



Multiple news analysis across cultures (element in corpus linguistics)

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BOOK REVIEWS

Multiple news analysis across cultures (element in corpus linguistics), by HELEN CAPLE, CHANGPENG HUAN, and MONIKA BEDNAREK, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2020, US\$20.00 (paperback), 90 pp.

Multimodal News Analysis across Cultures co-authored by Helen Caple, Changpeng Huan and Monika Bednarek, demonstrates the analysis of news values by combining three dimensions, namely cross-linguistic study, corpus analysis, and multimodal analysis, the combination of which provides readers with a full picture of how news value could be discursively constructed across cultures and makes the book an excellent guide for research within the fields of cross-culture studies and multimodal analysis. Using news texts covering national days in China and Australia in two case studies, the authors also explore the relationship between news value and national identity, which could lend insight to critical discourse analysis.

The book is composed of four parts. The first part introduces the key concept—news value—and the data and approach adopted for analysis, while the second and third parts present two case studies that showcase the practical aspects of conducting corpus and qualitative research. Part four is the conclusion and reflection based on the case studies.

Part 1 exhibits a general introduction to two key approaches, namely corpus-based multimodal discourse analysis (CAMDA) (Bednarek & Caple, 2014, p. 151) and discursive news value analysis (DNVA). CAMDA combines corpus linguistic techniques with the discourse analysis of other semiotic modes, which is particularly appropriate to analyze news items given its inherent multimodality. The authors also briefly introduce the National Day of the People's Republic of China and that of Australia, as well as reasons for analyzing the national days. Then, an overview of the concept of news value is provided with a list of 11 elements: aesthetic appeal, consonance, eliteness, impact, negativity, personalization, positivity, proximity, superlativeness, timeliness, and unexpectedness. Linguistic and visual resources that have the potential to construct news values are then discussed with selected examples. The authors emphasize that they adopted the discursive perspective to analyze the construction of news values. Part 1 then summarizes the key concerns of corpus design, including dataset, size, techniques and software. Four research questions are then outlined: “What news values are discursively construed in different cultures around a similar event? How are these values typically constructed? How does the construction of newsworthiness relate to national identity? What are the similarities and differences in what the corpus linguistics analysis uncovers and what the visual analysis uncovers?” (p. 30).

Based on the data obtained from four newspapers (two Chinese newspapers: *People's Daily* and *Nanfang Metropolis Daily*, and two Australian newspapers: *The Australian* and *The Sydney Morning Herald*), Parts 2 and 3 explore how news values are discursively constructed in linguistic and visual reporting of national days in China and Australia via corpus-based analysis. The approach to analyzing the corpora and the key elements within the corpora are illustrated in detail.

Focusing on the Chinese National Day, Part 2 first identifies six node words referring to the national day using a frequency list (e.g. *guoqing*, 国庆, “national celebration”; *huangjinzhou*, 黄金周, “golden week”) by drawing on the author Changpeng Huan’s familiarity with the corpus texts. Then, using the software tool Sysconc (Wu, 2009), a concordance analysis is carried out on full sentences within the co-text of the node words identified. One of the key observations is that four major news values are consistently constructed in both newspapers—proximity, positivity, superlativeness, and eliteness—which the authors attribute to the press censorship in China. Apropos of the visual data, using the repository of resources established by Helen Caple for DNVA in “Anglo” news discourse, the authors analyze each photograph and collate their analysis in an MS Excel spreadsheet. Given the much smaller size (131 photographs), the authors draw a much clearer comparison of findings across these two newspapers than when dealing with linguistic texts. They point out an interesting co-patterning of news values across these two news organizations, with personification and positivity always co-patterned in *People’s Daily*, whereas superlativeness and negativity are more connected in *Nanfang Metropolis Daily*. This distinction is important because it allows the authors to discover and discuss the potential influence of the levels of control and commercialization within these two newspapers (p. 52).

Part 3, dealing with the Australian National Day, is the second case study. In this corpus, the special discursive struggle in Australia is underlined, referring to the struggle for different labels for the Australian National Day. It begins with a collocation analysis of the word *day* using Lancsbox/Grphcoll (Brezina et al., 2015) as well as frequency and distribution analysis to reveal the range of labels used to refer to the national holiday (e.g., *Invasion Day*, *Survival Day*), finding that *Australia Day* is the most commonly used term (p. 55). The authors then undertake qualitative concordance analysis using the WordSmith Concordancer tool to further scrutinize how news value is constructed within the co-text, and a brief collocation analysis is carried out to test whether a different corpus linguistic technique could uncover the same findings. In terms of visual DNVA, the procedures are similar to those used to analyze the Chinese photographs. The authors then present the reader with a complex, complementary picture of what this day represents (p. 79), with the results indicating that negativity dominates in both news outlets in the linguistic texts but positivity dominates in the photographs. Not reflecting the “expected, consonant, positive sided of the news values scales” (Ben-Aaron’s, 2003), the predominance of negativity in the linguistic reporting clearly reveals the discursive struggle associated with the day, and it points to emerging trends around the need for discussion and eventually for change (p. 71).

