

A Study of American Media's Metaphorical Construction of China's Images—Taking Reports on PLA's Military Exercises in the Taiwan Strait as an Example

Zhu Ting

College of Foreign Studies, Guangxi Normal University, Guilin, Guangxi, 541006, China

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Abstract: News media often employ metaphorical strategies to create national images in their reports, but there are few researches on foreign media's construction of China's images in the military reports. By analyzing the metaphors in *The New York Times*' report on the PLA's military exercises in the Taiwan Strait, the image of China portrayed by these metaphors, and their causes, based on the theory of critical metaphor analysis, it was found that it mainly used metaphors such as conflicts, journeys, bodies, and constructions to stigmatize China as a country that flaunts its power and undermines regional peace. This is closely related to the history and culture inherent in U.S. military expansion, the fear of China taking over its status as the world's superpower, and the ideology of competitive individualism.

1. Introduction

National image, as a part of a country's soft power, is formed by both a country's self-perception and the others' perception (Boulding 1959:123). News media, as a way for people to obtain information, is an important medium to construct national images. Metaphor, as a discourse strategy, is widely used in news reports to convey authors' attitudes and construct images. From the perspective of critical metaphor analysis, metaphor is a discourse choice that can reflect the ideology of authors and have persuasive functions towards readers (Charteris Black 2004:41). Therefore, metaphorical strategies used by media in news discourses are crucial in shaping national images and worthy of study. Researches on the discourse construction of China's images from this perspective are still in its infancy. Besides, previous studied discourses are mainly on politics and economics, but seldom on military. Therefore, studies of China's images in foreign media's military discourses need developing.

From August 4th to 7th in 2022, Chinese People's Liberation Army (PLA) conducted military exercises in the Taiwan Strait against US House Speaker Pelosi's illegal visit to Taiwan, which has attracted a sea of new reports where various metaphors show authors' attitudes and construct certain China's images. Therefore, the current study analyzes metaphors of *The New York Times*' related reports and the created China's images by the quantitative-and-qualitative analysis research method based on the critical metaphor analysis theory. The study is not only conducive to enriching the practical application of critical metaphor analysis and providing ideas for researches on the discourse

construction of national images, but also helps strengthen Chinese media's awareness of national images' discourse construction and enhancing China's international influence.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Critical Metaphor Analysis

Traditionally, metaphor is a decorative language that can only convey emotions (Zheng Yinfang 2009:37). But with the development of cognitive linguistics, scholars realize cognitive properties of metaphors. Lakoff and Johnson (1980:153) proposed the conceptual metaphor theory, contending that metaphors widely exist in human language as a way of thinking and cognitive activity where people use the experience of one conceptual domain A to understand or explain another conceptual domain B. The process of the source domain A acting on the target domain B is called mapping, a projection from metaphorical cognition to ontological cognition.

Later, scholars find that the theory ignores the motivations behind their usage. Charteris-Black (2004:34-41) believes that metaphor is a discourse choice that can reflect the ideology of metaphor users and change metaphor readers' opinions. In order to confirm this view, he proposes the critical metaphor analysis based on critical discourse analysis and Lakoff and Johnson's (1980) conceptual metaphor theory and employs it to analyze discourses on political, religious, etc., revealing metaphors' pragmatic roles in discourses. His model includes three steps: 1) Metaphor identification---identifying metaphors and their distribution by identifying candidate metaphors, metaphor keywords and classifying and counting tokens of keywords; 2) Metaphor interpretation---analyzing the mapping mechanism of metaphors from the perspectives of cognition; 3) Metaphor explanation---analyzing the relationship between metaphors and authors' ideology from a socio-cultural perspective (Charteris Black 2004:48-51). Afterwards, domestic and foreign scholars constantly develop the theory (such as Koller 2005; Koller 2014), conducting researches of literature review (such as Chen Linlin 2018; Xun Changpeng and Guan Xinchao 2022) and applied researches mostly (such as Zibin, A 2022; Patterson, KJ 2022). In terms of discourse themes, foreign researches analyze discourses on diverse themes like politics, economy, military, culture, sports, religion, law, immigration, etc. (such as Yu, DN 2020; Chiu, SH&Chiang, WY 2011). However, domestic researches mainly focus on politics (such as Wu Jianguo et al., 2022) and economics (such as Fang Mengting, 2021), but seldom on military, religious, and laws.

