

Ideology in Media Discourse: A Critical Discourse Analysis of People's Daily and the Washington Post Representations of Uyghur Muslims

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Abstract

The present study critically scrutinizes the representation of Uyghur Muslims in the Chinese and American media by applying Fairclough's three-dimensional model and Van Dijk's socio-cognitive approach to articles from People's Daily and the Washington Post. The research adopts a qualitative analysis of three extracts from each newspaper published between 2020 and 2023. The data were chosen for their relevance to the political and human rights discussions surrounding Xinjiang. The study seeks to explore how linguistic choices, ideological structures, and socio-political contexts shape the contrasting portrayals of the Uyghur issue in media discourse. The findings demonstrate that People's Daily ideologically employs emotive expressions, strategic linguistic choices, and polarized narratives that portray China as a victim of Western misinformation while focusing on the economic development and stability in Xinjiang. Moreover, the discourse cognitively constructs mental models that present Western media narratives as biased, fabricated, and politically motivated. At the level of social practice, the Chinese discourse delegitimizes the global hegemony of the United States and its allies through the use of human rights narratives as politically and economically motivated attempts to undermine China. Conversely, connoted vocabulary in the Washington Post are negatively utilized to depict China as an authoritarian state infringing upon Uyghur rights. Through constructing mental models, the Western discourse legitimately frames the United States and liberal institutions as defenders of minority protection and human rights. At the level of social practice, Western narratives are employed as geopolitical instruments that support the United States' moral authority while delegitimizing China's political system.

Key Words : Critical Discourse Analysis, Ideology, Uyghur Muslims, Media discourse, People's Daily, and The Washington Post

الايديولوجيا في الخطاب الإعلامي: تحليل خطاب نقدي لتمثيل المسلمين الإيغور في صحيفتي الشعب
وواشنطن بوست

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المخلص

تفحص الدراسة الحالية بنقد تمثيل المسلمون الإيغور في الصحف الصينية والأمريكية بواسطة تطبيق نموذج فيركلاف ذي الأبعاد الثلاثة وطريقة السوسيو معرفية لفاندايك على مقالات مختارة من صحيفة الشعب وواشنطن بوست. يتبنى هذا البحث منهج التحليل النوعي لثلاث مقتطفات من كل صحيفة نشرت خلال الفترة الممتدة من عام 2020 إلى عام 2023. تم اختيار هذه العينات لارتباطها بالنقاشات السياسية وحقوق الإنسان المحيطة بإقليم شينجيانغ. تسعى هذه الدراسة إلى التحري عن إسهامات الاختيارات اللغوية والبنى الأيديولوجية والسياقات الاجتماعية-السياسية في تشكيل صور متباينة حول قضية الإيغور

في الخطاب الاعلامي. برهنت النتائج بأن صحيفة الشعب ايدولوجيا وظفت عبارات عاطفية وخيارات لغوية استراتيجية و سرديات مستقطبة لتصوير الصين كضحية لتضليل الغربي مع التركيز على التطور الاقتصادي والاستقرار في شينجيانغ. علاوة على ذلك، يبني الخطاب نماذج ذهنية لتصوير السرديات الاعلامية الغربية على انها متحيزة و مزيفة و ذات دوافع سياسية. على صعيد الممارسة الاجتماعية، الخطاب الصيني ينزع الشرعية عن الهيمنة العالمية للولايات المتحدة وحلفائها من خلال استخدام سرديات حقوق الانسان كمحاولات ذات دوافع سياسية واقتصادية لتقويض الصين. على العكس من ذلك، المفردات ذات الدلالات السلبية في صحيفة واشنطن استخدمت لتصوير الصين كدولة استبدادية تنتهك حقوق الايغور. من خلال انشاء نماذج ذهنية، يوظف الخطاب الغربي بصورة شرعية الولايات المتحدة والمؤسسات الليبرالية كمدافعين عن حماية الاقليات وعن حقوق الانسان. على مستوى الممارسة الاجتماعية، وظفت السرديات الغربية كأدوات جيوسياسية تدعم السلطة الاخلاقية للولايات المتحدة بينما تقوض شرعية النظام السياسي الصيني.

