

**Strategies for Affiliation in Media Editorials:
Persuading and Aligning Readers**

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of requirements for a
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Certificate of Original Authorship

I certify that the work in this thesis has not previously been submitted for a degree nor has it been submitted as part of requirements for a degree except as fully acknowledged within the text.

I also certify that the thesis has been written by me. Any help that I have received in my research work and the preparation of the thesis itself has been acknowledged. In addition, I certify that all information sources and literature used are indicated in the thesis.

Signature of Student:

Date: July 2017

Dedication

I dedicate this thesis to my loving husband, *Changxing*.

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Abbreviation

SFL Systemic-functional linguistics

Abstract

This thesis is concerned with the enactment of persuasion of readers in written monologic media discourse. It characterises persuasion as the particular patterns of linguistic choices for constructing and managing communities of shared values between writers and their readers in newspaper editorial texts. The analyses and discussions in this study provide an account of the means through which editorial texts enable their readers to feel with the writers' evaluative positions.

The general linguistic theory underpinning this thesis is that of systemic-functional linguistics (SFL). Of particular relevance within this theoretical framework is the affiliation aspect of the individuation cline, which presents the evaluative couplings of [ATTITUDE+IDEATION] as the linguistic basis for constructing a community of shared values and for enacting persuasion. The thesis proposes a complementary perspective on the strategies of affiliation by treating the patterns of re-coupling of different evaluative couplings as its strategies. To capture the re-coupling process, the thesis adopts both a synoptic and a dynamic approach to explore the strategies of affiliation: distributional patterns of evaluative couplings (synoptic) and the logogenetic development of these couplings (dynamic).

The affiliation model is applied to the examination of 21 editorial texts from two national broadcast newspapers. Eleven of them are from *The Australian* and 10 are from the *China Daily*. The exploration focuses on the distributional patterns of attitudinal values both in terms of their category and their experiential targets in each data set. It also examines the patterns of re-coupling between evaluative couplings which are mediated by choices from other linguistic systems. Finally, the analysis investigates the effects of these patterns of evaluative couplings and the effects of re-couplings for persuasion between editorial writers and their readers and compares the persuasive rhetoric identified for each data set.

The analyses of coupling and re-coupling suggest that the two newspapers differ from each other in terms of their affiliation strategies. *The Australian* prefers to encode opposite evaluative couplings in each editorial text. The strategy is described as a divisive one, dividing its predominantly Australian readership into opposing communities. The *China Daily*, on the other hand, tends to express consistent evaluative couplings in every editorial text. On this basis, it can be said to function as a solidary strategy, in relation to

its global readership. This tendency attempts to unite a global populace and realises a solidary rhetoric. At a broader level the thesis makes a significant contribution to a linguistic understanding of persuasion in media discourse.