The South African media's framing of the introduction of Mandarin into the South African school curriculum

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Declaration

I, Richard Frank, know and accept plagiarism (to use another's work and present it as one's own) is wrong. Consequently, I declare that this research report is my own unaided work.

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Acknowledgements

Abstract

This research report examines the way the media framed the introduction of Mandarin to the South African school curriculum, and the relationship between frame sponsors and the frames employed by the media.

The dramatic growth of Chinese investment and its related social and political influence in Africa has been greeted by a mixed response. The media has often characterised the relationship in a binary way, as either Chinese imperialism or a developmental relationship. To improve China's image, the Chinese government has embarked upon a policy of soft power, which extends into influencing educational language policy, to encourage more people to learn Mandarin and understand Chinese culture. To explore the media articulation of the China-South Africa relationship media framing theory was employed.

The frame analysis was conducted by analysing the content of 50 articles published in the South African press between March and October 2015. The analysis found three mega-frames: imperialism, globalisation and nationalism. The imperialism and globalisation frames are consistent with other academic and media literature that considers the China-Africa relationship as either colonial or a natural outcome of global market dynamics.

The role of frame sponsors and their influence on the framing process was also explored. The majority of frame sponsors were official government, trade union and academic sources, suggesting an elite contestation. Notably absent were Chinese frame sponsors and the views of teachers, parents or learners. Government frame sponsors promoted the globalisation mega-frame while trade union sources promoted the imperialism and nationalism frames.

The results suggest that the South African media articulates the China-South Africa relationship using the binary of colonial predator or developmental partner, where a more nuanced reading may prove more fruitful in understanding the dynamics of their relationship.

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1. Introduction, aims and rationale

1.1. Introduction

In March 2015, the South African government issued a notice, which stated that Mandarin would be included as an optional subject in public school curriculum in 2016 ("Mandarin to be offered in SA state schools," 2015). This was backed up by an August 2015 Department of Education circular, which was widely reported in the media (Dipa, 2015; Nkosi, 2015a).

The circular added Mandarin to the other optional languages in the curriculum, which include German, Arabic, Serbian, Italian, Latin, Spanish, French, Portuguese, Tamil, Telegu, Urdu, Hebrew and Gujarati, and which, with the exception of Latin, are all languages of ethnic groupings in South Africa (Siswa, 2015). There are between 250,000 and 350,000 Chinese living in South Africa (Park, 2009).

On face value, the introduction of Mandarin as an optional subject could be seen as a positive change - giving South African learners the opportunity to learn one of the world's major languages, and giving the South African Chinese population the option to study Mandarin. The number of overseas Chinese-language learners grew from less than 30 million in 2004 to 100 million in 2014, with over 5-million students having taken Chinese-language proficiency tests, showing the growing popularity of the language (Want China Times, 2014). In 2013, more than 10,000 South Africans were learning Mandarin in universities and secondary and primary schools ("Education helps build relationships", 2013).

However, the change of syllabus was met with criticism from teachers' unions and commentators, among others, who described the language introduction as a form of colonialism and an attack on the promotion of indigenous languages. A Lexis-Nexis search reveals no evidence that similar reactions have occurred when other languages have been added to the syllabus.

The debate over the introduction of Mandarin may be seen broadly as a reflection on how the media represents South Africa's relationship with China - economically, socially and politically. For some, what is at stake is South Africa's economic future that is largely in the hands of the global market, with China as one of the key players. For others, it is the South African national identity, reflected by the country's language and cultural choices.

South African has a colourful history of language policy negotiation. Under apartheid, Afrikaans was seen as the language of the oppressor and was the central reason for the 1976 Soweto Uprising after school children rejected Afrikaans as the medium of instruction in local schools. At the time, *The*

World published a letter from a student, which stated:

> "Our parents are prepared to suffer under the white man's rule. They have been living for years under these laws and they have become immune to them. But we strongly refuse to swallow an education that is designed to make us slaves in the country of our birth." (Mwakikagile, 2008, p. 89)

English, on the other hand, was the language of the colonising British, imposed on the country in 1822 when the British proclaimed it as the language of the government, church and schools (Marjorie, 1982). Throughout Africa, the introduction of foreign languages has been seen as either the forerunner or the crowning act of colonisation.

In post-apartheid South Africa, the South Africa has adopted 11 official languages. The South African Constitution states that all official languages "must enjoy parity of esteem and must be treated equitably" (*The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa*, 1996), however, practically English is seen as the primary language for business and governance ("Tongues under threat," 2011).

Language policy is thus an emotive issue and a useful barometer on the receptiveness of South Africans to Chinese soft-power[1] initiatives.

China is central to South Africa's economic future. South Africa is China's largest trading partner in Africa, worth $20.2 billion (Dews, 2014). This reflects China's dramatic increase in trade with Africa over the past two decades, with China surpassing the United States of America (US) in 2009 as Africa's largest trading partner. By 2012, China's trade with Africa was more than double that of the US, reaching $198.5 billion versus US-African trade of $99.8 billion (Dews, 2014).

China's growing relationship with Africa represents a massive geopolitical shift, a change that will "increasingly be mediated through journalistic representations and the flow and counterflow of media capital" (Wasserman, 2013).

Media representations of the China-Africa and China-South Africa relationship have been explored by several researchers (De Beer & Schreiner, 2009; Mørk, 2012; Umejei, 2014; Wasserman, 2013; Wekesa, 2013) using content analysis and framing analysis.

While it should be noted that the role of China in Africa is not homogenous, with different sovereign

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[1] Soft power, coined by Joseph Nye, is "the ability to get what one wants by attraction and persuasion rather than coercion or payment" (Nye, 2012). China's soft-power policy was introduced in 2007 by President Hu Jintao.

relationships between China and African states, a brief review of press coverage of Mandarin being introduced into public school curriculums in Africa does provide valuable context to this study.

African press coverage is cautiously optimistic with pro-China stories often using human interest framing to tell the story of students learning the language and finding opportunities locally as translators, or studying further abroad in China. However, common areas of criticism include the introduction of Mandarin as a colonising act that reduces the prominence of indigenous languages.

There is also a defensiveness and conflict-orientation in some of the coverage. In an article headlined "Learning of Chinese in Schools will be Optional", the Kenyan News Agency suggests that the CEO of Kenya Institute of Curriculum Development Julius Jwan has "defended the introduction of Chinese language into the Kenyan curriculum" ("Learning of Chinese in Schools will be Optional," 2015), while in a proposed introduction of compulsory Mandarin, the registrar at the University of Zimbabwe, said that Mandarin, like English, was just another "evil language used to colonise us and brainwash us" (Caulderwood, 2015).

In Nigeria, a similar defensiveness is found in coverage. In "Administrator defends teaching of Mandarin in Nigerian schools", the administrator of Grace High School in Lagos, Tokunboh Edun, "explained that the school will continue to teach her students Chinese language, also known as Mandarin, despite criticism by stakeholders that Nigerian children are learning more foreign languages at the expense of indigenous languages" ("Administrator defends teaching of Mandarin in Nigerian schools," 2015).

I intend to use framing theory and framing analysis to explore the way the South African press has framed the decision by the South African government to introduce Mandarin as a second language option in South African schools.

1.2. The aim

The aim of this research is to analyse the press's framing of the South African government decision to introduce Mandarin into the South African school curriculum as an optional language choice.

By using framing analysis, I am going to answer the following questions:

1. How does the press frame the introduction of Mandarin into the South African school curriculum?
a. What frames can be identified, and what is the frame frequency?
b. Which sources are most prominent in advancing particular frames?
c. What is the relationship between the sources and the frames identified?

This research seeks to demonstrate how these frames enabled media producers such as editors and journalists to select and make salient certain viewpoints while downplaying or ignoring others, either consciously or subconsciously. This use of frames helps us understand how the China-Africa story is being told. It also offers predictive insights into how it will be told in the coming years.

1.3. Rationale

It is important to understand how the media covers South Africa-China issues, because China is South Africa's largest trade partner, and therefore its cultural and economic influence is expected to increase.

Although there is plentiful research (De Beer & Schreiner, 2009; Mørk, 2012; Umejei, 2014; Wasserman, 2013; Wekesa, 2013) on media representation of China in Africa on a broad scale, there has been little research on specific issues such as language policy. I have found no research relating to the introduction of the Mandarin language on the African continent. Therefore this study contributes to a new area of research.

The media has an important role to play in the formation of public opinion. The media is not the only forum in the public sphere, but in media-saturated society its content is the clearest indicator of ideological contests (Gamson & Modigliani, 1989). The news media is "a site on which various social groups, institutions and ideology struggle over the definition and construction of social reality" (Gurevitch & Levy, 1985, p. 19). How the issue was framed, and how often certain frames are present, offers us insight into how the South Africa-China relationship is being negotiated by the South African media. What views are made salient, and which views are left out, has implications for how the South African public sphere interprets the relationship. For instance, the frame of *Chinese imperialism* gives structure to discussions around South Africa's sovereignty, while the frame of *deepening trade relations* places emphasis on the economic consequences of the relationship.

