

## **A Discoursal Investigation on Accelerated Hostility between China Daily and the New York Times**

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### **ABSTRACT**

Since COVID-19 outbreak hit China in December 2019, there has been a “narrative battle” between China and the US. Roughly 89% U.S. adults consider China a competitor or enemy, rather than a partner, according to a Pew Research Center survey in Oct. 2020. Faced with accusations internationally, there appears rising attacks and unfavourable feelings towards Asian people in the US during COVID-19, which leads to social exclusion and discrimination to Asian, especially the Chinese in the US. In the meantime, the COVID-19 pandemic has worsened a rising tide of nationalism in China, amplifying pre-existing nationalist and protectionist trends. According to a survey from Carter Center and RIWI (2021), 62% of Chinese internet-using population shows unfavorable feeling towards the US. As media plays a significant role in society in shaping public opinions, it is of significance to explore how the media reports accelerate the anti-sentiments towards each other. Although scholars have started to explore media reports during the pandemic, less is known about how the COVID-19 pandemic is reported, discussed, and presented in the Chinese and American media from critical discourse analysis (CDA) perspective. This study will comparatively evaluate 36 editorials from China Daily (CD) and New York Times (NYT) with regards to ideological square framework. Based on data analysis, the study indicates that not only the headings, but also the media substance constructs a type of conflicting relations. Through positivizing “us” and negativizing “them”, both media accelerate the unfavorable feeling towards each other. This study suggests that both media should rationally report the pandemic, and people should work together to preserve our lives and live in peace.

*Keywords:* COVID-19, Ideological square framework, CDA; Editorial, crisis

### **INTRODUCTION**

Since COVID-19 pandemic hit China in December 2019, there is a “narrative battle” between the media in China and the US (Jaworsky & Qiaoan, 2021). According to Darling (2020), misleading and prejudicial coverage on the respective countries have arisen, further influencing the public’s opinion and leading to discrimination. In the US, roughly nine-in-ten U.S. adults (89%) consider China a competitor or enemy, rather than a partner, according to a Pew Research Center survey in October. 2020. Faced with accusations internationally, there appears rising attacks and unfavourable feelings towards Asian people in the US during COVID-19 (Silver *et al.*, 2020), which leads to social exclusion and discrimination to Asian, especially the Chinese in the US (He *et al.*, 2020). In the meantime, the COVID-19 pandemic has exacerbated China's growing nationalism, amplified pre-existing nationalist and protectionist trends (Nicolás & Wise, 2020). According to a survey made by Liu (2021) from Carter Center and RIWI, 62% of Chinese internet-using population shows unfavourable feeling towards the

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US. Against the backdrop of the “narrative war” and widespread conflicting emotions between China and the US, many scholars have begun to explore media reports during the pandemic, however, very little is known about how the hostility between the two powers accelerated through the narratives of the mainstream media.

This study investigates altogether 36 editorials from China Daily (CD) and the New York Times (NYT). The reason why editorials was chosen is because Newspaper editorials, according to Connor (1996), present the newspaper's views on recent problems of social or political importance. In addition, both CD and the NYT are influential media outlets in China and the US. A study published in *Journalism & Mass Communication Quarterly* (Denham, 2014), finds that NYT “may affect how news organizations characterize issues and events” (ibid). According to Liu (2006), China Daily is the first choice among China’s English language newspapers for both Chinese and foreigner, and it is also the only Chinese newspaper with access to the mainstream international community, since its reports are more frequently reprinted by foreign media than those of other Chinese newspapers. CD strongly reflects and represents the national interest, is typical and representative, and consistent with the party and government's positions. Hence, CD and NYT deserve to be examined as the source of data for this proposed study.

Through the investigation, the study aims to uncover the in-depth ideological presentation through the employment of ideological square framework (Van Dijk, 2018). This framework distinguishes the news discourse into “us” and “them” categories (Van Dijk, 2018).

