

# MALAYSIAN FLIGHT MH370 REPORTS: A CRITICAL DISCOURSE ANALYSIS

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## Abstract

The disappearance of Malaysian Airlines flight MH370 has been a controversial topic in the news media since March 8th 2014. This study aims to investigate how Chinese and Malaysian news reporting of this event differs in the stances and actions that emerge in their reporting of the same issue in their news articles. In this paper, I analyse aspects of the discourse features that emerged during the investigation of the accident of Malaysian flight MH370. In so doing I illustrate the different types of ideologies that emerge in the media from these two countries. The data are derived from two popular Chinese and Malaysian online newspapers: *China Daily* and *The Star*. I examine 18 articles and reports, nine articles from each newspaper. These articles are collected over the period of a year since its disappearance. This paper uses aspects of Scollon's (1998, 2001) mediated discourse analysis of news reporting on MH370. As a theory and methodology of discourse analysis, mediated discourse analysis enables us to examine the hidden ideologies and power relations in language, culture and society through an emphasis on the actions that people take.

**Keywords:** Critical Discourse Analysis, Malaysia Airline flight MH370, news discourse, action, ideology, language, culture and society

## Introduction

Mass media plays an important part in transmitting information in modern society. News media, as a kind of mass media, are crucial presenters of culture, politics and social life. Meanwhile, along with the development of the internet, news reports have also achieved much progress in terms of internationalisation. For example, more and more of China's newspapers are establishing their own websites in order to attract online readers.

Malaysian Airlines Flight MH370 was a scheduled international passenger flight that disappeared on 8 March 2014 en route from Kuala Lumpur to. Contact was lost with the plane as it was flying over the sea between Malaysia and Vietnam. The aircraft was carrying 227 passengers. The investigation into the mysterious disappearance of the Malaysia Airlines flight MH370 has presented several rumors but the aircraft still remains missing after more than one year. Such a wide coverage of the situation regarding the search operation and its progress made daily news for several months. The reporting on this event involved people who come from different countries with potentially different agendas. It is those agendas that influence news discourse and reflect an underlying ideology (Gee, 1999).

Generally speaking, Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) studies society from a linguistic angle. It aims to discuss the ideology or the power hidden in the discourse, revealing how ideology and discourse interact with each other. As Threadgold (1986) points out, exploring the relationship between social meaning-making practices and language and ideology means engaging in the kind of research which involves not only a study of the socio-historical conditions in which subjects act and interact; an analysis of the conditions in which subjects are constructed in discourse and in which discourse is produced as received; but also a detailed discursive analysis of the text and an interpretation of that analysis. Such an analysis can then illustrate how meanings, systems of ideas and beliefs, ideologies, are constructed in discourse and function to maintain and transmit existing power relations. In other words, CDA is viewed as a linguistic and social analysis approach to expose the implicit ideologies and power relations in various kinds of discourses.

However, few researchers have focused on critical discourse analysis of the disaster news reports, especially those found in Chinese websites and compared them with foreign websites. According to Scollon (2001), language and action are intimately related. Mediated Discourse Theory looks into social relationships to see how the use of language is both a form of action in itself and is also indirectly related to all other forms of human action. As a result, this study tries to make a critical analysis of news reports on Malaysian flight MH370 in the *China Daily* and *The Star Online* (a Malaysian Newspaper). The two newspapers have covered various aspects of

actions, such as search and rescue operation, emotions of family members, and crisis management.

## Research questions

1. How do *China Daily* and *The Star Online* present the same issue in their news articles and reports in terms of the discourse features in relation to the accident of Malaysian flight MH370 ?
2. What ideologies are reflected in the articles in relation to Malaysian flight MH370 ?

## Literature Review

The section briefly introduces the related theories that have been adopted in this research: (1). Transitivity (2). Theme -Rheme structure (3). Cohesive devices (4). Scollon's Media Discourse Analysis.

### *Transitivity*

Transitivity is an important semantic system and embodies the *ideational function*. Halliday (2000 : 101) stated that transitivity is the function for people to describe realities in language. It describes the process involved and indicates the actors and circumstances in which they occur. There are six process: material (action, event), verbal, behavioral, mental (perception, affect, cognition), existential and relational processes (attribution, identification).

### *Theme -Rheme structure*

In Systematic functional grammar, the Theme - Rheme system is to realize the textual metafunction which is defined as the linguistic components that are constructed into text. There are sub - systems in textual metafunction, namely, thematic system information system and cohesive system. In this study, I will focus on thematic system and cohesive system.

