two-categories of keywords-relevant-vocabulary (“KRV”)		
Type of word categories		KRV
Disease-associated (DA-KRV)		Crisis; Disaster(s); Disease(s); Epidemic; Infect*; Outbreak(s); Pneumonia; Sars; Spread(ing); Virus;
Human-associated (HA-KRV)	Social organizations	Hong Kong, SAR, gover*, transparen*, authorit*, global, mainland, inform*
	Personal entities	Confiden *, Doctor(s), Fear *, Health *, Medical, Panic *, Patient(s), People, Staff, Victim(s), Victory(ious)

\*the search word is for a lemma, the word with same base form but different derivational and inflectional suffixes.

Therefore, both of the WCDC and the WSCMP are listed in frequency order, from the most frequently appearing word to the least. Then, I checked the words on the wordlists, selected in all twenty-nine disease-relevant and

human-relevant words. In order to contain more presentable and valid words, the selected words have to be the most frequent ones. As a result, more relevant words were added into the designed word groups. They are called keywords-relevant-vocabulary (“KRV”). The detailed words are listed in Table 3.3.3.

#### **3.3.4. Collocation**

In order to study the patterns in the disease discourse of newspapers, it was necessary to move on to collocation analysis. Generally, measurement of collocation is the statistical tendency of words to co-occur. This is calculated by any corpus investigation software; if a “node word” is taken, then the collocation program counts the instances of all words occurring within a particular “span”. For example, “2:2 span” is two words to the left of the node word and two words to the right. If the formal pattern of co-occurrence that exists between the span can be identified, we may say the unit pattern exists, encompassing the node word and some of its most relevant items. The collocational statistics are useful to summarize the information to be found in concordance lines, allowing more instances of a word to be considered than is feasible with concordance lines (Hunston, 2002)

In the current study, the collocation program was used to process the corpus data with the search word, also known as node word – *SARS*. The researcher

particularly chose *SARS* as the node word, because the whole theme of the study is to examine the newspapers coverage of *SARS*.

Depending on the “significant” collocational statistics that resulted from WordSmith 4.0, both of the “word patterns” and “collocates” of the node word were compiled, which are in fact the collocation grid. “Word patterns” refer to “collocates” (words adjacent to the search word *SARS*), organized in terms of frequency within each column. That is, the top word in each column is the word most frequently found in that position. The second word is the second most frequent. Here, the top twenty collocates of *SARS* in each position within 2:2 span were listed and discussed for the sake of significance of collocation. “Collocations” of *SARS* from the CDC and the SCMPC, can also be examined by listing the top twenty “significant” collocates within the 5:5 span. However, the lists exclude the “default” high frequency functional words, like *the*, *of*, *to*, *in*, *and*, *a*, and *on*, etc. These functional words belong in the top twenty from the raw data. However, they probably lack any real significance, for these functional words are the most frequent collocates in any text. Thus, I chose to ignore them. Other collocates with less frequency within the 5:5 span, with *SARS* as the node word, were substituted in the place of function words. Both of these programs help us to see lexical patterns in the concordance.

### **3.3.5. Concordance Lines**

The node word in “word patterns” is the same as the search word used for the concordance lines. The concordance lines can be regarded in short as the results of calling up selected word(s) and lines with the same word in the original text file that the key word list came from. The point of it is to see these same key words in their original contexts, and to observe their language function and underlying meaning.

Concordance lines are, perhaps, the commonest result of processing corpus information. Thus, in this study, concordance lines which were randomly selected from the CDC and the SCMPC are expected to be the most textually-based and detailed method of interpreting the newspapers’ disease discourse. The frequency analysis and the collocation analysis bring a straight method of categorizing the keywords and KRV into disease-associated and human-associated words. In the concordance lines analysis, this categorization is persisted with, because I intended to observe the frequency and the collocation results, and relate them to the concordance lines analysis. After I introduced the methodology of the thesis, the analysis and results are discussed in the next chapter.

## **4. Keyword-relevant-vocabulary (“KRV”) Analysis**

### **4.1. Introduction**

In the current research, keywords are only a general preliminary finding which has to be supplemented with the keywords-relevant-vocabulary (“KRV”). In other words, I made the decision to choose the most frequent words from the wordlist of the CDC and the SCMPC in disease-relevant and human-relevant categories. In this way, the basis of the KRV analysis was set up.

### **4.2. Disease-associated keyword-relevant-vocabulary (‘DA-KRV’)**

#### **Analysis**

In the case of disease-relevant keywords-relevant-vocabulary (DA-KRV) (refer to the table 4.2.1.), there are 10 significant words chosen and categorized as DA-KRV of SARS-related news discourse in the CD and the SCMP.

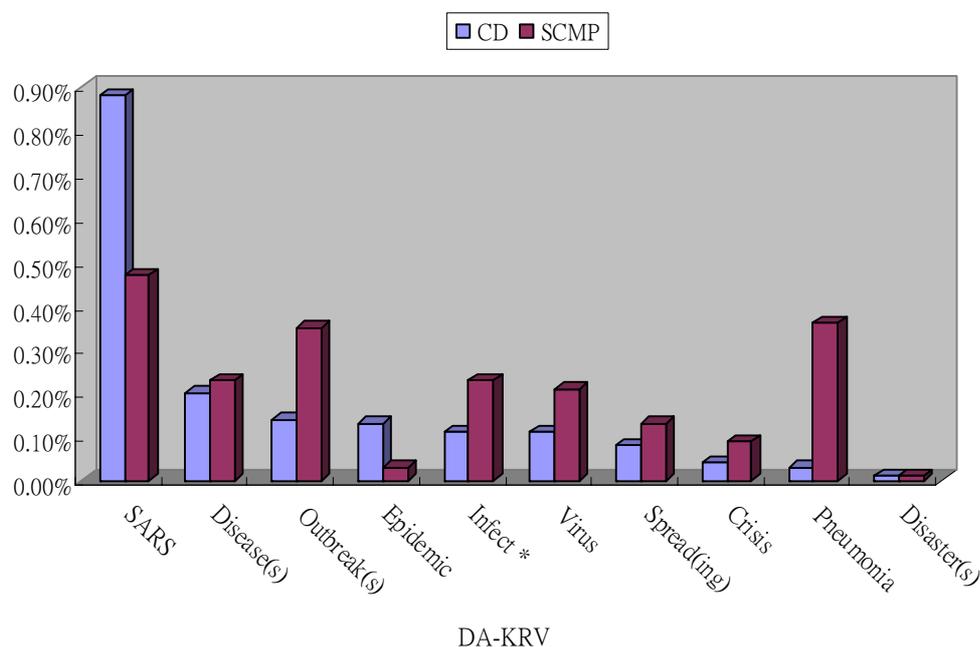
Table 4.2.1. DA-KRV and their numbers/percentage among the CDC and the SCMP					
Word list	CD (num)	CD (%)	SCMP	SCMP (%)	CD vs. SCMP
Crisis	194	0.04%	476	0.09%	SCMP>CD
Disaster(s)	58	0.01%	41	0.01%	CD>SCMP
Disease(s)	1080	0.20%	1208	0.23%	SCMP>CD
Epidemic	677	0.13%	175	0.03%	CD>SCMP
Infect *	606	0.11%	1238	0.23%	SCMP>CD
Outbreak(s)	751	0.14%	1841	0.35%	SCMP>CD
Pneumonia	169	0.03%	1888	0.36%	SCMP>CD
SARS	4708	0.88%	2502	0.47%	CD>SCMP
Spread(ing)	445	0.08%	687	0.13%	SCMP>CD
Virus	599	0.11%	1121	0.21%	SCMP>CD
DA-KRV number	9287	1.729%	11177	2.105%	SCMP>CD
Corpus number	537,000		531,000		

Words like *contagion*, *epidemic*, *pneumonia*, *outbreak(s)*, *Sars*, and *virus* are chosen as DA-KRV, including the base form followed by the inflectional affixes “-s” or “-ing”. However, the lemma *infect* slightly differs from other DA-KRV, as it is sorted by *infect* with an asterisk (\*), which represents all sorts of words with the base form of *infect* and both of its derivation and inflection affixes like *infectious*, *infection(s)*, *infected*, and *infecting*. However, other words like *crisis* and *disaster(s)* are viewed as also selected as DA-KRV of the keyword *disease* according to their meanings in the SARS context, in spite of the fact that these KRV make much more of the affective response to the disease. It is obvious that referring to the “severe acute respiratory syndrome” as a SARS *crisis* and *disaster* or viewing it as a type of *pneumonia* shows different descriptions or at least attitudes that the journalist

representing the respective newspapers hold towards this disease. The KRV of *crisis* might refer to the decisive moment of SARS, and *disaster* points out that SARS has caused harm to humans, both of which create a great deal of alarm.

Figure 4.2 shows the relative percentages of DA-KRV in the CDC and the SCMPC. This might give us a better insight as to how the two newspapers differ from each other in choosing disease-associated words. Generally, the CDC tends to employ *SARS*, *epidemic*, and *disaster(s)* more, while the SCMPC uses *disease(s)*, *outbreak(s)*, *infect\**, *virus*, *spread(ing)*, *crisis*, and *pneumonia* more frequently. In order to further illustrate their patterns of applying DA-KRV words, the researcher adopts an evaluation scale to support the measurement and analysis of these words

fig 4.2 DA-KRV frequency % comparison



According to Leech (1981), to study the meaning of word systematically, some approximative statistical techniques can be employed. Osgood (1957) has proposed a statistical measurement device to compare the semantic meanings. Generally speaking, a scale that is labeled by contrasting adjective pairs is plotted, such as *strong-weak*, or *positive-negative*, or *informal-formal*. Then a person is required to record their impression of the subject word along the scale, to test and rate the designed lexical items. I decided to apply this semantic differential scale to measure the DA-KRV meanings. Though many different aspects of words might be measured and tested, the current analysis deliberately focuses on the gradation of seriousness, or to say “alarm” potency, of the DA-KRV words.

All these DA-KRV are already negative in common sense – the association of illness is normally not good. It would be better to regard them as generally *neutral* or most *frightening*. Thus, the labels that are plotted on the scale of DA-KRV are as follows:

NEUTRAL\_\_:\_:\_:\_:\_:\_:\_:\_:\_:\_:\_ FRIGHTENING  
 10  
 DEGREES OF ALARM

The degree of alarm scale of DA-KRV above tests and records the human emotive response to the ten words. At one end, *Neutral* refers to the word that is just a factual description without emotive connotations. At the other, *frightening* expresses the strongest emotion in degree of alarm, mostly negative or shocking.

The DA-KRV set includes about ten disease-relevant words, for example, if *disease* is considered *neutral*, it is rated 1. Then the word *pneumonia* can probably be rated medium-number in the middle of the scale. Let’s say it scores 2, because usually *pneumonia* is related to a serious illness with inflammation of one or both lungs. While *SARS*, which stands for *severe acute respiratory syndrome*, increases the level of seriousness of *pneumonia*, plus, it is defined as an *atypical pneumonia*, both of which increase its degree of alarm. Moreover, this *pneumonia*, know as *SARS* has been reported and described as a killer *disease* all the time which has made the population extremely scared.

Thus, the alarm potency of *SARS* cannot be played down. At the peak time of its outbreak it tended to be reported as one of the most frightening diseases ever. Though this is not a descriptive word the naming of the disease itself might be rated relatively high.

In order to better understand the perception of general affective response to DA-KRV, a survey was conducted (see appendix 4.4.2.). In all twenty participants were required to record the intuitive degree of alarm of the ten DA-KRV words. All of the participants corresponded to the newspapers' target readers, who are highly educated university students with English as their first or second language. The average of their scores on each lexical item reflects the gradations of seriousness of the DA-KRV. As a result, a more objective result of the degree of alarm was measured. The results of the survey are ranked and summarized as follows:

Degree of Alarm

NEUTRAL \_\_\_\_\_ FRIGHTENING

*spread; infection; disease; pneumonia; virus; SARS; outbreak; epidemic; crisis; disaster*

The results rank the words in the following order of degrees of alarm: 1) *spread*; 2) *infection*; 3) *disease*; 4) *pneumonia*; 5) *virus*; 6) *SARS*; 7) *outbreak*; 8) *epidemic*; 9) *crisis*; and 10) *disaster*.

In table 4.2.2., ranking by the intuitive degree of alarm (DEGREE), I multiplied the degree numbers with the relative percentages of each word (RELATIVE %) in the two newspapers. The relative percentage of each word is shown in the column of RELATIVE%\*DEGREE. The result of the DA-KRV measurement in terms of the impression of alarm potency shows that the SCMPC is higher than the CDC by 0.008 %.

Table 4.2.2. DA-KRV alarming degrees in the CDC and the SCMPC						
SCALE	DEGREE	DA-KRV	RELATIVE %	RELATIVE % * DEGREE	CD vs. SCMP	TOTAL
NEUTRAL → Alarm-raising → FRIGHTENING	1	Spread(ing)	-0.05%	-0.0005	SCMP>CD	SCMP>CD -0.008%
	2	Infect *	-0.12%	-0.0024	SCMP>CD	
	3	Disease(s)	-0.03%	-0.0009	SCMP>CD	
	4	Pneumonia	-0.32%	-0.0128	SCMP>CD	
	4	Virus	-0.10%	-0.005	SCMP>CD	
	6	SARS	0.41%	0.0246	CD>SCMP	
	7	Outbreak(s)	-0.21%	-0.0147	SCMP>CD	
	8	Epidemic	0.09%	0.0072	CD>SCMP	
	8	Crisis	-0.05%	-0.0045	SCMP>CD	
	10	Disaster(s)	0.00%	0.001	CD>SCMP	

To sum up this part of disease-relevant keywords analysis, the CDC tends to employ *SARS*, *epidemic*, and *disaster(s)* more, while the SCMPC uses *outbreak(s)*, *infect\**, *virus*, *spread(ing)*, *crisis*, and *pneumonia* more frequently as table 4.2.1 shows. However, this result can only draw the conclusion that the SCMPC may diversify its way of referring to the SARS disease, while the CDC probably has less variation. Further, in terms of the alarm potency, the SCMPC seems to employ more alarming DA-KRV than the CDC does as shown in table 4.2.2. Thus, the SCMP may employ more

disease-associated lexical variation in word choice, as well as conveying a more alarming message through applying disease-associated words.