The role of the media in post-1994 South Africa has been commonly judged against the normative liberal-pluralistic or libertarian tradition. In this tradition, the media is viewed as an independent voice, able to act as a watchdog of government and private enterprise, provide information for the public to act and make rational decisions, and provide a platform and forum for debate (Burton, 2010). The South African press is therefore expected to play a critical role in public opinion formation, and its normative values influence the framing of public policy issues.

This study focuses on the South African press - newspapers that are published in South Africa. Although according to the South African Audience Research Foundation (*SAARF Media release June*

2014 Topline Results, 2014), television (91.8%) and radio (92.4%) offer far greater reach than newspapers (46.3%), newspaper articles are valuable units of study in that they often drive the national news agenda. Broadcasters, online bloggers and social media commentators often respond to stories in the press, adding additional commentary or pursuing additional angles on the same story. For instance scandals such as the upgrades to the South African president's private residence in Nkandla was broken by the *Mail & Guardian*. The press, therefore, has an important agenda-setting function, despite the continuing fragmentation of platforms.

The study was restricted to English newspapers as the study required a deep reading of media frames and the author is proficient in English only. It should therefore be acknowledged that this does limit the study in that it does not deal with the non-English press such as Afrikaans and Zulu newspapers, which may exhibit different framing due to their separate media traditions.

The study also supports further research into the China-Africa relationship. African countries such as Kenya, Nigeria and Zimbabwe are grappling with China's growing influence, and more specifically how it is promoting language and cultural studies to push its soft-power agenda. On the one hand, African countries seek further integration into the world community and, on the other hand, they continue to deal with the vestiges of colonial and neocolonial economic policy, exemplified by the recent failures of IMF and World Bank-backed structural reform.

Although this research does not touch on "framing effects", there is a large body of research (Gamson & Modigliani, 1989; Kahneman & Tversky, 1979; Nelson, Clawson, & Oxley, 1997) that suggests that the way the media frames an issue has an effect on public opinion and consequently on political choices. The role of China in South Africa is therefore affected by media framing.

2. Theoretical framework

Framing theory has gained prominence in recent years as a research tool (Scheufele & Iyengar, 2012). Instead of measuring whether, for example, an article is *for* or *against* abortion, framing theory enables us to understand *how* the issue is defined - for instance as concerning the life of the unborn child, or concerning the mother's freedom of choice - which then leads the reader to certain conclusions. In other words, "convincing others to accept one's framing means to a large extent winning the debate" (Tankard, 2001, p. 96).

2.1. Frames

In an oft-cited frame definition, Entman says frames define problems, diagnose causes, make moral judgements and/or suggest remedies to a problem.

Frames, then, define problems—determine what a causal agent is doing with what costs and benefits, usually measured in terms of common cultural values; diagnose causes—identify the forces creating the problem; make moral judgments-evaluate causal agents and their effects; and suggest remedies—offer and justify treatments for the problems and predict their likely effects. A single sentence may perform more than one of these four framing functions although many sentences in a text may perform none of them. And a frame in any particular text may not necessarily include all four functions. (Entman, 1993, p. 53)

Reese (2001) offers the following definition of frames:

Frames are *organizing principles* that are socially *shared* and *persistent* over time, that work *symbolically* to meaningfully structure the social world. (Reese, 2001, p. 11)

2.1.1. Organising principles

Firstly the frame should "organise" information. This organising mechanism can occur on a cognitive or cultural level. Cognitive studies have shown that simple emphasis changes, for instance *saving lives* instead of *causing deaths* (Kahneman & Tversky, 1979), or thematic versus episodic treatments (Iyengar, 1991), cause different audience reception effects. Cultural frames indicate a broader, deeper way of accepting reality. For instance, the phrase "war on terror" often evokes a supporting world view. "When these frames are picked up without their supporting apparatus, made implicit and naturalised, they gain organising power" (Reese, 2001, p. 11).

Reese (2001) warns that if a frame describes the actual stance in a story - the factual position of the protagonists - it offers less analytical power. In other words, the frame should add more to a story than just its facts.

Reese (2001) cautions that "to ignore the principle that gives rise to the frame is to take media texts at face value, and be misled by manifest content". The abstract nature of frames is thus again emphasised. In fact, the principles that give rise to a frame may yield little content themselves. A media blackout on a particular issue can be a strong indicator of an underlying framing principle. This infers that content analysis can only tell part of the story, and a thorough literature review is required in order to understand the underlying context and principles that give rise to the manifested frames.

2.1.2. Shared

An essential trait of frames is that they are shared. The strength of the frame can be measured by how readily it is shared across different media, and how strongly it is shared between culture, communicator, text, and the receiver (Entman, 1993). The more frames can be shared, the more powerful they become. A frame brings with it a set of shared assumptions, enabling organisations and

institutions to communicate in a way that will be interpreted in the manner they intended it to be communicated (Hertog & McLeod, 2001).

2.1.3. Persistent

A frame's persistence gives it power. Frames evolve and change, but deep frames are remarkably persistent. The frame of "global warming" for instance, or "war on terror", has decades-long longevity. They persist and are inherently stable because they perform a stabilising function - they offer dependable mental shortcuts for members of society. They are also associated with organisations and institutions that are themselves stable (Hertog & McLeod, 2001).

2.1.4. Symbolic

Frames are manifested through symbolic devices - such as words and images. Gamson and Modigliani (1989) identified framing devices as metaphors, catchphrases, exemplars, depictions and visual images. Reese (2001) suggests that the most powerful frames can also suppress content and thus their symbolic representation. Language use, sentence structure and jargon is influenced by frames.

2.1.5. Structure

A frame imposes a structure, that is, a "pattern on the social world constituted by any number of symbolic devices" (Reese, 2001). The structure can be "manifest and explicit, or embedded and implicit" (Reese, 2001).

However, the narrative structure of the text is not a frame (Hertog & McLeod, 2001). What style or format the media item was structured in (for example, the "inverted pyramid" style of writing) does not offer a framing effect in itself.

2.1.6 Conclusion

While reportage on the China-South Africa relationship which reflects on China's imperial or developmental ambitions may appear to be "common sense" to the average reader, framing theory enables one to lift the veil on the socially shared and persistent principles that structure our understanding of this relationship. By testing proposed frames against these traits, one is able to test whether a frame is truly a frame, or rather, for example, an argument position or narrative device.

2.2. Framing

Entman describes the act of framing:

> To frame is to select some aspects of a perceived reality and make them more salient in a communicating text, in such a way as to promote a particular problem definition, causal interpretation,

moral evaluation, and/or treatment recommendation for the item described. (Entman, 1993)

Entman finds frames in four parts of the communication process: the communicator, the text, the receiver, and the culture (Entman, 1993, p. 52). *Communicators* make framing judgements based on their belief systems; the *text* contains frames that are clusters of reinforcing symbols, stereotypes and sources of information (in this study referred to as "frame sponsors"); the receiver has their own frames that guide their interpretation of the text; and finally, *culture* is a set of frames commonly shared by most people in a given grouping (e.g. that capitalism is right and communism is wrong). Entman (1993, p. 53) concludes: "Framing in all four locations includes similar functions: selection and highlighting, and use of the highlighted elements to construct an argument about problems and their causation, evaluation, and/or solution."

An example of framing, described by Entman (2004), was George Bush's framing of the September 11 terrorist assaults as an "act of war", invoking "evil" five times and "war" twelve times in his 2002 State of the Union speech. "Repeating these terms helped frame September 11th to 'unite' the country behind the Bush administration's interpretation and response to the attacks and to exclude other understandings" (2004, p. 1).

Researchers may sometimes confuse frames with argument positions. Both pro and anti positions can be evident within a single frame. Gamson & Modigliani (1989) demonstrate how the 1950s debate around whether nuclear technology should be used for energy generation or for military purposes excluded voices that suggested nuclear power could be dangerous. The dualism of war versus energy had a limiting effect on debate.

> The dominant metaphor is a road that branches to two alternative paths - one leading to the development of weapons of destruction and the other to the eradication of human misery. Again, there are optimists and cautious skeptics who warn that technological problems in tapping this energy source for human betterment are formidable and far from solved. But no opposition to nuclear power development is presented, and no alternative package is ever offered. (Gamson & Modigliani, 1989, pp. 13–14)

For this research, which describes the South African media's framing of the introduction of Mandarin into the South African school curriculum, we will be focusing on frames found in the *text* part of the communication process while recognising that the communicator and reader, situated in a particular cultural context, have a role to play in the creation and rendered meaning of the text.

2.3. Frame devices in text

Frame devices often carry the power of the frame in a catchphrase, metaphor, graphic or allusion to history, culture, or literature (Gamson & Modigliani, 1989).

For example, a phrase such as "Big Pharma" immediately brings with it an emphasis on corporate conspiracy and lack of accountability, and does not need to be explained further to readers familiar with this frame. Similarly, a phrase such as "red dragon" brings with it images of a coercive and mystical China. The phrase, "trading partner", gives a positive connotation, while being "in love" (de Wet, 2015) would denote a more uncritical and unequal partnership.