2.2 China's Image

China's image is a combination of China's self-perception and the perception of others as an important component of China's soft power. With the development of China's international influence, the construction of China's image has become a research hotspot. Early related researches are mainly conducted at the macro level, focusing on the strategic planning of China's image. For example, Han Yuan (2006:31) believed that China needs to promote a "peaceful rising power" image and upgrade its construction and publication as a systematic project. Currently, researches are mainly conducted at the micro level, showing two trends. First, the translation turn. Scholars mainly study the relationship between the foreign translation of Chinese promotional cultural products such as literary works, international news and the construction of the national images. For instance, Luo Zheng (2022) studies the rationality and specific paths of constructing overseas China's images in literary translation from the language perspective that both iconography and literary translation rely on each other. Second, discourse turn. Scholars mainly use theories and methods from cognitive linguistics, critical discourse analysis to analyze the construction of China's images in discourses. For example, Wang Hui and Xin Bin (2019) analyze metaphors used by American media's reports on America's

withdrawal from TPP and China's images constructed by metaphors by the critical metaphor analysis theory.

Although domestic and foreign scholars have made some achievements in this field, there are still some shortcomings. Firstly, previous researches mainly focus on politics, economics, but rarely on military. Secondly, previous researches mainly adopt the qualitative analysis method and their conclusions are relatively subjective. Therefore, this study analyses metaphors of *The New York Times*' reports on PLA's military exercises in the Taiwan Strait and the China's images constructed by them and its causes by the quantitative-and-qualitative analysis research method based on the critical metaphor analysis theory.

3. Research Design

3.1 Data Collection and Processing

This study takes *the New York Times*' reports on PLA's military exercises in the Taiwan Strait as corpus. *The New York Times* is a daily medium which publishes newspaper worldwide with good credibility and authority (Luo Chunxia, 2014). Specifically, this study searches related reports from August 2, 2022 (PLA announced its military exercise plans on that day) to September 2, 2022 (one month after the end of the military exercise) by the keywords "People's Liberation Army" and "military exercises/drills" in *the New York Times* database of the Lexis-nexis news database. After a second check by researchers, 20 texts were collected, totaling 27478 words.

3.2 Research Questions

This study aims to answer the following questions:

- (1) What metaphors does *The New York Times* mainly use in their reports on PLA's military exercises in the Taiwan Strait?
- (2) What China's images does it construct by these metaphors?
- (3) Why dose it create these images?

3.3 Research Method

This study identifies, interprets and explains metaphors in the corpus by the research method of quantitative-and-qualitative analysis. First, we categorized the candidate metaphors with metaphorical meaning as metaphorical keywords by carefully reading the text. Second, we used the corpus analysis software AntConc4.0.10 to locate and count the metaphorical keywords, and identified the keywords with metaphorical meanings by using the metaphor recognition program MIPVU proposed by G.J. Steen et al. (2010). Third, we categorized the extracted keywords and calculated the resonance value of each type of metaphor (resonance value = total number of metaphorical keywords * total number of keyword occurrences). Fourth, we analyzed the mapping process between metaphors with high resonance values and the constructed image of China. Finally, the reasons for the constructed image in American media are analyzed from a socio-cultural perspective.

4. Results and Discussion

4.1 Metaphorical Strategy in *The New York Times*' Reports

As shown in Table 1, there are 12 kinds of metaphors in the corpus.

Table 1: Metaphor Statistics of the Corpus

Metaphorical Type	Number of Metaphorical Keywords	Token	Percentage of Source Domain's Resonance Value
Conflict Metaphor	90	689	54.55%
Journey Metaphor	67	347	20.45%
Body Metaphor	78	218	14.96%
Construction Metaphor	51	125	5.61%
Stage Metaphor	21	55	1.02%
Energy Metaphor	28	60	1.48%
Animal Metaphor	18	32	0.51%
Competition Metaphor	12	41	0.43%
Plant Metaphor	11	40	0.39%
Study Metaphor	11	40	0.39%
Circle Metaphor	5	39	0.17%
Money Metaphor	6	9	0.05%
Total	398	1695	100.00%

Several metaphorical strategies are utilized in the corpus. First, high metaphorical density. This study identifies 398 metaphorical keywords with a frequency of 1695, indicating that 616.9 words in every 10000 words have metaphorical meaning. Second, diverse metaphorical types, including 12 kinds of metaphor such as conflict metaphor, journey metaphor. Finally, extremely uneven metaphor distribution. The resonance values of the metaphors of conflict, journey and body accounted for 86.96% while the resonance values of the other nine metaphors accounted for only 10.04%.