According to Halliday, the theme refers to the elements which serve as the point of departure of the message. The remainder of the message, or the part in which the theme is developed, is called the rheme (Halliday , 2000 : 37) In short, sentences can be divided into the theme and the rheme according to the textual function. There are unmarked theme and marked theme. In a clause a theme that is conflated with subject is said to be the

unmarked theme. If a clause is something other than the subject it is referred to as a marked theme. In general, the unmarked themes are usually adopted as starting points. However, the speaker can choose marked themes in order to emphasize certain aspects of the message.

### *Cohesive devices*

The concept of cohesion is a semantic one and refers to relations of meaning existing within a text. According to Halliday and Hasan (1976 : 270), cohesive devices consist of reference, ellipsis, substitution, conjunction and lexical cohesion. In this study, I will focus on reference and ellipsis.

In Halliday's model of cohesion, the term is used when a participant or circumstantial element is introduced at one point in the text and can be taken as a reference point for something that follows. In addition, reference may serve as a basis for comparison. Halliday (1994) summarizes three types of reference : personal, demonstrative, and comparative reference.

Ellipsis is another cohesive device that is used when words are omitted but the phrase is repeated. Like all cohesive agencies, ellipsis contributes to the semantic structure of discourse, but unlike reference, ellipsis sets up a relationship that is not semantic but lexicogrammatical - a relationship in the wordings rather than directly in the meaning (Halliday, 2000 :34).

### *Scollon's Media Discourse Analysis*

Scollon (2001) developed MDA as a response to theories of discourse that focus on text and changed the unit of analysis from texts themselves to action. As an example of this shift from text to action he sought to understand how toddlers learn the various meanings for the physical action of handing an object to another. For example, handing money to a cashier means something different than handing a birthday present to a friend. The first action results in a bi-directional exchange of goods while the second action is unidirectional with no object expected in return. Scollon (2001) views discourse analysis as social action or as Scollon and Scollon (2004: 470) states that for an engaged discourse analysis the most useful focus of our attention is human action rather than language or texts. In other words, mediated discourse analysis focuses on the mediated action (Wertsch, 1991,1998) rather than discourse itself.

Furthermore, mediational means, social actors and the sociocultural environment intersect at the real time moment of mediated action. Mediational means refer to the semiotic means through which mediated actions are conducted. In addition to the focus on mediated action, mediated discourse analysis also stresses the importance of social actors as they are acting, because 'these are the moments in social life when the discourses which we are interested in are instantiated in the social world as social action' (Scollon 2001: 3).

## Research Methodology

As previously indicated this study examines news coverage about the missing Malaysian airplane MH370 from *China Daily* in China and *The Star* in Malaysia. This study uses Halliday's Systemic - Functional Grammar as the theoretical basis and combines Scollon's mediated discourse analysis to analyse it. In the aspect of text, the researcher analyses the discourse features of the news' language from the perspective of transitivity, cohesion and coherence. In the aspect of social context, the study discusses the two countries' culture, society, economy and political system through an emphasis on the actions that people take, and the differences between the two countries thereby revealing to some extent the ideologies and the power relation hidden in the news reporting.

### *Data Collection and Analysis*

There are nine articles from each newspaper. These articles were collected from 8th March 2014 to 8th March 2015. The details of the articles and reports which include the titles of the texts, publication date and the source as follows :

*China Daily* (from China)

[http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/world/Malaysian-flight\\_12.html](http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/world/Malaysian-flight_12.html)

	Headlines	Date
1	Premier Li asks Malaysia to act quickly over missing plane	09/03/2014
2	Chinese premier asks for more detailed info on MH370	17/03/2014
3	Families express gratitude for all involved in search	01/04/2014
4	China is 'biggest spender' in search	09/04/2014
5	China urges continuous MH370 search	27/05/2014

	Headlines	Date
6	China-Malaysia friendship lasts forever	06/06/2015
7	Li urges collaboration on MH370	06/09/2014
8	Families refuse to accept MH370 statement	29/01/2015
9	China says MH370 search to continue	08/03/2015

*The Star* (from Malaysia)

<http://www.thestar.com.my/Topics/2014/03/08/Missing-MH370/pgno=84#>

	Headlines	Date
1	Missing MAS flight: Relatives staying positive for now	09/03/2014
2	Missing MH370 : Chinese families refuse to abandon hope	20/03/2014
3	MH370 search: No anger towards Malaysia, ties still strong says Chinese ambassador	02/04/2014
4	Ng: 30% of Chinese tourists cancel bookings to Malaysia	18/04/2014
5	MH370: One-child policy, burial rites among factors for Chinese nationals' outburst, says Nazri	28/04/2014
6	'Chinese tourists will return to Malaysia soon'	15/05/2014
7	Liow has no problems handling Flight MH370 case	28/06/2014
8	MH370 : Malaysia Airlines official statement	29/01/2015
9	Search for MH370 still continues	08/03/2015

The analysis focuses on particular discourse features of language use, including (1) transitivity (2) Theme - Rheme structure and (3) cohesive devices analysis as well as different kinds of ideologies embodied in the actions of news discourse.