الكلمات المفتاحية: تحليل خطاب نقدي، ايدولوجيا، مسلمون الايغور، الخطاب الاعلامي، صحيفتي الشعب و واشنطن بوست.

1. Introduction

In contemporary critical discourse studies, representation of minority groups has become an essential issue, especially when the representation reveals ideological, political, moral, and economic orientations. Among the most deeply debated global cases is the portrayal of Uyghur Muslims in Chinese and Western media, where each side constructs a critical discourse that aligns with its political and economic interests. The issue of Uyghur rights has gained largely international attention in media, especially in considerable newspapers such as People's Daily and the Washington Post, which have an influential role in shaping public opinion by formulating narratives that reflect their underlying ideological positions.

Through selected linguistic units, grammatical structures, and rhetoric strategies, the journalistic discourse may legitimate certain political stances while delegitimizing others. Accordingly, this study critically investigates how the selected newspapers employ expressions and linguistic structures to portray Uyghur Muslims and present ideological interpretations of the issue.

2. Aims of the Study

This study aims at:

1. Identifying lexical units and grammatical structures that shape the representation of Uyghur Muslims and China in the selected articles.
2. Revealing ideological narratives influence readers' mental models and construct their perceptions of the Uyghur Muslims rights.
3. Clarifying the way the socio- political contexts shape the representation of Uyghur Muslims in both newspapers People's Daily and The Washington Post.

3. Questions of the Study

1. How do the journalists employ lexical units and grammatical structures to shape the representation of Uyghur Muslims and China in the news-selected articles?

2. How do the journalists ideologically construct narratives that influence readers' mental models and construct their perceptions of the Uyghur Muslims rights?

3. How do the socio-political contexts shape the representation of Uyghur Muslims in both newspapers People's Daily and The Washington Post?

2. Literature Review

2.1. Critical discourse Analysis

Generally, Critical Discourse Analysis (henceforth CDA) is understood as a discipline or practice composed of several recognizable schools or approaches, each employing its own unique methodology. These approaches are problem-orientated, making CDA an interdisciplinary and eclectic field to obtain an accurate understanding of how language operates in constituting and transmitting knowledge in organizing social establishments or in exercising power (Hart, 2014; Weiss & Wodak, 2003).

Based on Coulthard and Coulthard's perspectives (1996), CDA fundamentally aims to investigate systems of power inequalities by uncovering how their work and the effects they produce. This is accomplished through the analysis of cultural texts that contribute to the development and change social structures in relation to demographic perspectives such as age, gender, race, religion, education levels, economic status, and sexual orientation thereby in achieving a more equitable social order (Kramer, 2007).

Moreover, CDA inspects language as a form of social practice and concerns in the ways that power relations and ideologies are conveyed through discourse that cannot be produced and understood without taking into account the current and historical context. Thus, many other forms of linguistic analysis are incomparable with CDA; it does not involve analysing words on a page but also examine a social context (Baker & Ellece, 2011; Weiss & Wodak, 2003).

Regarding the analysts working within this field, they stated that speakers' selections of linguistic units are principled, systematic, and ideologically based. Consequently, the analysts are concerned to uncover the hidden ideological assumptions embedded within the structures of language (de Filologia, 2006).

2.2. Fairclough's Three-Dimensional Approach

Broadly, Fairclough presented a three-dimensional analytical framework for critically analysing discourse. Discourse-as-text is the first dimension, sheds light the linguistic features (vocabulary, grammar, cohesion, and text structure) of the text. Discourse-as-discursive-practice is the second dimension, concerns with the processes of text such as production, distribution, and consumption. This level of analysis involves speech acts, coherence, and intertextuality, which link a text to its wider social context. In other words, it goes beyond surface linguistic analysis (Blommaert, 2005). In the same environment, Fairclough (1992) confirmed that the ways that socially constrained the processes are the available members' resources and the nature of the social practice in which

discourse takes place. Exploring these constraints and link discourse processes with the social practices they belong to is the aim of Fairclough's framework.

The final dimension is discourse-as-social-practice, which concerns the hegemonic and ideological functions of discourse, where power is practiced through establishing coalitions and the integration of social groups (Bloom, 2005). This dimension sheds light instead on how the discourse shapes and reflects ideologies and social relations by connecting interaction to its social context (Fairclough, 1989).

