

MASTER'S THESIS

A contrastive structural analysis of Chinese and English newspapers of a collapsing building accident

Lam, Fung Ming

Date of Award:
2002

[Link to publication](#)

General rights

Copyright and intellectual property rights for the publications made accessible in HKBU Scholars are retained by the authors and/or other copyright owners. In addition to the restrictions prescribed by the Copyright Ordinance of Hong Kong, all users and readers must also observe the following terms of use:

- Users may download and print one copy of any publication from HKBU Scholars for the purpose of private study or research
- Users cannot further distribute the material or use it for any profit-making activity or commercial gain
- To share publications in HKBU Scholars with others, users are welcome to freely distribute the permanent URL assigned to the publication

**A CONTRASTIVE STRUCTURAL ANALYSIS OF
CHINESE AND ENGLISH NEWSPAPERS OF A
COLLAPSING BUILDING ACCIDENT**

LAM FUNG MING

STUDENT NO. 00404969

A Dissertation Submitted in Partial

Fulfilment of The

MASTER OF ARTS IN LANGUAGE STUDIES

HONG KONG BAPTIST UNIVERSITY

AUGUST 2002

ABSTRACT

This study attempts to explore the similarities and differences between macro-structures of English and Chinese news reports with regard to Bell's (1991) model on news stories. The rhetorical analysis is based on the news reports covering one single event in four newspapers (two English and two Chinese) published in Hong Kong.

According to Bell (1991), there are five major components in news stories, namely abstract, orientation, evaluation, action and resolution. It is found that English news stories follow Bell's model strictly whereas Chinese news stories do not. In terms of parastructure, English newspapers display an inverted pyramid pattern in their overall structure of news stories; whereas one Chinese newspaper (Ming Pao) displays two-pyramid pattern, an inverted one on the top with a proper upright one underneath as well as one Chinese newspaper (Apple Daily) follows the real-life chronological order while plotting the story.

Finally, another interesting finding is about the news attribution. English newspapers tend to attribute the text to different news actors through either direct or indirect quotations whereas Chinese news texts tend to downplay the news actors' voices. The main focus is on the journalists' speech.

論文摘要

本論文是參考貝爾 (Bell 1991) 的新聞故事模式來分析比較中、英文報章新聞故事結構的異同。研究結果顯示英文報章是根據貝爾的新聞故事模式來寫作，其故事結構是倒樁金字塔形式。而中文報章不但沒有根據貝爾的新聞故事模式來寫作，而且更沒有一個特定的模式；其中一份中文報章利用兩個金字塔模式來架構新聞故事，〔一個倒樁金字塔在一個正金字塔上〕，而另一份是利用時間順序法去結構新聞故事。

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER ONE : INTRODUCTION	1
1.1. Why interests in newspaper?	1
1.2. Background of Contrastive Rhetoric Studies	2
1.3. Aims of Study	3
1.4. Research Questions	4
CHAPTER TWO : LITERATURE REVIEW	5
2.1. A Comparison between English and Chinese languages	5
2.1.1. Principal Syntactic Different between English and Chinese Languages	5
2.1.2. Development of English-Chinese Contrastive Rhetorical Studies	8
2.1.3. Comparative English-Chinese News Discourse	10
2.2. Perception of Genre	12
2.2.1. Definition of Genre	12
2.2.2. Genre of News Texts	13
2.3. The History of News	15
2.4. Perceptions of Narratives	17
2.4.1. Concepts of Narratives	17
2.4.2. Personal Narratives	17
2.5. Van Dijk's Framework on News Structure	19
2.6. Bell's Model on News Stories	20
CHAPTER THREE : METHODOLOGY	25
3.1. Data Collection	25
3.2. Which News Stories?	25

3.3. Which Newspapers?	27
3.4. Chinese Texts and Romanization	27
3.5. Frame of Analysis	28
CHAPTER FOUR : FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION	29
4.1. Abstract and Story Proper	29
4.1.1. Abstract	30
4.1.1.1. Headlines	30
4.1.1.1.1. Findings	30
4.1.1.1.2. Discussion	31
4.1.1.2. Leads	38
4.1.1.2.1. Findings	38
4.1.1.2.2. Discussion	44
4.1.1. Story Proper	54
4.1.2.1. Findings –	
An overview of the sample text (SCMP)	54
4.1.2.2. Discussion	58
4.2. News Attribution – News Actors	71
4.2.1. Findings	74
4.2.2. Discussion	78
CHAPTER FIVE : PEDAGOGICAL IMPLICATIONS	87
5.1. Reading Comprehension	88
5.2. Writing Technique	91
5.3. Language Awareness and Contrastive L1/L2 Information	94
CHAPTER SIX : CONCLUSION	99
6.1. Conclusion	99
6.2. Limitation and Recommendation	100

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A : Full texts of the selected news stories	102
Text 1 : One dead, four missing as building collapses (South China Morning Post)	102
Text 2 : Collapse kills three, two missing (Hong Kong iMail)	103
Text 3 : 拆卸工廈倒塌 3 死 2 活埋 (Ming Pao)	104
Text 4 : 塌樓 3 死 2 失蹤 (Apple Daily)	105
APPENDIX B : Tables of the story and time structure of the Selected news stories	106
Text 1 : Collapse kills three, two missing (Hong Kong iMail)	106
Text 2 : 拆卸工廈倒塌 3 死 2 活埋 (Ming Pao)	109
Text 3 : 塌樓 3 死 2 失蹤 (Apple Daily)	112
APPENDIX C : Romanization, gloss and translation of the Selected Chinese news stories	116
Text 1 : 拆卸工廈倒塌 3 死 2 活埋 (Ming Pao)	116
Text 2 : 塌樓 3 死 2 失蹤 (Apple Daily)	139
BIBLIOGRAPHY	168