In the narrative, Journalists and editors of a media report usually emphasize the positive side of “us” and de-emphasize the negative side of “us”, in the meantime, they prefer to emphasize the negative side of “them” and de-emphasize the positive side of “them” (Van Dijk, 2018). Through analysing all the 36 editorials’ heading and editorial substance from the mainstream media in both CD and the NYT, it uncovers how both media emphasize the positive side of itself and the negative side of the other side. It finally discovers not only the editorial headings, but also the media substance that construct a type of conflicted “us V.S. them” binary relations between China and the US. It provides guidance to the media person and relevant media organizations on how to report rationally and remove ideological hostility.

## **RESEARCH SCOPE**

To have a comprehensive and scientific research analysis, the researchers secured the research scope at the first step, and then selected the editorials purposively: 18 editorials were selected from China Daily (CD), and another 18 editorials from the New York Times (NYT). Then researchers categorized the editorials into two corpora, one is for CD editorials, and the other is for NYT. After familiarization of the social context of the editorials, researchers began to analyse all the editorial headings and substance qualitatively to diagnose the in-depth ideological presentation.

Setting the research scope is of significance, because the scope of a study describes how deeply the research area will be probed throughout the endeavor and details the constraints under which the investigation will operate. Researchers set the scope from 3 perspectives: media source, genre, and time scope. In this study, both CD and the NYT were selected as the media source of the research data (editorials). As noted, both CD and NYT are agenda-setter, which has a strong agenda-setting ability, that

means both of which could greatly impact the perception and choice of the public, political stance or policy implementation, and the view of peer media organizations. A study published in *Journalism & Mass Communication Quarterly* (Denham, 2014), finds that NYT “may affect how news organizations characterize issues and events” (ibid). On the other hand, according to Liu (2006), CD is the first choice among China’s English language newspapers for both Chinese and foreigner, and it is also the only Chinese newspaper with access to the mainstream international community, since its reports are more frequently reprinted by foreign media than those of other Chinese newspapers. CD strongly reflects and represents the national interest, is typical and representative, and consistent with the party and government's positions. Hence, CD and NYT deserve to be examined as the source of data for this study.

Apart from media source, genre is another considerable factor for data collection. This study will focus on the editorials related to COVID-19. Newspaper editorials, according to Connor (1996), present the newspaper's views on recent problems of social or political importance. As a result, the reports' genre is CD and NYT editorials.

Furthermore, because the COVID-19 outbreak time varied in both countries, so the time scope for coronavirus-related editorials in both media varied as well. In China, the time scope is set from the first case was reported (2019 Dec.31) to two months later after the crisis outbreak specifically, from 2019 Dec.31 to 2020 Mar. 23, because 2020 Jan. 23, the date of Wuhan lockdown, is regarded as the crisis starting point. The situation in the US is different. The time of outbreak is the date that Trump declared the national emergency (2020 Mar. 13th), so, the time scope is from 2019 Dec.31 to two months later after that day (2020 May 13).

## METHODOLOGY

After defining the scope, the researcher searched some keywords, such as “coronavirus” and “The Editorial Board” in the search bar of the two media official websites: [www.chinadaily.com](http://www.chinadaily.com) and <https://www.nytimes.com/>; Generally, after inputting the keywords in both websites, NYT appears 94 pieces of editorials, and CD owns 38 pieces. Then researchers set up 2 corpuses: CD editorials, the NYT editorials. In this study, altogether 36 editorials from CD and the NYT were selected and analysed purposively, including 18 CD editorials and another 18 editorials from the NYT. Hereby, analyzing all the editorials was not required as this study has reached a saturation point upon analyzing this qualitative research has reached a saturation point. Glaser and Strauss (1967: p. 61) defined saturation in these terms:

*“The criterion for judging when to stop sampling the different groups pertinent to a category is the category’s theoretical saturation. Saturation means that no additional data are being found whereby the sociologist can develop properties of the category. As he sees similar instances over and over again, the researcher becomes empirically confident that a category is saturated. He goes out of his way to look for groups that stretch diversity of data as far as possible, just to make certain that saturation is based on the widest possible range of data on the category.”*

Hence, data saturation is typically defined as the point at which "no new information or themes are discovered in the data." (Guest, Bunce, & Johnson, 2006:59).