4.1.1 Conflict Metaphor

Conflict serves as a basic schema for people to understand the world and thus conflict metaphors are widely used in human language (Wang Hui, Xin Bin, 2019: 34). The military is a formal armed organization of a country or a region to preserve its political objectives and is highly related to conflict. Therefore, there are numerous conflict metaphors in this corpus.

As Table 2 shows, *The New York Times* use conflict metaphors whose source domains are attack, defense, etc with attack metaphors accounting for the highest proportion at 71.11%. By these metaphors, it stigmatizes China as the instigator of disputes and conflicts, Taiwan, the US and Japan as victims of conflicts and advocates of peace and democracy. PLA's military exercises and the ban on Taiwan's agricultural and fishery products are regarded as offensive behaviors towards Taiwan. The disruption of peace in the Asia Pacific region is seen as a consequence of the drills.

1) But the People's Liberation Army trains for a blockade that "would be violent and would generate a lot of international costs," Mr. Saunders said. In that scenario, China could use a blockade to support an attempt at a full invasion. That step could unleash a potentially protracted and devastating conflict, as well as a major international backlash against China that would bring it economic damage and political isolation. (*The New York Times*, 2022-09-02)

2) Even if imminent conflict is unlikely, the exercises are putting the region on edge. And tensions could dangerously escalate, especially if something goes wrong, with the missiles landing near Japan seen as a message that China could hit the U.S. forces stationed there and intended as a warning to the government in Tokyo of the cost of its American alliance. (*The New York Times*, 2022-08-03)

3) It is even more complicated by the continuing debate over how to help Taiwan become a "porcupine," or a country too well defended for China to invade. For all the talk of F-16 sales to Taiwan -- its fleet is supposed to top 200 of the fighter aircraft by 2026 -- there is growing worry that Taiwan is buying the wrong kind of gear to defend itself, and that it needs to learn some lessons from Ukraine. (*The New York Times*, 2022-08-04)

Table 2: Statistics of Conflict Metaphors

Type of Source Domain	Number	Percentage	Metaphorical Keywords and Their Frequency
Attack	64	71.11%	crisis(40)\conflict(33)\tensions(31)\invasion(28)\attack(21)\ warning(18)\warned(16)\ weapons(13)\ risk(12)\ pressure(11)\confrontation(11)\strike(11)\ invade(8)\risky(8)\ assault(8)\ escalate(7)\fight(7)\ intimidate(6)\deterrent(6)\hit(6)\escalation(6)\ intervention(5)\combat(5)\warnings(4)\ intimidating(4)\challenge(4)\cyberattacks(4)\threatening(4)\escalating(4)\clash(4)\ven geance(4)\warn(3)\ expand(3)\expanded(3)\offensive(3)\intensify(3)\shoot down(3)\ dispute(3)\ retaliate(3)\struggle(2)\ dispute(3)\provocations(2)\provocative (2)\ retaliation(2)\trigger(2)\ incursion(2)\coerce(2)\strikes(2)\ struck(2)\ weapon(2)\backlash(2)\cyberwarfare(2)\ contention(2)\ threat(2)\threaten(2)\threatened(2)\opened fire(2)\fighting(2)\clashes(1)\ escalatory(1)\triggered(1)\challenges(1)\intruded(1)\ harassment(1)
Defense	6	6.67%	defense(78)\defend(13)\ defending(5)\defended(2)\ defiance(2)\safeguard(1)
Strategy	7	7.78%	unification(32)\strategic(22)\strategy(20)\unifying(5)\unify(5)\ unified(4)\tacit(1)
Involver	9	10%	force(45)\ alliance(8)\allies(6)\ enemy(4)\opponents(4)\rally(2)\rallies(1)\ rivals(2)\enemies(1)
Consequence	4	4.44%	wins(3)\winning(3)\lost(1)\fail(1)
Total	90	100%	