2.4. Frame sponsors

Entman's critical perspective is evident in his suggestion that framing "plays a major role in the exertion of political power, and the frame in a news text is really the imprint of power - it registers the identity of actors or interests that competed to dominate the text" (Entman, 1993, p. 55).

The frame's sponsors, often identified as the sources used in an article, but not limited to traditional definitions of sources, have a powerful role to play in the way the media represents issues. Their utterances often have frames embedded with them. By quoting the source, the journalist is embedding the frame within the story.

The prominence the communicator gives to an external source is part of the framing process (Van Gorp, 2007). This, Van Gorp suggests, is about the construction of meaning.

> Constructionism deals with the process in which individuals and groups actively create social reality from different information sources ... They cannot tell stories effectively without preconceived notions about how to order story elements and about what meanings they could or should impose upon those story elements. (Van Gorp, 2007, p. 84)

Media routines affect which frame sponsors are given a platform in the media. Sponsor activities are conducted by those wishing to influence the framing of an issue, including public officials, public relations officers and social movement organisations, who offer ready-to-use "official" information and apt catchphrases to further their message. Journalists' working routines and practices influence the development of the frame. Official sources are favoured over unofficial sources and the daily news-gathering cycle means journalists have a symbiotic relationship with frame sponsors. Frames "enable journalists to process large amounts of information quickly and routinely [and to] package the information for efficient relay to their audiences" (Gitlin, 1980, p. 7).

Gamson and Modigliani (1989) noted that journalists are both producers and consumers of meaning, reinforcing and reacting to existing media accounts and their perception of what the public wants to read or hear.

2.5. Operationalising the theory

Scheufele (1999) places framing in the context of media effects research, which has swayed between the mass media "strong effects" and "limited effects" approaches. Scheufele notes that the current stage, characterised by social constructivism, combines both the strong and limited effects of mass media, and it is within this theoretical perspective that framing can be operationalised. "Because frames have to be considered schemes for both presenting and comprehending news, two concepts of framing can be specified: media frames and individual frames" (Scheufele, 1999, p. 106).

Understanding that framing research suffers from a lack of a central core theory (Entman, 1993, p. 55; Hertog & McLeod, 2001), we must draw from prior research and determine a sound conceptual and practical basis upon which to conduct the analysis.

The terms "frame" and framing also have varying definitions, including the frame as a framework, and the frame as a shaping mechanism, contribute to its vagueness as a theoretical concept (Van Gorp, 2007). Not all researchers agree that a single conceptualisation is required. D'Angelo (2002) suggests the theoretical and paradigmatic diversity of the framing research program has contributed useful insights.

The term's ambiguity is evident in the variety of approaches that have been used in using framing theory in research.

In their analysis of media discourse and public opinion on nuclear power, Gamson and Modigliani (1989) used the notion of a "media package" with a central "organising idea", or frame, at its core. The frame is largely unspoken and unacknowledged by journalists, and typically contains a range of positions to allow for a degree of controversy. The package has some framing devices (such as metaphors, catchphrases and visual images) that make it possible to display the package as a whole. The authors suggest three determinants. "In sum, packages succeed in media discourse through a combination of cultural resonances, sponsor activities and a successful fit with media norms and practices." (Gamson & Modigliani, 1989, p. 9) Through cultural resonance "certain packages have a natural advantage because their ideas and language resonate with larger cultural themes" making them appear "natural and familiar" (Gamson & Modigliani, 1989, p. 5).

Frames can contain pro, neutral and anti positions on an issue (Gamson & Modigliani, 1989). Climate change activists have used "economic consequences" to their benefit in recent years, describing how the development of renewable energy can be beneficial to the economy. This is in contrast to conservatives who use the economic consequences frame to describe how not using fossil fuels will hurt the economy.

Pan and Kosicki (1993) offered a constructivist approach to examining news discourse with a focus on "conceptualizing news texts into empirically operationalizable dimensions—syntactical, script, thematic, and rhetorical structures—so that evidence of the news media's framing of issues in news texts may be gathered" (ibid, abstract).

The news text is produced by journalists and is subject to the journalist's understanding of organisational constraints, rules, conventions, rituals and structures of news discourse, and anticipated audience responses (Pan & Kosicki, 1993, p. 57). The authors cite Stuart Hall in arguing that "when the text is transmitted to audiences, the structural and lexical features of the news text will 'have the effect of constructing some of the limits and parameters within which decodings will operate'" while acknowledging that audiences are active participants in interpreting the texts. In simpler language, the choice of words and symbols limit the interpretation of the text.

Tankard's (2001) empirical approach to framing proves to be instructive. With the help of a research group, Tankard offers the following definition:

> A frame is a central organising idea for news content that supplies a context and suggests what the issue is through the use of selection, emphasis, exclusion and elaboration. (Tankard, 2001, p. 100)

The group then identified 11 framing mechanisms or focal points for identifying framing, including headlines and kickers, subheads, photographs, photo captions, leads, selection of sources or affiliations, selection of quotes, pull quotes, logos, statistics charts and graphs and concluding statements or paragraphs of articles.

Tankard argues that the approach "makes the rules for identifying frames explicit and takes the subjectivity out of frame identification" (Tankard, 2001, p. 102). However, he also notes that inter-coder reliability was not achieved within the group when testing their method using six frames relating to the abortion issue. Only when the research group reduced the frames to two - generally favourable to abortion and generally unfavourable - did they achieve an acceptable level. This trade-off reduces the diversity and complexity in the research, which is counterproductive when one considers the aim is to move away from simplistic "objectivity and bias" studies.

A more reliable coding was achieved by Maher (cited by (Tankard, 2001)) who looked at the assignment of causes of environmental pollution in Barton Creek, Texas and achieved 94% intercoder reliability. By choosing a particular dimension of framing, the researcher was able to achieve a reliable and replicable research result.

Van Gorp (2010) concedes that a level of subjectivity is implicit in the research. The link between framing device elements and the larger central organising idea requires interpretation from the researcher.

The challenge for the frame analyst is that they belong to the same culture as those producing the frames, rendering them imperceptible to the researcher. Van Gorp (2010) recommends that researchers read materials from a different era on the same topic to identify frames. It is also important to read radical texts to identify frames that would otherwise seem obvious or common sense.

Van Gorp (2010) advances three criteria for the suitability of a frame: the 'thickness' of the frame description, its degree of abstraction and its applicability to other issues. The frame has to be sufficiently abstract for it to be applicable to other issues. Other researchers such as Reese (2001) also describe how the generalisability of frames is important for future research efforts.

Researchers have used both generic and issue-specific framing definitions. Semetko & Valkenburg (2000) drew from previous research for the generic frames of conflict, human interest, economic consequences, morality and responsibility, when analysing the framing of European politics. Other researchers choose frames that are issue-specific, for instance, Tankard's (2001) abortion example or Gamson and Modigliani's (1989) review of nuclear literature. These examples are useful considering this research centres around a particular topic.

2.6. Conclusion

Framing theory is a viable tool in order to understand the current media negotiation of the China-South Africa relationship. It is useful in that it enables the researcher to get to the "generating principle" that resulted in the framing of a story in a particular way, and is also at work on other stories (Reese, 2001).

3. Literature review

In order to understand how the South African press frames the introduction of Mandarin into the South African school curriculum, one first has to review the current research on China in Africa, the research methodologies used and where this research may be situated in the current research landscape. In the following chapter, I first review the history of China-Africa and China-South Africa relations to contextualise the current China-South Africa dialogue. Secondly, I review media research on China in Africa. Finally, I reflect on the relationship between language and power.

3.1. China in Africa

China's relationship with Africa stretches back several hundred years. The first reference to Africa by a Chinese writer was in the Yu-yang-tsa-tsu, a general knowledge encyclopaedia, by Tuan Ch'eng-shih, who died in 863 (Hirth, 1909, bk. 48).

Modern relations started in the late 1950s with a bilateral agreement between Algeria, Egypt, Guinea, Somalia, Morocco and Sudan. Zhou Enlai, who served as the Chinese foreign minister under Mao Zedong, toured 10 African countries between 1963 and 1964, outlining eight principles for foreign aid, including equality, mutual benefit and respect for sovereignty - principles that still guide Chinese foreign aid today (Brautigam, 2008).

China supported several African liberation movements, beginning with the Algerian revolution in the 1950s and 1960s. Chairman Mao met ANC military trainees personally in China, including Raymond Mhlaba, and gave advice on military strategy, in 1961. China later aligned itself with the Pan Africanist Congress due to the ANC's ties with the Soviet Union (Ellis, 2013).

In the late 1970s, China opened up to the world and rode the first wave of globalisation. The USA and other western powerhouses found low-wage labour in China, which helped them sell cheap goods to a growing consumer base in their countries. As China grew its economy, it changed from being a passive player to a dominant actor in the world economy. Chinese enterprises today actively seek out "outlets for their money and goods, for business and markets, and for the raw materials needed to sustain China's rapid growth." (French, 2014, p. 11)

Africa, rich in resources and with a developmental agenda and growing consumer base, has become an ideal market for the Chinese. The trade blueprint begins with the Chinese offering long-term loans to pay for large infrastructure projects such as railways, highways, airports and dams. The financing is usually tied to using Chinese companies, materials and workers, and paying the loans back is usually in the form of long-term mineral supply (French, 2014, p. 12). China's trade with Africa, estimated at

$200 billion in 2012, is far ahead of any western country including the USA. An estimated 1-million Chinese have moved to Africa within the last decade, bringing with them countless small businesses and family networks (French, 2014).