Additionally, Fairclough suggested threefold methodological processes in CDA: description, interpretation, and explanation. In the description stage, the focus is on the formal properties of the text. Regarding the interpretation stage, the relationship between the text and interaction is investigated, viewing the text as both a product and resource for meaning-making. Finally, in the explanation stage, how interaction connects to the wider social context is examined, demonstrating how discourse is socially determined and what social influences it produces (Fairclough, 1989; 2001).

2.3. Van Dijk's Socio-Cognitive Approach

Socio-Cognitive is an approach to carrying out critical discourse analysis, developed by Teun Van Dijk. It explicitly aims to connect discourse, cognition and society. In practice, the analysis per this approach includes topics, local meanings, context models, mental models, and the association between discourse and society (Baker & Ellece, 2011).

From van Dijk' perspectives, cognition is categorized at two various levels, i.e., personal and social. The real interface between society and discourse is socio-cognitive. However, the main difference between the scholars Van Dijk and Fairclough is that the first emphasizes the minds of language users by focusing on the cognitive side of interpretation. This is grounded in the understanding that it is through discourse in society that socially shared knowledge and social representations are acquired, used, altered, and reproduced (Kim, 2025).

2.4. Ideology

In a broad sense, ideology is defined as a coherent and constant set of beliefs or values; however, its meanings and connotations have shifted over time. During the eras of communism, fascism, and the Cold War, totalitarian ideologies were opposed to democracy (Wodak & Meyer, 2009). Consequently, ideology has acquired various significances over time. Regarding Thompson's perspectives, ideology is viewed as a social process through which symbolic forms are disseminated. Within CDA, ideology is viewed as a vehicle of sustaining unequal power relations through language (Thompson, 1990, as cited in Weiss & Wodak, 2003). Similarly, Eagleton noted that ideology must concern the historical reasons beyond shaping how individuals think and act (Eagleton, 1994, as cited in Weiss & Wodak, 2003).

Van Dijk, (1998) stated that ideologies gained their negative connotations as systems of the dominant thoughts of the ruling class, reflected in the ambiguous

concept of false consciousness utilized by Marx and Lenin. Subsequently, ideologies came to be described in terms of hegemonic and persuasive ideas being accepted by controlled groups as part of their common sense about the nature of society and their place in it.

Nevertheless, Van Dijk (2000) confirmed that ideologies are not always negative. The ideologies such as feminism and anti-racism are positive, as they function as systems that legitimize opposition and defiance against social inequality and domination. Though many definitions are presented, they are interest in collective beliefs, but the cognitive aspect has been less studied. Accordingly, Van Dijk defined ideologies as "the basic frameworks of social cognition, shared by members of social groups, constituted by relevant selections of sociocultural values, and organized by an ideological schema that represents the self-definition of a group. These frameworks control social attitudes and influence social practices and discourse" (van Dijk, 1995, p.248, as cited in Lindebaum, 2014).

Finally, the present study seeks to investigate the embedded ideologies in People's Daily and The Washington Post by examining how Uyghur Muslims are represented. The aim of the study is justified by the assumption that "some representations may conceal truths and legitimize negative labeling in the interest of certain people or governments" (Chiluwa, 2011, p.197).

2.5. Media Discourse and Religion

Social attitudes toward faith, belief, and identity are constructed through the crucial role of media discourse that shapes public perceptions of religion and religious groups. Media outlets can either promote tolerance and understanding or reinforce stereotypes and prejudice, through the use of specific linguistic and visual choices.

Regarding Western media, they have often been criticized for associating Muslim identities with themes of backwardness, extremism, or violence (Said, 1997; Richardson, 2004). Such negative representations contribute in sidelining Muslims by portraying religious minorities as threats to social cohesion and national security. On the other hand, media can reinforce the interfaith dialogue and promote narratives of peaceful coexistence. Thus, Critical Discourse Analysis is employed to examine media discourse on religion to uncover how the representation, ideology, and power influence in shaping public perceptions of understand faith and religious communities.

2.6. Language and the Construction of Reality

Language is not only a mean to convey information, it shapes how reality is understood (Fairclough, 2003). Through selecting linguistic expressions, rhetorical devices, and syntactic structures, authors frame events differently to influence readers' perceptions. In other words, various ways can be conveyed the same idea, and these non-random alternatives reflect underlying ideological stance (Fowler, 1991).