In the example [1], *The New York Times* regards the military exercise as an aggressive move of Chinese mainland towards Taiwan, believing that it is full of violence. In the example [2], it utilizes conflict metaphors to indicate the offensiveness of the exercise, contending that it is not only a counterattack against Pelosi’s visit to Taiwan, but also a warning against the US and Japan. In the example [3], it uses the conflict metaphors to depict Chinese mainland as the initiator of offensive behaviors, Taiwan as the victim and the defender, and US and Japan as advocates of peace and democracy. To sum up, it has created a negative China’s image by conflict metaphors---a nation with increasing military power poses a threat to regional peace. It is undoubtedly a smear of China’s images and is greatly different from China’s actual images of safeguarding its national territory and sovereignty, maintaining world peace and stability by military modernization.

4.1.2 Journey Metaphor

Table 3: Statistics of Journey Metaphors

Type of Source Domain	Number	Proportion	Metaphorical Keywords and their Frequency
Path	8	11.95%	Line(20)\way(14)\access(8)\ways(7)\ path(2)\approach(2)\ route(4)\paves(1)
Obstacle	11	16.42%	blockade(40)\block(9)\avoid(7)\ standoff(3)\ avoided(2)\ blocking(2)\ thwart(1)\thwarted(2)\encounter(2)\encountered(2)\noose(1)
Speed	8	11.95%	accelerate(6)\ slow(6)\fast(6)\fast-moving(2)\drag down(1)\accelerating(2)\ slowdown(2)\stepping up(1)
Direction	8	11.95%	conduct(5)\forward(4)\direction(3)\conducting(3)\guided(2)\directed(2)\outwar d(1)\ guiding(1)
Objective	10	14.93%	plans(11)\reached(8)\goal(6)\target(5)\ achieved(3)\goals(4)\purposes(2)\purpose(2)\planed(2)\aimed at(2)
Development	3	4.48%	advanced(6)\rolling(1)\advancing(1)
Pace	10	14.93%	step(12)\ action(11)\actions(11)\ move(7)\moving(6)\steps(6)\doorstep(3)\ apace(2)\astride(2)\preparations(3)
Place	6	8.96%	point(21)\end(13)\position(5)\start(4)\started(3)\ended(2)
Total	67	100%	

Journey is a purposeful activity along a path to a destination and is metaphorical. Its starting point, traveler etc. can be source domains of journey metaphors (Lakoff 1993:63). Therefore, there are

countless journey metaphors in the corpus.

As Table 3 shows, *The New York Times* use five types of journey metaphors where obstacle metaphors account for the highest proportion at 16.42%. By using these metaphors, it compares China's reunification to a journey, believing that both the military exercise and the ban on Taiwan's agricultural and fishery products are steps in this journey. However, it is not optimistic about China's performance during this journey, believing that Chinese mainland faces many obstacles, such as the development of the Taiwanese military.

1) "The attractiveness of the carrots in China's Taiwan policy -- economic inducements -- has now fallen to its lowest point since the end of the Cold War," said Wu Jieh-min, a political scientist at Academia Sinica, Taiwan's top research academy. "The card it holds presently is to raise military threats toward Taiwan step by step, and to continue military preparations for the use of force," he said, "until one day, a full-scale military offensive on Taiwan becomes a favorable option." (*The New York Times*, 2022-08-08)

2) The first step toward achieving that vision would be unification itself, and China has used its military exercises to flex its increasing ability to make that happen by force. Military jets have made dozens of incursions over the informal median line in the Taiwan Strait this month, and for the first time China launched missiles over the island. (*The New York Times*, 2022-08-16)

3) But even if China does not take the most potentially incendiary steps this time, experts and officials on the island worry that the operations could spark an incident -- a collision at sea or in the air, or a misfired missile -- that inflames tensions into a full-fledged crisis. (*The New York Times*, 2022-08-05)

