

Author: Weishan Liang

Affiliation: Department of Foreign Language and Literature, Tsinghua University

Address: Wennan, Building

Tsinghua University, Haidian District, 100084

Beijing, China

Email: liangws16@mails.tsinghua.edu.cn

A Contrastive Analysis of Reports on North Korea's Missile

Program: *The New York Times* and *China Daily*

Abstract: The paper argues that the conflict over North Korea's nuclear program is a matter more of discourse than of real military engagement and that the external knowledge of North Korea's nuclear program is constructed and shaped through discourses which involve cultural differences and struggles in power. From a constructionist perspective, the paper compares the representation of the November 2017 missile test in news reports by *The New York Times* and *China Daily*. It is argued that the U.S. reports embody to some extent a Cold War mindset by tending, through discourse, to internationalize the issue and make itself appear as a victim of the crisis. Through the attribution of blame, the U.S. seeks to maintain its perceived role as the only superpower and hegemony in global politics. The Chinese reports, on the other hand, intimate that the crisis is mainly a problem between the U.S. and the Korean Peninsula. These reports tend to present China as a responsible stakeholder seeking to help solve the issue through communication and dialogue - by openly rejecting the U.S.'s strategy of blame and explicitly seeking leadership over this issue. The analysis of these differences in representation is informed theoretically by perceived differences in culture. Where the U.S. political culture features the core values of innocence, benevolence and exceptionalism, the Chinese system features contextuality, correlativity, complementarity, and changeability. The paper concludes, amongst other things, that the discourse patterns of these reports index a rising China and a shift in the balance of power in international politics.

Key Words: North Korea's missile test, nuclear issue, *The New York Times*, *China Daily*

1. Introduction

Although the nuclear program by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK, commonly known as North Korea) has been named 'the most dangerous security issue in the world' by the United Nations, there are several reasons to believe that at current stage it is a matter more of discourse than of real military engagement. As Hayes & Bruce (2013) pointed out, although rivers of ink were spilled in endless reports on topics related to nuclear weapons, there are no right answers-because only a global nuclear war could provide real data, but no one would be around to collect it after such a war since most nuclear analysts live in cities that are likely targets and would be dead or dying. Thus analysts are free to make whatever statements they like now. This tendency is further strengthened as DPRK seeks total opacity with respect to their intentions and capacities. Moreover, since nuclear operations require advanced technologies, numerous tests and tons of raw materials, DPRK is currently far from achieving nuclear operationality and neither will DPRK nor the U.S. easily strikes a war against each other irrationally without considering the deadly consequences and delicate balance between stakeholders on the Peninsula. Over the past few years, there have been exchanges of disappointment, anger, blame and threat between major stakeholders as well as debates, negotiations, regulations, reports and studies centering on DPRK's nuclear program. The knowledge of the issue is constructed and shaped through these discourses. Thus to understand what is happening on the Korean Peninsula, analysis of these discourses is indispensable, which unfortunately still has not been widely realized among international academia.

This paper takes a social constructionist view, a cultural perspective and a critical position towards discourse and looks into news reports released by *The New York Times (NYT)* and *China Daily (CD)* in response to DPRK's missile test in November 2017. It seeks to

examine how the U.S. and China represented DPRK’s nuclear program and what is at stake behind the differences with the hope to provide a clearer picture of the issue and contribute to mutual understandings between different parties. The corpus consists of news reports released within 24 hours after DPRK launched its missile test in November 2017 by *NYT* and *CD*. There are five reports (4,059 words) from *NYT* and six (1,781 words) from *CD*. The reports are analyzed from two perspectives: social actors and news schemata in order to explore who were (not) involved, what was (not) said and why.

2. Social Actors Analysis

Social semiotician Van Leeuwen’s study in 1996 provides inspiration to the analysis of the representation of social actors in discourse. Reports by *NYT* and *CD* include different social actors which are summarized in Table 1.