### *Transitivity analysis in news reports*

Transitivity system construes the world of experience into a manageable set of process types (Halliday, 2004 : 170). The process types in the 18 samples have been analyzed and the frequency of the occurrence of process choices is illustrated in Table I

Table 1 The percentage of each process type in the samples

Process Type	The Star		China Daily	
	Number	Percentage (%)	Number	Percentage (%)
Material	106	44.54	160	56.94
Verbal	51	21.43	63	22.42
Relational	44	18.49	37	13.17
Mental	30	12.61	19	6.76
Existential	5	2.10	2	0.71
Behavioral	2	0.84	0	0.00
Total	238	100.00	281	100.00

In the 18 newspaper samples, material process occupies the major position and verbal process follows. It is not difficult to understand that the news agency reports news events that have just happened as material process reflects the 'doing', so the material process follows the expected discourse feature of news events. As for verbal process, the journalists quote what people have said or saying in the reporting. In these news reports, most of the people are relatives of the missing passengers and crew, foreign ministry spokesmen and national leaders of both countries. Relational process on the other hand helps readers to understand the news reports and to present the events in their background. However, mental processes seem to appear more frequently in the Malaysian reports, this may be part of the reflective process in an attempt to understand the events as they develop.

Table 2 Material processes in the sample from China Daily

	Actor	Action
Chinese government	we	have activated
	China	has dispatched
	we	to fully engage
	we	should continue to do
	China	would spend
	Beijing	to help deal with
	China	has sent
	China	stands ready to keep
	China	has offered
	China	has also deployed
Malaysian government	Malaysia	to provide
	Malaysia	to identify

	Malaysia	will work
	we (Malaysia)	could not have made so much progress
China and the Malaysia	the two countries	are trying to expand
	the two countries	to broader
	we	to make our best endeavours
Chinese relatives	we	are still waiting for
	we	also want to thank
	The families	have thanked

Table 2 shows the material processes in the samples from *China Daily*, and identifies 20 main actors which can be classified into four categories : Chinese government, Malaysian government, Chinese and Malaysian relatives. The Actors can be roughly divided according to the two concerned parties: China - related, Malaysia - related and two - community - related. An apparent contrast can be seen, as more than half of the actors are from China - related and only a few are Malaysia - related. Probing into the actions further, what Chinese government wants to do is clearly stated as in the following examples :

- 1) We have activated the emergency mechanism...
- 2) China has dispatched more than 10 specialized vessels to...
- 3) we should continue to do our utmost...
- 4) China would spend no less than any other nation...
- 5) China has also deployed several planes and 21 satellites for the mission...

The Chinese government seems to be determined to investigate and deal with the case by activating emergency mechanisms, dispatching vessels, spending large amounts of money and deploying planes and satellites to continue to search for the missing flight MH370. The Chinese are presented as ready to take active measures to deal with this event, even though Malaysian Airlines has the primary responsibility to search for the missing aircraft and compensate the families of the Chinese relatives.



Table 3 Material processes in the sample from The Star

	Actor	Action
Chinese Tourists	Close to 30% of Chinese tourists	have cancelled
	the abduction of a Chinese tourist	also contributed to
	Chinese tourists	will come back
	Chinese tourists	spent
	at least 10,000 of them	had cancelled
Chinese relatives	Zhao Chunzeng	declined to identify
	we	will still have to wait and see
	they	should know
	they	cannot conduct
	they	direct
Chinese government	The one-child policy in China	was enforced
Malaysian government	we	have to continue
	I (Liow)	will do
China and the Malaysia	China-Malaysia ties	will not be affected
	we	will remember
	we	will take

However, the reality represented in the samples from *The Star* is quite different. Table 3 has a list of Actors and associated processes in the samples from *The Star*. Again, the main Actors can be identified into five categories : Chinese tourists, Chinese relatives, China and the Malaysia, Malaysian government and Chinese government. As far as the two parties are concerned, China - related category includes Chinese tourists, Chinese relatives and Chinese government while Malaysia - related category has only Malaysian government. Admittedly, Malaysia - related also mentions the action to continue the search of missing M370 , due to their presumed responsibility. But more attention seems to be paid to the impact on the national economy and the effect on tourism.