In media linguistics, researches show that passive constructions, nominalization, and evaluative adjectives can be used as linguistic tools to embed ideological bias into ostensibly neutral reporting (Johnson & Malani, 2010). Particular interpretations across coverage can be normalized through repetition of patterns, and thus appearing as objective truths.

2.7. The Uyghur Muslims

The Uyghur is a Muslim minority living in the Xinjiang, a self-governing region in China. Although cultural transformation, the Uyghurs have significantly preserved their unique customs and religious identity (Millward, 2007; Roberts, 2020). The ruling Communist Party has exercised political tactics aimed at integrating the Uyghurs into the Han culture. Additionally, Chinese government has established training centers and vocational education programs for the Uyghurs. In fact, these facilities are described as re-education camps characterized by psychological pressure, forced indoctrination, and cultural erasure.

Meanwhile, these actions are framed in Chinese state media as necessary to promote security, combat extremism in Xinjiang (Clarke, 2021). Within Chinese narratives, state policies are portrayed as efforts to reinforce national unity and economic development, while the Uyghurs are presented as beneficiaries of social harmony and development. On the other hand, the Western media use a human rights discourse that depicts the Uyghurs as victims of repression by Chinese government. This sharp contrast in portrayals has created a discursive battlefield in Chinese and Western media (Leibold & Zenz, 2020). Through applying of Critical Discourse Analysis' approaches, these opposing narratives uncover how manipulation in language and ideology shape public perceptions to serve ideological political and agendas.

3. Research Methodology

3.1. Research Design

In a broad sense, research design is the organization of conditions for collection and analysis of selected data in a way that seeks to combine relevance to the research objective with economy in procedure (Kothari, 2004). A qualitative research design is adopted in the present study to focus on interpreting both linguistic and ideological features of news discourse rather than numerical data.

3.2. Data Collection and Selection

The present study is based on newspapers for their covering a wide range of issues as compared with other news media (Craig, 2004). The data consist of six extracts taken from online news articles, published between 2020- 2023 in People's Daily (<https://en.people.cn>) and the Washington Post (<https://www.washingtonpost.com>). For achieving balance in representation Uyghur in Western and Chinese media discourses, the researcher selected three extracts from each newspaper, their details are summarized in Table (3-1).

3.3. Choosing the Articles

The articles were purposely selected for their relevance to Uyghur Muslims. The researcher specifically selected articles Published by People’s Daily, a state-owned newspaper, reflecting the Chinese government's discourse and shed lighting national unity and social stability. On the other hand, The Washington Post represents the American liberal media perspective, often emphasizing human rights and democracy. The balance between the two newspapers, enables the researcher to uncover the ideologies that hidden in media discourse by comparative analysis of linguistic structures.

3.4. The Corpus of the Study

Critical discourse analysis is conducted to uncover how the representation of Uyghur Muslims in People’s Daily and The Washington Post news articles is employed as a strategic tool to highlight the economic competition between the two countries.

Table (3-1)

No.	Article Headline	Website Link	Date	Nationalit y
1.	Western media blind to vast development in Xinjiang	https://en.people.cn/n3/2020/1027/c90000-9773548.html	27 Oct 2020	China
2.	Pompeo's allegations of genocide in Xinjiang 'ravings of a madman'	https://en.people.cn/n3/2021/0122/c90000-9812243.html	22 Jan 2021	China
3.	Things to know about all the lies on Xinjiang: How have they come about?	https://en.people.cn/n3/2021/0429/c90000-9845352.html	29 Apr 2021	China
4	What’s happening in Xinjiang is genocide	https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/global-opinions/whats-happening-in-xinjiang-is-genocide/2020/07/06/cde3f9da-bfaa-11ea-9fdd-b7ac6b051dc8_story.html	6 Jun 2020	USA

5.	China brings its cruel crackdown on Uighur advocates to the U.S	https://share.google/yCn5556R9cCyeEHRa	4 Jan 2021	USA
6.	What's happening in Xinjiang is genocide	https://www.washingtonpost.com/national-security/china-genocide-human-rights-report/2021/03/30/b2fa8312-9193-11eb-9af7-fd0822ae4398_story.html	30 Mar 2021	USA