Many have suggested that Mainland China neutralized the SARS event, if not eliminated its threat. Indeed, the results illustrated so far, at least statistically, agree with this statement. The argument is whether it is too arbitrary to judge the CDC for concealing the disease from the public, only because statistically it does employ slightly fewer disease-associated words. The SCMPC created a higher degree of alarm. However, the small difference between the CDC and the SCMP as realized by 0.008% in statistics fails to convince us that the SCMPC, the Hong Kong English newspaper, overreacted to the event. Eagleton's viewpoint is probably a fair comment that the SCMP coverage has generally been considered fairly balanced, in spite of the fact that the local press was accused repeatedly of reacting hysterically (2003).

### **4.3. Human-associated keyword-relevant-vocabulary ('HA-KRV')**

#### **Analysis**

##### **4.3.1. Introduction**

The KRV analysis includes the human-associated KRV words ("HA-KRV") analysis. As already mentioned, I particularly chose the most frequent words from the wordlist of the CDC and the SCMPC. They can be defined and

grouped into the two categories of the disease-associated word group and the human-associated word group. In addition, HA-KRV words are further divided into the sub-categories, named social organizations (“HA-KRV-SO” or “SO”) and personal entities (“HA-KRV-PE” or “PE”). In all, we have eleven SO words and lemmas, and eight PE words and lemmas.

#### 4.3.2. HA-KRV-PE Analysis

Table 4.3.2 shows eleven HA-KRV-SO words and their proportion in the corpora. Words like *staff*, *doctor(s)*, *patient(s)*, *people* and *victim(s)* are obviously selected and grouped together.

Table 4.3.2.1. HA-KRV-PE and their numbers/percentages among the corpus					
	CD (num)	CD %	SCMP (num)	SCMP %	CD vs. SCMP (%)
Confiden *	176	0.033%	185	0.035%	SCMP>CD
Doctor(s)	199	0.04%	604	0.11%	SCMP>CD
Fear *	210	0.04%	302	0.06%	SCMP>CD
Health *	1151	0.21%	1821	0.34%	SCMP>CD
Medical/medicine	1066	0.20%	1093	0.21%	SCMP>CD
Panic *	94	0.02%	161	0.03%	SCMP>CD
Patient(s)	739	0.14%	1004	0.19%	SCMP>CD
People	1161	0.22%	1563	0.29%	SCMP>CD
Staff	743	0.14%	636	0.12%	CD>SCMP
Victim(s)	76	0.01%	127	0.02%	SCMP>CD
Victory(ious)	39	0.01%	12	0.00%	CD>SCMP
HR-KRV-PE amount	5654	1.05%	7508	1.41%	SCMP>CD
Corpus amount	537,000		531,000		

Moreover, word forms like *confiden* \* - *confident* and *confidence*, *fear* \* – *fearful* and *fear(s)*, *panic* \* – *panicky*, *panicking*, and *panic*, and, word *victory/victorious* are also considered to be human-related (personal entities), since both *fear* \* and *panic* \* embrace a human emotion of nervousness caused by “danger, pain, evil, etc.” (OED on line version). As for the words *confident* and *confidence*, in contrast to the fearful emotions, they imply trust and esteem among people. *Victory/victorious* seem to treat the onslaught on SARS as a “fight”, “war” or “battle”, which requires “weapons” – efficient reactions and powerful measures – to beat it, and the literal meaning of *victory* conveys the emotion of confidence in the success of the community in defeating the virus.

As an overview of table 4.3.2.1., the general trend in the use of HA-KRV-PE is that the SCMPC contains more PE words than the CD does.

Table 4.3.2.2. Three categories of HA-KRV-PE: Human Roles PE, Physical PE and Positive/Negative Emotional PE						
		Words	CD vs. SCMP	Relative percentages	CD vs. SCMP	Total
HUMAN ROLES		Doctor(s)	-0.077%	-0.20%	SCMP>CD	SCMP>CD -0.36%
		Patient(s)	-0.051%			
		Staff	0.019%			
		Victim(s)	-0.010%			
		People	-0.078%			
MEDI-		Health *	-0.129%	-0.14%	SCMP>CD	
		Medi*	-0.007%			
EMOTION	POSITIVE	Confiden*	-0.002%	-0.002%	SCMP>CD	
		Victor *	0.005%	0.01%	CD>SCMP	
	NEGATIVE	Fear *	-0.018%	-0,03%	SCMP>CD	
		Panic *	-0.013%			

The CDC has more instances of *staff* and *Victory/victorious* than the SCMPC among these eleven PE. Table 4.3.2.2 divides these eleven PE words according to their different characteristics, and they are further sub-divided into the third-stage categories: “Human roles PE”, “Medi-PE” and “Emotion-PE”.

First, PE words which directly mean “people” or “human roles”, hence categorized as “Human Roles PE” is a category, including words that directly refer to people, like diverse medical workers or *staff – doctor(s)*, suspicious virus-carriers, SARS-*patients*, and ordinary *people* in the street. Among these Human roles PE *victims* may refer to patients/relatives of SARS patients/some medical workers/ people who had to wear facial masks, or who lost their job during the SARS period.

Second, the category of the “Medi-PE” including *medi\** and *health* are defined as Medi-PE. In terms of recurrence of *medi\**, which implied *medical*, *medicine*, they are typically distributed as the modifiers of Human Roles PE, as the collocations indicate. *Health* belongs to the “Medi-PE” when it is the head noun, meaning the state of being healthy and free from illness, because medicine or medical service and system are the foundation of physical health. However, when it is used as premodifier like *health service*, *health centre* or

The *Health, Welfare and Food Bureau of Hong Kong, etc.*, it refers to the medical services or institutions.

Third, the category of “Emotion PE” focuses on the words that are relevant to human emotions. Those evoking negative feelings, like *fear* or *panic*, are considered “Negative Emotion PE”. Those words that imply positive senses like *confidence* and *victory/victorious* belong to “Positive Emotion PE”, because they share a positive attitude towards the battle against SARS.

Generally speaking, the final relative percentage result – a negative number – gives the impression that the SCMPC cares more about people, ranging from the medical workers and SARS patients to ordinary people whose lives were disrupted by the SARS restrictions and measures. However, this does not mean to say that the CD’s stance keeps it from caring about or paying attention to those who suffered in the anti-SARS battle. The CD pays attention to people by raising the spirits and confidence of society, which is the reason why the only positive number is in the column of Positive Emotional PE – lemma *victor*\*. *Victory/victorious* originally means success in a war. In the current disease context it metaphorically implies humans eliminating the disease – SARS. The fact that there are fewer instances of *victory/victorious* appearing in SCMP suggests that it did not perceive its journalistic duty as “comforting people” as the CD did. However, in terms of

the other Emotion Positive PE – *confident/confidence*, the SCMPC applies a little more than the CDC. In the light of this, it would be too simplistic to judge the CD as only reporting the event with optimistic attitudes, and the SCMP reporting it with pessimistic connotations.

The SCMP's pessimistic or alarming connotations become significant in the Negative Emotion PE – *fear and panic*. It could be the case that the intention of including alarming emotions is to inform people (information function), to point out how critical the moment is (persuasive function), and also to reveal the ineffectiveness and inefficiency of the government (function as a watchdog), rather than to intentionally create *panic* in order to cause trouble to the government. These functions are probably the key functions of the fourth estate – the public media. Furthermore, concerning the consumption of newspapers, a national newspaper like the CD does not seem to be subject to the same marketing pressure or competition as the SCMP may have, since the CD is partially dependant on market needs. As the use of alarming and threatening words is usually more sensational, the SCMP then might be expected to make more use of them.

The SCMP's considerably greater attention paid to “human roles PE” (0.2% more) and “Medi-PE” (0.14% more) illustrate that the local SCMP is more human-oriented. This is possibly because the city of Hong Kong underwent a

severe test during the SARS period, and Hong Kong people were those who really suffered. Furthermore, it is a matter of ideological priority. For a communist country, the interests of individuals are always less important than those of the nation; however, in Hong Kong, individualism and personal rights are more strongly emphasized, as we discussed in section 2.2.3. Thus, the CDC would not be expected to be as interested in the individual's health to the same extent as the SCMPC is. Thirdly, the public health service and public safety are guaranteed by the Hong Kong government in return for the tax revenue they receive from the citizens. By contrast, the censorship of the mainland media might have allowed the CD to report SARS, but it might have failed to remind and persuade the readers that that the central or local government is obligated to provide sufficient information and prevent the disease for the sake of every individual citizen.

#### **4.3.3. HA-KRV-SO Analysis**

As mentioned, HA-KRV words are further divided into the second-stage categories, named as social organizations (“HA-KRV-SO” or “SO”) and personal entities (“HA-KRV-PE” or “PE”). In all, eight PE words and lemmas are selected from the wordlists of the CDC and the SCMPC.

Table 4.3.3.1 shows HA-KRV-SO words, their recurrent numbers and percentages among corpora. As we can see, the HA-KRV-SO words are

slightly different from the other two word groups that I have discussed so far.

Except for the words like *transparen\**, *inform\** and *authorit\**, all the selected words are geographical and political terms, such as *China*, *mainland*, *Guangdong*, *Hong Kong*, *government* and *SAR*. The CDC, compared to the SCMPC, uses more words like, *China*, *Global* and *inform\**.

Table 4.3.3.1. HA-KRV-SO words and their numbers/percentages among the CDC and the SCMP					
	CD (num)	CD	SCMP (num)	SCMP	CD vs. SCMP
China	5696	1.061%	1217	0.229%	CD>SCMP
Hong Kong	792	0.147%	3287	0.619%	SCMP>CD
SAR	24	0.004%	95	0.018%	SCMP>CD
Gover*	1449	0.270%	1689	0.318%	SCMP>CD
Transparen*	41	0.008%	59	0.011%	SCMP>CD
Authorit*	369	0.069%	648	0.122%	SCMP>CD
Global	205	0.038%	174	0.033%	CD>SCMP
Guangdong	484	0.090%	537	0.101%	SCMP>CD
Mainland	446	0.083%	602	0.113%	SCMP>CD
Inform*	502	0.093%	458	0.086%	CD>SCMP
HR-KRV-SO amount	10008	1.864%	8766	1.651%	CD>SCMP
number of words in corpus	537000		531000		

Three interpretations can be drawn. First, the CD as a national newspaper is more engaged with issues between nations and countries as the only national English newspaper in China. It might apply more words like *China* and *Global*, for its targeted readership might also require some national level events or news. The CD treated the disease as a *global* illness and a health problem around the world. Take the CDC concordance lines with search word *Global* as example:

- (1) The World Health Organization (WHO) has warned of a global health threat with SARS cases already identified in Europe and North America
- (2) needed to establish whether it was a new virus. The virus has been declared a global threat by the WHO.
- (3) If a US attack on Iraq as punters chose to focus instead on drug firms during a global incidence of atypical pneumonia, brokers said. Shanghai's hard-currency

However, although the effects of globalization did worsen the situation, the disease did not really threaten the western world, as it did Asia. Thus, it was a *global* fear as well as a *global* disease. Take the concordance lines from the SCMP for example:

- (1) But the danger of another outbreak remained in this age of global travel and the easing of controls between the mainland and Hong Kong.
- (2) Hong Kong found itself at the epicenter of the global Sars outbreak when the virus spread out of the Prince of Wales Hospital a

The SCMP especially mentioned the *global* fear of Hong Kong travelers and the close connection with *mainland*, which caused Hong Kong to suffer. Thus, while the SCMP particularly focused on the seriousness of SARS in Hong Kong, the CD probably wanted to define SARS as a *global* disease so that the origin of the disease would be somewhat played down.

Second, there was a lot of criticism of the Chinese's government for not disclosing the information relevant to the SARS outbreak. The assumption is that the CD, the national English newspaper, would be likely to function as a media tool to battle against this criticism. However, in the CDC, the concordance lines (search word inform\*) do not seem to agree with this

pre-supposition. Here some detailed context is included to make this point clearer.

- (1) It is not odd for the public to have no necessary knowledge and no psychological preparation. In this situation, the government should co-operate with hospitals to let the public know the truth. But out of the misunderstanding that information blackout may prevent social instability, the outcome just went against the original intention. So the government should inform the public of the accident in a timely fashion.
- (2) and 34 people have died from the disease. The harsh reality demands clear information disclosure from the authorities, so the public can be fully informed

The underlying logic unveiled from the CDC concordance lines is that the central government's intention of information blackout is to prevent social instability. However, it refers to the death rates and collective fear and panic among the anxious public who lack enough information required them to be informed by the CD. Clearly therefore, the CD claimed that the government and the media should be held partly responsible for this unnecessary fear, and suggested that the best way to eliminate panic and protect residents' rights is to disclose the information 'in a timely fashion'.