- 6) Close to 30% of Chinese tourists have cancelled their bookings to visit Malaysia...
- 7) Chinese tourists spent an average of RM2,800 each in Malaysia...

- 8) at least 10,000 of them had cancelled their trip.  
 9) Chinese tourists will come back.

The representation shifts the focus from the real situation which is a majority of Chinese tourists cancelled their initial travel plans. The following examples describe their actions of Chinese tourists.

- 10) Zhao Chunzeng declined to identify his relative on board...  
 11) we will still have to wait and see.  
 12) they cannot conduct the final rites and in their frustration.  
 13) they direct their anger at Malaysia.

Comparing the samples from the two newspapers, it is clear that news reports do not simply report the facts, but re-construct reality to fit a particular view point. In *China Daily*, Chinese government's activities are as treated as active, but it is seldom mentioned in *The Star*. Similarly, Chinese's actions in *China Daily* are viewed as positive while those in *The Star* are regarded as somewhat negative. Therefore, readers of different newspapers can get a different picture of the event. From the analysis of material processes in the two newspapers, the selected Actor and process in both *China Daily* and *The Star* reveal that "news does not limit itself to reality judgment; it also contains values, or preference statements" (Gans ,1990 : 385). In other words, the selection is ideologically invested.

### *Theme -Rheme structure analysis*

As previously noted, theme and rheme are the typical way to realize the textual function which shows how speakers/writers edit their texts and render the experiential and interpersonal meanings. An overview of the theme and rheme pattern can help to make the text coherent in relation to the content. By looking at the developing thematic structure, it is also possible to see the speaker/writer's positioning in weighing the issue. In the next table, the selection of themes and the arrangement of themes will be analyzed so as to discover the editors' intention. The numbers and percentages of the unmarked and marked themes in the 18 sample news are given in Table 4

Table 4 Thematic realization in the samples

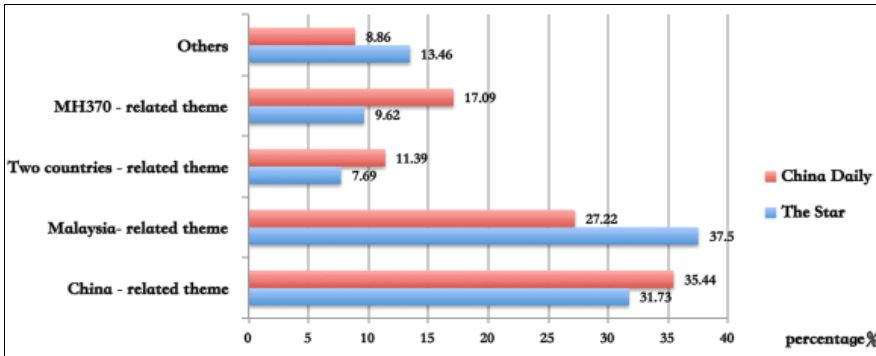
		The Star				China Daily			
		Number		Percentage (%)		Number		Percentage (%)	
Unmarked Theme	1	21	200	10.50	71.43	21	222	9.46	74.00
	2	29		14.50		31		13.96	
	3	23		11.50		40		18.02	
	4	18		9.00		34		15.32	
	5	25		12.50		13		5.86	
	6	14		7.00		41		18.47	
	7	34		17.00		18		8.11	
	8	18		9.00		10		4.50	
	9	18		9.00		14		6.31	
Marked Theme	1	8	80	10.00	28.57	6	78	7.69	26.00
	2	11		13.75		17		21.79	
	3	15		18.75		8		10.26	
	4	6		7.50		11		14.10	
	5	8		10.00		6		7.69	
	6	7		8.75		18		23.08	
	7	13		16.25		7		8.97	
	8	5		6.25		3		3.85	
	9	7		8.75		2		2.56	
Total		280		100.00		300		100.00	

Table 4 shows unmarked themes dominate as they are conflated with the subject of the clause. In other words, the news articles from both *China Daily* and *The Star* have a high frequency of themes overlapping with subject - more than two thirds. A further investigation of the unmarked themes will help us reveal the focus of the news reports.

