

Analyzing Quotations in News Reporting from Western Foreign Press: Focusing on Evaluative Language

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Abstract

This study explores evaluative linguistic expressions in news reporting about the 2016 general election outcome in Korean newspapers. In particular, we have examined the evaluative linguistic expressions quoted from the three Western news media -New York Times, Washington Post, and BBC, both quantitatively and qualitatively in Korean news stories in order to know how journalists frame the news stories to persuade news consumers to accept their ideologies. This is based on the assumption that quotation can be a tool in conveying ideologies to news consumers (van Dijk, 1988, Jullian, 2011). To achieve this purpose, we selected ten Korean newspapers which included quotations from the news stories of the three Western media and then analyzed the quoted expressions quantitatively and qualitatively. For a qualitative analysis, evaluative linguistic expressions were analyzed to examine the journalistic stances of the Western news stories, following Martin's (2003) appraisal theory. For a quantitative analysis, a word frequency analysis was conducted to figure out the ratio of quoted words to the whole news texts in Korean newspapers. As a result, it was found that the news stories of BBC and Washington Post were more frequently quoted than that of New York Times when journalists conveyed neutral or positive attitude to the election outcome, thus confirming that evaluative linguistic expressions were functionally employed to convey journalists' ideologies or stances to news readers.

Keywords: *news text, evaluative language, the 2016 general election, Western news media, quotation*

1. Introduction

In the digital age, an increasing number of quotations are used in news discourse. A specific event in one country – high oil price, accidental deaths, general elections, and so forth – is quickly transmitted to other countries. During the process, the source text in one country might undergo some textual changes. Reasons vary: cultural divergence, different text conventions, the quality of source texts, and others might influence

the process. However, what if journalists select the source texts purposefully to persuade news consumers to accept their ideologies? It is possible that journalists frame news stories by selecting the content of the source texts to convey their ideologies to readers (Bell, 1991; van Dijk, 1988). Here the selection in the content of the source texts is made by linguistic expressions, called evaluative language. Then, we can assume that quotations have evaluative power because language in quotations delivers ideologies to news consumers, where the piece of news is ideologically loaded.

Given this, the paper explores the evaluative power of quotations in news stories about 2016 general election outcome in South Korea mainly by looking at the evaluative linguistic expressions in the news texts of ten Korean newspapers which included the source texts from three Western news media – the New York Times, Washington Post, and BBC. This study examines two things: First, evaluative linguistic expressions are analyzed. Since the expressions are the key words in the new stories, it was reasonable to analyze them in examining whether they convey negative, neutral, or positive attitude to the 2016 general election in South Korea within the framework of Martin's (2003) appraisal theory. Second, a word frequency analysis is conducted by counting the quoted words from news stories of the three western media to know the frequency of quotations in delivering Korean journalists' ideology to news consumers.

2. Quotations

Quotations have largely two types. One is a direct quotation which is a report of the same words of an author, whereas an indirect quotation is to paraphrase someone's words. That is, it reports an issue or an event on what an author said without requiring the reporter to use the exact words of the author.

Quotations are much discussed with two terms in journalism: authority and credibility (van Dijk, 1988). It indicates that by using quotations, a reporter can deliver his stance, retaining the 'authorship' but avoiding 'responsibility for what is said. That is, quotations give credibility to the reporting, to give preference to the story, and to deliver different views of the events to readers (van Dijk, 1998; Fairclough, 1995; Jullian, 2011).

However, quotations have little attention in their evaluative power in news discourse (Bell, 1991; Jullian, 2011). News stories are heavily affected by the media which report the stories (Entman, 1988; Bell, 1991; Reese, 2001). From the perspective, the selection of events, the sources, the writing style, the headlining and others might be ideologically framed. Then, quotations can be used in the framing process. Thus, these arguments lead us easily assume that quotations can be strategically used as a powerful resource for journalists to convey their ideologies (van Dijk, 1988; Fairclough, 1995).

3. Evaluative power in News Texts

Martin's (2003)'s appraisal theory assume that language is used to evaluate, appraise and classify objects and people by showing subjective attitudes toward them. In his theoretical framework, the types of evaluation are divided into three elements: *Attitude*, *Graduation* and *Effect*. Simply, attitude is about linguistic expressions which convey feeling about a certain event. Graduation is related with the linguistic expressions which emphasize or reduce feeling about a certain event. Effect is about the linguistic expressions focusing on the effect of a certain event on any relevant outcome. However, in this paper, the two key elements, *attitude* and *graduation*, which are relevant for the purpose of this study, are used. Attitude deals with the expression of feeling and include two sub-elements: *affect* and *judgment*: *affect* refers to the explicit expression of positive or negative feeling, as in (1a), whereas *judgment* concerns social esteem

and ethical evaluations, as in (1b). Note that affect is of great importance especially in evaluative language because the explicit expression of bad or good feeling is a barometer for the measurement of one's preference.

- (1) a. I am sad, gloomy and angry
 b. Politicians behave honestly; He is a respectable person.