The final part, Part 4, concludes the book by addressing the research questions posed before. It then provides a synthesis and comparison of the results generalized from two case studies, and it finally reflects upon the approach to corpus-assisted multimodal discourse analysis, which showcases the authors’ thoughtfulness and circumspection in conducting research analysis.

In this book, the authors provide the readers with a demonstration of how news values could be discursively constructed from three dimensions, namely cross-linguistic study, corpus analysis, and multimodal analysis. To begin with, in contrast to previous language research using corpus-assisted discourse studies, which is mostly monolingual, this study is situated as “intersemiotic, intertextual and cross-linguistic” (p. 28) and manages to compare two different languages, which

successfully meets the challenge mentioned by Vessey (2013) and Taylor (2014). This is a big step in this field. Second, corpus-assisted discourse analysis overcomes the problem of insufficient data and avoids the tedious work of manual operations including manual collecting, categorizing and analyzing data. And third, non-linguistic resources and linguistic resources are both examined, contributing to the full understanding of news values. What is also noteworthy is that despite the departure point of analyzing news values, the book also discusses the relationships between the newsworthiness and national identities of the two countries, which could inform readers about the discursive construction of national identity. For example, positivity is constructed in relation to multiculturalism and reconciliation in the Australia national reporting, whereas key Chinese values such as 礼/rites, 和/harmony and 爱国/patriotism (Shi-Xu, 2014, p. 61) dominate in Chinese reporting. Therefore, the book could provide some context for Critical Discourse Analysis.

The book is also a guide for cross-linguistic, corpus-based research. It explains a list of key elements of news value, introduces specific corpus tools, and demonstrates practical studies with two cases. The demonstration is particularly useful, brilliantly showcasing how corpus-based multimodal analysis can discover the news values of reports and directing readers to actually perform corpus analyses. In addition, it takes the referring expressions as its starting point and thus avoids the problem of identifying translation equivalents. To be specific, referring expression refers to the Chinese national day in Chinese dataset, whereas refers to the Australian national day in the Australian dataset. These expressions are hence not strictly translation equivalents, since they refer to two different referents.

Despite what is mentioned above, some limitations of this research could not be ignored. First, exploring how photography constructs and presents meaning with DNVA does not seem to be as scientific an approach as the use of DNVA to analyze linguistic resources; the information is merely inferred from the photos. The readers' cultural backgrounds and personal judgments may interfere in the process. Therefore, the results surrounding news values and national identities may not be comprehensive and objective enough. In addition, the framework used suits the English-language more than Chinese, which is likely to make the analysis more Western-centric. Therefore, it is necessary to independently develop a comprehensive framework suitable for analyzing the Chinese language and to set criteria for inferring meaning from visual resources.

Nonetheless, this book is a concise, illuminating study of multimodal discourse analysis, corpus linguistics, cross linguistics, and critical discourse analysis, and it is a valuable contribution to development discourse studies of news reports. It should serve as a good guide and a valuable inspiration to students, scholars, and researchers interested in the discourse analysis of news reports, national identity and cross-linguistic corpus linguistics.

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Mapping digital game culture in China: From Internet addicts to esports athletes, by SZABLEWICZ MARCELLA, London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2020, €49.99 (*paperback*), 218 pp.

Mapping Digital Game Culture in China by Marcella Szablewicz examines the socio-economic and political changes in mainland China through discourses and affect in the digital game culture. The digital game culture is specific to the post-1980 and post-1990 generations, whose defining cultural features depart from the experiences of generations from the Maoist era. In this exploration of the two generations, Szablewicz maps a journey of continuities and discontinuities in the construction of the ideal Chinese citizen. The map shows how this ideal is “textured” by experiences associated with exposure to digital games, by playing games and creating the digital game culture, as well as by state approaches to regulating digital games and its culture. Moreover, Szablewicz contextualizes the uniqueness of the digital game culture in China against domestic politics as well as international experiences, particularly the affective aspect of digital media.

In Chapter 1, Szablewicz introduces the reasons for developing topographic research on the digital game culture based on ethnographic research and media