Furthermore, researchers analysed the total of 36 editorials in both media through analyzing the macro-structural and micro-structural level of the editorials, such as the headlines and lexical employment of these editorials, to see how the hostility presented in both countries through the employment of ideological square framework (Van Dijk, 2018) under CDA, which is proposed by Van Dijk (2018). Ideological square framework guides readers to interpret media reports in the means of positivize “us” and negativize “them” in the lexical words and patterns implicitly or explicitly. As Figure 1 shows, the polarization between Us and Them is manifested via all linguistic dimensions of a text, which are interpreted as one of the following overall strategies:

- (1) Positive-Self Representation: representing the in-groups’ members (Us) positively, via discourse, by de-emphasizing their negative and emphasizing their positive features;
- (2) Negative-Other Representation: representing the out-groups’ members (Them) negatively, via discourse, by de-emphasizing their positive and emphasizing their negative features.

	<b>US</b>	<b>Them</b>
<b>Emphasize</b>	Positive dimension	Negative dimension
<b>De- emphasize</b>	Negative dimension	Positive dimension

**Figure 1** Ideological square framework (Van Dijk, 2018)

Journalists and editors of a media report usually emphasize the positive side of “us” and de-emphasize the negative side of “us”, in the meantime, they prefer to emphasize the negative side of “them” and de-emphasize the positive side of “them” (Van Dijk, 2018). This framework is widely introduced to examine news reports about inequality, discrimination, and dominance.

## DATA ANALYSIS

As we can see from Table 1 and Table 2, during the pre-crisis, there is no conflict relations that appear in both media. However, during the crisis period, both media appears a confronted relation in the headings and contents, for instance, from the perspective of headings, CD does not have any conflict headings during the pre-crisis, the headings in this period seems more rational, however, during the crisis period, there are altogether 6 editorials attaches blames on US on the headings, which are in bold in Table 1. On the other hand, NYT also appears bilateral conflict during the crisis, such as “China’s Ill-Timed Attack on the Free Press”; however, it put more blames on the inaction of Trump administration.

Researcher collected the editorials from CD and the NYT as follows:

**Table 1** The editorials selected from China Daily (CD)

Media	Time	Title
Pre-crisis	2020-01-09	Transparency can check spread of virus: China Daily editorial
	2020-01-20	Authority must put people's health first in resolute fight against coronavirus
	2020-01-21	Transparency and cooperation are crucial to contain new coronavirus: China Daily editorial
crisis	2020-02-06	Firing up the economy again will help Wuhan and the nation
	2020-02-09	Policies necessary to facilitate production
	2020-02-09	<b>Belittling of China's struggles in fight against the virus betrayal of humanity</b>
	2020-02-10	<b>Misinformation an enemy of all those fighting virus</b>
	2020-02-11	Institutional advantages to help fight against coronavirus
	2020-02-12	Protection measures must not be unbridled
	2020-02-16	<b>Bias undermines solidarity in virus fight</b>
	2020-02-18	Economic immunity boosters will ensure epidemic not chronic illness
	2020-02-19	Economy set to fire on all cylinders again
	2020-02-20	China's unprecedented measures prevent novel coronavirus infecting the world
	2020-03-10	World fighting a common public health battle
	2020-03-12	Life-saving experience from front line of practical value in global anti-virus fight
	2020-03-16	<b>US media should not play to anti-China crowd</b>
	2020-03-18	<b>Futile attempt to deflect domestic pressure</b>
	2020-03-23	<b>Fault lies with belated US response, cursing China won't change that</b>