Graduation refers to linguistic expressions for emphasizing or reducing one's feeling toward an issue. However, since the expressions do not have intrinsic values, the values are determined in context. In general, intensifiers such as *real*, *very*, *true*, *greatly*, and *slightly* are attached to words, making one expression stronger or weaker in meaning than other expressions, as in (2). However, in this study, graduation will be taken into account only when it is combined with the scope of an evaluative span of attitude.

- (2) a. He is really capricious but reserved.
 b. He is very aggressive, but little angry.

Then, let's take a look at framing in news texts. It has been said that news is not neutral, but subjective (van Dijk, 1988; Bell, 1991). This laid groundwork for the emergence of framing, a model for 'understanding the media's role in political life' (Reese, 2001). Gamson argued that a news frame is a basic idea for making sense of relevant events and suggesting what is at issue' (Gamson, 1989). Similarly, Entman (1988) emphasized that framing was to select some aspects of an event and made them more salient in news text. Interpretive journalism also allows for journalists' interrupting in news reporting. Evaluative language refers to linguistic expressions which express a subjectivity of a speaker or a writer. So, technically speaking, it is the linguistic expressions which drive readers to accept, or acknowledge the opinions and attitudes in the news discourse. Thus, as mentioned above, if inclusion of quotations is one of journalism practices in framing news stories, it is no doubt reasonable to carefully examine the linguistic expressions used in quotations.

4. Methods and Findings

This study examines the evaluative language in quotations in news stories representing ideologies towards the event of the 2016 general election in South Korea. We selected ten news stories in Korean newspapers, all of which included quotations from three Western news media – New York Times, Washington Post, and BBC. The source texts of three news media were three news stories: 'Party of South Korean's President loses majority in parliament' (April 14, 2016, New York Times), 'South Korean elections: President Park's party loses majority' (April 14, 2016, BBC), and 'South Korean President is dealt a setback at the polls, ushering a stalemate' (April 14, 2016, Washington Post). However, before analyzing the quotations in the Korean news stories, we examined the main content of the source texts of Western media by analyzing evaluative linguistic expressions, in order to understand the journalistic stances of the news stories to the election outcome in South Korea.

4.1 Foreign News Media: The General Elections in South Korea

The three news stories- the New York Times, Washington Post, and BBC- all reported that the election outcome in South Korea was unexpected, against the general assumption that the ruling party, Saenuri,

would comfortably win the opposition parties to secure a majority: the ruling party won 122 seats for the 300 member National Assembly, thus being the first ruling party without a majority in 16 years, giving the opposition party 123 seats. All three media used a responsibility frame, so the news stories focused on who or what was responsible for the result: the news story from the NYT (the NYT story) blamed the results for President Park and her party, whereas the news stories from WP (the WP story) and BBC (the BBC story) mainly accused the outcome of weak economy or deteriorating labor market, but reported that the nuclear threat from North Korea or national security was not related with the election outcome. BBC also pointed out that hardline policies against protesters and dissidents was another reason for the outcome.

In this analysis, we used key words in evaluating the election outcome. It was counted as negative if the words denoted a negative stance to an entity. For example, the words such as *lame-duck*, *very divisive*, *hardline policy against dissidents*, *suppress* were analyzed as negative. However, the words such as *rising housing debt*, *rising unemployment*, *economic downturn* are counted as neutral because they do not convey a certain ideology, but report a current economic state of South Korea. In comparing the news stories from NYT from those from the others, it was clear that the tone of the NYT was more negative toward Korean government and her government party than the other two. Both BBC and WP took negative (or less negative) stances to the election outcome. Explicitly, the news stories reported that the election outcome reflected voters' concerns over South Korea's economic state, as follows:

- 3 a. The result shows the rejection of her style of governance (Apr.14, the NYT)
- b. The weak economy has been voter's top concern (Apr.14, WP)
- c. The economy has seen rising unemployment and high levels of household debt (Apr. 14, BBC).

Table 1. Distribution: Tone and Key Words

News Media	Tone	Keywords
NYT	Negative	<i>early lame duck,</i> <i>suppress the freedom</i> <i>of speech,</i> <i>protesters,</i> <i>dictatorship</i>
BBC	Neutral	<i>rising unemployment,</i> <i>economic downturn,</i> <i>rising household debt</i> <i>falling export</i>
WP	Neutral	<i>weak economy,</i> <i>voter turnout,</i> <i>jobless rate,</i> <i>people's party</i>
...		

The Table 2 shows the numbers of words and lines from each news story. As shown, it was found that the NYT news story was the longest one, being followed by the BBC news story, and the WP news story.