Table 5 Unmarked Themes in Type of Material Process of the samples

Unmarked Themes	The Star		China Daily	
	Number	Percentage (%)	Number	Percentage (%)
China - related theme	33	31.73	56	35.44
Malaysia- related theme	39	37.50	43	27.22
Two countries - related theme	8	7.69	18	11.39
MH370 - related theme	10	9.62	27	17.09
Others	14	13.46	14	8.86
Total	104	100.00	158	100.00

Table 5. Unmarked Themes in Type of Material Process of the samples



According to Table 5, an apparent contrast between the samples from the two offices is revealing. In the samples from *China Daily*, the percentage of China - related themes is 35.44%, while the figure of Malaysia related theme is 27.22%. But in the samples from *The Star*, China - related themes account for 31.73% and Malaysia- related themes account for 37.75%. The indication is that naturally the content of the samples from *China Daily* attaches more importance to the Chinese community, and that of the sample from *The Star* focuses on the Malaysian community. When it comes to the other two types of themes, a proportion of the Two countries - related theme and MH370 - related theme used in *China Daily* are 17.09% compared to 11.39%, from *The Star*.

In *The Star*, the most frequently used Malaysia- related themes including “Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak”, “Corporate planner Afiz Ayub/I”, “Tourism and Culture Minister Datuk Seri Mohamed Nazri Abdul Aziz”, “Transport Minister Datuk Seri Liow Tiong

Lai/I”, “party leaders at all levels/they”, “Malaysia Airlines' representatives” and “Malaysian government/we”.

In *China Daily*, themes are more varied partly because the reports in *China Daily* are longer. The most frequently used themes are the China - related themes which include “Chinese government/ we” , “Chinese Premier Li Keqiang”, “China”, “ spokesman Jiang Hui” , “the families of the Chinese passengers of MH370/we” , “China's military”, “Chairman of China's Central Military Commission Fan Changlong” , “Cui Yiliang, a military observer in Beijing” and “Defense Ministry spokesman Geng Yansheng”.

As Black and Frederick (1988 : 34) argued the four functions of mass media are information, entertainment, persuasion, and transmission, and the print media tends to emphasize information. In other words, the readers will not spend so much time on the details, they just want to know who are principally engaged and what has happened. As a result, what is represented first must be essential and interesting so as to attract the readers' attention and to give the information immediately available.

### *Cohesive devices analysis*

All the eighteen samples are analysed in detail and their cohesive devices are shown in the following table.

Table 6 The Distribution of the cohesive devices in the samples

Text	The Star						China Daily					
	Reference			Ellipsis			Reference			Ellipsis		
	R1	R2	R3	E1	E2	E3	R1	R2	R3	E1	E2	E3
1	18	3	1	2	0	0	11	3	0	2	0	0
2	15	3	0	5	0	0	8	5	0	7	1	0
3	9	8	0	3	0	0	13	9	0	1	0	0
4	6	3	1	1	0	1	10	7	0	1	0	0
5	15	4	1	0	0	0	1	1	0	1	0	0
6	6	1	1	1	0	0	20	5	0	2	0	0
7	26	8	2	2	0	0	3	1	0	1	0	0
8	6	3	0	0	0	0	4	2	0	2	0	1
9	6	3	2	0	0	0	8	3	0	0	0	0
Total	107	36	8	14	0	1	78	36	0	17	1	1
	151			15			114			19		

Reference

According to Halliday and Hasan (1976), people make reference to something else and in English, the most basic form of referencing is Pronominal Reference (R1) , Demonstrative Reference (R2) and Comparative Reference (R3). As Table 6 shows, pronominal reference has a major role to play as part of the meaning function in both in *China Daily* and *The Star*. The following are examples of pronominal reference in the samples.

[The Star]

Text (No.)	Sentences	Cohesive Items	Types of Cohesion	Presupposed Items
Text 1 (No.1)	As relatives of the missing passengers made their way to the special holding area at the Kuala Lumpur International Airport, most of them looked anxious but hopeful.	- their	R1	- relatives of the missing passengers
Text 1 (No.3)	We are staying positive.	- we	R1	- Malaysian relatives of the missing passengers
Text 2 (No.1)	The families of Chinese passengers aboard a missing Malaysia Airlines flight insisted that their loved ones could still be alive as they came to know about the findings of the objects in the south of the Indian Ocean.	- their	R2	- The families of Chinese passengers aboard a missing Malaysia Airlines flight insisted
Text 5 (No.3)	“We have to understand that China has (had) a one-child policy for more than 30 years and for the families of passengers on the flight, they are worried and angered over the loss of their descendants,”	- we - they - their	R1 R1 R1	- Malaysian - the families of passengers on the flight - the families of passengers on the flight