All of these viewpoints might break the myth and stereotype that the public hold about the communist media. The CD actually points out the authorities' lack of transparency and efficiency in informing the public, though in a mild and exculpatory way. This tends to imply that the Chinese Communist Party press has undergone some gradual and significant transformations over the years. However, the SCMP took a strong disapproval stance on (1) China's

long history of suppressing information for political and strategic reasons, condemned (2) the lack of accurate information about the virus which has led to wild speculation, and required (3) more transparency and efficiency in disseminating information, and a more effective mechanism for tracking and containing the spread, as the concordance lines illustrate.

The SCMPC on the other hand uses more SO words, such as *SAR*, *government*, *Guangdong*, *Mainland*, and *Hong Kong*. Among the SO, *SAR* is very interesting in our discussion. When the WHO decided to name the atypical pneumonia *SARS*, Hong Kong did not agree with this acronym since it is so similar to the short form of the Hong Kong government – *SAR*. However, this coincidence made the local government a laughing-stock according to some local Chinese newspapers in Hong Kong.

The SCMPC also has more SO words like *Guangdong*, *Mainland*, *Hong Kong*, and *government*. The SCMP prefers to report *Mainland* (not *China*), especially the disease origin *Guangdong*. It is a way to identify *Hong Kong* as a city that is different from any ordinary province in the *Mainland*, such as *Guangdong*. The desire to separate herself from the image of the *Mainland*, while keeping the Chinese Hong Konger identity, is deep-rooted in Hong Kong. Especially in this instance when *Hong Kong* acted as a victim that the *Mainland* “invades” with the disease of *SARS*. This concept of ‘disease as invasion’ fits into Sontag’s (1991) disease as invasion metaphor very well, as

we discussed in previous section. The appearance of military words in medicine is not the first time in the history of disease, as Sontag makes clear, SARS here did act as an invader from the Mainland for it was believed that both the Mainland's political policy and weak medical situation lead to the virus's appearance and outbreak. Thus, there is more reason for a Hong Kong local newspaper to use terms like *Mainland* and *Guangdong* in order to emphasize the differences of "Hong Kong" identity, rather than its similarities and proximity to other Chinese cities and provinces, such as typical *Guangdong* cities – *Shenzhen and Guangzhou*. Moreover, things coming out of the mainland, like poorly educated people, children of Hong Kongers born on the mainland, and even educated people taking away unemployed graduates' jobs, and, of course industrial pollution are routinely seen as problematic for Hong Kong. The main exception to this perception is Mainland tourism, since tourist dollars are always welcome.

## **5. Collocation Analysis**

### **5.1. Introduction**

After having looked at the frequency of keywords that reflect disease discourse word choice and preference, I encountered an obvious problem. This is that if I only look at the frequency of appearance of the chosen words, it simply reveals that one of the two newspapers has the tendency of employing certain words more than the other newspaper. Besides, the review of those disease-relevant and human-relevant words interprets the underlying institutional, cultural, and social assumptions that are contained or carried within the chosen two newspapers' disease discourse. An analysis of collocation will definitely provide an opportunity to follow up some of the hypotheses arrived at on the basis of frequency counts.

### **5.2. Collocation analysis**

In order to further study the patterns of the disease discourse of newspapers, it would be better to move the analysis to word clusters, collocates, patterns - that is, in the direction of collocation analysis. Not only because the collocational statistics are useful to summarize the information to be found in concordance lines, but also because the collocation results themselves are already meaningful in helping to reveal the newspaper's coverage of the disease.

### 5.3. Word patterns – SARS

After running the CDC by the concord device in the software with the search word *SARS*, the summary of concordance lines suggests some word patterns of the CDC. The study focuses on the top twenty with relatively higher frequency that appear within the horizon of about two words on either side of the node word – *SARS*.

Table 5.3. 1. Word patterns of SARS in the CDC				
L2	L1	Node "SARS"	R1	R2
OF	OF	1	<b>OUTBREAK</b>	THE
RESPIRATORY	THE	2	<b>CASES</b>	IN
TO	SYNDROME	3	<b>PATIENTS</b>	AND
THE	<b>AGAINST</b>	4	<b>VIRUS</b>	ACUTE
<b>OUTBREAK</b>	BY	5	THE	HAS
<b>IMPACT</b>	WITH	6	<b>EPIDEMIC</b>	IS
<b>FIGHT</b>	FOR	7	AND	TO
<b>SPREAD</b>	NEW	8	IN	SAID
AND	FROM	9	SEVERE	A
IN	ON	10	IS	HAVE
BY	TO	11	HAS	ON
AS	<b>ANTI</b>	12	ON	WAS
NUMBER	A	13	<b>PREVENTION</b>	WILL
THAT	<b>SUSPECTED</b>	14	WILL	WERE
FROM	THAT	15	<b>CRISIS</b>	AS
<b>INFECTED</b>	<b>CONFIRMED</b>	16	CASE	NOT
<b>BATTLE</b>	<b>FIGHTING</b>	17	<b>PATIENT</b>	AREAS
DURING	AS	18	BUT	HAD
A	<b>PREVENT</b>	19	WAS	BE
SAID	OVER	20	<b>HIT</b>	<b>BEIJING</b>

Table 5.3.1 shows that many of the words that belong to the disease-associated keyword-relevant-vocabulary appear adjacent to *SARS*, such as *outbreak*, *spread*, *infected*, *virus*, *epidemic*, and *crisis*. Other than these, words like *case(s)*, *patients*, *suspected*, *confirmed*, *treat(ing)*, *impact* and *prevent(ion)* also appear frequently and show their human-associated orientation, particularly in the situation of how people are dealing with the SARS disease. These mentioned words have been bolded in the table 5.3.1.

Collocates between the 2:2 span word patterns of SARS in the CDC, like *against*, *anti-*, *fight(ing)*, *battle*, and *hit*, were obviously drawn from the “language of warfare” (Sontag, 1991).

In the context of SARS, these metaphorical ideas become very applicable. SARS is treated as an *outbreak* or *outbreaks* (R1-1 and L2-5 in the table5.3.1), a word also frequently collocating with war in other contexts. The idea of *virus* invasion of human body corresponds with the enemy army’s “invasion” and “attack”. As a consequence, the concept of *battle* or *fight against* (L1-17 and L2-17 in the table 5.3.1), SARS is generated, which clearly shows the CD’s tendency to treat the disease as the outbreak of a kind of “war”. Moreover, SARS is constructed as a *virus* that invades people which has caused a *crisis* or has *hit* (see R1-15 and R1-20 in the table 5.3.1) society. It dramatically illustrates how the SARS disease has destroyed the

balance and order of people's normal life and has threatened human health and lives, or metaphorically a social organization. If we recall what happened in 2003, SARS occurred mainly in Asia and claimed hundreds of lives. In a city like Hong Kong which is famed as a bustling shopping Mecca, it was difficult to see many people walking on the streets. To this extent, many Asian societies with vibrant social systems like Hong Kong were nearly "defeated" by the disease. Threatened by the attack of this mysterious disease of unclear origin, human society determined to keep it out. The CDC calls for a "war" on the epidemic.

Firstly, SARS cases (R1-2 in the table 5.3.1) are defined as *suspected* or *confirmed patients* (L1-14, L1-16, and R1-3 in the table 5.3.1), those who acquired the *SARS virus* (R1-4 in the table 5.3.1) in their bodies, were quarantined first and treated with all kinds of medicine. This is the procedure of "counter-attack", metaphorically speaking, though some side effects of various treatments later turned out to be damaging to health. Besides, words or prefixes such as *fighting*, *against* and *anti-* are located before the node *SARS*, which implies that people, social organizations or society might have taken an actor role in keeping the intrusive disease out. However, the affected *SARS* as the object of the verb *fight against* does not necessarily involve a passive role. In this sense, the role of humans in the war with *SARS* is rather a passive one, suggesting that *SARS* initiated the battle, and

that people became the victims of this disease war, and the war field – society was also influenced. In addition, the CDC pays attention to *prevention* (R1-13 in the table 5.3.1) a lot. However, attack may be seen as the best defense. Thus, preventing humans from catching the disease is the most effective strategy of “resistance” and to “defeat” the disease, finally. The result of this disease battle, moreover, appears to justify the use of the metaphor.

Table 5.3.2. Word patterns of the SCMPC				
L2	L1	Node “SARS”	R1	R2
RESPIRATORY	THE	1	<b>OUTBREAK</b>	THE
OF	OF	2	<b>PATIENTS</b>	IN
TO	SYNDROME	3	AND	AND
THE	WITH	4	<b>CASES</b>	TO
<b>IMPACT</b>	FROM	5	IS	A
THAT	FOR	6	<b>VIRUS</b>	IS
A	THAT	7	THE	HAS
BY	BY	8	<b>CRISIS</b>	WAS
<b>SPREAD</b>	<b>SUSPECTED</b>	9	IN	NOT
IN	ON	10	HAS	BE
ON	A	11	WAS	HE
<b>INFECTED</b>	<b>AGAINST</b>	12	BUT	ARE
<b>OUTBREAK</b>	TO	13	<b>CASE</b>	HAVE
SAID	IF	14	ON	SAID
IS	HAVE	15	HAD	HAD
<b>SYMPTOMS</b>	SAID	16	TO	BUT
<b>CASES</b>	AS	17	WILL	<b>HONG</b>
WITH	ABOUT	18	<b>PATIENT</b>	BEEN
FROM	FIRST	19	AS	FOR
HAVE	<b>CONFIRMED</b>	20	HE	ON

Table 5.3.2 shows the first-twenty word patterns when *SARS* is the search word in the SCMPC. In the word patterns of the SCMPC, words can also be

divided into two groups: the disease-relevant category: *outbreak, virus, crisis, impact* and *spread*, and the human-relevant category: *case(s), patient(s), infected, symptoms, suspected, and confirmed*. Though some may argue that both *infected* and *symptoms* are also disease related, I consider them more human-relevant, for the human bodies are the carriers of SARS. Humans are *infected* or have *symptoms* of SARS.

Relatively, the major difference between the two newspapers' word patterns is in the way that the CDC illustrates that the SARS battle is the most prevalent factor. The way it portrays and focuses on how people deal with the virus invasion has been discussed above. By contrast, in word patterns of the SCMPC, it is not clear that the fighting metaphor is used at all. At least the top twenty (see table 5.3.2) most frequent words do not include words like *anti-, fight against, or battle* which the feature highly in the CDC. Although the adverbial *against* features somewhat in the SCMPC, the sense of struggle is downplayed by comparison with the CDC word patterns.

This difference was not expected. I used to believe that it is the nature of the disease that determines whether it is suitable for applying the metaphor of military language. However, collocates and word patterns here provide evidence that the event of SARS can be construed as an invader and attacker metaphorically in the context of the CD, but not in the SCMP. Thus, we

might conclude that the underlying ideology of the CD tends to be more aggressive in overcoming the disease. It might be due to the common understanding and acknowledgement that nature, including disease, is something that can be overcome or defeated. Obviously, this military concept or ideology towards disease is downplayed in Hong Kong society while it is overwhelmingly emphasized in the Mainland. My explanation, as to the difference, is that the underlying communist ideology is based on the idea of fighting, though to fight against a disease sounds much more strenuous than just getting medical treatment. It would not be irrelevant to relate this concept of the national struggle against SARS to the concept of class struggle within Marxism and Maoism. For example, Mao developed tactical principles of guerrilla warfare, based on Taoism and Marxism. According to these principles, 'the enemy advances, we retreat. The enemy halts, we harass. The enemy withdraws, we attack. The enemy retreats, we pursue.' This theory of conflict between the enemy and oneself recalls the idea of class struggle or contradiction within every social, cultural or political domain. Mao (1996) once said that 'there is nothing that does not contain contradiction; without contradiction there would be no world...'. Here I do not intend to claim that when the reporters or editors wrote the SARS news; their outlook was dictated by Maoism or Marxist political thought. However, these underlying ideologies might have had some subliminal influence, especially when this sense is much less evident in the SCMPC.

#### 5.4. Word collocates - SARS

The previous difference between the CDC and the SCMPC can be further seen in the word collocates comparison of both corpora. The software of Oxford WordSmith Tools 4.0 provides a device that adds up collocates of SARS within the 5:5 span, and indexes the results in order of frequency.

As table 5.4.1 and table 5.4.2 show, the top twenty keywords further confirm the previous observation that the CD tends to treat the SARS epidemic from a national struggle perspective, while the standpoint of the SCMP is more based on the concerns of human health and safety. The first point of “national struggle” can be typified by its high usage of *China*, *China’s* and *Chinese*, and *fight*, *against*, which are not found in the SCMPC. Probably, this implies that a representative newspaper of Hong Kong would not contain the same national propaganda perspective or function as the national governmental newspaper China Daily does, although pro-Beijing patriotic Chinese newspapers certainly operate in the SAR and reflect a more patriotic national viewpoint.