**Table 2** The editorials selected from the New York Times (NYT)

	Media	Time	Title
Pre-crisis	NYT	2020-03-09	The Economy Is on the Edge, and Trump May Push It Over
	NYT	2020-02-29	Here Comes the Coronavirus Pandemic ---Now, after many fire drills, the world may be facing a real fire
	NYT	2020-01-29	Is the World Ready for the Coronavirus?
crisis	NYT	2020-03-14	The Companies Putting Profits Ahead of Public Health
	NYT	2020-03-14	There's a Giant Hole in Pelosi's Coronavirus Bill
	NYT	2020-03-17	Stop Saying That Everything Is Under Control. It Isn't.
	NYT	2020-03-17	<b>China's Ill-Timed Attack on the Free Press</b>
	NYT	2020-03-19	The Epic Failure of Coronavirus Testing in America
	NYT	2020-03-23	Call It 'Coronavirus'
	NYT	2020-03-24	Coronavirus is Advancing, All Americans Need to Shelter in Place
	NYT	2020-04-10	'We're Going Down, Down, Down, Down, Down'
	NYT	2020-04-13	The Global Coronavirus Crisis Is Poised to Get Much, Much Worse
	NYT	2020-04-22	Covid-19 Threatens Global Safety Net
	NYT	2020-04-22	Trump: Why Waste a Crisis?
	NYT	2020-04-30	In a Crisis, True Leaders Stand Out
	NYT	2020-05-01	We the People, in Order to Defeat the Coronavirus
NYT	2020-05-04	Mr. Trump's War on Accountability	
NYT	2020-05-06	Is This What 'Tremendous Progress' Feels Like?	

After analysis the media substance, it could be discovered that all CD editorials during the pre-crisis concentrates on the measure for this widespread virus; and NYT editorials during this pre-crisis period shows a more fair and neutral manner, the NYT attaches not much blame on China for the emergence of

this new coronavirus. In addition, NYT acknowledges Chinese officials for their quick, transparent, and resolute response, for example: “Chinese officials appear to have moved much faster this time around” (Jan. 29, 2020, NYT). However, with the situation getting more serious in the crisis period, both media begun to blame other in the substance through the employment of rethoric discursive devices, such as lexicalisation. It will be demonstrated in detail in the discussion part. Hence, it could be concluded there is a rising tension between these two countries.

## DISCUSSIONS AND RESULTS

The researchers then analysed the headings and the substances of all the 36 editorials’ headings and contents in both media to uncover how the NYT and CD accelerate the hostility between China and the US. Ideological square framework (Van Dijk, 2018) is an analytical tool for this study.

### Headlines

Headlines introduce, frame, and contextualize the news issue. They award significance, communicate gravitas, and reinforce status. Headlines inform and misinform. They are a crucial part of how news turns into a story. In the long term, they play a part in how stories are retold and recorded, thus eventually turning into memories and histories (Papacharissi & Boczkowski, 2018). Ideologically, the headlines depict the editor’s inclination towards political matters (Butool *et al.*, 2021). People could often feel the political attitude of the media from the headlines of editorials. During the epidemic, the conflict headlines are influential contributor for the accelerated hostility between the two countries, which explicitly and implicitly delivers the authors’ ideological presentation.

During the pre-crisis, CD does not have any conflict headings during the pre-crisis, the headings in this period seems more rational, however, during the crisis period, there are altogether 6 editorials attaches blames on US on the headings; on the other hand, NYT also appears bilateral conflict during the crisis, such as “China’s Ill-Timed Attack on the Free Press”; however, it put more blames on the inaction of Trump administration.

However, during the crisis period, by analysing the editorial headlines of the related reports, researchers discovered that both media mostly uses blaming tone or construct an “us V.S. them” relation explicitly or implicitly. Conflict heading is the classical example of ideological framework in the headline. Through positivizing “us” and negativizing “them”, the author tries to construct a conflict or contradiction of the two sides. The following contents analysed some typical examples of the headings in pre-crisis and crisis period. It uncovers a rising unfavourable feeling between the two powers.

**Sample 1:** “*Is the World Ready for the Coronavirus?*”(NYT, 2020-01-29)

**Analysis:** This article was published in Jan. 2020 in NYT, when the coronavirus occurred in Wuhan, China. During time, China had entered into the crisis period, there was a rising death toll in China, and however, other corners of the globe are relatively peaceful. This is the pre-crisis period of the US.

In this headline “Is the World Ready for the Coronavirus?”, “the world” is presented as one united in-group (“us” side), while “the coronavirus” assumes the role of other (“them” side), at this time, NYT regards China, of course, belongs to the world. It means the coronavirus is the enemy of the whole world. It is notable that the NYT attaches no blame to China or any other country the emergence of this new disease at this time. Editors later attribute the emergence of new pathogens, such as the coronavirus, “partly as a result of global warming” in the media substance.