Text (No.)	Sentences	Cohesive Items	Types of Cohesion	Presupposed Items
Text 6 (No.8)	"This is a joint effort from both parties and I strongly believe that our future is much brighter," said Huang.	- I  - our	RI  RI	- Huang Huikang - Malaysia and China
Text 7 (No.12)	"As Transport Minister, I will do my best to ensure our economy remains resilient," he said,	- I  - my  - our - he	RI  RI  RI RI	- Datuk Seri Hisham muddin Hussein - Datuk Seri Hisham muddin Hussein - Malaysia's - Datuk Seri Hisham muddin Hussein

[China Daily]

Text (No.)	Sentences	Cohesive Items	Types of Cohesion	Presupposed Items
Text I (No.8)	"We expect Malaysia to exert all efforts to cooperate with relevant countries, such as Vietnam, to find the missing plane as soon as possible, seize the golden window of opportunity for finding survivors, and do the utmost to launch rescue operations," he said.	- we  - he	RI  RI	- Chinese government and people - Premier Li Keqiang
Text I (No.15)	Malaysia was working closely with other countries in the region where the plan disappeared to locate its position as quickly as possible	- its	RI	- Malaysia Airlines flight MH370

Text (No.)	Sentences	Cohesive Items	Types of Cohesion	Presupposed Items
Text 1 (No.18)	Malaysia was sending a working group to Beijing to help deal with matters relating to the tragedy, and was ready to maintain contact and cooperation with China in this regard, he added.	- this - he	R2 R1	- search for MH370 - Premier Li Keqiang
Text 3 (No.12)	"The government is due to hold a high-level briefing soon for these families, to update them on the latest developments regarding the search for MH370," Hishammuddin said at a daily briefing on Monday.	- these families - them	R2 R1	- the families of the 154 Chinese passengers - the families of the 154 Chinese passengers
Text 4 (No.3)	"China is the nation that has sent the largest group of ships and aircraft to the search," said Wang Ya'nan, deputy editor-in-chief of Aerospace Knowledge magazine.	- that	R2	- China is the nation
Text 4 (No.8)	Cui Yiliang, a military observer in Beijing, said, "Without reliable information to support the calculation, the only guess I can make is that China would spend no less than any other nation.	- I - that	R1 R2	- Cui Yiliang - the only guess I can make is
Text 6 (No.7)	While our countries, and the world, have changed considerably, one thing has remained constant: the strong bond of friendship between our two peoples.	- our - our	R1 R1	- China and Malaysia - China and Malaysia
Text 6 (No.8)	This friendship has created a huge economic success. Today, China is Malaysia's top trading partner. Last year, our bilateral trade was US\$106 billion.	- this - our	R2 R1	- the friendship between China and Malaysia - China and Malaysia



Text (No.)	Sentences	Cohesive Items	Types of Cohesion	Presupposed Items
Text 6 (No.28)	Then, as now, it is my firm belief that relations between our countries will remain strong.	- it  - my - that	RI  RI R2	- relations between our countries will remain strong - Najib - it is my firm belief

Ellipsis

Ellipsis refers to the absence of items to avoid repetition in accordance with the principle of economy. Ellipsis is distinguished into three types: Nominal Ellipsis (E1), Verbal Ellipsis (E2) and Clausal Ellipsis (E3). The following are examples of ellipsis in the samples.

[The Star]

Text (No.)	Sentences	Cohesive Items	Types of Cohesion	Presupposed Items
Text 1 (14, 15)	Faced with a flurry of journalists, a few $\phi$ were spotted in tears and shielding their faces but most $\phi$ were calm.	- $\phi$ - $\phi$	EI EI	- relatives - relatives'
Text 2 (9)	Only one man, Wen Wancheng, said: "I don't believe it" when $\phi$ approached by the media.	- $\phi$	EI	- Wen Wancheng (the name of Chinese relative)
Text 2 (13)	"We are waiting $\phi$ , just waiting $\phi$ and we can't respond to news until it is definitely confirmed," Zhao told AFP.	- $\phi$	EI EI	- the news of the missing Malaysia Airlines flight
Text 2 (16)	he said: "Maybe, but we will still have to wait and see $\phi$ ."	- $\phi$	EI EI	- the news of the missing Malaysia Airlines flight