Table 5.4.1. Word collocates of SARS in the CDC	
SARS	4826
OUTBREAK	518
CASES	400
<b>PATIENTS</b>	348
AGAINST	281
BEIJING	228
EPIDEMIC	208
VIRUS	198
IMPACT	194
CHINA	184
NEW	176
FIGHT	165
SPREAD	150
CHINA'S	145
PREVENTION	143
SUSPECTED	130
CONTROL	127
CHINESE	120
CONFIRMED	119
HEALTH	103

Table 5.4.2. Word collocates of SARS in the SCMPC	
SARS	2556
OUTBREAK	309
<b>PATIENTS</b>	155
HONG	116
KONG	101
VIRUS	100
PEOPLE	98
CRISIS	79
IMPACT	72
HEALTH	71
SUSPECTED	65
SPREAD	63
HOSPITAL	59
INFECTED	56
SYMPTOMS	56
PATIENT	49
CONFIRMED	46
<b>GOVERNMENT</b>	39
CONTROL	33
<b>DISEASE</b>	33

The second stance can be exemplified by the frequent appearance of *health*, *hospital*, and *symptoms* in the SCMPC while the top-twenty list of the CDC lacks these words representing medical care and attention. Referring back to the previous discussion about the degrees of alarm, I do find that the SCMP tends to be more alarmist than the CD. Thus, we can probably assume that if the SCMP did want to be more sensational then the best way to achieve this is to relate the disease closely and tightly with humans. The more a disease might threaten human life, the more serious it appears to be. However, the CD operates a high key anti-SARS style. The positive message seems to say no matter how serious the disease is, humans are powerful adversaries.

Using news values to explain this difference, I would say the SARS issue is more in line with the news value factors such as (F2) threshold, (F4.2) relevance, (F.2) scarcity, (F7) continuity, and (F12) reference to something negative. A vast quantity of reports, editorials, features or letters from the readers were all talking about the disease, making SARS overwhelmingly present in the media. Most of all, media would consider the health and safety issue to be most relevant to the public interest, which corresponds to the relevance factor. Second, the death rates of SARS heightened a sense of threshold and scarcity in the society. A mysterious disease is obviously something negative. All these reasons made SARS an extremely newsworthy event to report. The SCMP naturally took the opportunity to make the news event as sensational as possible in the context of the newspaper's editorial policy and journalistic style.

### **5.5. Collocation**

The collocation data are not only meaningful to reveal the word collocational patterns, but are also useful to summarize the information to be found in concordance lines as well. The point of a concordance is to be able to see examples of a particular word or phrase in its contexts. It is by seeing the contexts that we can get a better idea about the search word. In order to find out the typical and presentable concordance lines in evidence, patterns of collocates are investigated.

### 5.5.1. DR-KRV Collocation

The disease-associated KRV has been discussed according to the frequency. One of the most distinguishing KRV items is the keyword – *disease*. In CDC, the collocation word patterns of *disease* indicate how humans actively *treat, prevent, control, fight against, combat, contain* and *contract* the *disease* of SARS. The premodifiers of *disease* like *infectious, respiratory, contagious, communicable, deadly, fatal, and killer* determine that the *disease* SARS is easily caught and it endangers human life. We have examples of concordance lines, such as ‘the whole nation has been mustered to fight against the *killer SARS disease*.’ The collocation word patterns of *disease* in the SCMPC are similar to those of the CDC. Humans *contract, control, catch, prevent, and fight against* the *infectious, respiratory, communicable, deadly, contagious, killer, mysterious, airborne* and *chronic* disease. We have example from the corpora such as, ‘if the children did not go to school they might end up *catching* the **disease** in crowded public places.’

### 5.5.2. HA-KRV-PE Collocation

Collocates can tell us a general view of the kind of collocates that might be found next to the node word. Those collocates in the tables represent the most popular collocates with *patient(s)*. The concordance lines represent here can give textual evidence of this. Collocates like *contact, infected, and*

*symptoms*, for example, are common collocates that appear near the node word *patient(s)*.

The collocates of *SARS* in 5.4.1 and 5.4.2 show that *patient(s)* is the most relevant and significant HA-KRV-PE word if we want to study the SARS news discourse. The collocation word patterns are thus searched with the node word *patients* to give the results in the table 5.5.2.1. In the CDC, patients are those *confirmed, infected, suspected* or *recovered SARS patients*. The *number* of SARS patients and their *symptoms* are also relevant as well as the SARS patients who *recovered* (R2) (from the SARS) or *died* (R2) of this disease. The collocate *contact* (L3) seems to refer to those who have contacts with *patients* (node), presumably the medical workers or the relatives of the *patients*.

Table 5.5.2.1. Collocates of patients in the CDC					
L3	L2	L1	node	R1	R2
contact	Confirmed	SARS	<b>patients</b>	Infected	Recovered
	Suspected	Infected		suspected	Discharged
	Treat			Said	died
	recovered				

In spite of the similarity of the pattern, the SCMPC differs to some extent in its patient(s) collocation word pattern from the CDC as shown in table 5.5.2.2.

Table 5.5.2.2. Collocates of patients in the SCMPC					
L3	L2	L1	node	R1	R2
Care	Contact	SARS	<b>Patients</b>	Suffering	Symptoms
number	Confirmed	Infected		Rights	Admitted
	Treat	Infectious		died	association
		recovered			

Most prominently, those infected patients *died* (R1) of SARS. The disease and the treatment made them *suffer* (R1). Patients in Hong Kong have their own *association* to claim rights for them. Those who had *contact* (L2) with *infected* (L1) SARS *patients* (node) were also taken into account. Here I list two concordancing examples of the two newspapers, to see these the collocates can be really found in those lines.

- (1) the culprit since many doctors and nurses who had close *contact* with *infected patients* fell ill with the disease. Liang has returned from Guangdong, where he (CDC)
- (2) Hospital Authority announced yesterday Princess Margaret Hospital will receive **patients** with *symptoms* of (SCMPC)

### 5.5.3. HA-KRV-SO Collocation

HA-KRV-SO is generated and categorized using the keyword *government*. In the CDC, the collocates of *government* can be generalized as *Chinese, central, local government said, decided, and announced* something. The typical concordance line is like ‘...respiratory syndrome (SARS) percolated into the markets, brokers said. The government announced on Sunday it had fired two senior officials - the health mi...’ In the SCMP the collocates behave with more variety and liberty, as shown in table 5.5.3.

Table 5.5.3. Collocates of government in the SCMPC					
L2	L1	Node	R1	R2	R3
Urged Accused Criticized	Hong Kong central Our	<b>government</b>	announced	Should/Would Could/must/can	Failed provide considering

Thus, in the SCMPC, *government* mostly refers to the *Hong Kong government*; second to this is the (Beijing) *central government*. *Our government* also figures prominently. We cannot find this sense of belonging in the CDC context, though. Also, government and its highest executive officials *announced*. However, noticeably, modal verbs like *should*, *would*, *could*, *must* and *can* are frequently applied, which show the SCMP's advisory role. More service or policy *should* have been *provided* or the authorities must *consider* something, for example. By contrast, the role of the fourth estate is more clearly defined in the SCMP which *urged*, *accused* and *criticized* the government for having *failed* in its performance. Here two typical concordance lines shows how these collocates behave in the textual extracts, and the high repetition of these collocational patterns show that the examples here are representative. Examples include sentences like, 'Chief Executive Tung Chee-hwa's **government** has *failed* to demonstrate leadership during his first and second term' or 'It is very dangerous and the **government** *must* take immediate action.'

## **6. Concordance lines analysis**

### **6.1. Processes Types**

Goatly's (2002) study of the BBC's representation of nature explores the relationship between the grammar and the semantics of the clause, and assesses the power hierarchy of natural objects. In accordance with this approach, the concordance lines analysis of SARS coverage will also focus on the grammatical hierarchy, using the three keywords from human-relevant and disease-relevant categories. Thus, it is hoped to observe the underlying attitudes of the respective newspapers towards SARS, based on the assumptions raised in previous collocation patterns and frequency KRV study.

In order to draw up a power hierarchy among the keywords of the three categories, Halliday's grammar of transitivity is particularly suitable for the present purpose. In Goatly's (2002) study the power hierarchy is drawn up only in respect of the material process clauses. It concentrates on natural objects' power presentation and hierarchy in BBC news, which normally does not feature the characteristics of human speech or behavior, e.g. thinking, feeling, seeing, etc. (not mention the literary or personification usages, which also seldom appear in hard news coverage). Thus, transitivity processes such as, verbal, behavioral, mental, existential, were not included in its hierarchy (Goatly, 2002:7).

## **6.2. Power Hierarchy Model**

Poynton (1991) indicates that what news is centrally about is action, though there is in fact more than one kind of process involved in what newspapers construe as action....what is spoken about is of crucial importance, those who speak as 'experts' of one kind or another are to be taken seriously, and what they say can reconstitute forms of social action...and with respect to control over objects, possession or ownership can be indicated by possessive relational clauses'.

The particular power relation among the participants and transitivity clauses help to establish a news power hierarchy. Thus, with reference to Goatly's Power hierarchy in material process clauses (2002), hierarchy used in a transitivity analysis of the clauses (2000) and Halliday's transitivity model (1994), a new power hierarchy particularly for newspaper discourse is suggested in table 6.2 (the short form is given in parentheses):

The hierarchy might be problematical and debatable, in terms of the relative power relationship. However, the general idea is targeted at the participants of four basic processes. Those that function as the initiators of any material or verbal action are treated as more powerful. Second, if the participants are affected by a material or verbal action, the action is considered less powerful simply because the actor influences or has impact on the affected.

Table 6.2. Power hierarchy in process clauses and their participants in newspaper discourse

	Participants and process	Explanations	Examples
Powerful → less powerful	Actor in transitive material process clause (ACT)	An active participant powerful enough to affect others	<i>Snow</i> blocked the road
	Actor in intransitive material process clause (AC)	An active participant though not affecting others	<i>John</i> went into the room.
	Sayer in verbal process clause (SAYER)	Message sender, having an effect on the consciousness of other sentient participants	Peter whistled
	Token in possessive relational clause (TOKEN)	Owner, signifying property of the possessor	<i>I</i> have a car
	Phenomenon in perceptual mental process clause (PN) <sup>6</sup>	Capable of impinging on the consciousness of others but non-volitionally	I saw <i>the bird</i> .
	Participant in intensive/circumstantial/existential relational process clause (either token or value) (RELATIONAL)	Neutral in terms of the relational process is the processes of being	<i>He is a teacher</i>
	Prepositional complement (as part of noun phrase) (PC) Circumstantial prepositional complement (CC) <sup>7</sup> Premodifier in any process clause (PM)	The syntactic-semantic categories that the node word belong in. They are considered the same in power hierarchy.	The chair in <i>the garden</i>  I Walked <i>on the road</i>  different <i>government</i> officials
	Sensor in mental process clause (SENSOR)	Sentient and responsive to outside stimuli.	<i>I</i> saw the bird.
	Receiver in verbal process clause (RECEIVER)	Listener who receives the information of orders.	Peter told <i>Mary</i> the hurricane was coming
	Value in possessive relational clause (VALUE) <sup>8</sup>	Something that is said to be something else's	<i>I</i> have a <i>car</i>
	Affected in material process clause (AF)	Most powerless because acted upon, the victim of the power of actors.	He passed <i>me</i> a knife

<sup>6</sup> The mental process is the process of sensing, including perception, affection and cognition. According to Halliday, these three categories mean “seeing”, “feeling” and “thinking”. The relevant power hierarchy considers the perception mental process only. However, the process of cognition seems to be more powerful than that of affection than that of cognition than any participants in relational process. Among these three categories, perception mental process is the least powerful, and most relevant to the news discourse power hierarchy.

<sup>7</sup> The sub-division into types of circumstance, place and time are neutral, instrument is positive in power hierarchy. Here, this sub-division is mentioned but does not count in the power hierarchy.

<sup>8</sup> The possession can be embodied by the participants and process. If someone affected/had/contracted/caught a disease, the power relation between the disease container and the disease will be the opposite. Disease, the possessed, is considered more powerful. This is a typical case of grammatical metaphor.

### 6.3. Keyword concordance lines analysis

#### 6.3.1. DA-KRV - disease

In total, 1208 concordance lines with the keyword *disease* from the SCMPC and 1087 concordance lines with keywords *disease* from the CDC are found. About 200 lines from each corpus have been randomly chosen and are believed to be adequate for a sample that can give an accurate picture of the respective corpora in terms of disease-associated words. The categories in the left column are in order of decreasing power, according to the hierarchy.