Table 1 Social Actors in Reports by *NYT* and *CD*

Newspaper	<i>NYT</i>	<i>CD</i>
/social actors		
DPRK (official level)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • North Korea (the isolated country, the North Korean regime, Pyongyang, the North, the reclusive government, terror sponsor); 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Democratic People’s Republic of Korea (DPRK, Pyongyang, the DPRK government); • the country’s Korean Central Television;

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • North Korea’s state media (a television presenter); • Kim (North Korean Leadership, North Korean leader Kim Jong Un, Kim Jong Un, “Little Rocket Man”, “a sick puppy”, the dictator of North Korea) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • its top leader Kim Jong Un (Kim) • the DPRK’s official Korean Central News Agency (KCNA)
U.S (official level)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • U.S. (the United States, Washington); • U.S officials; • U.S. ambassador Nikki Haley (Haley, the U.S. ambassador to the United Nations, Nikki Haley); • Trump (U.S President Donald Trump, the Trump administration); • Previous U.S. administrations; • U.S. Secretary of State Rex Tillerson (Trump’s top diplomat, Rex Tillerson); 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the United States (Washington, the US, the Trump administration;) • US government officials; • US government experts; • US Defense Department (Pentagon spokesman Robert Manning; US Defense Secretary James Mattis, the Pentagon chief, Mattis); • Secretary of State Rex Tillerson; • US President Donald Trump (Donald Trump, Trump)

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • U.S. intelligence analysts (three U.S. officials); • the Treasury Department; • the Pentagon (U.S. Defense Secretary Jim Mattis) 	
China (official level)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • China (Beijing - the North's neighbor and sole major trading partner, North Korea's lone major ally); • Chinese President Xi Jinping (Xi, the Chinese president); • China's deputy U.N. ambassador Wu Haitao; • China's state-run Xinhua news agency; 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • China (Beijing); • Chinese Foreign Ministry (Foreign Ministry spokesperson Geng Shuang); • Chinese President Xi Jinping (Xi, the Chinese leader)
South Korea	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • South Korea (a rattled Seoul); • South Korean officials; 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • news agency Yonhap of the Republic of Korea (ROK); • the Republic of Korea (ROK);

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • South Korean President Moon Jae-In (Moon, the South's presidential office); • South Korea's military 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ROK's Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS); • the ROK's military; • ROK President Moon Jae-in
Japan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Japanese officials; • Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe (Abe); • Japanese Defense Minister Itsunori Onodera 	
Experts (unofficial)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • analysts (International observers; many nuclear experts); • the U.S.-based Union of Concerned Scientists (David Wright of the Union of Concerned Scientists, a U.S.-based nonprofit science advocacy group, a physicist); • the U.S.-based Centre for Strategic and International Studies; 	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Jeffrey Lewis, head of the East Asia Nonproliferation Program at the Middlebury Institute of Strategic Studies 	
other actors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Russia’s U.N. Ambassador Vassily Nebenzia; • Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov • Canadian officials; • U.N. Secretary-General Antonio Guterres & his spokesman; 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov

It can be seen from above that there are more social actors involved in the reports by *NYT*. Social actors excluded by *CD* but included by *NYT* include: experts, Japan, previous U.S administrations, the Treasury Department (of the U.S.), U.S. ambassador Nikki Haley, China’s deputy U.N. ambassador Wu Haitao, China’s state-run Xinhua news agency, Russia’s U.N. Ambassador Vassily Nebenzia, Canadian officials, U.N. Secretary-General Antonio Guterres & his spokesman. To the U.S., the DPRK nuclear issue is not only a problem between the U.S. and DPRK, but also a historical and international problem involving different stakeholders, including China, South Korea, Japan, the U.N., Russia, non-governmental institutions and even Canada where a meeting on the DPRK nuclear crisis would be held. Accusation has been made against the U.S. that by dragging other

countries into the mud, the U.S. tries to internationalize and complicate the problem just to create distraction and evade responsibility. To China, the problem is mainly restricted to the relationship between the U.S. and the Korean Peninsula. Other stakeholders play only a mediating role. Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson Fu Ying once said, ‘as the Chinese saying goes, he who tied the bell should be the one who unties it. To open the rusty lock of the Korean nuclear issue, we should look for the right key’ (Fu, 2017).