3.5. Analytical Framework

Critical discourse analysis as a main analytical approach is employed in the present study to discover embedded ideologies that are embedded in media discourse. For a comprehensive analysis that links micro-level textual features with macro-level sociopolitical structures, this study adopts Fairclough's three dimensional model (1989) and Van Dijk's socio- cognitive (2000). Analyzing the articles proceeds through three main stages: description, interpretation, and explanation. In the description stage, Fairclough's approach is applied to investigate the vocabulary, grammar, and textual structure that reveal ideological meanings within news text. Regarding Van Dijk's approach, the cognitive perspective is employed in the interpretation stage to examine how the journalists' mental models and readers' shared knowledge influence the production and interpretation of language by connecting textual structures to broader social cognition. Finally, in the explanation stage, Fairclough's approach is applied to get an integrated analysis by investigating how language interacts with power relations and social contexts.

Following these stages systematically enables the researcher to uncover how the linguistic choices and grammatical structures in People's Daily and The Washington Post convey the journalists' ideologies to influence readers' interpretation of the texts.

In sum, the purpose of applying Fairclough's and Van Dijk's approach in analysis is to link textual features to the broader ideological and geopolitical contexts shaping media discourse on Uyghur Muslims.

4. Data Analysis

4.1. Chinese Media-People's Daily

4.1.1. Extract 1 "Western media outlets are very concerned about Uyghur Muslims in Xinjiang, but remain blind to the slaughter of millions of Muslims in

different countries including Iraq, Afghanistan, Syria and Libya. The media is too busy spreading false news of so-called concentration camps, labor and human rights violations, forced birth control, along with many other topics directed at Xinjiang, conscious not to disseminate the information of the vast development of the region".

1. Textual analysis

Concerning the vocabulary, grammar, cohesion, and rhetorical strategies, the extract employs a set of linguistic units that construct a polarized discourse to represent the China and Xinjiang as victims of misleading and biased western media outlets. The journalist's linguistic choices explicitly reveal his ideological orientation which endeavors to reshape the readers' perceptions by challenging the controlled view that the western media discourse is objective and neutral.

2. Cognitive analysis

The editor directly attempts to uncover western media double standards by covering fake news concerning Uyghur Muslims in order to create a negative mental model in readers' minds. This is done by deliberately focusing on the West's alleged ignorance the crimes that were committed in different countries. Moreover, the editor aims at convincing the reader that the western media hide the economic development in Xinjiang through exaggerating in accusations.

3. Social practice analysis

This discourse represents a Chinese own-state medial institution. It criticizes what is characterized as biased Western media, which has the authority to reshape the public opinion by using the Uyghur Muslims' issue as a political tool against the development of Chinese economy. Furthermore, this discourse attempts to depict the Chinese state as a victim of Western media, which claims that the Uyghurs' rights are marginalized. To determine the Western medias' credibility, the current discourse aims at casting doubt on Western media discourse by using positive narratives supporting Chinese stance.

Extract 2 "I think Pompeo's accusations of genocide and crimes against humanity in Xinjiang are totally groundless and 'ravings of a madman.' Though Pompeo has come up with the accusations lately, his administration has long been working on creating a suitable pretext of making the allegations against China".

1. Textual analysis

From a linguistic perspective, the editor employs prominently emotive vocabulary to undermine the credibility of Pompeo's accusations. The lexical units such as "groundless" and "ravings of a madman" rhetorically serves to refute the Western claims. Likewise, expressions such as "accusation" and "pretext" ideologically function to prove that Western discourse is manipulative and fabricated the facts.

Grammatically, the editor relies on declarative sentences that frame the Pompeo's claim as baseless , while presenting the China's stance as precise.

In sum, the linguistic units in this extract present China as an innocent actor, while depicting Pompeo's statement and U.S. as irrational.

2. Cognitive analysis

The editor aims at shaping the reader's mental model regarding to the economical and political tensions between China and U.S. by describing the Pompeo's claim as "groundless and "ravings of a madman". Through these evaluative labels, the editor attempts to construct a negative cognitive representation of western political figures, depicting their statements as unreliable and affected by hidden motives.