In this headline, there is no conflict between China and the US. The narrative is in a fair and neutral manner.

**Sample 2:** *“Belittling of China's struggles in fight against the virus betrayal of humanity” (CD, 2020-02-09)*

**Analysis:** This article was published in Feb. 2020 in CD, when China struggled to fight against the virus; however, the opponents of China began to against China. At that time, US Republican Senator Tom Cotton of Arkansas made his allegation that the COVID-19 is from a Chinese State-owned virology laboratory in Wuhan, which is regarded as an irresponsible and baseless conjecture in China. Against the backdrop of the hypothesis, CD published this editorial. Hence, the ones who “belittling of China's struggles in fight against the virus” arose public’s hatred in China.

This headline constitutes two sides, namely Chinese opponents who “belittles of China’s struggles in fight against the virus” (“them” group), and the other side is “humanity”(“us” group). In this article, China is presented as a heroic image for fighting against the virus for the whole world, hence, China is represented implicitly as the “hero of the humanity”, however, Chinese opponents are portrayed as a threat for humanity. Hence, during China is at the frontline and fighting against the virus for the world, and China’s opponents, however, belittling of China’s struggle, even “open fire on China from behind”, which shows these people lack of humanity and principles. So, a confronted relation has been constituted during this time.

**Sample 3:** *“Misinformation an enemy of all those fighting virus” (CD, 2020-02-10)*

**Analysis:** This conflicting headline constitutes two opposite parts: “the misinformation”, which is regarded as a “enemy”, and “all those fighting virus”, it could be inferred that China is the one who “fight virus” (“us” group), and the ones who disseminates the misinformation are the other side. Hence, a distinctive contradiction already implicitly presented, that is a contradiction between “the disseminator of the misinformation” and “China”. Hence, the ones who disseminate the misinformation are the wrongdoers. And the China is the hero. It is a classic example of positivizing “us” and negativizing “them”.

Against the background of the accusation from Tom Cotton, who made a conjecture on the origin of the virus, proposing that the virus is from Chinese State-owned virology laboratory in Wuhan, which is widely blamed all over the world. It can be seen that a serious confrontation between China and the US was constituted partly through the employment of “conflicting headings”.

**Sample 4:** *“China’s Ill-Timed Attack on the Free Press” (NYT, 2020-03-17)*

**Analysis:** This article was released in Mar. 2020 in NYT, when the US was in the crisis period. This conflicting headline is a classic example of “ideological square framework”, which tries to negativize “China” and positivize “the US media”. It puts “China” on one side (“them” group), and group “free press” (“us” group), which is regarded as the representative of American liberty democracy, on the other side. This heading constitute a “victim/assailable”(us/them) narrative. The so-called US free press is presented as “the victim”, while China is identified as the “attacker”, using connective terms “attack” to portray the relations between “China” and “free press of the US”. In doing so, China should be guilty of what the NYT presents as wrongdoing committed against the democratic value worldwide. Compared with Sample 1, the NYT articles published in the pre-crisis period, this article shows a strong conflict relation between the two powers.

To be concluded, both media tries to mould itself or the value of its group as a “heroic image” or “the pursued values of justice” in modern times. However, the other side is portrayed as “assaillant” or “attacker”. Hence, the editorials with conflicting heading are the classical examples of ideological square framework (Van Dijk, 2018), which leads to a rising hostile relations between the two powers.

### Lexical Employment

In addition, both media use positive or neutral vocabularies to describe itself and employ negative words to present “the other side” in the media substance. For example, NYT prefer to use “aggressive” “free press” to construct itself (US press) as a heroic image, while using the words, such as “attack” “ruler” “authoritarian” to present China’s negative image. However, CD employs positive words, such as “self-sacrifice” “effort” to demonstrate the Chinese pioneer image, while use the negative words, such as “prejudice” “vilify” “pedding” to describe the US. The following samples illustrate more detailed information from the aspect of lexical employment.