Moreover, there is a significant difference between *NYT* and *CD* in how the DPRK government, its leader and China were addressed. *NYT* used ‘North Korea’ while *CD* used ‘The Democratic People’s Republic of Korea (DPRK)’. The Democratic People’s Republic of Korea (DPRK) is the official name of the country. It represents Pyongyang as the true, legitimate Korean government. By using ‘DPRK’, China acknowledges its legitimacy and shows due respect for the government. The U.S., on the other hand, believes that the government is neither democratic nor republic. It is a totalitarian state and hereditary dictatorship and thus does not deserve such a name. The name ‘North Korea’ comes from the end of the Second World War in 1945 when the Korean Peninsula was divided into two zones administered by the U.S. and the Soviet Union respectively. In 1948, the Communist-aligned DPRK and the West-aligned ROK (Republic of Korea) were established and since neither of them was able to win the Korean War, the two separated governments remain existing and are very often in confrontation as a result of the Cold War. After the end of the Cold War, both governments joined the United Nations, a symbol of recognition by the international community. The name ‘North Korea’ used in *NYT* reports suggests that the U.S still has a Cold War mindset, which is also reflected in addressing DPRK as ‘the isolated country’, ‘the North Korean regime’, ‘the North’, ‘the reclusive government’, ‘terror sponsor’ and China as ‘Beijing - the North’s neighbor

and sole major trading partner’, ‘North Korea’s lone major ally’. *NYT* also bound the U.S together with Japan and South Korea in ‘Trump spoke by phone with Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe and South Korean President Moon Jae-In’, ‘U.S., Japanese and South Korean officials all agreed...’ and ‘Abe and Moon’. The Cold War has already been a thing of the past. There is no longer confrontation between the two camps and China and DPRK are not allies. But the U.S. to a certain extent still possesses a binary view towards the world and regards the whole DPRK nuclear problem as an issue between evil communists and innocent non-communists.

Another finding worth mentioning is the number of social actors within the U.S. society. As a country that labels itself “free”, there are departments on the governmental level, current and previous administrations as well as media and organizations on the grass-root level, each with different attitudes. They are stuck in constant struggles against each other. For such a society, it could be difficult to achieve agreement, let alone consistency. However, in China, collectivism is highly valued. People come together and express one voice. Thus within China, the number of social actors is much smaller. If the U.S. inside alone cannot achieve solidarity, how can it blame other countries and count on the international community to settle this crisis?

Furthermore, in the reports by *NYT*, DPRK was mostly assigned the role of agent while the U.S. was assigned a beneficialised role. DPRK was represented as the one of action, such as ‘launched ballistic missile’, ‘develop and test nuclear weapons’, ‘realize the cause of completing the state nuclear force’, ‘make it more difficult to predict and the intercept a launch’, ‘describe itself as “responsible nuclear power”’ and ‘denounced Trump’s decision’. The U.S. was represented as the victim being targeted, such as ‘reach all the United State’, ‘put the U.S within range’, ‘strike the United States’, ‘target the United

States with nuclear weapons’, ‘can hit the U.S. mainland’, ‘jolted the Korean Peninsula and Washington.’, ‘necessary defense against U.S’ and ‘force the US to attack the North’. It was only when the U.S. was responding to the crisis that it became the actor and DPRK beneficialised, as in ‘U.S. warns North Korean leadership will be “utterly destroyed” in case of war’, ‘never sought war and still do not seek it’, ‘ask China to cut off oil supply’, ‘denies intention (to invade)’, ‘have long list of additional potential sanctions’, ‘to combat the North Korean threat’ and ‘to defend itself or its allies’. The *NYT* reports give an impression that DPRK is the initiator of all evils while the U.S. is innocent and is forced to do what is needed when faced with such a big threat. When it comes to China’s role in the crisis, in the reports by *NYT*, in addition to expressing concern and reiterating its stance and determination, China was passivized as in ‘emphasize the need for China to use all levers’, ‘urging China to use its leverage’ and ‘ask China to cut off oil supply’, depicting China as a country of words not deeds. On the contrary, *CD* simply said that DPRK successfully launched a missile test and the missile flew east. Only in a statement quoted from the KCNA did it ever mention that the U.S. is the target of the missile. China, in the reports by *CD*, played a more active role, as in ‘Chinese Foreign Ministry called for more efforts to ease tension’, ‘it was seriously concerned about and opposed to (DPRK’s missile test)’, ‘China strongly demands the DPRK abide by the UN Security Council resolutions’, ‘Beijing wants the two belligerents to calm down’, ‘Beijing has consistently argued...’, ‘(China’s goal) is to denuclearize the Korean Peninsula’, ‘China would like to keep up communications with the United States and all other related parties’, ‘(China and the US) exchanged views and reached consensus...’, ‘Xi called on the two sides to...’ and ‘(he) urged two sides to...’, which were unreported by *NYT*.