Text (No.)	Sentences	Cohesive Items	Types of Cohesion	Presupposed Items
Text 3 (14)	"Irresponsible western media reports spread rumours that $\phi$ were untrue, $\phi$ trying to create tension between China and Malaysia.	- $\phi$ - $\phi$	EI EI	- rumours - western media
Text 3 (23)	the search and rescue effort has been China's largest-ever international operation, and $\phi$ were planning to deploy another five more vessels in the search.	- $\phi$	EI	- Chinese government
Text 4 (2)	Close to 30% of Chinese tourists have cancelled their bookings to visit Malaysia this year since the disappearance of Flight MH370, cutting down potential revenue for the local tourism industry.	- $\phi$	E3	- Close to 30% of Chinese tourists have cancelled their bookings to visit Malaysia
Text 5 (6)	"Due to the promotion of Visit Malaysia Year (VMY) 2014, many $\phi$ had initially made preparations to visit Malaysia in the second half of this year	- $\phi$	EI	- Chinese tourists
Text 6 (1)	Chinese nationals still love Malaysia and will $\phi$ return soon as tourists, said Chinese Ambassador to Malaysia Huang Huikang.	- $\phi$	EI	- Chinese nationals

[China Daily]

Text (No.)	Sentences	Cohesive Items	Types of Cohesion	Presupposed Items
Text 1 (10)	"We expect Malaysia to exert all efforts to cooperate with relevant countries, such as Vietnam, to find the missing plane as soon as possible, $\varnothing$ seize the golden window of opportunity for finding survivors, and $\varnothing$ do the utmost to launch rescue operations," he said.	- $\varnothing$ - $\varnothing$	EI EI	- Malaysia - Malaysia
Text 1 (17)	Malaysia was sending a working group to Beijing to help deal with matters relating to the tragedy, and $\varnothing$ was ready to maintain contact and cooperation with China in this regard, he added.	- $\varnothing$	EI	- Malaysia
Text 2 (4)	China, he said, has dispatched more than 10 specialized vessels to scour relevant sea waters and $\varnothing$ asked Chinese commercial ships traversing the areas to help with the hunt.	- $\varnothing$	EI	- Premier Li Keqiang
Text 2 (6)	China has also deployed several planes and 21 satellites for the mission and $\varnothing$ notified 25 countries of relevant information and Beijing's request for assistance, Li added.	- $\varnothing$	EI	- China

In this part, the sample texts have been analysed in terms of coherence and cohesion. As the analysis shows, we find that pronominal reference as expected is the predominant grammatical cohesive device. However, ellipsis is rarely used possibly to avoid misinterpretation in such disaster news reports. Pronouns serve as links between a given item in the discourse and subsequent references. In these two newspapers, the referent of actions includes national search and rescue operation, family response and difficulties in this crisis management. *The Star*, also mentions more about the actions of Chinese tourists and the economic impact on the Malaysian government while *China Daily* focuses more on the relationship between China and Malaysia and China's economic strength.

### *The kinds of ideologies*

Ideology is seen as operating, not so much as a coherent system of statements imposed on a population from the government or the newspaper, but rather through a complex series of mechanisms whereby meaning is mobilized in discursive practices of everyday life. Consequently, it is important to search for ways in which the theory of ideology can be linked with methods of the analysis of the discursive forms in which ideology is expressed (Thompson, 1984). As the characteristics of news discourse are taken into consideration, I will begin with the underlying discursive practices which include (1) cultural, (2) economic (3) international relations and (4) news values.

### **Cultural practice**

From the analysis of reference, we can easily see that both the newspapers mentioned about the actions of rescuing victims numerous times as in the majority of cultures, the most significant element is people. In China, the Chinese government is often emphasising "people - oriented" together with social progress and harmony. The prompt relief efforts of the Chinese government following the massive air disaster are seen as fully reflected its people - oriented ideology. Similarly, in Malaysia, saving people's lives and comforting their families are the top priorities. Both the countries take survival as the starting point and hopefully the final goal of rescue operation.

### **Economic practice**

As stated in the previous example from text 4 (2), close to 30% of Chinese tourists cancelled their bookings to visit Malaysia. A rapidly

decreasing number of Chinese tourists- will have a negative effect on the tourist industry. Consequently, how to deal with this crisis is a major issue in *The Star's* reporting in terms of the Malaysian economy. China on the other hand does not focus on the economic consequence but rather on its ability in crisis management. For example, In *China Daily*, the fourth reports stresses "China is 'biggest spender' in search" in *China Daily*).