3.2. China-Africa media research

De Beer and Schreiner (2009) evaluated the South African media's coverage of China. Through a content analysis study of major South African newspapers and broadcasters, they found that China received only a little more negative coverage than the UK and USA.

Wasserman's (2012) update on De Beer and Schreiner's work using a similar content analysis methodology and reflected "a balanced to cautiously optimistic picture of China emerging from South African media rather than an overly negative or overly positive one" (Wasserman, 2012, p. 349).

Wekesa (2013) used framing theory to evaluate China's image in four East African newspapers. He found that coverage of China was 'balanced' with more positive coverage than negative coverage, and found that economic consequences and to a lesser extent, conflict, were the dominant frames in coverage.

Umejei (2014) analysed the framing of China's involvement in Nigeria by *Thisday* newspaper, and found two 'mega-frames'. The first, *partner/role* frame, had thematic points of *investment*, *infrastructure*, *trade*, *aid*, *friendship*, *good labour practices* and *prosperous China*. The *predator* frame had thematic points such as *immigration*, *exploitation of resources*, *unaccountable standards*, *scepticism*, *insecurity*, *competition*, *neo-colonialism* and *'fake China'*. The *partner/role frame* was used more than twice as much as the *predator* frame, with 27 articles and 13 articles respectively, indicating a warming relationship in Nigeria.

In a comparative analysis of Chinese and British media coverage of China in Africa, Mørk found that British news stories framed China as "a greedy and skillful capitalist, a determined giant with comprehensive plans to exploit Africa for its resources" while in Chinese media, "frames portray a benevolent developing nation nursing a warm friendship with China's African brothers, while promoting mutual benefit and pragmatic cooperation" (2012, p. v).

In an analysis of coverage trade relations between South Africa and China in three South African publications, Sithole found that no Chinese sources were quoted in coverage, while Robinson found that news on China was seldom positive and "nearly all of the news about China is filtered through non-Chinese mediators" (cited in Finlay, 2013, p. 156). Read (cited in Finlay, 2013) found more favourable coverage of the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation conference which she found was

related to direct access to Chinese sources. Finlay (2013) suggests a deeper qualitative analysis is required on how media houses critically negotiate the China story.

Zeleza (2008, p. 74) describes the China-Africa relationship as being predominantly framed in three ways: imperialism, globalisation and solidarity. According to Zeleza, the imperialist frame is sponsored most loudly by Western commentators. Defenders of the relationship offer solidarity with China as a developing country with no history of imperialism and a glowing example of South-South cooperation. The globalisation frame finds the middle ground, where analysis centres around trade flows and investment, and the 'de-marginalisation' of Africa.

Previous China-Africa research has largely focused on broad-based benchmarks rather than the deeper qualitative analysis. This research focuses on a single issue, which therefore contributes a new area of research in China-Africa media studies.

3.3. Language and power

In order for humans to work together, they need to communicate with one another. Language is our primary tool for communication, and thus, informed by the critical perspective, the languages used in the production process become the languages of power (Alexander, 2005, p. 3).

The intersection of language and power can be traced back through South African history. The original European settlers, who arrived in 1652, spoke Dutch, which eventually evolved into Afrikaans. When the British gained control in 1822, they instituted English as the official language of schools, church and government. This, among other factors such as laws against slavery, forced the Afrikaaners to move northward and establish the Transvaal region. The Afrikaaners only won the right to be taught in Afrikaans in 1925, after which it was seen on an equal footing with English. The National Party's 1948 election into government and its ensuing policy of apartheid entrenched Afrikaans as an official language alongside English.

Language during the apartheid era was a political and economic device:

> Today 19 of the 20 Cabinet members are native Afrikaans speakers. English, however, still holds greater prestige in finance and education. English is an urban, international language and Afrikaans mainly a rural, national one. English is the language of the more liberal newspapers as well as most black newspapers. Afrikaans is the language of the labor bureaus, the police, and the prisons, which explains black Africans' antipathy toward it. (Marjorie, 1982)

In 1976, learners protested against the use of Afrikaans as a medium of instruction, in what came to

be known as the Soweto Uprising. Ironically, the use of vernacular in schools was also resisted by black South Africans as it was seen as a method of distancing the majority of the population from the economy and political power (Marjorie, 1982).

For Alexandar (2005), all language planning serves ideological and political goals. Thus "language policy, class and power are tightly interwoven" (Alexander, 2005, p. 15). This perspective, therefore, suggests that language policy decisions could represent deeper power shifts within the China-South Africa relationship.

The role of English in South Africa and responses to English offer a case study in how language and power interplay. Despite being an official language and commonly referred to as the language of business, English is not immune to criticism.

Parmegiani (2012) describes common metaphors used in describing the role of the English language in South Africa.

Firstly English can be seen as a "linguistic poacher" and "killer language". A *Daily News* article in 1999 headlined "Prominence of English kills African languages" reads:

> The New South Africa presides over the death of African languages. Not only are we overseeing the death of African languages, but we are also acting as both executioner and grave-digger. We are truly killing and burying our African languages and the tragedy is there are very few mourners. For a variety of understandable reasons, African parents are increasingly choosing English as the medium of instruction by sending their children to the more privileged schools in the suburb. ("Prominence of English Kills African Languages," 1999)

Similar headlines such as "English Onslaught: Indigenous Languages under threat" ("English Onslaught: Indigenous Languages under threat," 2000) and "English is a killer language in S.A" (Herman, 2006) indicates that the framing of a language as a threat to other languages is done using emotive symbolism.

Secondly, the use of English is seen as a gatekeeper – a barrier to people participating in society. A potential employer is more likely to hire someone with a good command of English.

Thirdly, English is described as a "coloniser of the mind". Parmegiani (2012, p. 82) cites Thiong'o's *Decolonising the Mind (1986)*, where the Kenyan author states:

The biggest weapon wielded and actually daily unleashed by imperialism against collective defiance is the cultural bomb. The effect of a cultural bomb is to annihilate a people's belief in their names, in their languages, in their environment, in their heritage of struggle, in their unity, in their capacities, and ultimately in themselves. It makes them see their past as one wasteland of non-achievement and it makes them want to distance themselves from that wasteland. It makes them want to identify with that which is furthest removed from themselves; for instance, with other people's languages rather than their own. It makes them identify with that which is decadent and reactionary, all those forces which would stop their spring of life. (Thiong'o, 1986)

The fuse that ignites the cultural bomb, according to Thiong'o, is language.

These frames – *English as the killer*, *English as the gatekeeper* and *English as the coloniser* – have been prevalent for decades. They provide the "organising idea" and "generating principles" for the language policy debate around the introduction of the Mandarin as an optional language. Although they are widely different policies (English as the medium of instruction and the primary language of business, and Mandarin as an optional language in public schooling), the underlying principles are similar and well established.

3.4. Soft power and language

President Hu Jintao introduced China's "soft power" policy in 2007, and it also grew under President Xi Jinping. Soft power, coined by Joseph Nye, is "the ability to get what one wants by attraction and persuasion rather than coercion or payment" (Nye, 2012). By one estimate, China spends 10 billion dollars every year on soft power initiatives, which include media, publishing, the arts, sports and education (Shambaugh, 2015). There are 475 Confucius Institutes worldwide, compared to 160 German Goethe-Institut and 70 British Council centers (ibid).

Part of China's soft power education foray has been promoting the teaching of Mandarin in schools in Africa. The Kenya Institute of Curriculum Development (KICD) announced that Mandarin will be offered as an optional language in schools from 2017. The Lagos State Commissioner for Education said that Lagos state would introduce Mandarin into the public schools' curriculum from 2013. However, there is little reporting on the effect of the introduction. Olagunju (2014) states that 30 primary and secondary schools are teaching Chinese in Lagos State. The Zimbabwean Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education has proposed Mandarin as a compulsory subject in its draft curriculum framework, which is yet to be ratified ("Government changes education syllabus," 2015).

The introduction of the language into the public school curriculum has followed a similar trajectory in African countries.

First, one or several Confucius Institutes aligned to a university are established in the country, where free or subsidised courses are offered to students. Bursaries are offered to students to study abroad in China, often with a precondition that the students learn Mandarin before their studies commence. Over 40 Confucius Institutes have been established in Africa, up from six in 2004 (Penn, 2014).

The Chinese government offers volunteers to teach in extra-curricular clubs or to teach in private schools where adoption can occur without legislative change. Private schools often lead the adoption, as in Uganda, where Luyanzi College started teaching Mandarin in 2011, and private support from both the Ugandan education ministry and the Chinese embassy. The Chinese embassy offers materials and teachers from abroad, as well as free training of teachers locally. Finally, the embassy applies to the government to add Mandarin to the curriculum, usually as an optional subject.