**Sample 5:**

*“The agency identifies new ones every year, and disease outbreaks — especially those involving viruses that leap from animal to humans, as the coronavirus did — are hardly surprising” (Jan. 29, 2020, NYT)*

*“They alerted the W.H.O. within a month of detecting the first coronavirus cases and moved quickly to sequence the new virus and to contain it: Some 56 million people, including the entire city of Wuhan, have been placed under quarantine.” (ibid)*

*“China, the center of the current outbreak, appears to have learned at least some lessons from the last such crisis it confronted” (ibid)*

*“Chinese officials appear to have moved much faster this time around” (ibid).*

**Analysis:** This article was published in the pre-crisis period of the US (2020-01-29). Editors attribute the emergence of new pathogens, such as the coronavirus, “partly as a result of global warming”, and at this time, NYT attaches no blame to China or any other country the emergence of this new disease.



After introducing the novel coronavirus in a fair and neutral manner, the NYT acknowledges Chinese officials for their quick, transparent and resolute response. This acknowledgement is notably set within the context of China's response to the SARS pandemic of 2003.

Generally, this article attaches limited blame on China. There is no obvious "us V.S. them" relations.

**Sample 6:**

*"But some outside the country prefer prejudice to empathy and they vilify the Chinese people, the country and its governance system. These China-bashers turn a blind eye to the country's efforts to prevent the virus spreading — efforts whose scale and efficiency are enabled by its system — and point to the infections outside the country, about 1 percent of the total, to hype up the epidemic as symptomatic of the China threat they are peddling." (CD, 2020-02-16)*

**Analysis:** With time passing by, this article is published in CD in February, 2020. At that time, US Republican Senator Tom Cotton of Arkansas made his allegation that the COVID-19 is from a Chinese State-owned virology laboratory in Wuhan, which is regarded as an irresponsible and baseless conjecture in China. Against the backdrop of the hypothesis, CD published this editorial. Hence, the ones who "belittling of China's struggles in fight against the virus" arose public's hatred on these China-bashers.

It views China as the "us" group, and the other country as the "them" group. Under this framework, CD emphasizes Chinese positive side: China extend its condolences to the Chinese people who passed away and appreciation to the self-sacrifice of Wuhan residents during crisis. Through this description, China is portrayed as a positive and virus-fighting heroic image. In this context, China should win the global sympathy and phrase. However, the so-called China-bashers mentioned in the article turn a blind eye to the country's efforts and shows prejudice, which is the negative side of "them". It followed by employing the words "vilify" to negativize these people. According to Merriam-Webster official website, "vilify" means "to utter slanderous and abusive statements against somebody". It could be regarded as a crude and rude image. The words "vilify" and "prejudice" established a strong contrast with Chinese "effort" and "compassionate", which constitutive a contrast relations. Followed by the vilifying actions from these people, it continues to employ "hype up" and "peddling" to describe the "Chinese enemy", which presents these alleged China-bashers' actions are illegal and unacknowledgeable globally. The employment of these emotional words presents these people who against China as an image of illegal and inhumanity.

The editorial highlights the illegal and inhumane actions of people who against China through the employment of the negative lexis, and emphasizes China's effort and achievements through the employment of the positive words, such as "effort" "efficiency" "scale", which is driven by the advantages of its "system".

**Sample 7:**

*"Despite all the obstacles in their way, they have reported aggressively on the coronavirus and on other issues deemed highly sensitive to China's rulers, including the mass internment of Muslims in the Xinjiang region and the suspect dealings of the family members of the leaders. Journalists have been expelled for their reporting, and online access to the work of many news outlets, including *The Times*, *The Journal*, *The Post*, *Bloomberg*, *Reuters* and *The Guardian*, is all blocked" (NYT, Mar. 17, 2020)*