In the example [4], *The New York Times* uses plant metaphors, journey metaphors and competition metaphors to compare the economic assistance to a carrot which is a negative temptation in Western culture and a journey, believing that it would end in failure. In the example [5], it utilizes journey metaphors and body metaphors to compare China's reunification to a journey, believing that the military exercise is a step of it and viewing Chinese mainland as a man who shows off its strength. In the example [6], it uses metaphors of journey, energy and animal to compare the military exercises, regional conflicts and crisis to a step in the journey, fire and bird, arguing that this event would exacerbate regional conflicts. In summary, it constructs a negative China's image---a nation that conducts economic temptations and military exercises against Taiwan to achieve reunification, threatens Taiwan and US and Japan and disrupts regional peace. This is undoubtedly a stigmatization to Chinese mainland and the military exercise is a legitimate move to safeguard China's national territorial sovereignty.

4.1.3 Body Metaphor

Body is a basic schema for people to understand the world and its parts, personalities and attitudes are commonly used as source domains of body metaphors. As shown in Table 4, body metaphors are widely used in this corpus.

As Table 4 shows, *The New York Times* frequently use body metaphors and behavior metaphors account for the largest proportion at 50%. By these metaphors, it respectively compare Chinese mainland and Taiwan to an ambitious strong man and a tenacious defensive weak man and views the military exercise as China's display of strength and ambition.

1) Culture, Family and Troops: China Lays Out Its Vision for Taiwan. Beijing has seized on the tensions over Taiwan, further fanned by a meeting between five U.S. lawmakers and the island's president, to push a far-reaching vision for unification. (*The New York Times*, 2022-08-16)

2) The latest drills indicated that Beijing might be seeking to normalize its military's presence around Taiwan, allowing Chinese forces to practice imposing a slow squeeze on the island that involves cutting off much of the access to its airspace and waters. China's announcement came a day

after its military wrapped up 72 hours of exercises encircling Taiwan, effectively simulating a blockade. During those drills, China sent at least 11 missiles into seas north, south and east of Taiwan, and it deployed warships and fighter jets to swarm the island. (*The New York Times*, 2022-08-09)

3) China Sees Information as a Key Battleground. In a real conflict to seize Taiwan, China would also seek to control the information landscape. It could use propaganda, disinformation, cyberwarfare and other tools in the hope of drumming up support at home and sowing fear and discord in Taiwan and across the world. (*The New York Times*, 2022-09-02)

4) In the example [7], *The New York Times* uses metaphors of body, journey and energy to respectively compare Chinese mainland, China’s reunification and the conflict in the Taiwan Strait to a man, a journey and fire, believing that Chinese mainland plans to reunify the country by three major means---culture, kinship and military. In the example [8], it uses metaphors of body, circle and animal to compare Chinese mainland, the Chinese fighter team and their tour to a person, insects and circles, believing that the military exercise threaten Taiwan by cutting off it’s ties with the outside world. In the example [9], it uses metaphors of body, war and plant respectively compared Chinese mainland, the network information field and the panic and discontent to a person, a battlefield or a stage and plants, arguing that the exercise leads to panic and discontent. To sum up, it stigmatizes China as a powerful but highly aggressive nation who threatens regional peace. This is highly inconsistent with the fact that Chinese military modernization is conducive to maintaining China’s national sovereignty and territorial integrity and promoting world peace and development.

Table 4: Statistics of Body Metaphors

Type of Source Domain	Number	Proportion	Metaphorical Keywords and their Frequency
Body Part	25	32.05%	power(21)\ vision(11)\strength(9)\ appetite(4)\superpower(4)\backing(4)\sights(4)\arm(2)\arms(2)\ punch(2)\heads(2)\throat(2)\ heart(2)\impetus(2)\genie(1)\bodies(2)\sights(2)\ anger(2)\kneel(1)\preview(2)\ vision(11)\foretaste(1)\lip(1)\blood(1)\flex(1)\bloodlines(1)
Behavior	39	50%	squeeze(7)\punish(7)\seize(6)\embrace(4)\ushing(4)\hurt(4)\caught(3)\scra mble(3)\ foster(2)\fostering(2)\jolted(2)\ stands(2)\sit(2)\absorb(2)\choke off(2)\ push(2)\faltering(2)\ strengthening(2)\hurts(2)\ press(2)\nudging(2)\lies off(3)\eyed(2)\ brainwashed(2)\countdown(1)\ touched(1)\touching (1)\ choking off(1)\paralyze(1)\paralyzed(1)\wear (1)\ murmured(1)\ watch(1)\envisioned(1)\laid out(1)\spine(1)\posturing(1)\punching(1)\ weaken(1)
Personality and Attitude	3	3.85%	aggressive(11)\stubborn(2)\ assertive(1)
Body Condition	9	11.54%	powerful(11)\strong(9)\weak(2)\ puzzle(2)\spook(1)\irate(1)\robust(1)\ swaggeringly(1)\unwavering(1)
Interpersonal Relation	2	2.56%	child(1)\filial(1)
Total	78	100%	