3.5. Conclusion

The representation of the introduction of Mandarin in South African schools is thus contextualised by the rising economic relationship between China and Africa, the introduction of Mandarin as part of China's soft-power policy on the African continent, the relationship between language and power in the South African context, and the role of the media in South Africa.

The literature review reveals media framing theory as a viable tool with which to unpack the media representation of the introduction of Mandarin into the South African school curriculum. Recent media framing and content analysis studies have tended to follow a broad baseline analysis. This research builds on this prior work by offering a deeper reading on a single issue.

4. Methodology

4.1. Sample selection and size

In 2013 in South Africa there were 22 daily and 25 weekly major urban newspapers and about 400 regional or community papers, with 17,5-million people or about 50% of South Africans over the age of 15 reading newspapers ("The press in South Africa," n.d.).

The South African print media is dominated by four major media groups: Media24, Independent Newspapers, the Times Media Group, and CaxtonCTP, which own most of the country's newspapers.

A content analysis of articles published by South African newspapers between 1 March 2015 and 31 October 2015 was conducted to identify and measure the frames used. The starting date of the time frame was chosen because the announcement of the introduction of Mandarin to the South African school curriculum was made in March 2015. The end date of the time frame was chosen in order to confine the study to a reasonable sample size of 50 articles.

The data sample was collected using the Lexis-Nexis Academic database. Lexis-Nexis was chosen due to the broad range of English language South African newspapers in its database.

The search phrase "Mandarin AND school" was used, with the search query limited to "All South African news sources" between 1 March 2015 and 31 October 2015. The newspaper sources include *The Star*, the *Mercury*, the *Sunday Times*, the *Mail & Guardian*, the *New Age*, *Business Day*, the *Sowetan*, the *Cape Argus* and the *Herald*.

Articles that were false positives, in that they did not discuss the Mandarin in public schools issue, were removed from the sample.

This is an example of purposive sampling, which is accepted practice in qualitative research, especially with small results sets (Jupp, 2006).

A total of 50 articles were found using the collection method and were categorised as either news, opinion and editorial, or letters as described by Lexis-Nexis metadata.

4.2. Frame sponsor analysis

Source analysis was conducted to understand the influence of "frame sponsors" who promote their perspectives in the public domain (Gamson & Modigliani, 1989, p. 6) and guide public opinion.

4.3. Frame identification

The researcher read each article several times and developed a list of themes. Once the list was developed it was refined into a series of frame definitions that were used to count the occurrence of the frames.

4.4. Coding procedure

The research approach used inductive analysis rather than deductive analysis. That is, the frames were identified as the research was conducted rather than beforehand.

The text - including headlines, subheads, leads, selection of sources, selection of quotes, pull quotes and concluding statements - was analysed in order to identify frames. Photographs and photo captions have been omitted as photographs aren't available in the Lexis-Nexis archives. Thus, this study is confined to textual analysis only.

Once the news frames were identified and described, their usage was measured using the "list of frames" method described by Tankard (2001).

The researcher developed a list of frames using the following approach:

1. Make the range of possible frames explicit
2. Put the various possible frames in a manifest list
3. Develop keywords, catchphrases and symbols to help detect each frame
4. Use the frames in the list as categories in content analysis
5. Get coders to code articles or other kinds of content into these categories

Additionally, I used the "interpretive package" technique (Gamson & Modigliani, 1989) to further describe the frame and guide coding.

This study does not seek to review all frames used in the data set. (Texts can have dozens of frames depending on the level of abstraction.) This study focuses on frames that have specific resonance with the China-South Africa relationship on political, economic and social levels, and affect the way the relationship is presented in the media.

4.5. Conclusion

The subject of this framing study is South Africa's relationship to China, seen through the prism of the introduction of Mandarin in the public school curriculum debate. At issue is how the South

African media negotiates the South Africa - China relationship. By employing a combination of the "list of frames" and "interpretative package" methodology, one can empirically measure the frequency of particular frames in media texts and thus the impact that this framing has on the debate. In addition, source analysis enables us to determine who the main sponsors are of these frames, and which voices have been left out.

5. Findings

The research sets out to unpack the South African media's framing of the introduction of Mandarin into the South African school curriculum. The author found framing theory to be most appropriate in understanding the media's representation of the issue. The literature review revealed that content analysis and framing have been used as viable methods in previous research, but also found that researchers have largely focused on broad baseline analysis rather than on specific issues. The researcher chose the "list of frames" methodology in order to minimise subjectivity during data collection. The findings are reflected in the following chapter.

5.1. Coverage types and publishers

Of the 50 articles identified in the sample, 24 were news articles, 21 were opinion or editorial and five were categorised as letters (see Table 1 below).

The sample shows that the topic was not only deemed newsworthy but also encouraged commentary in the form of opinion pieces, letters and newspaper editorials.

Table 1: Percentage of articles by section

Section	No. of articles	Ratio
Letter	5	10%
News	24	48%
Opinion & Editorial	21	42%

A wide range of South African newspapers covered the topic and the Lexis-Nexis database contained articles from 14 different newspapers, which include newspapers from three major newspaper groups Media24, Independent Newspapers, and the Times Media Group. It should be noted that the database is not exhaustive and does not contain articles from *The Citizen*, for instance.

The *Mail & Guardian* had nine articles on the topic, followed by eight articles by *The Star* and six by the *Sowetan* and *Cape Argus* respectively (see Table 2 below).

Table 2: Percentage of articles by publication

Publication	No. of articles	Ratio
Mail & Guardian	9	18%
The Star	8	16%

Sowetan	6	12%
Cape Argus	6	12%
The Times	4	8%
Post	4	8%
Business Day	3	6%
Cape Times	2	4%
The Mercury	2	4%
Sunday World	2	4%
Sunday Times	1	2%
The Herald	1	2%
The New Age	1	2%
Sunday Tribune	1	2%

The number of articles and the range of publications indicates that the newspaper titles found the issue to be important and newsworthy. The issue elicited attention because it raises a number of issues, including:

1. South Africa's education language policies and how language and power intersect.
2. The growing role of China-South Africa relations and rules by which sovereign countries should interact (including contestation around the definition of corruption versus trade).
3. The South African government's increasingly non-consultative approach to public policy-making.

The issues resonated with the media's role as a watchdog of government and a platform and forum for debate (Burton, 2010). This meant that the issue was widely reported and offers enough content to identify several frames.

5.2. Frame analysis

During the frame identification phase a thematic grouping emerged. Frames describing the China-South Africa relationship tended to cluster around themes of *imperialism*, *globalisation* and *nationalism*, which I describe as "mega-frames". As frames can have different levels of abstraction, it is common to find frames within frames. The "mega-frames" nomenclature was used by Umejei (2014), who used the term to describe the China *partner* and *predator* frames.

The *imperialism* and *globalisation* frames are consistent with Zeleza's (2008) analysis of China-Africa discourse, while *nationalism* is more specific to this study, and describes South Africa's

continuing search for a national identity.

The *imperialism* mega-frame had the following frames contained within it:
- *Chinese imperialism*. China is an imperialist and wants to colonise South Africa economically and culturally. There is an unequal relationship, which China dominates.
- *Corruption.* The South African government and the Chinese are in a corrupt relationship. The introduction of Mandarin is a direct result of corruption.
- *Government imposition.* The South African government does not consult with stakeholders and imposes language policy on others.

The *globalisation* mega-frame had the following frames contained within it:
- *Deepening trade relations.* China is an important trading partner and understanding Mandarin improves our trade relationship.
- *Job opportunities.* Understanding one of China's dialects enables South Africans to study overseas and get jobs.
- *Improving cultural understanding.* Learning Mandarin enables South Africans to understand Chinese culture and embrace foreign citizens.
- *Freedom to choose.* Learners, who are global citizens, should be given the choice to learn whatever they wish to learn.

The *nationalism* mega-frame had one frame contained within it:
- *Replacing indigenous languages.* By adding Mandarin to the syllabus, it takes away from indigenous language promotion.

While the nationalism mega-frame relates more to the South African government role than the China-South Africa relationship, it is important to note the challenge of nationalism and national identity within the context of bilateral relationships.

This study found that the replacing *indigenous languages* frame was found in 52% of articles, followed by the Chinese imperialism frame in 48% of articles and the *deepening trade relations* frame found in 46% of articles (see Table 3 below).

Table 3: Identified frames

Frames	No. of Articles	Ratio
Imperialism mega-frame		
Chinese imperialism	24	48%
Government imposition	8	16%
Corrupt relationship	7	14%
Globalisation mega-frame		
Deepening trade relations	23	46%
Freedom to choose	13	26%
Cultural understanding	4	8%
Job opportunities	2	4%
Nationalism mega-frame		
Replacing indigenous languages	26	52%

In aggregate, the imperialism frames were found 39 times, the globalisation frames 42 times and the nationalism frames 26 times. It should be noted that more than one frame could be found in the same article, however if a frame was found multiple times in the same article, it was not counted twice.