Through the analysis of the representation of social actors, one sees that *NYT* framed the missile test by DPRK as an act of aggression over the U.S. The U.S. regards itself as the victim of the crisis and seeks to evade its responsibility by making the crisis international, dragging other countries into the issue and presenting China as a country of inaction. The U.S. also exhibits a Cold War mindset by viewing the DPRK government as illegitimate and totalitarian and seeing the crisis as a confrontation between the communist and non-communist camp. Traces also indicate political divergence and a lack of solidarity in the U.S. society which can only aggravate the situation. *CD*, by contrast, presented a simpler and cleaner picture, depicting the issue as a problem between the U.S. and the Korean Peninsula and China as an active mediator in between.

3. News Schemata Analysis

A piece of news is basically composed of headline, lead, episodes, consequences, verbal reactions and comments (Van Dijk, 1988). Headline and lead are the most eye-catching parts of the report, containing the most important information the newspaper wants to express. The headlines and leads of the reports are summarized in the following table.

Table 2 Headlines and Leads of the Reports by *NYT* and *CD*

News No.	<i>NYT</i>	<i>CD</i>
1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Headline: North Korea Says Successfully Launches New ICBM That Can Reach All of U.S 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Headline: DPRK fires ballistic missile: ROK's news agency • Lead: The Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) fired

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lead: North Korea successfully launched a new type of intercontinental ballistic missile, the “Hwasong-15” that can reach all of the United States, the isolated country’s state media said on Wednesday. 	<p>a ballistic missile on Wednesday, news agency Yonhap of the Republic of Korea (ROK) reported, citing the ROK's Joint Chiefs of Staff.</p>
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Headline: How North Korea’s Latest ICBM Test Stacks Up • Lead: North Korea said it had successfully launched a new type of missile that can reach all of the U.S. • Subtitles: HEIGHT, DISTANCE; LOCATION, TIME; 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Headline: DPRK said to have launched ballistic missile • Lead: The Democratic People’s Republic of Korea (DPRK) have launched a ballistic missile, the United States and the Republic of Korea (ROK) said.

3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Headline: U.S. Warns North Korean Leadership Will Be ‘Utterly Destroyed’ in Case of War • Lead: The United States warned North Korea’s leadership it would be “utterly destroyed” if war were to break out, after Pyongyang test fired its most advanced intercontinental ballistic missile, putting the U.S. mainland within range. • Subtitles: Far into Space; More Sanctions Likely 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Headline: DPRK declares test firing another intercontinental ballistic missile • Lead: The Democratic People’s Republic of Korea (DPRK) successfully test-fired a newly developed Intercontinental Ballistic Missile (ICBM) early Wednesday morning, the country’s Korean Central Television reported.
4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Headline: North Korea Says ‘Breakthrough’ Puts U.S. Mainland Within Range of Nuclear Weapons. • Lead: North Korea said it successfully tested a new 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Headline: China seriously concerned about DPRK missile test • Lead: China said on Wednesday it was seriously concerned about and opposed to the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea’s

	<p>intercontinental ballistic missile on Wednesday in a “breakthrough” that puts the U.S. mainland within range of its nuclear weapons whose warheads could withstand re-entry to the Earth’s atmosphere.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Subtitle: ‘THREATEN EVERYWHERE’; ALL OPTIONS; U.S. EAST COAST IN RANGE? 	<p>(DPRK) test-firing of a newly developed Intercontinental Ballistic Missile.</p>
5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Headline : Haley: NKorea ‘Brings Us Closer to War’ the US Doesn’t Seek • Lead: The U.S. ambassador to the United Nations said Wednesday that North Korea's launch of an intercontinental ballistic missile — which some observers believe could reach the Eastern U.S. — 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Headline: Grave concerns that DPRK crisis is getting out of hand • Lead: Unilateral countermoves by individual stakeholders have proven insufficient, and ineffective, in reining in the nuclear weapons program of the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea, as its latest missile test on Wednesday demonstrated.