Table 2. News Stories from NYT, WP, and BBC

News Media	Words	Lines
NYT	646	83
WP	303	45
BBC	558	63

Given this, let us take a look at the percentage of words quoted from the original news texts (target texts) in their translated versions in corresponding Korean newspapers. As shown in Table 4, ten Korean newspapers were selected for the analysis. Here some formula need to be explained: the 'N of the words in ST' in the first column refers to the number of words of source texts; the 'N of the quoted words in target text (d./ind.)' in the second column refers to the number of words which were quoted either in direct quotations or in indirect quotations from the foreign three media in Korean news text and the two numbers in a parenthesis represent the percentages of directly quoted or indirectly quoted words in the whole Korean news story in each Korean newspaper: Table 4 shows that the three numbers under the NYT, WP and BBC represent the numbers of words quoted into the translated text from the source text, respectively. For example, the first line shows that in the newspaper A, the source text consisted of a total of 262 words, where 136 words (52%) and 14 words (5%) were used either in direct or indirect quotations and among 150 (136+14) words, 88 words (34%), 24 word (9%), and 38 words (14%) were quoted from the NYT story, the BBC story, and the WP story each.

Table 3. Word Frequency: Source Texts and Target Texts

	N. of words In ST	N. of quoted words In TT (d./ind.)(%)
A	262	136/14 (52/5)
B	226	14/66 (6/29)
C	199	43/0 (22/0)
D	306	104/15 (34/5)
E	551	181/55 (33/10)
F	231	0/79 (0/34)
G	163	46/0 (28/0)
H	191	46/0 (24/0)
I	269	56/12 (20/4)
J	321	38/15 (12/5)

A: Joongang Ilbo, B: Chosun Biz, C: Maeil Daily, D: Kyunghyang, E: Hangyere, F: Kookmin, G: Seoul Daily, H: Herald Biz, I: Money Today, J: Bridge Economy

Table 4. Word Frequency: Quoted Source Texts

	NYT (%)	BBC (%)	WP (%)
A	88(34)	24(9)	38(14)
B	0(0)	80(35)	0(0)
C	26(13)	0(0)	17(8)
D	37(12)	35(5)	37(12)
E	127(23)	65(12)	44(8)
F	66(29)	0(0)	13(6)
G	41(25)	0(0)	5(3)
H	41(21)	0(0)	5(3)
I	0(0)	67(25)	0(0)
J	18(6)	20(8)	15(2)

A: Joongang Ilbo, B: Chosun Biz, C: Maeil Daily, D: Kyunghyang, E: Hangyere, F: Kookmin, G: Seoul Daily, H: Herald Biz, I: Money Today, J: Bridge Economy

Through the word frequency analysis, direct quotations are found to be used more than indirect quotations. There was no exception. This follows the general journalism practice where journalists prefer direct to indirect quotations because direct quotations are more credible and authoritative than the other. Furthermore, it was also found that the source text from the NYT story was much more frequently used than those from the WP story and the BBC story. So, depending on the portion of the source texts in the whole news stories, the ten newspapers were categorized into three groups: negative, neutral and positive. Particularly, the newspapers A, E, F, G and H were categorized into negative, the newspaper B, I as positive, whereas C, D, J and neutral. It means that the group 'negative' used the NYT as their source much more than the group 'neutral'. This is based on the formula: if the percentage of the quoted words from the NYT story is higher than the combined percentage of the quoted words from the other stories, the newspaper is highly likely to have a negative feeling toward the Korean government. The newspapers, C, D, and J were categorized as neutral because they used the NYT as many as either the BBC story or the WP story. Finally, the newspapers B and I never used the NYT as a source, thus being categorized as positive.

But we did not further classify the newspapers in the same group in order to determine which newspaper has more or less positive, neutral, or negative stances to the election outcome, due to differences in length of each news story. For example, in the case of H, the total number (41) of quoted words consisting of its news story is, for example one third as many as that of the newspaper E (127), one half as many as that of the newspaper A (88), even though they are in the same group.

5. Conclusion

Quotations have a lot of functions in news texts. They give readers various opinions and perspectives, make news texts vivid and dynamic, and give credibility to readers. So, for news consumers, quotations have been regarded as reliable sources. However, a question arises when the quoted words or sentences convey a certain ideology to news consumers who read the translated versions of original news stories. This motivates us to explore the evaluative power of quotations. In particular, we have analyzed the news texts quantitatively and qualitatively. For a qualitative purpose, we have focused on evaluative linguistic

expressions because ideological conveyance should involve lexicons carrying what Martin (2003) calls *Attitude* (*affect* and *judgement*). For a quantitative purpose, we analyzed the Korean news stories by counting the key words quoted from foreign news stories. To conclude, it was found that the news stories of BBC and Washington Post were more frequently quoted than that of New York Times when journalists conveyed neutral or positive attitude to news consumers, whereas the news stories of New York Times was more frequently quoted than those of BBC and Washington Post when journalists delivered negative attitude to news consumers. It implies that evaluative linguistic expressions were effective in expressing journalists' ideologies or stances in news reporting and in persuading news consumers to accept the ideologies implicit in the news stories. Lastly, this paper has some drawbacks in that it analyzed ten Korean news stories only within specific dates. We did not include other types of stories, such as opinion columns, interview stories, in-depth articles, and so on because our main purpose was to examine the quotation of the foreign news stories. We hope that this case study would give some clues to those who want to study the intercommunication between language and news discourse.

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