5.2.1. Imperialism

The imperialism[2] mega-frame consists of the *Chinese imperialism*, *government imposition* and *corrupt relationship* frames. The imperialism frame characterises the China-South Africa and China-Africa relationships as unequal, with China imposing its economic might on the continent. This frame has a decades-long history. President Julius Nyerere conceded that Tanzania-China relations were between "most unequal equals" (cited in Zeleza, 2008, p. 178).

Zeleza noted that political literature in the 1980s was largely dismissive of Africa's value to China,

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[2] Imperialism is described as "a policy of extending a country's power and influence through colonization, use of military force, or other means" ("imperialism - definition of imperialism in English from the Oxford dictionary," n.d.). The frame is invoked with words such as "colonisation", "colonialism", "master", "imposition", "indoctrination", "for sale" and "subjugation".

but with China's growing interest in Africa, policy makers have now tended to the other extreme, warning of Africa's re-colonisation (ibid). Mork (2012) found this framing largely evident in British media coverage with articles "littered with references to the new scramble for Africa, China's colonial ambitions and China's African safari" (Mørk, 2012, p. 24). This description is exemplified by a Guardian article entitled "Beijing's Race for Africa", which suggests that China's Africa policy

> is plainly designed to make money, win friends, and gain influence. In Africa, it is as if the era of 19th century imperial expansion is happening all over again - but this time freebies and open check books have replaced glass beads and pith helmets. (Tisdall, 2006)

5.2.1.1. Chinese imperialism

In 46% of articles, the *Chinese imperialism* frame was invoked. This frame sees China as a skilful manipulator, who is able to colonise South Africa politically, economically and socially. The frame was shared in a number of articles and persisted throughout the research data set.

In this frame, China is presented as practising imperialism by encouraging the introduction of Mandarin into the schools' curriculum.

The frame has persisted over several decades. Since China has opened up to the world in the 1970s, it has been accused of an imperialistic agenda, both by western commentators and by Africans. South African President Thabo Mbeki warned against Chinese neo-colonial adventures, with the trade of raw commodities for badly manufactured imports (Zeleza, 2008). Zeleza notes that "some of the loudest warnings against China's colonialist or neo-colonialist ambitions come from South Africa", a consequence of its "own hegemonic ambitions across the continent" (Zeleza, 2008).

Using Gamson and Modigliani's (1989) interpretive package approach, one could describe the frame as follows:

> South Africa has a history of colonisation, from the original Dutch and British settlers, to the colonisation by the National Party during apartheid. The Chinese seek to colonise us again and the South African government are aiding the process. The government is naive and inviting the Chinese to take over our country. Language is a powerful tool of colonisation, and allowing Mandarin to be taught is the first step in this process.

In a *Mail & Guardian* article entitled "Teaching Mandarin at school 'will colonise SA anew' - Sadtu", SADTU general secretary Mugwena Maluleke uses historical examples to introduce the frame:

"As Sadtu we see it as colonisation. As much as during colonisation some people were complicit in selling our souls, that's what's happening [again now]," he said.

"We're going to make sure that we've got serious campaigns against this particular colonisation. We see it as the worst form of imperialism that is going to happen in Africa." (Nkosi, 2015a)

The union also rejected "another foreign domination" and remarked, "Our culture and souls as a nation are not for sale" (Molefe, 2015).

An editorial entitled "Sorry, my China, but Mandarin classes can 'hamba'" in *The Times* is as damning, with another reference to South Africa's past:

Why is the government handing over our land to colonialists? ... Are we about to be colonised yet again, and why is the government handing over our country to a foreign superpower? ... It is doubtful the populace wants to be colonised by a new master. History teaches us that imposition leads to rebellion and this government cannot just roll us over and hope for good results. ("Sorry, my China, but Mandarin classes can 'hamba,'" 2015)

The headline uses South African slang and vernacular to drive home the point that Mandarin is not welcome in the South African syllabus. The use of hyperbole such as "for sale" and "handing over our country" is a feature of this frame.

The relationship between language and power is invoked in a letter headlined "We don't want Mandarin as subject in our schools":

Lest we forget, language was the first entry point to the colonisation of Africa. It imparts the ability to accept commands and the ability to take instructions. (McKenzie, 2015)

For proponents of globalisation, the ability to accept commands and take instructions would be seen positively. Yet the imperialism frame cuts out the role of trade relations, relying on references to Africa's colonial past.

Language is a primary instrument for expansion and subjugation. The Chinese have realised that African people allowed European colonisers such as Portugal, France and Britain to conquer them through their languages and ended up controlling their economies. (Shishenge, 2015)

"Colonialism and apartheid have limited our people ... which in turn has limited our view of the world. ... Colonialism and apartheid have denied our people their language and this has denied them of their

rich culture and heritage. ("Teachers slate move to Mandarin," 2015)

Mashile goes further, describing the introduction of the optional subject as indoctrination:

> We must therefore seek to understand what has gone wrong in the mind of the ANC, that the party voluntarily invites foreigners not only to indoctrinate our children, but indirectly to run our country. (Mashele, 2015)

Some commentators see imperialism as inevitable and reflect on which imperialist should be preferred.

> In fact, one of my friends says he will defend US imperialism with his life, because he can't imagine himself being colonised by the Chinese....

> Echoing the sentiments of Sadtu, my friend said: "I spent almost my entire life trying to learn and understand the intricacies of English. I cannot therefore even begin to imagine myself trying to learn Mandarin, or whatever dialect the Chinese will foist upon us once they've displaced the Americans as the indirect rulers of our continent. Let's defend the Americans with our lives." (Khumalo, 2015)

As this frame was predominant in the sample, it did receive some counter-framing arguments, reflecting on South Africa's sovereignty and diplomacy. For example:

> There is no China coming over to gobble up South Africa, with Mandarin paving the way towards her cultural and economic colonisation. And the South African government is not some gullible, mindless native child ready to prostitute herself to China with all her economic might, her power and her glory. (Siwisa, 2015)

The *Mail & Guardian* reflected on how other colonial languages that are optional in the South African school syllabus did not attract as much attention.

> The fact that other languages of colonisation in Africa, such as Portuguese, were also approved by Motshekga as additional optional languages, failed to attract Sadtu's ire. Perhaps there is no outcry over these languages because Portuguese remains an official language in places such as Angola and Mozambique, as French does across West Africa. Nobody, it seems, questions the utility of learning those languages, so why should we be closed to languages spoken elsewhere in the world? ...

> If there are concerns about China "colonising" South Africa and other parts of the continent, refusing to learn one of its languages will not make the problem go away. ("Editorial: Reject China's policies, not its lingo," 2015)

The *Chinese imperialism* frame was a persistent and shared frame throughout the research period. Despite the contradiction that former colonisers such as Portugal and France also have their languages in the South African syllabus, the imperialism frame is easily invoked due to China's growing role on the continent and fears of a second colonisation of Africa.

These fears are driven by the increasingly murky relationship between state governments. The South African government has made a conscious decision to develop a relationship - socially, politically and economically - that surpasses other bilateral relationships, including education exchanges for its top state-owned enterprise executives (de Wet, 2015). Language such as "win-win" and "mutual admiration" suggest a relationship that is too cosy in some people's eyes. The expectation amongst the public would be for rigorous negotiation, rather than "mutual admiration".

The intertwined relationship, which extends to the alleged sponsorship of an ANC political school ("Chinese may fund ANC's political school," 2014) means that one cannot get a clear understanding of the terms with which China and South Africa engage. This anxiety plays a part in the representation of China as an imperialist.

Secondly, the imperialism fears are driven by China's "scramble" for African resources and markets with at times unethical business practices and a lack of respect for worker's rights. The result is that China's spreading influence on the continent bears similarity to the previous nineteenth-century colonial era and the current Western neo-colonial era. By preventing international intervention in the Darfur genocide, the Beijing government put itself on par with western powers that likewise allowed genocide to occur in Rwanda and the DRC (Lee, 2006).

These factors give rise to the frame of *Chinese imperialism*.

5.2.1.2. Government imposition

The ***government imposition*** frame is used in 14% of articles. The following interpretative package was used to define the frame:

> The South African government did not consult with anyone and is imposing Mandarin on us, whether we like it or not. They are shoving it down our throats. It's a deal that has been made between China and South Africa, and we've had no say in it.

Keywords and symbols in this frame include "imposition", "non-consultation" and "done deal".

SADTU argued that they had not been consulted, which implies that the government is imposing the policy change on schools and teachers.

> Sadtu pointed out that the authorities did not consult stakeholders on the introduction of the Chinese language at schools. (Molefe, 2015)

While Chinese stated policies towards Africa include respect for sovereignty, equality and mutual benefit (Zeleza, 2008, p. 178) this frame suggests that the Chinese are influencing the South African government into more authoritarian practices.

> This announcement was preceded by news of the ANC dispatching delegations to learn from the Communist Party of China. It is even alleged that China has committed to bankrolling the construction of a political school for the ANC in South Africa. (Mashele, 2015)

By associating the Mandarin issue with other related news about the ANC learning from the Chinese government, the frame is given additional power.