Figure 6.3.1. relative % of disease in the CDC and the SCMPC

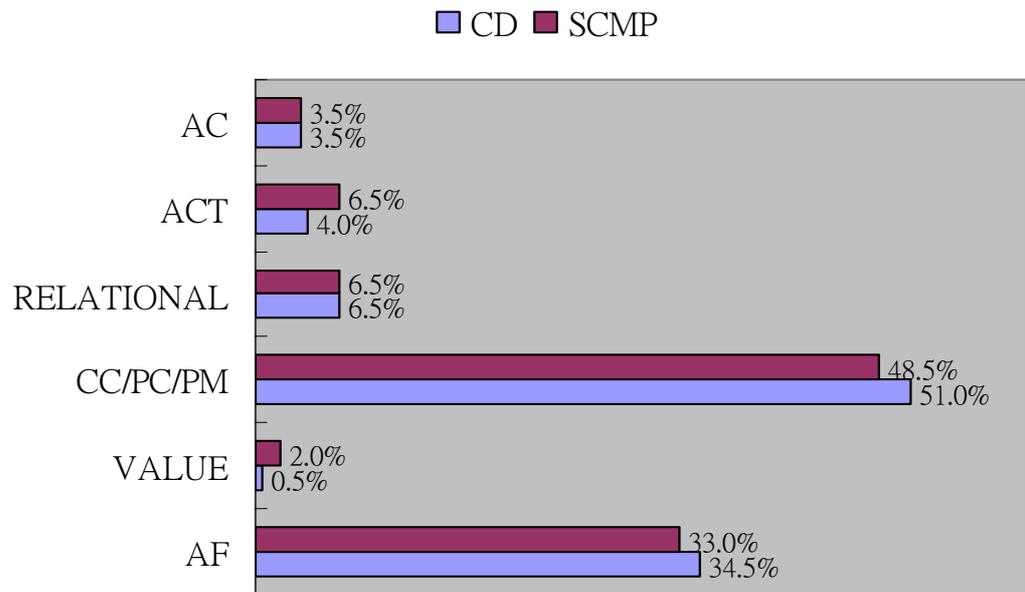


Figure 6.3.1 shows that in both corpora, material process clauses occupy most of the *disease* concordance lines, while those where the *disease* is the affected (AF) is much higher than those where it is the actors, including both AC and ACT. The dominant collocates of *disease*, as discussed above,

suggest that humans actively deal with or even fight back against the disease, with verbs like *treat*, *prevent*, *control*, *fight* and *combat* figuring prominently in the CDC. Goatly (2002) has pointed out that ‘the power of disease is often minimized by the choice of verbs...which grammatically represent the disease as affected rather than an actor. Verbs like *contain* and *contract* here definitely belong to this category. Also, the premodifiers of *disease* like *infectious*, *respiratory*, *contagious*, *communicable*, *deadly*, *fatal*, and *killer* embody the seriousness of SARS and that the *disease* is easily caught and endangers human life. These particular collocations, especially *deadly*, *fatal* and *killer* somewhat challenge the hierarchy, where premodifiers might not be thought to have much power. The collocation word patterns of disease in SCMPC are generalized as ‘Humans *contract*, *control*, *catch*, *prevent*, and *fight against* the *infectious*, *respiratory*, *communicable*, *deadly*, *contagious*, *killer*, *mysterious*, *airborne* and *chronic* disease.’ The SCMPC shares a similar schema with the CDC in terms of the lexicogrammar of *disease*, in that the material process clauses are in the majority among all the syntactic-semantic categories.

- (1) will be held in Hong Kong soon to look for better ways to *combat* the disease in the future. (AF/CD)
- (2) All of the infected students *contracted* the disease from their relatives. The chance for the transmission of the (AF/SCMP)

In (1), a verb like *combat* shows that faced with the fatal disease, humans are determined to defeat it. The verb *contracted* (2) grammatically represents the

*disease* as the AF, but semantically it is the actor. Other examples are *catch* and *contain* in the CDC. These words minimize the power of *disease* in terms of the power hierarchy as suggested in table 6.2. I interpreted *diseases* in these clauses as affected rather than actors due to this grammatical judgment. It remains an arguable interpretation.

Goatly (2003) showed the number of disease elements that are affected is also higher than those are actors in transitive clauses, and much higher than those that are actors in transitive process clauses, though not as much as the two kinds of actors combined together, which makes the result different from the current study. This difference, statistically, shows that in the context of SARS disease coverage, both the CD and the SCMP maintain a human-dominant stance that humans should be more powerful than the disease, SARS. I interpret these different findings as the difference between the general noun phrase and the specific term. In my view, the general concept of disease contains less threat towards humans, thus it is less powerful than a specific mysterious and fatal disease, like SARS disease. The second interpretation is drawn from the difference between western and eastern concepts of nature, like disease.

However, we should bear in mind that some of the constructions may be irrealis. The power relation between disease and human may have switched in accordance with what the hierarchy suggests.

- (I) no authoritative unit proving that the medicine can effectively *prevent* the disease. (AF/CD/irrealis)
- (II) "It is the government's plan to *stop* the disease outside the city limits," said Huang Jianzhi, the city's deputy transp (AF/SCMP/irrealis)

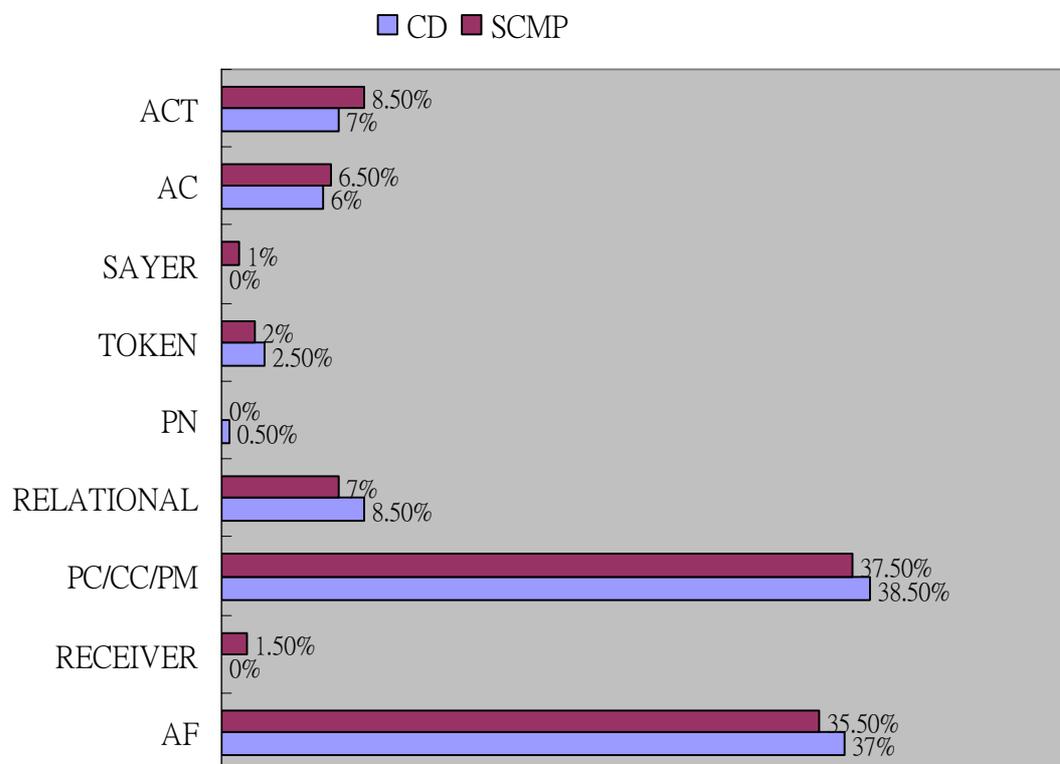
In these two concordance lines, humans are not sure about the origin of the disease or how it spreads or the authoritative ways of curing the disease, etc. Though the CD and the SCMP maintain a human-dominant stance that humans should be more powerful than the disease; nevertheless SARS, the mysterious disease, causes both the fear and panic among the society and kills people. The disease, at least, shows its power.

### **6.3.2. Human-associated keywords with personal entities – patients**

In total, I got 1004 concordance lines with the keyword *patients* from the SCMPC and 739 concordance lines with the keyword *patients* from the CDC. About 200 lines from each corpus have been randomly chosen and analyzed based on the similar size of the original corpora. The results of the lexicogrammar of the clauses with node word *patients* are calculated and ranked by its syntactic-semantic categories in figure 6.3.2.

Figure 6.3.2. shows that the lexicogrammar of the HA-KRV-PE word *patients* transitivity clauses on the whole agrees with the point that the news disease, SARS disease news contexts here, is still centrally about action (Poynton, 1991). The dominance of material process clause is evidence for this phenomenon, while the node word *patients* are mostly affecteds. If we look at the instances of the transitivity clauses of *disease*, we may say that *disease*, as a natural element, is less powerful than humans. But what we find is that patients, as sick humans, are very much powerless and passive, compared with the cause of their sickness, the SARS disease.

Figure6.3.2. Relative % of patients in the CDC and SCMP



Looking at collocates of HA-KRV-PE, the word *patients* are the most relevant and significant PE words, if we want to study the SARS news discourse. This is because they appear frequently in the context of the SARS collocates within 5:5 span, as highlighted in table 5.4.1 and table 5.4.2. According to the previous study on the collocates of *patients*, in the CDC, the SARS patients *recovered* (from the SARS) or *died* of this disease. The collocate *contact* seems to refer to those who have contacts with *patients*, presumably the medical workers or the relatives of the *patients*. Despite the similarity of the pattern, the SCMPC differs in its *patients* collocation word pattern in the CDC, in which the disease and the treatment made patients *suffer*. At the statistical level, I counted the subject of *suffer* still as sensor, rather than phenomenon, for reasons of its grammatical structure.

- (3) Province under control. "The disease is now effectively under control and *the patients have recovered gradually* and are resuming their normal lives," Foreign (AC/CD)
- (4) It means the situation is under control, Dr Lo said. A *74-year-old female patient* with a history of other diseases *died* in United Christian Hospital yesterday (AC/SCMP)
- (5) care workers. The team also analysed the patients' clinical symptoms. *All patients suffered* from fever, 74 per cent had chills or rigors, 62 per cent had (AC/SCMP)

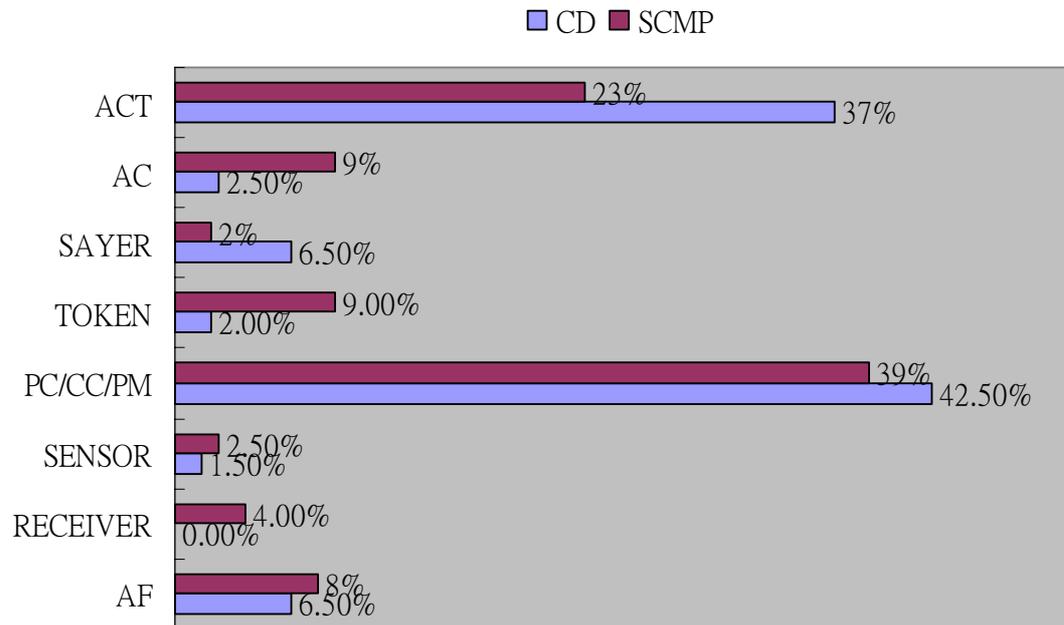
*Patients* which are AC, are generally divided into two results – to be or not to be. AC is the most powerful in the transitivity clauses only second to ACT. In (3) '*patients have recovered gradually*', which means that the patients have defeated the SARS at last. The happy-ending result agrees with the power hierarchy that the AC is more powerful than the AF - disease.

However, the struggling process of treating and curing cannot hide the fatality of the SARS disease at all. Also, in (5), *patients* suffered from..., where the influence of the phenomenon upon the sensor does not seem to be negligible. 'A 74-year-old female patient with a history of other diseases died...' in (4), the patient was too powerless and weak to maintain her/his health and life. The fatal disease leads to death. I can hardly think of anything else more powerful than this disease, or anyone who is more powerless than a dead patient. According to Davidse (1992), verbs might be subdivided into superventive and non-superventive, actors in a superventive clause are more like affecteds. Thus, the percentage of *patients* affected might be even higher.

### **6.3.3. HA-KRV-SO – government**

In total, 1416 concordance lines with HA-KRV-SO word *government* from the SCMPC and 1389 concordance lines with keywords *government* from the CDC were found. About 200 lines from each corpus have been randomly chosen and analyzed based on the similar size of the original corpora. The results of the lexicogrammar of the clauses with the node word *government* are ranked by its syntactic-semantic categories. In addition, the similarity and dissimilarity of the lexicogrammar pattern and verb choice and content will be observed.

Figure 6.3.3 Relative % of government in the CDC and the SCMPC



In Figure 6.3.3 the variety of syntactic-semantic categories is varied and calculated to be: actor in transitive clause, actor in intransitive clause, token in possessive, sayer in verbal clause, relational, sensor in mental clause, receiver in verbal clause, and affected. Again the material process and its participants are found most among all these syntactic-semantic categories. Generally, *government* emerges as most powerful with the high percentage of *government* ACT. Comparatively speaking, *government* is represented as much more extremely powerful and active in the CDC compared to the SCMPC not only for its relatively bigger number of *government* ACT, AC, and SAYER, but also for its smaller number with *government* AF, RECEIVER (0%), and SENSOR.

Referring to the previous study of *government* collocation, in the CDC, the collocates show that the most frequent appearances of *government* are *Chinese, central and local government*. *Government* which is SAYER, is reported as having made a speech or announcement, with the verbs *said, decided, and announced* most significant. The *government* in CDC is never a RECEIVER which is the converse of its being an authoritative SAYER. Last but not least, it emerges and indicates a position of superiority, in that it frequently uses verbs like *supports* (for example, *Hong Kong*), *plans, provides and takes (measures)*<sup>9</sup> to deal with the SARS disease.