	<p>“brings us closer” to a war the U.S. isn't seeking.</p>	
6		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Headline: Xi: Denuclearization in Korean Peninsula is ‘China’s unswerving goal’ • Lead: Chinese President Xi Jinping told his US counterpart, Donald Trump, in a telephone conversation late Wednesday that denuclearizing the Korean Peninsula, maintaining international nuclear-nonproliferation regime, and preserving peace and stability in Northeast Asia are China’s unswerving goal.

Although the major event-DPRK successfully launched a missile test-was reported by both sides, they focused on different aspects. In all the leads of *NYT* reports, the U.S was specifically mentioned as the goal of the missile test with a focus on the technical details, making the threat genuine and urgent, generating fear and panic among the public. After dramatizing the event, the U.S. was able to legitimize their tough responses, including

reference to potential ‘war’ and using tough words like ‘utterly destroyed’ in the headline of Report No. 3, meanwhile indicating its reluctance in the headline and lead of Report No. 5, paving way for future exceptional measures against DPRK. The five reports by *NYT*, which were released one after another, form a discourse chain. With the dissemination and reproduction of these news and later other official mechanisms including sanctions and changes in regulations, step by step, the U.S. is able to institutionalize the discourse and ultimately use it for its own interests. *CD*, on the other hand, had different focuses. The first three headlines and leads are basically the same, reporting the major event. In the following reports, *CD* presented Chinese government’s prompt responses to the missile test, reaffirming its principle and goal regarding the crisis and showing its concern over the issue through the reports. Although China believes that it is a crisis mainly between the U.S. and the Korean Peninsula, it still cares and would like to make its own contributions, presenting itself as a responsible country on the global stage.

Episode of news features major event in context and background. According to Van Dijk (1988: 54), context information denotes the actual situation while background has a more comprehensive, structural, or historical nature. Backgrounds may include the history of the actual events and their context. For the sake of promptness and brevity, both *NYT* and *CD* did not give detailed background but only recent related events in the reports. Both mentioned Trump’s listing DPRK as a ‘terror sponsor’. It was taken as the most immediate cause of DPRK’s missile test. But there is a slight difference between *NYT* and *CD*. *NYT* saw it as Trump’s decision while *CD* represented it as the US’s. *NYT* portrayed Trump as incompetent and should take responsibility for the missile test. *NYT* also repetitively mentioned Trump’s insults on Kim (‘Little Rocket Man’ and ‘a sick puppy’),

depicting Trump as rude, outrageous and arrogant, which is related to American media's critical tradition and the divergence of different political parties. To China, there is no difference between the U.S. and Trump's administration because in Chinese culture, the government represents the country and the people. One difference between *NYT* and *CD* is that *NYT*'s tendency to refer to previous missile tests in the reports, suggesting DPRK's continuous and intensifying aggression against the U.S. and the U.S.'s position of being forced to take action.

The consequences sometimes could be more important than the event itself and thus become the topic expressed in the headline as in Report No.3 and NO.5 by *NYT* and Report No.5 by *CD*. Both the U.S. and China agree that the missile test by DPRK worsens the situation of the Korean Peninsula and could lead to DPRK having nuclear weapons and the worst case scenario: a war between the U.S. and DPRK no matter who takes the initiative. However, the solutions proposed by the two sides are different. Having stressed itself as the victim of the crisis, the United States believes that the only thing it can do is to impose tighter sanctions and resort to violence in case the situation worsens. The rest is in the hands of the international community. 'Diplomatic options' on the U.S. side refer to the international community joining it in isolating DPRK, which as a matter of fact, is not diplomatic at all. This one-sided solution is selfish and self-centered and would not solve the crisis at all. As Choi & Bae (2013) pointed out, economic sanctions against DPRK may have virtually no impact as the Kim administration is designed to sustain external economic sanctions and it has minimal economic relations with the United States and Japan. Economic sanctions worldwide could also result in humanitarian crisis in DPRK in that sanctions do not weaken those in power but rather victimize civilians. Thus further sanctions can only add fuel to the fire. China, taking the big picture and

multilateral relations into consideration, believes that dialogue and a peace treaty are better ways to solve the problem.