**Analysis:** This article was published in Mar. 2017 in NYT. On Feb. 3, 2020, the Wall Street Journal published an article “China Is the Real Sick Man of Asia”, this report comments on the Chinese government’s mismanagement of the COVID-19 epidemic and the possible global consequences of Chinese economic meltdown. The headline “China is the real sick man of Asia” immediately aroused public anger in China. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) in China swiftly blasted the author for his "arrogance, bigotry, and stupidity," accusing the Wall Street Journal of being "racially discriminating," and demanded a public apology. After receiving no apology, the Global Times, a prominent Chinese news organization, published an opinion piece on February 18 mocking the WSJ for not having the bravery to even say sorry. The US State Department also recognized five Chinese media outlets as official government entities under the Foreign Missions Act on the same day, putting its journalists under the same restrictions as the PRC government's diplomatic outposts. Beijing replied quickly, issuing five-day notices to three WSJ journalists, and the MFA asserted that “the Chinese people do not welcome media that speak racially discriminatory language and maliciously slander and attack China.” (Jaworsky & Qiaoan, 2020). This is the reason of narrative battle between China and the US.

This editorial emphasizes the difficulties and risks encountered by American journalists in reporting the virus in China by using the words “obstacles” “aggressively” “expel” “blocked”, which reflects the spirit of American journalists who are not afraid of sacrifice in pursuit of freedom of the press, and the obstacles the US media person had come across. At the same time, it portrays China as an obstacle’s creator, and an authoritarian regime by employing the negative vocabularies, such as “rulers” “mass internment” “suspect dealings”, which is a classic example of ideological square framework (Van Dijk, 2018), under this framework, “us” means “the US press”, “them” means “China”. It tries to positivize “us (the US)” and negativize “them (China)” and finally demonstrates the unremitting and brave professional spirit of American journalists in China, and then emphasize the principal of American press, that is "to disseminate the accurate, balanced and comprehensive news and information." It also implicitly indicate that Chinese media is “inaccurate, biased and incomprehensive”.

Generally speaking, from January to March, NYT reflects a totally different tone to China, in January, NYT does not blame China obviously for the crisis, it even acknowledged China’s effort and efficiency. However, NYT begun to employ the conflict headings to involve China into a “us V.S. them” relations, and use the negative terms to describe China and positive lexis to portray itself. On the other hand, CD does not have conflict headings in the pre-crisis period; however, it has 6 conflict headings in the crisis period. Also, CD employs negative words to describe China, and use the positive words to describe the US.

## RESEARCH FINDINGS

It discovers the two media accelerates the anti-sentiment towards each other ideologically through the employment of conflict headings and the employment of lexis in the substances.

The headlines are a depiction of the editor's personal inclination towards the political matters (Butool F *et al.*, 2021). Through analysing the headline, the editors' personal inclination will be presented. In this study, both media gradually constitute a conflicted relations between the goodness and the badness during the crisis period, usually, the goodness implies its own party, and the badness represents the other side, which could be regarded as a classical example of ideological square framework (Van Dijk, 2018).

Apart from headline analysis, this study also analysis the substances of the editorials of CD and the NYT. It demonstrates the media convey their ideology through the employment of lexis in the substance. In terms of lexical employment, it borrows the negative words to describe others, and the positive words to portray itself, which conveys an ideological presentation, and put much effort on the negative side of the others, and the positive side of us structurally.

Through the employment of conflicting headings and the lexical employment in the media contents, both media exaggerated s the negative side of the other part, and enlarge the positive side of itself. This narrative framework enables the public hatred of the other side, and in the meantime it over-appreciates itself. Against the narrative background, the other party's verbal attack on each other will accelerate the hostility of both parties.

To summarize, the findings provide a direction in which teachers can associate and evaluate the strategies and interventions to suitably be adapted in assisting struggling early ESL readers in the classrooms. Apparently, there are no one-size-fits-all approaches or methods that successfully could work for every struggling reader. Nonetheless, the selection of specific activities, centralizing on the basic elements of reading presumably could benefit the learners and improve their reading ability.

## CONCLUSION

In this study, it discovers the two media accelerates the anti-sentiment towards each other ideologically through the employment of conflict headings and the employment of lexis in the substances. Authors often positivize "us" and negativize "them" implicitly and explicitly. Based on the study, researcher found that "us V.S. them" framework appears not only in the headlines, but also in the substance of the editorials.

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