- (6) The *government* will also **provide** medical aid and subsidies to poorer people (ACT/CD)
- (7) He added that *the municipal government* **has** contingency plans in place to deal with any possible outbreak in (TOKEN/CD)
- (8) *ute respiratory syndrome (SARS)* percolated into the markets, brokers said. *The government* **announced** on Sunday it had fired two senior officials - the health mi (SAYER/CD)

It is true that ‘what news is centrally about is action, though there is in fact more than one kind of process involved in what newspapers construe as action...’ (Poynton, 1991). Thus again the material process and its participants, like *government* ACTs are found most among all these syntactic-semantic categories. The material verb *provide* (3) shows that *government* is placed at the top position of the power hierarchy in such a way that it is able to exercise its duties.

---

<sup>9</sup> *Take* and *measures* belong to different rows of collocation; however, they are combined to show the probable usage of verb *take* in the context. So it is with *pays* and *attention* and *to*.

According to Poynton (1991), ‘with respect to control over objects, possession or ownership can be indicated by possessive relational clauses (X has/owns a)’, which is also the way of *government* illustrating its ownership over measures or plans here in (4). Obviously, since government is legitimated as owners or the assigned social organization, it must assume through the possessive verb *have*, all responsibility for the aftermath of the disease. Also, Poynton (1991) indicates that what is spoken about is of crucial importance, those who speak as “experts” or “authorities” of one kind or another are to be taken seriously, and what they say can constitute forms of social action. In terms of the verbal clauses, the government’s announcement bears out this theory, see (5). In sum, among these clauses where *government* ACT, SAYER and TOKEN are more active and powerful, the Chinese *government* as the highest social organization represents its authority through (a) getting to “act”, or ‘provide medical aid and subsidies to poorer people (3)’ or (b) possessing, for example ‘the municipal government has contingency plans in place to deal with any possible outbreak (4)’ ; and (c) getting to “speak” authoritatively, such as in the phrase ‘the government warned against over-reaction (5)’.

In the SCMPC, the collocates statistically suggest that *government* behaves in a more varied and liberal manner. *Government* mostly refers to the *Hong*

*Kong government*; second to this is the (Beijing) *central government*. Also, the *government* SAYER who makes announcement or appointment uses verbal verbs like *announced* or *appointed*, like (8). More service or policy should be *provided* by the *government* actors, see (6). Also government TOKEN illustrates that it has the right or responsibility to take control over or take care of others, for example (7). These are similar to the schema of government in the CDC.

- (9) in Hong Kong next week to discuss how to combat the virus. Mr Tsang promised *the government* would **provide** daily updates on developments and issue guidelines on h (ACT/SCMP)
- (10) described Dr Yeoh as a socialist who strongly believes in the philosophy that *a government* **has** the responsibility to take care of the health of its citizens. (TOKEN/SCMP)
- (11) could eliminate evidence of the origins of the disease. In Hong Kong, *the government* **announced** a raft of Sars control measures, including enhanced tempera (SAYER/SCMP)

Consequently, *government* in these clauses is relatively more proactive, while other participants in the same clauses might be played down or considered inferior to “government” according to the hierarchy of powerfulness. Nevertheless, the role of the fourth estate, the media, functions in such a way that the voice from the SCMP, probably representing ordinary Hong Kong citizens, *advised*, *urged*, *accused* and *criticized* the *government* as RECEIVER. This pattern figures prominently.

- (12) World Health Organisation experts yesterday **urged** *the central government* to allow a full investigation into the spread of (RECEIVER/SCMP)

The verbal verb such as *urged* in (9), by contrast, discloses much of the disapproval towards the *Hong Kong government* and the central government in (12) for its reaction to the SARS outbreak. However, none of such government RECEIVERs examples can be found in the CDC concordance lines, which reveal the lexicogrammar of the SCMPC and the CDC respectively as significantly different. However, since RECEIVER is not as powerful as actors in terms of the syntactic-semantic categories as shown in figure 6.3.3., we may argue that what humans or media can do is only to *advise*, to *urge*, to *criticize* rather than “act” to influence the powerful *government*.

The irrealis concept, as introduced before, examples of which may contain negative words or meaning or include modal verbs like *must*, *should* or *ought to*, seems to be relevant here. The newspaper advises the government to do things that in fact have not yet been done, as we see from examining these irrealis concordance lines.

- (III) of Health had not been well prepared for the outbreak and *the Beijing Municipal Government* had [failed] to accurately **report** the epidemic situation in the city (Sayer/CD)
- (IV) I hope the *government* will speedily **announce** more measures to deal with the disease in orde (SAYER/SCMP)

(V) be Sars-free, such as Tuen Mun, have been **reported** in the media, but not by the *government*. (SAYER/SCMP)

Here are the three irrealis concordance lines where the powerful government, despite its position as SAYER, is not as powerful as the hierarchy power model demonstrates. In (III), the negation towards the government's misdoing was direct and obvious, although a word like "accurately" may diminish the seriousness of this inadequacy. In (V), the SCMP's tones, 'so that they have not yet done' sounds more straightforward. The clause 'but not by the government' even strengthens the criticism. (IV) shows a similar function of urging the government to do something that they have not yet done. Of course, 'I hope', 'will' makes this sentence less strong than when the government is RECEIVER in the SCMPC examples.

## 7. Conclusion

“The mass media do not simply mirror the world around them...Mass media content – both news and entertainment – is shaped, pounded, constrained, encouraged by a multitude of forces” (Shoemaker & Reese, 1996). Thus, from the linguistic point of view, the language use in news reporting is ideologically constructed and presented. By comparing the discursive construction of the same event – the outbreak of SARS - in the two newspapers, statistically significant differences are evident between the two newspapers by observing word choices and frequency, collocation and concordance lines. The search words were categorized upon the keyness of the two corpora. The word categories were namely disease-associated-keywords-relevant-vocabulary (DA-KRV), human-associated keywords-relevant-vocabulary personal entities (HA-KRV-PE) and human-associated keywords-relevant-vocabulary social organization (HA-KRV-SO).

First, the China Daily occupies more SO words while SCMP shows more concerns about DA and PE. Second, the collocation results of SARS observed that the China Daily tends to treat the SARS epidemic from a national struggle perspective, while the standpoint of the SCMP is more based on human health and safety. Moreover, the collocation of the three selected keywords summarized the general patterns of their concordance

lines, which became the hypothesis and basis of determining the typical concordance lines to analyze. Third, according to the typical concordance lines analysis, the study discussed to what extent critical corpus linguistics (CCL) and Systemic Functional Grammar (SFG) can be mutually reinforced and interpreted within the disease discourse context, textually, culturally and ideologically. In particular, a power hierarchy model was established and tested in the transitivity analysis.

This quantitative methodology of the study inevitably determines that there is no alternative but critical corpus linguistics. The applying methods, including word counting, collocation and concordancing, however, suffer in two ways. First, word frequency cannot represent the situations when the search words are negated in the concordance lines. Second, even in respect of the concordancing, I might have no idea whether the context of the search words is in fact a quotation that does not mean to be the newspaper's viewpoint. If it is only a quotation then it might not be in line with the news or editorial opinions, thus, I will not be able to interpret the underlying institutional reasons, cultural influence or political causes.

If we refer back to the earlier debate on the difference between critical linguistics, critical corpus linguistics and CDA, the limitation of the currently chosen methodology is obvious. The unrealistic problem needs to be highlighted.

For the word frequency and collocation, the occurrence of irrealis cannot be detected at all. However, in terms of the concordance analysis, the limited span will prevent us from seeing the whole picture. Originally, I preferred the quantitative methodology because I wanted to understand the SARS reports of the newspapers thoroughly. Trew (1979) said he chose to compare two reports rather than all the reports about the Carnival issue, because it was impossible to analyze all. I originally believed that the computer-assistant program will figure this problem out. However, the technology still limits itself in its own way.

However, the findings are still significant and interesting, as concluded below. The cultural assumption of China that the priority for harmony may result in playing down conflicts raised by the disease is not as apparent as many would assume according to the analysis. However, the position of government in the Mainland is without doubt more powerful than Tung Chee Hwa's Hong Kong government. The authoritative organization still enjoys its authority despite the fact that the media point out or suggest how the government should improve in certain ways. The promotion of the collective interest shed light on the fact that the CD devoted the main part of its coverage to the call to fight the disease. The campaign was represented as a national struggle emphasizing how the government was calling for a

collective determination among the populace to defeat the disease. This distinguishes the CD's reporting style from the SCMP quite sharply.

In terms of the political belief system, since the rule of law is not as deep-rooted in the Chinese political system as it is in western democratic countries, the CD's position as a defender of the government rather than a watchdog might explain why outside media lacked confidence in the Chinese bureaucratic systems, especially when it came to effectively and transparently reporting on the disease situations in China. The purpose of political and social stability can still be traced. However, the analysis cannot show enough evidence that the CDC played down the alarming potency of SARS while the SCMP by contrast over-reacted.

Moreover, collocates and word patterns here provide evidence that the event of SARS can be construed as an invader and attacker metaphorically in the context of the CD, but not in the SCMP. Thus, we might conclude that the underlying ideology of the CD tends to be more aggressive in overcoming the disease.

From the institutional practice view, it is not surprising to find that this pro-government newspaper promoted the government's position on the SARS-issue, or at least did not criticize the government. A softer way was

applied. Meanwhile, however, those who assumed that the positive reporting policy and downplaying of the crisis might have happened in the context of the CD fail to gain support statistically for this view. The marketization of the Chinese media and the western media concepts imported may answer why the stereotypes are now broken. To this extent, the Chinese media, though gradually, is changing.

However, the SCMP discursively constructed the SARS-issue in a different way. First, in cultural assumptions, the emphasis on individuality gives rise to the SCMP's concern about the individual's health. The dominant cultural assumption is the advocacy of diversity. We do find evidence that the SCMP confronted the local and central government. However, if we probe more deeply, self-censorship can still be detected. In terms of the political beliefs what we find from the SCMP reporting is that Hong Kong probably pays more attention to the concept of "two systems" rather than "one country", which is why it tends to establish differentiation between itself and Mainland China.

As for the institutional practices, the SCMP is a privately run print media institution. However, there is some evidence to suggest that in order to attract a wider range of readership; the SCMP intentionally constructed a dramatically reported version of the SARS issue. This is in accordance with

its perceived role as the biggest English broadsheet's position in Hong Kong. However, feeling perhaps in a delicate position in regard to Beijing and national affairs, the SCMP took the approach of exercising caution in their treatment of Beijing-sensitive matters. Perhaps, this is why I failed to find more extreme examples conflicting reporting policies in the CD and the SCMP respectively with reference to the central government. To some extent, therefore this study has demonstrated that these two examples of the print media in Hong Kong did not entirely conform to expectations and common assumptions about their ideologies in the way they mediated the SARS issue. The present study indicates that the data do not necessarily fit cultural stereotypes and the representation of the media as reflecting binary opposites.

## **8.0 Discussion**

In my research, I intended to address the potential difference between the SCMP and the CD, in terms of their representation of the disease SARS. The chosen methodology mainly employed the analytical procedures of corpus linguistics, combined with a critical linguistics systemic functional grammar transitivity analysis. Such a combination in my mind was necessary if the purpose of the research was to understand and illustrate the whole picture of SARS news presentation in both newspapers.

Trew (1979) recommends that, if possible, rather than only analyzing two articles from the two chosen newspapers, the researcher should record all the articles about the discussed event. This is a reasonable pursuit if the researcher wants to explore the patterns of language. Thanks to the development of language analytical software in corpus linguistics we are now able to interrogate a wide range of texts, as Trew recommends, much more efficiently than we could by hand. Researchers have a wide scope of choice of texts to include in this kind of corpus and the choices I made in my methodology and in compiling a corpus are discussed below.

First, if I only compared two articles of the same events in one piece of research, it would be easy to compare and discuss the texts on the sentence level, the clause level or even the word level. In Trew's study, as mentioned, he chose two articles from two representative newspapers and concluded that the contrasts between the treatments of the same event are clear, due to their political readership and circulation. His argument was supported by analyzing each sentence from the reports according to their participants and processes. This methodology in my mind was creative and suitable to serve a small size corpus, such as comparing two news reports. However, it suffered a very obvious problem – representativeness. It is true that the researcher could claim that the reports are representative. However, the first step in deciding which report was the most representative for the particular

newspapers was already arguable. According to Widdowson(2000), a computational quantitative analysis does reveal a reality about language usage by word frequency, collocation and concordance. For this reason, it would be easy to understand why Trew recommended collecting as much data as possible on the “same” events. In my research, I obviated the problem of representativeness by attempting to obtain all the *SARS*-related articles included.

The second problem of research methodology was how to define whether the articles included in the corpus were the articles whose main topic was about and related to *SARS* or only articles which include the word *SARS*. I selected articles for my corpus mainly by searching for the word *SARS* (or its original name *atypical pneumonia*). Doubts about this way of selecting articles might be quite critical – what if the article’s main topic was some other event with only one passing mention of *SARS*, for example, ‘during the period of *SARS* disease...’

In order to obtain a general view on the relevance of the corpus with *SARS* issues, I randomly chose 20 articles from each corpus, and grouped them according to their categories. In the SCMP, 30 percent of the sample articles were concerned with political and societal issues, like the article addressed to ‘the cross-border co-operation in the surveillance of outbreaks’

or ‘SARS fear fuels exodus to HK parks and beaches’ or ‘schools will reopen’. Among the sample, 40 percent talked about SARS medical prevention and measures. For example, ‘Hong Kong tightens its anti-virus measures’. 30 percent were articles concerned with economics in the society, such as ‘shop shunned as on-line sales soar’.