In an article headlined "Like it or not, SA schools set to teach Mandarin", SADTU General Secretary Maluleke takes exception to the prominence of the language introduction - suggesting ulterior motives are at play.

> "Why Mandarin all of a sudden is the only language they are sending a circular about, then they still say it's non-official? It's [being] imposed. If people must exercise their freedom to choose, why are you not leaving it in the registrar and say this is one of the languages that have been approved officially? Why do you go into pain to even use our money to issue a circular? (Nkosi, 2015b)

The imposition frame is also evident in a *Times* editorial, combining historical examples and emotive language to castigate the government:

> It is troubling that the Zuma administration feels that it can just shove Mandarin down our children's throats and claim that it will serve this nation's interests. ... History teaches us that imposition leads to rebellion and this government cannot just roll us over and hope for good results ("Sorry, my China, but Mandarin classes can 'hamba,'" 2015)

By using the frame *government imposition*, frame sponsors use South Africa's history of subjugation and associated symbols to focus the debate on the government's authoritarian practices.

5.2.1.3. Corrupt relationship

The *corrupt relationship* frame presents the China-South Africa relationship as dishonest.

The frame is summarised as follows:

The Chinese have bought off the South African government through a corrupt relationship. The Chinese have brought gifts and in return the South African government has allowed them to take over our country.

The frame is not unique to the South African situation, as Zeleza (2008) describes:

> In this narrative, the Chinese are flourishing in Africa because being corrupt and authoritarian themselves, they are not averse to doing business with Africa's corrupt and authoritarian regimes; they pay no heed to ostensibly enlightened trading and lending criteria of western countries and their international financial institutions. (Zeleza, 2008)

This narrative is sometimes evident in western media reports, with *The Guardian* reporting that "freebies and open check books have replaced glass beads and pith helmets" (Tisdall, 2006), a reference to the colonial era.

This frame persisted throughout the research period and was surprisingly not counter-argued effectively by other frame sponsors.

This frame introduces China as a corrupting force, willing to employ corruption to achieve its goals. The initial frame sponsor was SADTU, who introduced the idea that there was a link between the sponsorship of tablet computers and the introduction of Mandarin as a subject, without substantiation.

> "Clearly it's corruption. The department must tell us what did they receive from China that they don't want to be open about it. We're not having a problem with the Chinese or their language. We have bilateral agreements with them and we're in Brics. We have no problem with that.

> "The issue is what's in for these officials and these politicians. Does this thing of the tablets [being distributed in Gauteng schools] have anything to do with this particular thing? Who has received a kickback out of these tablets? If you discount a tablet for me, do I have to give you my life?" (Nkosi, 2015b)

This frame was also emphasised by letter writer Smit and Shishenge:

> The introduction of Mandarin seems like a payment to the Chinese for all the kickbacks that certain

people received from the Chinese government. These kickbacks have caused the collapse of certain sectors of our economy. (Smit, 2015)

Shishenge makes the frame explicit: the South African government is being controlled by the mutually corrupt Chinese government.

> Remember this saying: "The hand that feeds you controls you". I mention this because the Huawei tablets that the South African children are given seem to have been donated by China so that the Department of Education would push Mandarin in our schools. (Shishenge, 2015)

Political commentator Prince Mashele uses the China-Africa corruption narrative to express how China enables African corruption.

> The idea is that, since transparency is not their culture, the Chinese will be better partners. In other words, the Chinese will let us become what we have always been – corrupt Africans. (Mashele, 2015)

The amount of space that the media gave this frame to develop, with little factual substantiation, indicates that *corrupt relationship* is a frame that is well organised, shared and persistent.

5.2.2. Globalisation

The *globalisation* mega-frame was used to justify the introduction of Mandarin as a way of *deepening trade relations*, offering teachers and learners *freedom to choose*, improve *cultural understanding* and bring about local and foreign *job opportunities*.

Zeleza (2008) suggests that globalisation in the context of China-Africa relationship is primarily focused on the economic dimension and the integration of the African economy into world markets.

> While, globalisation has many dimensions - economic, political, cultural, and technological - involving intensified exchanges of capital and commodities as much as ideas and images, peoples and practices, values and viruses, those who discuss the China-Africa relationship are preoccupied with the flows of trade and investment. From this perspective, the growth of China's relationship with Africa is often seen as a rescuing Africa from marginalisation into the world economic mainstream. (Zeleza, 2008, p. 174)

Agreeing with Zeleza, this research focuses on globalisation in its economic dimension. While globalisation has negative connotations in some literature, this frame leads to a pragmatic rather than paranoid relationship between South Africa and China. It recognises that both countries are interacting in order the further their interests, but that the negotiation is on relatively equal terms.

5.2.2.1. Deepening trade relations

The *deepening trade relations* frame was used in 46% of articles. The main frame sponsor was the South African government, primarily represented by the Department of Basic Education.

The interpretive package is described below:

> China is an important trading partner to South Africa; it is also the world's second biggest economy. Language is sometimes a barrier to buying and selling goods and services effectively. By learning Mandarin, we will be able to negotiate better and improve our mutual understanding.

This frame leads the reader to understand the introduction of Mandarin as an economic issue, rather than a political or cultural issue (such as language policy).

This preoccupation with trade and investment exchanges is made clear in commentaries. The frame's keywords and symbols include "biggest trading partner", "second biggest economy", "superpower" and "major economic force".

Under the sub-heading "Strengthening trade ties", Nkosi (2015b) quotes the Department of Basic Education:

> At the time Motshekga's office said: "As [China is] South Africa's biggest trading partner, it is important for our children to become proficient in the Confucius language and develop a good understanding of Chinese culture." (Nkosi, 2015b)

The phrase "biggest trading partner" was reflected in 11 articles in the data set. The *deepening trade relations* frame the introduction of Mandarin as a symbol of further integration.

> It was another sign of SA's growing economic and diplomatic relations with China, the country's largest single trade partner. Their broad strategic partnership agreements meant South Africa-China ties are assuming a significant position in continental and global affairs, the department said. (Staff Writer, 2015)

In other examples, the connection was made more explicit, linking language ability to business performance.

> China does a great deal of business in Africa, so knowing Mandarin would be helpful to African entrepreneurs and state officials. ("Editorial: Reject China's policies, not its lingo," 2015)

Under the headline "China and the language of trade", Phakathi (2015) finds a similar line of reasoning - a tool that increases opportunities and a symbol of strengthening relations.

> "Most students choose Chinese because of the powerful influence of China as a rising nation both politically and economically, and they also see and believe that there will be more opportunities for their future if they know the Chinese language as there are more and more business investments and co-operations between the two countries (SA and China)," Prof Yu says. ...

> With some experts suggesting Mandarin could be the "new English" as China's influence grows, SA's education institutions seem to be taking the lead in pushing for a greater understanding of the language and Chinese culture. This is likely to strengthen relations between SA and China. (Phakathi, 2015)

China's position as the second largest economy in the world is also strongly supported:

> China is already the second biggest economy in the world. Indications are that the day is not too far off before it overtakes America's and becomes the largest. It therefore makes sense to give South African children a head start if the rise of China as an economic superpower is inevitable. (Moya, 2015)

While the connection between understanding a language and doing trade may seem obvious to some readers, the "obviousness" of it is framing in action. SADTU's counter-argument makes this point clear, asking why do other foreign nations rely on interpreters when trading if learning each other's language was the key to increased trade.

> Why is it that it's only Africa that finds it simple to talk about economic ties? You can go to a small country in Europe where they speak their languages; they have interpreters everywhere. It's only in Africa where you can have a situation where we're not talking about [learning] Swahili, isiZulu or any African language, but Mandarin." (Nkosi, 2015a)

The deepening trade relations frame positions China as a rising superpower, able to pull South Africa along with it, if it learns to relate better to China. The growing economic relationship between China and South Africa is offered as reason enough to introduce Mandarin into the curriculum.

5.2.2.2. Freedom to choose

Closely linked to the globalisation frame is the *freedom to choose* frame, which links individual sovereignty and self-determination to the introduction of the subject. As Mandarin is offered as an optional subject, this frame situates the language as an opportunity to learn and grow individually.

Offering opportunities, of course, costs money and time – a point made clearly by opponents. This frame seeks to downplay the political and economic aspects of the language introduction and rather focus on the individual and school's choice to learn and teach the language.

Due to the strong *imperialism* and *indigenous language* framing, government officials had to repeatedly make the point that the subject was optional and that schools and learners were free to choose not to teach it or learn the subject.

> Elijah Mhlanga, spokesperson for the department, has told the M&G the introduction of Mandarin is above board. "We have said this before and we will repeat it because it is necessary: Mandarin as a language in school is optional, unofficial and those who wish to offer it will do so. It's not compulsory." (Nkosi, 2015b)

Motshekga was also forced to clarify the adding of Mandarin to the list of foreign languages.

> She said the council had also noted the "misconceptions in the media" about the addition of Mandarin to the list of foreign languages offered in schools. Motshekga said Mandarin was available to schools that wished to offer it "at an optional third language level". It will have no impact on our current compulsory curriculum in which it is mandatory to take two South African languages. ("African language project a 'challenge,'" 2015)

Deputy Minister in the Presidency Buti Manamela described the opposition to Mandarin as a hindrance on children to learn another language.