3. Social practice analysis

This extract aligns with geopolitical tensions between China and U.S. This discourse reinforces China's ideological stance, which denies the allegations against the Uyghur. The text portrays the U.S. narratives and Pompeo's statements negatively by describing them as politically fabricated. Furthermore, the editor employs the critical discourse to confirm that U.S. exerts global influence through the use of human right discourse. Delegitimizing U.S. hegemony through disproving the Western narratives is to reinforce the Chinese unity.

Extract 3 "The CIA suggested in 2003 that should the US find itself in a crisis or confrontation with China in the future, the option of using the "Uyghur card" as a means of exerting pressure should not be taken off the table. Under this strategy, the United States, Britain and their allies, latching on to the Cold War mentality, have directed their intelligence establishments and anti-China scholars to mobilize Uyghur diaspora groups in spinning out misinformation about the so-called severe oppression of Uyghur Muslims in Xinjiang, which was spread by mainstream Western media in a coordinated manner".

1. Textual analysis

Concerning the vocabulary, grammar, cohesion, and rhetorical strategies, the author emphatically confirms that the United States and its allies use Uyghurs' rights as a political tool rather than as a humanitarian concern. Some linguistic expressions in this extract such as "Cold war mentality" and "spinning out misinformation" ideologically imply that the Western actors still think hostilely toward the East through exploitation of minorities, implementing their plots by directly mentioning the names of the actors in complex sentences. Additionally, the pronouns in this extract function in constructing a polarized discourse that legitimizes the Chinese narratives while explicitly doubting Western narratives credibility.

2. Cognitive analysis

The author seeks to construct mental models in readers' minds that the Western conflict and hegemony are continuing against rising countries such as China. Highlighting the delegitimized Western narratives ideologically convince the reader that the West exploited the Uyghur Muslims' right for political purposes in order to weaken Chinese state.

3. Social practice analysis

This discourse belongs to a political context. It sheds light on the United States and its allies as dominant global actors; they manipulate the Uyghur Muslims' issue for political leverage to undermine China politically. The editor attempts to cast doubt on America's intentions to avert the accusation against the Uyghurs. Moreover, the present extract aims at undermining the neutrality of Western media, which strives hard to deform China's image by spreading misleading news. In addition, this discourse highlights the Western political hegemony, which fabricated the human rights' issues for political interests.

4.2. American Media-Washington Post

4.2.1. Extract1 "WHAT HAS been known until now about China's persecution of the Uighurs and other Muslims in Xinjiang province has focused on cultural genocide: concentration camps intended to eradicate their language, traditions and ways of life. This was cruel enough. But new evidence has surfaced that China has also imposed on the Uighurs a form of demographic genocide with forced sterilizations and other measures aimed at reducing the population".

1. Text Analysis

This discourse is based on linguistic units such as "persecution", "cultural genocide", "concentration camps" and "demographic genocide" within negative connotations. Choosing such words proves that the Chinese state extremely exerts violence and human rights violations to eradicate of Uighur cultural identity. Depending on politically charged discourse is to represent China as an oppressive actor.

From a grammatical perspective, employing declaratives structures escalates the accusations against China by producing precise information. Moreover, using passive constructions hides the agents responsible the claims.

2. Cognitive Analysis

The discourse seeks to shape the reader's mental model of Uighurs' situation by constructing a mental image of Chinese state as a powerful actor, while portraying Uighurs as victims of authoritarian system. Moreover, the mention of "until now" and "new evidence" convinces the readers that United States media are reliable and rational by highlighting the diversity in lethal tactics.

3. Social practice analysis

The extract reveals the opinion of Western institutions, situating it within a political and human context. It implies the resilience of Chinese regime. The use of linguistic units reveals that the liberal ideologies are asking about human rights and supporting the cultural existence minorities. Moreover, depending on human right narratives reinforces Western ideological stances that depict China as an authoritarian state, violating and threatening human morals. In the same context, using human right discourse as a political tool contributes to criticizing China as a state supporting minorities' rights. On the other side, this extract

shows the Western media institutions work as watchdog to delegitimize international issues for shaping public opinions.