In the CDC sample, about 40 percent of the articles had political and social angles, such as ‘Hu warns of hard battle with SARS’ and ‘clearer picture benefits SARS battle (confirmed cases reported in an undated manner)’. About 30 percent of the sample articles were economy-oriented, such as ‘indices down as SARS fears infect market’ and ‘e-commerce soars’. The remaining 30 percent were more on the medical treatment, like articles named ‘patient, SARS curable, timely treatment crucial’. Thus, looking at the corpus items, the chances were that if they mentioned SARS, they were going to say something about or connected with the disease. It was a period of time when huge attention was paid to the disease, and newspaper coverage contributed a lot to reporting the SARS events. The intense concentration on the most heated topic at the time made the articles in the corpus with the search word *SARS* very relevant to the SARS events. The high relevance ensured a basis for the disease corpus analysis.

Third, the chosen newspapers were the electronic articles of the CD and the SCMP retrieved from “wisearch” engine. The chosen newspapers were two

major English newspapers in China and Hong Kong. Originally, I planned to compare the CD Hong Kong version and the SCMP, because I believed the Hong Kong version of CD would pay more attention to Hong Kong local news while sharing a similar readership with the SCMP, i.e. educated Hong Kong Chinese. However, if I had used the Hong Kong version of CD it might have been difficult to claim that it represented a mainland newspaper, bearing in mind that one of the major purposes was set to find the difference in reporting SARS under two kinds of media institutions and political and social backgrounds. Thus, I decided to give up the Hong Kong version of CD. I also thought of looking for two local Chinese newspapers, one from Hong Kong and one from another major mainland city. As a mainlander myself, I realized that some changes have taken place in the Chinese media, due to the commercialization and steady importation of western news values. The best example would be the famous “Nanfang Zhoumo”, etc. However, the research was a study of English language discourse undertaken within the context of a university English department. If I translated the Chinese newspapers into English, the loss and gain from the translation would be another methodological problem. The drawback in my choice of newspapers probably was that I did not use some updated new stylish Chinese newspapers which could present the new media trends and break the stereotypes about the mainland media. However, the CD was no doubt representative enough. Luckily even though it is the national newspaper,

there is no evidence that the CD played down the disease. In fact the newspapers chosen appear to have met my purpose perfectly and adequately – to find the difference between two representative newspaper institutions, which belong to their respective cultural contexts.

The fourth methodological question concerns “Keyness”, calculated by the software “Wordsmith”. Keyness is a measure of the frequency of occurrence of a word form in one corpus relative to its frequency in another corpus. In the research, the main aim was to find the difference between two newspapers rather than to understand what they shared in common. Thus, the application of keyness to the two corpora, rather than to a general purpose reference corpus, particularly fits the current study. This device helped me to exclude some words that may be very frequently used in both corpora. The aim to concentrate on the differences between the two texts was what determined my choices.

However, the limitations in the Keyness methodology are quite obvious. Finding a wordlist based on difference in frequency rates may ignore some of the most important common vocabulary in the corpora. Thus, instead of comparing the SCMP corpus and the CD corpus with a general reference corpus, I chose to compare the CD with the SCMP to find significant lexical choice differences. Though this was my aim, the methodology still suffered

in its own way by establishing difference rather than importance. With more time to take this research to another level, the alternative would be, after comparing them with each other to show the difference, to use a general reference corpus, such as any newspaper language word bank, to compare with both the SCMPC corpus and the CD corpus. Firstly, to compare the frequency lists of the general reference corpus with the SCMPC wordlist and the CDC wordlist separately. Secondly, to look at the words that differed most across the CD and the SCMP. The results could be considered some “keywords” that may not only establish high degrees of difference but also of importance. Thirdly, to consult a frequency list of the two corpora to find words semantically related to the “keywords”. In such way, probably, the vocabulary chosen might remove the possible deficiency of concentrating on vocabulary with no importance.

The fifth methodological question involves the categorization of keywords. There was a degree of subjectivity involved. For example, the first categorization of *staff* was human associated, but its sub-category was personal entities. However, semantically, *staff* refers to people who work for an organization. Thus, it can be argued that one should put *staff* in a pure personal entities category. This categorization method not only helped to analyze the keywords between the two corpora, but also served as a way of searching for related words. The choice of words was not subjective because

I picked them by the order of their frequency. However, there was more subjectivity in deciding which words are more relevant to the defined two categories semantically. Moreover, I also tried to put these relevant words into these designated categories. The complexity of their semantics made categorization particularly difficult. For example, I put *crisis* in the disease-associated category because the disease produced a crisis. However, *crisis* could also be associated with social organization to some extent since the disease obviously became a threat to the societal security and medical system. Though the quantitative nature of the research determined that some way of categorization was necessary when analyzing those data, it would be better to clarify why I preferred this way of grouping the words, rather than any other. Or at least, in the research, I should have acknowledged this issue. In fact, the way of grouping the words was in line with the three aspects of analysis on the level of discourse, known as institutional practice, cultural assumptions and political beliefs. Generally, the political beliefs established and determined most of the words in the social organization; the cultural assumptions had more to do with personal entities word choice; and the disease-associated words were very much associated with the institutional practice. Probably, there are many other ways of categorization for these relevance words; however, the suggested grouping way was one way that proved suitable enough for the analysis.

A sixth problem with the methodology was whether ideology can be discovered from the frequency of lexical items, collocation and the concordance lines analysis. Geoffrey Leech (1983) argued in his “principles of pragmatics” that his main disagreement with Halliday (1970, 1973) is ‘over his wish to integrate all three functions within the grammar’. Leech was referring to Halliday’s functional grammar, involving the ideational function, the interpersonal function and the textual function. Leech maintained that the ideational function belongs to grammar, but the other two – the interpersonal function and the textual function belong to pragmatics. As mentioned in the conclusion, the potential problems such as unrealistic examples or quotations could not be fully addressed if I only relied on frequency analysis or collocation or concordance lines analysis. Uncovering ideology involves more than simply decoding the surface textual meanings of lexico-grammar and ideology functions in the texts in a more complicated way. It would be very interesting if further study can be done on this. Leech pointed out the importance of relying more on pragmatics rather than grammar itself, especially on the level of textual and interpersonal analysis. These are messages that can be decoded through reading between lines, that is, some underlying message those readers can infer from the texts rather than literally finding from the specific lexical items.

The famous debate between Fairclough, Widdowson and Stubbs as discussed in the previous literature review generally was an argument about the limitation of quantitative analysis. Widdowson (2000) maintained that corpus analysis is unable to reveal the reality of first person awareness or intuition and corpus linguistics does not necessarily account for the whole picture of language behavior. Stubbs (2001) argued that though corpus linguistics mainly analyzes recontextualized language, it is possible to observe repetitions or routines of language use. However, in a single text, they cannot be observed. Goatly (2004) indicated that Widdowson in fact focused on the role of pragmatics, which is a counter-argument from both Hallidayan analysis and concordance analysis. However, Goatly did not consider that systemic functional grammar ignores generic context, but “it shows a lack of interest in the inferential processes that rely on mental context or the pragmatics that make these work” (2004:151). O’Halloran (2003) following Fairclough (2001) as discussed in the previous chapter considered three stages of discourse analysis with regard to text. They involved description, interpretation and explanation. He indicated that critical linguistics ignores the cognitive or pragmatics element in interpretation. As mentioned, I used critical corpus linguistics, which gave little place for pragmatics, but jumps from description to explanation. Critical corpus linguistics I used involves frequency of occurrence of words, patterns of collocational co-occurrence and concordance lines, which were not designed to go beyond semantics or

de-coding, In other words, it was not my purpose to aspire to the level of pragmatics.

In the light of the role played by pragmatics in ideology, the research should have better acknowledged the interactions between texts and their target readers. The original purpose of the survey to measure the alarm potency was actually a trial on the interactions between the readers and the newspapers. The survey size could be bigger and the subjects should have been chosen more specifically, like the target readers sample. Moreover, the survey would be more helpful if the pragmatics issues were addressed to further understand questions, such as whether the CD readers were consciously or subconsciously inclined to rely more on pragmatics in order to infer more underlying messages than readers of the SCMP.

Seventh, it would have been desirable to engage the analysis above the level of clause, for example the paragraph level for a discourse analysis approach to the thesis. Although I still believe the major purpose of the research was to find a way of dealing with a large amount of corpus material in order to ensure representativeness rather than analyzing a specific article, perhaps paragraphs or whole articles could have been presented and analyzed to test the validity of the concordance-line and lexical analyses.

In the CDC, we have an article which addressed the point that the nation and WHO were working very closely together.

**The World Health Organization (WHO)** is working closely with **Chinese authorities** to try to close in on the source of the *potentially fatally* **SARS** virus.

It also wants to strengthen training in China to prevent *infectious* diseases from spreading in hospitals, **officials** said yesterday.

“The WHO and **the Ministry of Health** will jointly launch a programme this September to train *medical workers* to prevent *infectious* diseases from spreading in hospitals,” said **Alan Schnur, who is responsible for communicable disease control at the WHO's Beijing office.** Both *overseas and domestic experts* will be invited by the WHO and the ministry to offer their experience during the training sessions, he added.

The first part of the training programme will be held in **Beijing** and will involve about 100 *medical workers from the capital and other regions of China,* Schnur told China Daily during an exclusive interview.

Further training courses will be held in **Beijing or other regions of the country,** such as **Changsha, capital city of Central China's Hunan Province.** Schnur said, several thousand medical workers will be trained.

Both *overseas and domestic experts* will be invited by **the WHO and the ministry** to offer their experience during the training sessions, he added.

However, the date for the start of the programme is yet to be decided and will be established after further discussion with **the Ministry of Health, the WHO's representative** said.

**SARS** become a *disaster* for many hospitals in the country, which registered 5,327 cases that resulted in 348 deaths in 24 provinces and regions.

*A joint 14-member team of specialists from the Chinese Government, the WHO and the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization* has finished its week-long **SARS** investigation in **South China's Guangdong Province.**

The team conducted field visits to markets and farms, research centres and healthcare facilities, as well as consulting with **local officials,** looking for a possible animal carrier of the **SARS** coronavirus.

The investigation remains a work in progress. The mission's objective is to determine what further studies are needed to explore the potential for an animal carrier, said WHO's Pierre Formenty, a Geneva-based zoonotic disease specialist and one of the team leaders.

**Maria Cheng, a WHO spokeswoman in Beijing**, said that the experts also came away convinced that measures should be put into place regarding animal hygiene.

Schnur said there is no evidence to confirm what animal is the source of the virus.

*The team* will report to **senior officials from the Ministry of Science and Technology, the Ministry of Agriculture and Ministry of Health this afternoon.**

In **Guangdong**, **Vice-Governor Lei Yulan** said yesterday **his government** has decided to invest more than 300 million yuan (US\$36.14 million) to expand and upgrade the Guangzhou Research Institute of Respiratory Diseases - a major research and clinic hospital for respiratory tract diseases **in the southern province.**

The money will be used to help find the causes and the transmission channels of **SARS** to prevent another outbreak in the coming months.

**Guangdong** has established a special task force consisting of *esteemed doctors, experts and government officials* to study the causes of the virus and develop new medicines to help prevent and cure it.

Schnur also pointed it is unknown whether **SARS** will return in November, when China's cold weather looks set to return, so all necessary steps should be taken to try and prevent the disease.

The WHO is working with the Chinese Government to implement enhanced **SARS** surveillance and response systems.

"I have not heard the news that there are new **SARS** cases in hospitals in Beijing and if the disease comes, I think we can control it immediately," Zeng Guang, a top epidemic expert from the Chinese Centre of Diseases Control and Prevention, told China Daily yesterday.

Zeng was refuting rumours that new **SARS** cases had occurred in Beijing recently.

According to the previous conclusion, the CDC contains more SO words generally, and tends to treat the SARS epidemic from a national struggle perspective. As the article mainly discusses the WHO and the Chinese authorities, the paragraphs here are full of names of health organizations (as in bold form in the article) – *the WHO* and *the WHO's Beijing office*, the government department and officials – *the ministry of health, Chinese authorities, senior officials from the ministry of science and technology, Vice-Governor Lei Yulan* etc., and the *representatives from the WHO* or the geographic nouns, like *capital of Hunan, Beijing, Guangdong*, etc. DA words also appear like *potentially fatally SARS, infectious diseases*, and *disaster*. The passage also contains some PE words, like *medical workers* and *overseas and domestic experts*. However, I was a bit concerned when defining *overseas and domestic experts* as purely PE words, due to the fact that in mainland China there is a very high likelihood that some experts will have official titles or ranks. The best example in the article is *A joint 14-member team of specialists from the Chinese Government, the WHO and the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization*. These specialists could be both experts in communicative disease and government/organization officials so that they might well include a number of SO words. In summary, I would say social organization human-associated words were frequently employed whilst the other two categories were relatively less apparent in this single article.

Secondly, although no verb to do with “fighting” that appears in the article, the quotation drawn from *Alan Schnur, who is responsible for communicable disease control at the WHO's Beijing office* might suggest a very step-by-step, organized strategic procedure. The training program offered by the WHO, according to the above CD article, beginning with Beijing and then broadening its range to the whole. This kind of control sounds quite militaristic to me at least.