Verbal reactions can be seen as a special category of consequence. Trump's words 'this situation will be handled' were quoted three times by *NYT* and once by *CD*. *CD* also quoted 'we will take care of it' by Trump, which is of similar meaning. Like *CD* said, these words are 'enigmatic'. On one hand, the American society and the rest of the world are looking on Trump over this issue since he tends to catch people by surprise. But on the other hand, given the failure of previous U.S administrations and struggles of the international community, there is doubt whether Trump could actually 'handle/take care of it' since as *CD* pointed out Trump's interest in diplomacy 'is simply for show'. The talk between Trump and Xi was also quoted by both sides but with different focus. While both sides consider China as a crucial player in the issue, *CD* clearly attached more importance than *NYT* to this phone call. The phone call itself was made headline and major event of the report by *CD*. The focus of *NYT* is on what China should do to help the U.S. and by presenting the U.S.'s requirements on China followed by China's expression of determination to achieve denuclearization of the Peninsula and peace in the region, *NYT* is inviting the reader to think if China is really concerned, it should definitely do what the U.S. asks; if not, then it is not sincere. By continuing to put pressure on China, the U.S. seeks to evade its responsibility in the crisis for its own interests. In the reports by *CD*, the focus is on China's determination as well as the fostering of good relationship between China and the U.S., as in 'close communication and coordination' and reference to Trump's previous visit and consensus achieved during the visit. Some critics say China was just playing with words by being imprecise and not promising anything. This is a misunderstanding of Chinese culture, in which interpersonal relationship or Guanxi is

considered highly important. Western people do business based on rules, regulations and institutions while Chinese people do business based on mutual trust. It is only when two sides get to know and trust each other can they achieve something together. Thus *CD* emphasized the importance of communication between different parties. The importance of Guanxi can also be seen in other East Asian countries such as the two Koreas. If the U.S. can get rid of its self-centeredness and approach the issue with an Asian cultural perspective, there might be some chance to solve the crisis.

Although newspapers generally agree that news should be objective and neutral, comments nonetheless still frequently appear in news reports, usually in indirect forms. The five reports released within 24 hours after the missile test by *NYT* are all hard news. But they are not objective at all, the attitude of the newspaper was expressed through careful selection and representation as we have discussed before. Five out of the six reports released by *CD* are hard news. Report No.5 by *CD* is an editorial. The five pieces of hard news by *CD* are simpler and more objective than those of *NYT* as they sticks better to the topics and major events under report. To analyze the editorial, we draw from the appraisal theory by Martin and White (2006). It can be seen that evaluations in the editorial are dominated by negative ones, showing that the overall situation is severe and worrying, the actions taken so far have been ineffective, insufficient and meaningless and the opportunities have been casually wasted. Instead of being the passive one who get pressured and blamed, China took the initiative to criticize both sides of the issue, especially the incompetence and lack of careful consideration of the U.S. China clearly expressed its dissatisfaction in words such as ‘vexed’, which can be understood as “causing difficulty” or “feeling annoyed”. China then proposed its methods and explicitly stated what it desired with ‘Beijing’ made agent of the sentence and ‘to achieve this’

theme. Through this editorial, China made its voice heard, showing its tough side and exercising its leadership over this issue.

The analysis of news schemata has revealed that the U.S. attempts to create a victim discourse worldwide so as to legitimize its future actions, presenting a very self-centered ideology, refusing to make change and seeking to avoid its responsibility by blaming and continuing to put pressure on China. China, showing its deep concern over the issue and determination to preserve peace, presents itself as a responsible country and stresses the importance of maintaining good relationship and cooperation between China and the U.S. as well as the need for communication, dialogue and negotiation among major stakeholders. Instead of taking the blame for inaction, China now seeks a more active role and reaches for a bigger say in the global governance, which is an exemplification of what Huntington termed ‘Western arrogance’ and ‘Sinic assertiveness’ (1996: 183). In addition, both *NYT* and *CD* are suspicious over Trump’s ability to solve the crisis. But *NYT* expressed it more explicitly, suggesting the newspaper’s distrust and disapproval over its president.