4.1.4 Architecture Metaphor

Lakoff (1993:93) contends that there are many architecture metaphors in human language. A theory or an argument can be seen as an architecture. As shown in Table 5, architectural metaphors are widely used in this corpus.

As Table 5 shows, *The New York Times* mainly take architecture’s structure, process, and problems as the source domains of architecture metaphors with process metaphors accounting for the largest proportion at 47.06%. It compares China’s reunification, Chinese army’s modernization, and Chinese people to buildings and builders respectively, arguing that China has strengthened its military construction in order to achieve national reunification. But it is not optimistic about this cause, believing that China faces many difficulties, such as the development of Taiwanese military.

Table 5: Statistics of Construction Metaphors

Type of Source Domain	Number	Proportion	Metaphorical Keywords and their Frequency
Construction Structure	17	33.33%	top(13)\ key(10)\framework(5)\ bulwark(3)\bolt(2)\firewall(2)\side(4)\headroom(1)\edge(4)\ door(2)\window(2)\pillar(1)\foothold(1)\model(1)\echoing(1)\echo(1)\echoed(1)
Construction Process	24	47.06%	designed(13)\ buildup(8)\ heightened(3)\expanded(3)\heighted(3)\create(3)\harden(3)\expand(3)\heightening(3)\ framed(2)\strengthening(2)\upgraded(2)\ ramped up(2)\rising(2)\rise(2)\bolster(2)\deepen(2)\deepened(2)\narrows(2)\narrow(2)\built up(1)\ building up(1)\ enclosure(1)\reinforce(1)
Construction Problem	10	19.61%	damage(3)\collapsed(3)\ undermining(2)\destroy(1)\wreck(2)\obliterated(2)\eroding(2)\trespassing(1)\decimated(1)\shattered(1)
Total	51	100%	

1) Chinese state media has kept up a steady drumbeat of menacing messages. The official People’s Daily newspaper wrote on social media on Tuesday that people who play with fire will burn themselves, apparently echoing similar warnings issued by Chinese officials over the past year. (*The New York Times*, 2022-08-02)

2) China’s leader, has said that he hopes to secure eventual unification with Taiwan through peaceful steps. But like his predecessors, he has not ruled out force, and China’s military buildup has reached a point where some military commanders and analysts think an invasion is an increasingly plausible, though still highly risky, scenario. The exercises could help Chinese forces test their readiness for that. (*The New York Times*, 2022-08-04)

3) One concern, however, is that the fast-moving situation could lead to an accidental encounter that could spiral out of control. It remains to be seen whether and how Taiwan and the United States will respond to China’s actions. Taiwan’s defense ministry said in a statement that it would respond appropriately in time and accused China of unilaterally undermining regional peace and stability. (*The New York Times*, 2022-08-02)

In the example [10], *The New York Times* views Chinese mainland’s warnings to Pelosi as the echoes of a building by architecture metaphors and regards China’s reunification as a building. But it is not optimistic about this cause and uses stage metaphors to compare China’s declaration of safeguarding its national sovereignty as a threat signal to provoke regional disputes. In the example [11], it uses architecture metaphors and journey metaphors to compare Chinese military modernization to a building and a journey, believing that Chinese military has been developed to the point where it is highly likely to make a threat to the regional peace. In the example [12], it views the situation in the Taiwan Strait as a journey, arguing that the current situation is unpredictable and worrisome. It also cites Taiwan authorities’ words where regional peace and stability is compared to a building and believes that the drills disrupt the regional peace. In summery, it maliciously portray China as a nation that threatens regional peace and stability. China’s military exercises are legitimate moves to safeguard its national sovereignty.