4.2.2." NOT CONTENT with suppressing all dissent inside its borders, China's Communist regime has become increasingly aggressive in its efforts to shut down foreign critics, including in the United States and other Western democracies. A particularly cruel example of that policy emerged last week when a U.S.-based Uyghur family revealed that a close relative in China had been handed a 20-year prison sentence in apparent retaliation for their activism"

1. Textual Analysis

The vocabulary such as "suppressing", "aggressive", and "shut down" is ideologically employed to confirm that China is an authoritarian state. It exerts oppressive power even outside its boundaries. Furthermore, the phrase "China's Communist regime" demonstrates that the ruling system politically fears the presence of Uyghur Muslims, as it considers them a threat to the unity of the Chinese state. Additionally, the phrase "20-year prison sentence" is emotionally charged; it portrays Uyghurs as victims of politically motivated punishment.

From a grammatical perspective, the claim is presented as factual and unquestionable information by using declarative constructions. The employment of the nominalization, such as "retaliation" hides the agency and obscures who is responsible for the punitive actions. Moreover, the use of cohesive devices emphasizes that the Chinese hostility expands beyond its geopolitical borders.

2. Cognitive Analysis

The editor constructs a negative mental model in readers' minds by depicting China's communist regime as a threat to multiculturalism. On the other hand, this extract reinforces the U.S. stance as a state that upholds minority rights and cultural diversity.

3. Social Practice Analysis

At this level of analysis, the extract sheds light on the geopolitical tensions between the U.S. and China. Focusing on human rights and depicting China as an authoritarian force aligns with liberal ideologies that emphasize respecting international norms, protecting minorities, and freedom of expression. This discourse is used as a political tool to legitimize the monitoring role of the U.S. in tracking threats and exposing authoritarian practices. Furthermore, this representation ideologically reinforces the negative mental image of China by criticizing the aggressive behavior of the Communist regime, depicted as expanding beyond national boundaries. Such discursive strategies contribute to shaping public opinion by reinforcing the perception that the Western institutions safeguard minorities' rights.

4.2.3. "The Biden administration -declared China's treatment of -Uyghur Muslims a genocide in an annual human rights report Tuesday, formalizing its dire assessment of a campaign of mass -detention and sterilization of -minority groups in the Xinjiang region. The move comes amid a sharp plunge in relations between the world's two largest economies following a tense meeting of top

diplomats in Alaska and underscores the Biden administration's willingness to spotlight atrocities regardless of the impact on sensitive bilateral relations".

1. Text Analysis

Regarding the linguistic Perspective, employing the expressions "declare" and "willingness to spotlight atrocities" serves to legitimize the Biden's government' role in reinforcing the U.S. image as a state with global moral authority, dealing with defending the minority rights even at the expense of diplomatic stability. Conversely, words within negative connotation such as "genocide", "mass detention", "sterilization", and "atrocities" are ideologically employed to represent China as a violator of Uyghur rights. Grammatically, passive constructions and nominalizations are used to hide the agents responsible for reporting the violation, presenting the accusations as facts. Moreover, this extract relies heavily on declarative sentences to reinforce the authority and credibility of Washington Post's discourse.

2. Cognitive Analysis

Cognitively, the editor attempts to influence the reader's perception by presenting the U.S. administration as a legitimate evaluator of minority rights. Furthermore, choosing emotional charged words has the ability to construct negative mental models in the reader's mind by portraying China as a violator. Moreover, using the evidence suggests that U.S. government is an authoritative source, presenting uncontested facts.

3. Social Practice Analysis

From a geopolitical and social perspective, this discourse aligns with a diplomatic context. Ideologically, the Biden administration discourse functions as a strategic tool, reflecting the influence of Western institutions and media in shaping public opinion regarding the Uyghur rights violation. In this context, focusing on of human rights reinforces liberal ideologies through respecting individual freedom, protecting minorities, and cultural diversity.

Moreover, this extract reproduces established narratives in Western discourse that portray the U.S. government as a an icon of international principles, while positioning China as an authoritarian state engaged in immoral violations. Through these narratives, the human-rights documents are framed as a geopolitical tool that influences bilateral international relations between the two countries.