4. Culture Differences and Power Struggles

The differences between the U.S. and China in their representation of DPRK’s missile test in November 2017 could be explained from the perspectives of cultural differences between the West and East and struggles over power in international politics.

Chinese Scholar Ji Xianlin (2006) classified world cultures into four systems based on their common features, namely the Chinese, the Indian, the Arabic-Islamic and the Euro-American cultural system, which in a broader dichotomy can be divided into two main bodies, with the former three forming the oriental or non-Western cultural system and the

fourth one standing opposite, which we call the occidental cultural system. The occidental cultural system features individualism and a binary way of thinking. A clear distinction is made between the self and the other and things are either good or bad, right or wrong, winning or losing. The occidental system finds its extreme manifestation in American political culture. According to Rosati & Scott (2010: 350), most Americans are raised to believe inherently in three values: American innocence, benevolence and exceptionalism. These beliefs contribute powerfully to the sense of an American mission to lead the world, which runs deep within the political culture of the U.S. American people see themselves as innocent in international affairs. They view themselves as benign and defensive. But over the past decades other countries and ideologies have been openly provoking, forcing them to get involved in wars and world politics not only for the purpose of defending themselves, but also to eradicate evils and promote peace and freedom worldwide. Americans also believe that they are more exceptional than others as they turned a piece of bare land to a global power. The success implies that God is on America's side and that America represents progress and the best social model for the future of the world. To the U.S., the DPRK is aggressive and corrupt. It has posed direct threat to the U.S., its allies and the world. The U.S. is forced to defend itself and by doing it, it is riding the world of communist evils, liberating people of DPRK and bringing peace and freedom to the world. These kinds of values are reflected in discourse and reproduced through discourse. They are so deeply rooted that the U.S. tends to refuse history inconsistent with its interpretation, social models and voices different from its own, ignore cultures of other countries, find it difficult to sit down and communicate with other parties and allow other countries to take leadership roles even though they prove to be better and more effective in solving particular issues.

The oriental culture, by contrast, features collectivism and a holistic way of thinking. Chinese culture, in particular, is characterized by four “C”s: contextuality, correlativity, complementarity, and changeability (Qin, 2012). Judgements and decisions are made concerning the timing, themes, and trends within the context. Multiple factors like power, interest, and morality should all be taken into consideration since things are related to each other and nothing is isolated. Relation is the most significant component of social life and the hub of all social activities. The opposites are not conflictual but complementary, the assumption being that the universe is essentially harmonious. The self and the other, like *yin* and *yang*¹ are organic whole, complementing each other to produce new life. Chinese people also believe that everything in the world is subject to ongoing and never-ending changes. Change is the very nature of everything but Chinese culture also stresses the role of human agency. The world is believed to be a shelter shared by all and every part of it is closely related. As a member of the world, China sees its part of responsibility. It views the difference between cultures as complementary instead of conflictual, seeking to maintain harmonious relations with different countries and trying to solve crises through mutual understanding and trust. The international political situation is changing fast, but China wants to seize the momentum and help build a better world. The differences between American and Chinese culture have led to differences in foreign policies, diplomatic discourse and media discourse, which have actively shaped the landscape of international politics.

From previous discussions on the news reports by *NYT* and *CD*, the U.S. is seen to continue to assume a powerful and superior role in the global governance, blaming others, making requirements and tough responses, striving to maintain its position as the world’s only superpower. But in the editorial by *CD*, China is seen challenging the U.S.,