4.2 China’s Images Constructed by *The New York Times*

As shown in Table, it is found that most of metaphorical keywords presented negative meanings and China’s images constructed by them tend to be negative.

As Table 6 shows, *The New York Times* mainly portray China’s negative images by nine kinds of metaphors. In their reports, China is maliciously depicted as a nation that threatens Taiwan and the US-Japan alliance by showing off her strong military strength and provoke regional disputes and conflicts. It is undoubtedly a smear to China’s images, which greatly damages China’s image as a

great power that loves peace and pursues cooperation.

Table 6: China’s images Constructed by American Media by Metaphors

Metaphorical Type	Semantic Prosody	China’s Images
Conflict Metaphor	Negative	An aggressor attempting to provoke disputes
Journey Metaphor	Negative	A traveler with the goal of national reunification
Body Metaphor	Negative	A man who flaunts her own power
Construction Metaphor	Negative	A destroyer of regional peace and stability
Stage Metaphor	Negative	A ringer of the adversarial bell against Taiwan
Energy Metaphor	Negative	An instigator of regional conflicts
Competition Metaphor	Negative	The greatest competitor of the US
Plant Metaphor	Negative	A seeder of panic and discontent
Circle Metaphor	Negative	A blocker surrounding Taiwan
Money Metaphor	Negative	The loss maker of international interests

4.3 Causes of Negative China’s Images Construed by *The New York Times*

The reasons for *The New York Times*’ construction of negative China’s images can be studied from the perspective of Orientalism. Orientalism is a theory which divides all countries into the Oriental camp with developing countries such as China and underdeveloped countries and the Occidental camp with developed countries such as Britain and the US. It believes there are ontological differences between these two camps---“traditional vs modern”, “barbaric vs civilized” and “left-behind vs advanced”. But actually, it is a biased interpretation against the Oriental. (Said 1979:157-159). Oriental Transcendentalism rooted in American ideology widely exists in the American history and culture and greatly affects American people’s understanding of their own interests.

Firstly, the construction of China’s negative images in *The New York Times*’s reports is closely related to Western countries’ historical culture. From the 16th to the 18th century, Western countries partly promote the rise of European and American powers by overseas military expansion and forms a conception that military expansion is a must for the rise of a great power. Deeply influenced by it, Western countries find it difficult to understand China’s Peaceful Development Strategy. Instead, they tend to believe that Chinese military modernization was full of threats and would invite conflicts and disputes and even undermine world peace and stability.

Secondly, the construction of negative China’s images is also associated with American media’s maintenance of its national benefits. After World War II, the US becomes the world’s only superpower. But with the rise of China, it begins to worry that China would replace its position and thus propagates the so-called “China Threat”. American media are mouthpieces of their government and are likely to help their government stigmatize China (Qian Liyong 2013:41).

Finally, the competitive individualism embraced by American is the root of the construction of negative China’s images. The US advocates individualism and emphasizes ambition and competition. Individualism and competitiveness can form competitive individualism which brings about a conception of surpassing others, which probably lead interpersonal relationships towards opposition. This confrontation is true of international relationships (Rolo May 2010:153). This ideology makes some American medium tarnish China’s images.

5. Conclusion

News media often employ metaphor strategies to construct images and propagate national images. The current study analyzes metaphors, China’s images constructed by those metaphors and its causes in *The New York Times*’ reports on PLA’s military exercises in the Taiwan Strait by the method of

quantitative-and-qualitative analysis based on the critical metaphor analysis theory. It is found that it mainly uses 12 kinds of metaphors. The distribution of metaphors is extremely uneven with conflict metaphors, journey metaphors, body metaphors and architecture metaphors accounting for the majority. By these metaphors, it maliciously portrays China as a threat maker who flaunts its power, an aggressor who attempts to provoke disputes, and a destroyer of regional peace. The construction of these negative images is closely related to the American conception that military expansion is a must for the rise of great powers, its anxiety of China replacing its position as superpower and its ideology of competitive individualism. Chinese media should optimize their discourse strategies to counter foreign media's smear of China's images and actively publicize China's images as a great power that loves peaceful development and pursues win-win cooperation in the world.

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