I found a similar topic article in the SCMPC dated the same day. It was entitled ‘medical advice due today’:

**A team of medical experts** will today make recommendations to **senior mainland officials** about how to track down the animal sources of future outbreaks of **Sars** and other diseases.

The proposals, which stem from a one-week inquiry in **Guangdong** and **Beijing** will focus on ways to control the spread of *infectious diseases* at wild animal markets on the mainland, which are infamous for their poor conditions.

**The team, including experts from the central government, the World Health Organisation and the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organisation,** conducted field visits to markets, animal farms and research centres in Guangdong between August 13 and 19.

**WHO spokesman in Beijing Maria Cheng** said yesterday that the team would propose control measures at wild animal markets to prevent *the spread of infectious diseases*.

Preliminary studies have shown that wild animals, especially civet cats, are the likely sources of the coronavirus that causes **Sars** in humans.

*The team members* returned to **Beijing** on Tuesday and will report to **senior officials at the Ministry of Science and Technology, Ministry of Agriculture and Ministry of Health** today.

The mission is jointly led by **the WHO's Pierre Formenty, a Geneva-based animal disease specialist and Xu Jianguo, director of the National Institute of Communicable Diseases at the Chinese Centre for Disease Control and Prevention.**

Dr Formenty said their investigation was still in progress.

The mission is not intended to provide a definitive answer about an animal reservoir for the **Sars** coronavirus, he said. To be able to implement **Sars** control and prevention measures, we need to know where it comes from. But unfortunately, a lot of question marks still remain.

Several major differences can be detected in the SCMP article. First, the article has a more specific focus than the CD one, for it only talks about the investigation in Guangdong province, and does not mention the national prevention training program, which as mentioned was quoted in a particular military-style ,strategic design for the whole nation, if not militarily driven.

Second, the article cites that the preliminary study shows that ‘civet cats are the likely sources of the coronavirus that causes **Sars** in humans’ while in the CD article the quotation drawn from the representative of the WHO Beijing office is ‘there is no evidence to confirm what animal is the source of the virus.’ They might both be correct in their respective claims, since the first was just a preliminary study result and the second quotation focused on the fact that the ‘confirmed’ result had not been found yet. However, this difference gave a clear insight into the positive reporting and negative reporting styles in the CD and SCMP respectively, which is in accordance

with the assumption of the study. However, I think this kind of difference in contrasting the content could only be discovered by comparing the whole articles. A decontextualized analysis would be unlikely to discover such differences.

From the corpus study, the conclusion that the China Daily uses more SO words, while SCMPC shows more concern about DA and PE seems not very valid in the chosen two articles, either. However, the conclusion mainly indicated the trend in covering the SARS issues. CD as a national newspaper refers to SO, for example the officials, geographic words, the government department etc, more often than the SCMP does in a general sense. In these two articles, it is essential to make it clear who were the members of the specialist team, what the result of the investigation was and which government departments were they supposed to report to etc. However, the difference of their focus can still be discovered. The SCMP article lacks the information that ‘the Vice-Governor Lei Yulan of Guangdong said his government has decided to invest more than 300 million yuan (US\$36.14 million) to expand and upgrade the Guangzhou Research Institute of Respiratory Diseases’. This might show that the CD, however, probably is still more politically driven in the sense of paying attention and respect to the individual politician rather than the whole bureaucratic system.

The conclusion that the SCMP was more DA and PE driven can be clearly illustrated by the last paragraph of the selected article, ‘the mission is not intended to provide a definitive answer about an animal reservoir for the **Sars** coronavirus’, he said. To be able to implement **Sars** control and prevention measures, we need to know where it comes from. But unfortunately, a lot of question marks still remain.’ However, in the CD article we have an official response to deny the potential of a new SARS cases arriving, ‘I have not heard the news that there are new **SARS** cases in hospitals in Beijing and if the disease comes, I think we can control it immediately,’ This denial sounds bureaucratic and arbitrary, since SARS was not a 100 percent curable disease especially when its real source was not found.

The quotation depends a bit too much on personal judgment. However, it reveals another very important issue in the study. The implication of this quotation was actually to deny a rumor that new SARS cases might have appeared in Beijing. It was not an unusual way for the Chinese newspaper to apply some negative news or information. I searched the news reports around the selected date, finding little SARS coverage at the time. The chances are that the target readers of the CD like native Chinese presume that the newspaper or many Chinese media institutions have a relatively strict media control so that not all the information can be released. Then they gradually

develop a habit of reading between the lines. It is even possible that reporting a denial is a way for the journalist working under restrictions to imply the truth of what is being denied

There are a lot articles in the CDC with titles such as, 'Hu calls for a battle on SARS', etc. which is very much in accordance with the Sontag's discussion of military metaphors in disease discourse. I conclude that the CD generally tends to treat the SARS epidemic from a national struggle perspective, while the standpoint of the SCMP is more based on human health and safety. However, From my past 20 years experience of living and being educated in the mainland. I do not feel that the whole of Chinese society is presently being driven by an ideological struggle. After Deng's reforms the struggle metaphor has not been applied to the battle for ideology, but nevertheless is re-applied here to the actions taken to prevent and treat SARS.

To sum up, the chosen methodology functions in a way that is particularly designed for the purpose of exploring the differences between the two newspapers in terms of their different social, cultural, political and institutional practices, based on two corpora representing and discussing the events connected with SARS. Despite some of the weaknesses detailed

above, the methodology was a viable one to choose, given the decision to compare two corpora, and the need for breadth and representativeness.

## References

- Applegate, E. (1996). *Print and broadcast journalism: a critical examination*. pp. 37-49. Westport, Conn.: Praeger.
- Backer, P. (2004). "Unnatural Acts: Discourses of homosexuality within the House of Lords debates on gay male law reform." *Journal of Sociolinguistics* 8 (1), 88–106.
- Carter, R. (1989). *Vocabulary: applied linguistic perspectives*. London; Boston: Unwin Hyman.
- Caldas-Coulthard, C. R. & Coulthard, M. (1996). *Texts and practices: Readings in critical discourse analysis*. (eds.). Routledge.
- Davidse, Kristin. 1992. "Transitivity/ergativity: the Janus-headed grammar of actions and events." in Davies and Ravelli (1992) 105-135.
- Eagleton, J. (2004). SARS: "it's as bad as feared but dared not say". *English Today*, 20, 2, 34-45.
- Fairclough, N. (1989). *Language and power*. London: Longman.
- Fairclough, N. (1992). *Discourse and social change*. Cambridge: Polity Press.
- Fairclough, N. (1993). 'Critical discourse analysis and the marketisation of public discourse: the universities', *Discourse and Society* 4(2):133-68.
- Fairclough, N. (1995a). *Critical Discourse analysis: the critical study of language*. London: Longman.
- Fairclough, N. (1995b). *Media Discourse*. London: Edward Arnold.
- Fairclough, N. (2001). *Language and power*, London: Longman.
- Fowler, R. (1991). *Language in the news: discourse and ideology in the press*. London. Routledge.
- Flowerdew, J. (1998). *The final years of British Hong Kong: the discourse of colonial withdrawal*. New York: St. Martin's Press.
- Goatly, A. (1999). "What does it feel like to be a single female 20something Singapore graduate?" In Chew, G. L. and Kramer-Dahl, A. (eds.) *Reading culture: textual practices in Singapore*. Singapore: Times academic Press.
- Goatly, A. (2000). *Critical reading and writing: an introductory coursebook*. London: Routledge.

- Goatly, A. (2002). The representation of nature on the BBC World Service. *Text* 22. 1: 1-27.
- Goatly, A. (2004). Corpus linguistics, systemic functional grammar and literary meaning: a critical analysis of Harry Potter and the philosopher's stone. *Ilha do Desterro, Florianopolis*, p.115-154.
- Goatly, A. (2007). Metaphor and hidden ideology or Washing the Brain. Amsterdam:Benjamins.
- Hachten, W. A. (1996). *The world news prism: changing media of international communication* (4<sup>th</sup> ed.) Ames, Iowa: Iowa State University Press, pp. 13-33
- Hall, S. (1978). Social production of news. In Hall et al. – S.C.Critcher, T. Jefferson, J. Clarke & B. Roberts (Eds.). *Policing the crisis: mugging, the stage, and law and order*. London: Macmillan.
- Hall, S. (1980). *Culture, media, language*. London: Hutchinson.
- Halliday, M. (1978). *Language as social semiotic*, Edward Arnold.
- Halliday, M. (1985). *Introduction to functional grammar*, Edward Arnold.
- Halliday, M. (1994). *An Introduction to functional grammar*, (2<sup>nd</sup> Ed.), New York: Routledge.
- He, Z. (1993). *Press Freedom in China: Past, Present and Future*. Proceeding of the 1993 Conference of Chinese Communication Research and Education: Journalism and Communication Research on Mainland China, Taipei, Taiwan: Research Center College of communication, National Chengchi University.
- He, Z. (1998). From mouthpiece to party-run opinion enterprise; evolution of party newspapers. In He, Zhou & Chen, Hailin. (Eds.). *The Chinese media: a new perspective*. Hong Kong: Pacific century press.
- Hunston, S. (2002). *Corpora in applied linguistics*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Knight, A & Nakano, Y. (1999). (eds.) *Reporting Hong Kong: foreign media and the handover*. Richmond, Surrey: Curzon.
- Kress, G. (1976). Types of process. In Gunther Kres (eds.) *Halliday: system and function in language selected papers*. London: Oxford University Press.
- Law, S.L. (1999). In character, *Asiaweek*, January 8, pp. 40-42.
- Leech, G. (1981). *Semantics: the study of meaning*. (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.). London: Penguin.

- Lodge, G. C. & Ezra Vogel. (1987). *Ideology and national competitiveness: an analysis of nice countries*. Boston: Harvard Business School Press.
- Macdonald, M. (2003). *Exploring media discourse*, London: Arnold.
- McEnery, T. & Wilson, A. (2001). *Corpus linguistics: an introduction*, Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press.
- Norris, S. & Jones, R. H., (2005). *Discourse in action: introducing mediated discourse analysis*. (eds.). London: Routledge, 2005
- O'Halloran, K. (2003). *Critical discourse analysis and language cognition*, Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press.
- Osgood, G. J., Suci, P. H. & Tannenbaum, P. H. (1957). *The measurement of meaning*. (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.) Urbana: University of Illinois Press.
- Pan, X. P. (2002). *Newspaper coverage of post-colonial Hong Kong: case studies of language and ideology*. Hong Kong: City University of Hong Kong, School of Graduate Studies, Department of English and Communication.
- Poynton, C. (1991). Reading the news: representation, agency, control. In F. Christie, (eds.) *Literacy in social processes*. Darwin: N of Northern Territorians.
- Sheridan, G. (1999). *Asian values, western dreams: understanding the news Asia*. St. Leonards: Allen & Unwin.
- Shoemaker, P. J. & Reese, S. D. (1996). *Mediating the message: theories of influences on mass media content* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.). New York: Longham.
- Sontag, S. (1991). *Illness as metaphor and AIDS and its metaphors*. London : Penguin.
- Stubbs, M. (2001). Texts, corpora and problems of interpretation. *Applied Linguistics*. 22(2), 149-172.
- Tannen, D. (1998). *The argument culture: moving from debate to dialogue*. New York: Random House.
- Tang, Z. L. & Zuo, B. (1996). *Maoism and Chinese culture*. New York: Nova Science Publishers.
- Teubert, W. (2004). Language and corpus linguistics. In M.A.K. Halliday et al. *Lexicology and corpus linguistics: an introduction*. pp. 73-113. London: New York: Continuum.
- Tognini-Bonelli, E. (2001). *Corpus Linguistics at Work*. Amsterdam ; Philadelphia : J. Benjamins.

- Trew, T. (1979). "What the papers say: linguistic variation and ideological difference." In Fowler, R., et al. (eds), *language and control*. Routledge & Kegan Paul.
- van Dijk, T. A. (1985). Introduction: discourse as a new cross-discipline, in T.A. van Dijk (ed.) *Handbook of discourse analysis*, Vol. 1, pp.1-10. London: Academic Press.
- van Dijk, T.A. (1991). *Racism and the press: critical studies in racism and migration*. London: Routledge.
- Van Dijk, T.A. (1993). Principles of critical discourse analysis, *Discourse and Society* 4(2): 249-83.
- Van Dijk, T. (1988a). *News as discourse*. Hillsdale, New Jersey: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates
- Van Dijk, T. (1988b). *News analysis*. Hillsdale, New Jersey: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates
- Van Dijk, T. (1991). *Racism and the press*, London: Routledge.
- Van Dijk, T. (2001). Critical discourse analysis in D. Tannen, D. Schiffrin and H. Hamilton (eds), *The handbook of discourse analysis*, Oxford: Blackwell, pp. 352-71.
- Vittachi, N. (2001). *North wind: what the Hong Kong media doesn't want you to know*. Hong Kong : Chameleon.
- Widdowson, H.G. (1998). The theory and practice of critical discourse analysis. *Applied Linguistics*, 19(1), pp.136-151.
- Wodak, R. (1990). Discourse analysis: problems, findings, perspectives, *Text* 10(1/2) 125-32.
- Zhang, W. (1997). *Politics and freedom of the press: a comparison of Australia and China with particular reference to coverage by two leading dailies of some significant events since 1970*. Sydney: Australian center for Independent Journalism.
- Zhao, Y. Z. (1998). The trajectory of media reform. In *Media, market, and democracy in China: between the party line and the bottom line*. Pp. 34-51. Urbana, Ill.: University of Illinois Press