5. Discussion

In the present study, employing Critical discourse analysis as a theoretical framework reveals that the discourse is ideologically polarized in both Chinese and American media. By applying Fairclough's three dimensional approach and Van dijk's socio-cognitive approach, the analysis shows that Chinese and Western narratives operate according to economic and political interests. The findings indicate that the addressing Uyghur issue from different ideological perspectives highlights the contrasting representation in People's Daily and Washington Post. Linguistically, the emotive vocabulary used in People's Daily

newspaper functions as an ideological tool to shape readers' perception by portraying China as a victim of biased and fabricated Western media discourse. Moreover, employing the linguistic strategies in Chinese media demonstrates that the Western journalistic discourse is perceived as a political instrument that exploits minority rights and reflects a broader hostile stance toward the East.

Regarding the Western media, the findings reveal that expressions such as "persecution", "cultural genocide", and "aggressive" are ideologically employed in the Washington Post to delegitimize the Chinese state. From a linguistic perspective, the newspaper represents the Chinese political system as attempting to eradicate the Uyghurs' cultural identity through oppressive tactics that extend beyond China's borders. Additionally, portraying China as an authoritarian state defending human rights violations reinforces the Western media discourse as a credible, objective, and ethically authoritative.

Cognitively, the journalists of Peoples' Daily attempt to reshape the readers' perceptions through constructing negative mental models of Western media narratives, portraying them as fake and unreliable. Convincing the readership that the Western accusations are ideologically delegitimized serves to reinforce the perspective that these narratives seek to compromise the economic development in Xinjiang through exploiting the issue of Ughurs' rights.

Regarding the Western media, employing negatively connoted expressions in The Washington Post cognitively influence the readers to construct mental models that delegitimize China by portraying it as an aggressive state. Presenting the Uyghurs as victims of an authoritarian system reinforces the credibility of Western media by highlighting its role as a legitimate evaluator of human rights. Moreover, portraying China as a violator, believing in multiculturalism, and focusing on minority protection contributes to constructing positive mental models of Western ideological positions in the readers' minds.

Regarding the social practice analysis, the discourse of Washington Post reveals the geopolitical tensions between the two countries. The Western allegations concerning the marginalization of the Uyghurs function to reshape public opinions by undermining the China's economic developments. Furthermore, the narratives in People's Daily are ideologically employed to present Western media as incredible and misleading. Additionally, the politically constructed Western occupations seek to globally undermine the legitimacy of Chinese system by emphasizing human rights discourse as a tool of criticism.

On the other hand, the findings reveal that the discourse of Washington Post focuses on the Chinese regime's alleged human rights violations against minorities, such as the Uyghurs. Western institutions and media strategically employ human rights discourse—grounded in liberal ideologies of protecting minorities and freedom of expression—as a political and geopolitical tool to legitimize criticism of China, portraying it as an authoritarian and morally

threatening state. This media strategy serves to reinforce negative public perception of the Chinese Communist Party while simultaneously affirming the West's role as the guardian of international norms. Ultimately, the analysis concludes that this framing of human rights documentation acts as a geopolitical instrument that shapes bilateral relations and reproduces established narratives where the U.S. is positioned as the icon of international principles against an aggressive, non-compliant China.

6. Conclusion

By employing Fairclough's three-dimensional model and Van Dijk's socio-cognitive approach, the present study concludes that the representation of Uyghur Muslims in People's Daily and The Washington Post is shaped by ideological, political, and geopolitical motivations. The analysis reveals that each newspaper uses linguistic choices, cognitive strategies, and socio-political contexts to construct polarized narratives that legitimized its ideological stance.

In People's Daily discourse, the use of emotive expressions depicts China as a victim of Western media manipulation and misinformation. This discourse delegitimizes foreign accusations by emphasizing economic development and stability in Xinjiang. Cognitively, the newspaper frames the Uyghurs rights issue as politically fabricated.

Conversely, adopting vocabulary embedded with negative connotations in The Washington Post discourse presents China as an authoritarian state, engaging in systematic Uyghurs rights violations. This discourse delegitimizes Chinese political system by constructing mental models that portray the Uyghurs as victims, position the United States and Western institutions as legitimate watchdogs of human rights, minority protection. At the level of social practice, the Western media discourse serves as a geopolitical tool that reshapes public perceptions regarding China and reinforces the United States as a global moral dominion.

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