expressing its dissatisfaction and putting forwards its own demands. Through the exchange of attitude on DPRK's missile test and the interactions via news reports, one sees the power struggles manifested in discourse, behind which lies the shift in the balance of power between different states. The realist theory of international relations holds that world politics ultimately is always and necessarily a field of conflicts among actors pursuing power. In the current global context, the West, in terms of its share of world political, economic, and military power, is going down relatively to that of other civilizations. The West's victory in the Cold War has produced not triumph but exhaustion. The U.S. is confronted with slow economic growth, high unemployment rate, huge government deficits, social disintegration, drugs, crimes and many other social problems. Economic power is now rapidly shifting to East Asia. Military power and political influence are starting to follow. These shifts in power among civilizations are leading and will lead to the revival and increased cultural assertiveness of non-Western societies and to their increasing rejection of Western culture (Huntington 1996: 83). China, as the world's second largest economy, has adopted a more active approach in international affairs, including its discursive plans and strategies. Instead of blindly follow the Western tradition and discourse, Chinese media and scholars are now embracing a more critical view towards the West and seeks to construct their own interpretations and knowledge of the world, stressing Chinese values, cultures and models. The world's political order has been shifting from the hegemonic U.S. to a balance between powers. A rising China would contribute to world peace and stability not only because it is in China's best interest, but also an inherent pursuit integrated in Chinese culture and deeply rooted in Chinese mentality.

5. Summary

This paper has argued the role of discourse in the construction of the knowledge of the DPRK nuclear issue, stressing the influence of culture in the production of discourse and power both in and behind discourse. Through the analysis of new reports released by *NYT* and *CD* within 24 hours after the missile test by DPRK in November 2017, it is found that the U.S., with a certain extent of the Cold War mindset and its difficulty in achieving internal solidarity over important matters, tends to internationalize the nuclear issue and make itself appear as a victim of the crisis through manipulations of discourse. By blaming others and refusing to negotiate, the U.S., with its self-centeredness and arrogance, attempts to evade its responsibility, disguising its real purpose of maintaining its role as the only superpower and hegemony in global politics. China, on the other hand, believes that the crisis is a problem between the U.S. and the Korean Peninsula. It presents itself as a responsible mediator in between seeking to solve the issue through communication and dialogue. It has openly rejected the U.S.'s blame and explicitly proposed its way of solution, actively seeking leadership over this issue. Both newspapers are suspicious of Trump's ability to solve the problem. The differences in representation can be explained from a cultural perspective. Meanwhile the discourse patterns of the reports reflects power struggle in international politics, featuring a relative decline of the U.S. as well as a rising China.

Acknowledgement

The authors are grateful to Prof. Paul Simpson at University of Liverpool for his support to the research and improvement of the abstract.

Funding

Part of the work was conducted when the author was a visiting PhD student to University of Liverpool sponsored by China Scholarship Council.

Notes

¹ *Yin* and *yang* are fundamental concepts in Chinese philosophy. Literally, *yang* means the sunny side of the hill and *yin* the shady side. They are both seen as *qi* (energy) operating in the universe. Everything is embedded in *yin* and embraces *yang*. When the two *qi* interacted and attained the stage of harmony (*he*), human life began. They are the building blocks of the Chinese intellectual tradition.

References

- Choi JK and Bae JY (2013) Implications for Seoul of an operationally nuclear North Korea. In Moore GJ (ed) *North Korean nuclear operationality: Regional security and nonproliferation*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, pp. 53-76.
- Fu Y (2017) The Korean nuclear issue: Past, present, and future-A Chinese perspective. Available at: http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/world/2017-05/09/content_29266091.htm
- Hayes P and Bruce S (2013) Translating North Korea's nuclear threats into constrained operational reality. In Moore GJ (ed) *North Korean nuclear operationality: Regional security and nonproliferation*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, pp. 15-31.

- Huntington SP (1996) *The clash of civilizations and the remaking of world order*. New York: Simon & Schuster.
- Ji X (2006) *Ji Xianlin talks*. Beijing: Contemporary China Publishing House.
- Martin JR and White PR (2005) *The language of evaluation: Appraisal in English*. London: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Rosati JA and Scott JM (2010) *The politics of United States foreign policy* (5th ed). New York: Cengage.
- Qin Y (2012) Chinese culture and its implications for foreign policy-making. Available at: http://www.ciis.org.cn/english/2012-04/12/content_4934865.htm.
- Van Dijk TA (1988) *News as discourse*. Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.
- Van Leeuwen T (1996) The representation of social actors. In Caldas-Coulthard CR & Coulthard M (eds), *Texts and practices: Readings in critical discourse analysis*. London: Routledge, pp. 32–70.