"China is the nation that has sent the largest group of ships and aircraft to the search," said Wang Ya'nan, deputy editor-in-chief of Aerospace Knowledge magazine. (Text 4 No.3 )

"Therefore, we can be sure that the nation must have become the biggest spender in the operation, although no official figures are available."(Text 4 No.4 )

Cui Yiliang, a military observer in Beijing, said, "Without reliable information to support the calculation, the only guess I can make is that China would spend no less than any other nation. (Text 4 No.8 )

### **International relations practice**

The international search and rescue operation is also fore-grounded in the news articles. The case of missing Malaysian Airplane MH370 distinguishes itself from similar disasters by the mystery of its disappearance, vaguely worded and self - contradictory information released by various authorities as well as the multinational involvement in both passenger identity and search operation. As stated in *China Daily* (Text 3 ), "Australia is coordinating the international hunt for the missing Boeing 777, which involves about 100 personnel searching from surveillance aircraft and 1,000 sailors in ships in or near the search zone." The focus of the reporting on the increasing international input of satellites, ships, helicopters in this multinational search and rescue operation Is partly to boost confidence of the victims' families.

### **News values**

According to Hall (1996 :53), the media does not simply and transparently report events which are "naturally"news worthy in themselves. News is the end - product of a complex process which begins with a systematic sorting and selecting of events and topics socially constructed set of categories. Fowler (1991) also states that the news media selects events for reporting according to a complex set of criteria of news worthiness; so

news is not simply that which happens, but that which can be regarded and presented as news worthy. News values are said to perform a “gate - keeping” role, filtering and restricting news input. The more news worthiness criteria an event satisfies, the more likely it is to be reported. (Fowler, 1991: 12)

For, as seen through the reporting in *The Star*, the incident is closely linked with its interest because of the long existing relationship between with China. Although the victims comprise 14 different nationalities more than half were Chinese. Consequently if this crisis was not handled with care, it was likely to breed discontent in the countries whose citizens were on the missing plane. Negative reactions soon began to appear.

He said the primary reason for the Chinese people’s emotional outburst was mainly attributed to the country’s one-child policy. (Text 5 No.2)

“We have to understand that China has (had) a one-child policy for more than 30 years and for the families of passengers on the flight, they are worried and angered over the loss of their descendants,” (Text 5 No.7)

“As both of these requirements are unfulfilled, they cannot conduct the final rites and in their frustration, they direct their anger at Malaysia.” (Text 5 No.13)

He said Malaysia understood the sorrow and complications faced by the relatives of the Chinese nationals, who formed the biggest number of passengers aboard the missing aircraft.(Text 5 No.14)

## Conclusion

After the analysis of 18 samples from *China Daily* and *The Star* in terms of discourse features at the level of text, and different kinds of hidden ideologies based on discursive practice. The findings can be summarised as follows.

In the first section , the analysis involves a description of the discourse features of in terms of transitivity, theme - rheme structure and cohesion. Any analysis of discourse procedures brings in a number of complex issues. Reporting of a disaster would involve fact finding with a tendency towards material and verbal processes. Relational processes are also highlighted as descriptions are needed to emphasize the reality of what has happened. The structure of the reporting will tend to fore-ground the major points by placing them in unmarked theme position, often as the subject of the clause.

Meanwhile, the main social actors emerged. As far as the analysis of cohesive devices, the referent of actions includes International search and rescue operations, family response, difficulties in crisis management, economic impacts on the Malaysian economy, and the relationship between China and Malaysia.

In the second section, different kinds of hidden ideologies based on the actions from these two countries were analysed from four aspects : (1) cultural practice, (2) economic practice, (3) international relations practice and (4) news values. Both *China Daily* and *The Star* mention the active action of rescuing victims numerous times. The ideology revealed is that both China and Malaysia have as their major concern the interest of the families of missing passengers because it is in accordance with its people - oriented governing philosophy. *The Star* tends to present Malaysia's positive attitudes and numerous active efforts in the search operation, and to criticize the aggressive behaviours of Chinese relatives. The ideology revealed is that Malaysia has tried its best to handle the crisis to win people's support, keeping a positive image in the international community. On other hand, *China Daily* tends to present China's strong economic strength and numerous active efforts in the search operation and illustrates its rapid economic growth in recent years. The ideology revealed is that the Chinese government has the adequate ability to handle a crisis like this and the attitude to solve the problems is positive and active, people's lives are China's top priority and the people need to trust Chinese government.

Finally from the data presented here what is seemingly factual news reports in *China Daily* and *The Star* are not transparent but constructed reality with their own ideological investment. The reality is that the two newspapers are published in two different countries which will involve, various factors such as cultural, political and social factors that play a decisive role in they represent of the news.

The value of attempting a study in terms of a CDA approach allows a discussion to take place that is based not merely on opinion but a textual analysis in its wider and more complex social context. It is through the analyses of the news reports from the *China Daily* and *The Star*, that it is possible to unpack the ideologies hidden in discourse of these newspapers.

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