> Manamela said he did not understand the anger and displeasure expressed by people at the announcement by Basic Education Minister Angie Motshekga of the approval of voluntary teaching of Mandarin in schools across the country. "I thought children were already learning Mandarin and many other languages through informal education institutions and informal programmes," he said. "By reacting in this manner, we're inhibiting our own children and youth by saying they cannot learn a different language." (Tlhabye, 2015)

Other optional languages in the curriculum, which include colonial languages such as German, Portuguese and French, had not received the same criticism, leading commentators to question the motives of naysayers.

> According to the Education Department, Mandarin will be optional, just like Greek, French and Latin are. It is hard to fault the Education Department's logic behind introducing Mandarin. ... Surely those worried about the imposition of foreign languages to our schools are inconsistent if they do not have

problems with Greek or Latin, which seem to have no more than a sentimental value to those who choose to learn them. (Moya, 2015)

Schools would have the option to teach the language, but would not be required to do so - a point not lost on the Governing Body Foundation's Chief Executive Tim Gordon.

> We are neutral to this. We are not for or against (Mandarin) being implemented. Remember, this would be an additional subject for schools, who want to teach it. No one is required to do it. It's up to the schools to decide. ("Comment," 2015)

As globalisation takes hold, parents and learners and becoming more aware of the need for individuals to have globally relevant skills.

> Learning an extra language, even Chinese, does open up new doors, and few parents would be impervious to the chance of more opportunities to their children. (Thinane-Epondo, 2015)

According to this frame, understanding Mandarin represents one of these skills to be acquired by the new global citizen.

5.2.2.3. Cultural understanding

The *cultural understanding* frame was represented in four articles (8%). It links the introduction of Mandarin to South Africa's continuing efforts to reintegrate South African society both internally and externally.

The interpretative package is as follows:

> South Africa is the Rainbow Nation, with a diverse people. As South Africa deals with issues of reconciliation between different race groups and cultures, we need to support into efforts to broaden learners' cultural understanding. Additionally, our recent experience of xenophobic attacks against foreigners highlights the need to develop our appreciation for foreign languages and cultures.

Park (2009) cites an estimate that there are approximately 250,000 to 350,000 Chinese living in South Africa, making it the largest population of Chinese in Africa. Chinese South Africans were discriminated against by the apartheid government, but were initially excluded from employment equity and black economic empowerment legislation. A court order in June 2008 redefined Chinese South Africans as 'black' resulting in a backlash in the media. Two Chinese nationals were victims of xenophobic attacks (Park, 2009). "Continued media representations of China's 'invasion' and 'neo-colonialisation' of Africa also contribute to a negative climate for all Chinese on the continent" (Park, 2009, p. 162).

Frame sponsors, such as director of the Confucius Institute at the University of Johannesburg, Lyu Jiangao, see the introduction of Mandarin as a "calculated tactic to inculcate a knowledge of Chinese culture in the country's citizens".

> "When we arrive here, we really find it necessary to promote a mutual understanding between the two countries and their people. ... From my point of view, a correct understanding between the two countries and its people is necessary. The UJ Confucius Institute finds it necessary for us to promote this kind of mutual understanding between the people and the countries."

Siswisa (2015) suggests that by learning Mandarin, South Africans are strengthening society.

> The point is: We introduce Mandarin as an optional language, adding to the other already taught optional languages, to reflect our rich multicultural fabric of society, as we bind ourselves into a socially cohesive entity.

> We are uniting in our diversity, as we strengthen our 21-year-old democracy and 19-year-old constitution. In doing so, as a sovereign country, we relate with other countries as necessitated by our national interests. And China, the second largest economy in the world, is but one of them. (Siwisa, 2015)

The frame of *cultural understanding* invites readers to focus on the diverse society of South Africa and gain an understanding of other cultures, such as the Chinese culture.

5.2.2.4. Job opportunities

Globalisation offers the promise for South Africans to become global citizens and seek employment abroad. In two articles (4%), the *job opportunities* frame was evident. This frame was led by Chinese academics from the Confucius Institute who suggested that career prospects are enhanced by learning Mandarin.

With high unemployment rates in South Africa, university students see learning Mandarin as a gateway to foreign jobs, as described by Lyu Jiangao, director of the Confucius Institute at the University of Johannesburg (UJ).

> "The main task of Confucius Institute is to promote language and cultural exchange," Lyu said. Learning Mandarin could also open job opportunities for South African in China, he reckons. "Some students just want to find a job in China after graduating." (Nkosi, 2015d)

Under the headline "It will enhance job opportunities", a student remarks:

> If I can speak Mandarin and English, my job opportunities will be enhanced, said Khumalo, who is also studying French. If I don't find work in South Africa, I can look for employment in China, Singapore and Taiwan. ("It will enhance job opportunities", 2015)

Runji (2015) identifies the benefits that learning a foreign language can have for social mobility – the ability to move between social strata in society.

> Proponents of adopting Mandarin speak of the prospects for social mobility and the economic opportunities that learning and understanding the Chinese language offer. (Runji, 2015)

This frame is surprisingly sparingly used considering the current South African economic climate and the paucity of jobs. Frame sponsors rather focused on more macro-economic frames such as *deepening trade relations*, rather than looking at individual opportunities.

5.2.3. Nationalism

The nationalism mega-frame had one frame contained within it, that of *indigenous languages first*.

5.2.3.1. Indigenous languages first

The frame *Indigenous languages first* was evident in 52% of articles. This frame emphasises that the provision of Mandarin is an unwelcome hindrance to the development of indigenous language and culture. Anti-Chinese sentiment is less obvious, with the South African government presented as the main protagonist.

The interpretive package is described as follows:

> South Africans need to learn in their indigenous languages, instead of English, to do better in subjects like maths and science. By introducing Mandarin, the South African government is diminishing the role of indigenous languages. It is an unwelcome distraction and it diverts attention from the issue of home language tuition, and indigenous languages as a second language choice. While multi-lingualism is important, home languages should be prioritised over foreign languages.

The frame has organising power as it suggests that indigenous languages are implicitly good and beneficial to the cultural and cognitive development of learners, while rarely offering any evidence to prove it. The frame minimises the role of languages outside the official South African languages, for instance, in cultural understanding or job opportunities.

Smangaliso Mkhatshwa, head of the Moral Regeneration Movement organisation remarks:

> The Chinese may be our comrades who supported our struggle for liberation, but why do we find it imperative to skill our kids in Mandarin instead of Zulu, Tsonga, Venda, Swahili, Xhosa, Swati, Pedi, Sotho, Ndebele, Khoisan, Afrikaans, English and sign language. (Mkhatshwa, 2015)

The use of this frame is a strong example of "setting the terms of the debate" (Tankard, 2001, p. 19).

SADTU were successful in contrasting the government's prominent publicity around Mandarin with the prioritisation of African indigenous languages.

> The union believes the introduction of Mandarin with clear time frames and specified grades contradicts the development and prioritisation of African indigenous languages in schools. (Molefe, 2015)

This frame was also picked up in the commentary, where the optional language was somehow marginalising the use of black languages in universities.

> Not so long ago we were debating a shift in universities to local languages. Mandarin will dilute any attempt we make to use black languages as the medium of instruction. (McKenzie, 2015)

The frame often exhibits a zero-sum argument, where the introduction of the Mandarin subject option hinders the progress of indigenous languages and sometimes other subjects.

> The president of the National Professional Teachers' Organisation of South Africa, Basil Manuel, said Mandarin, introduced as a second language option, was not a priority at schools.
>
> "Our country is battling to teach indigenous languages, so why complicate things and introduce Mandarin? It's not necessary and it should not be a priority, especially when children in rural areas are struggling to even speak English," he said. ("Teachers slate move to Mandarin," 2015)

A *Times* editorial reflected on the ongoing education crisis in South Africa as a reason not to add any foreign languages to the syllabus.

> It is puzzling that, while we are battling to provide quality education to our children, we routinely fill their mouths with foreign languages. ("Sorry, my China, but Mandarin classes can 'hamba,'" 2015)

Noted academic, Jonathan Jansen suggested that world languages should not be even spoken about

until indigenous languages are taught well.

> Until we teach our indigenous languages well and every child becomes competent in the transition language of English, it is a complete distraction to talk about other world languages. Such a policy would benefit the middle classes whose children are in the best schools but it would place an unconscionable burden on the schools at which most of our children are taught - trying simply to do the basics of language education well. (Jansen, 2015)

As described earlier in the literature review, the indigenous languages frame is not unique to South Africa. The frame is also evident in media texts from Nigeria, Kenya and Zimbabwe where similar language policy changes involving Mandarin are taking effect, a situation reflected on by SADTU's general secretary Mugwena Maluleke:

> It's only in Africa where you can have a situation where we're not talking about [learning] Swahili, isiZulu or any African language, but Mandarin. (Nkosi, 2015a)

The *Mail & Guardian* offered one of the few arguments against the frame, suggesting that SADTU's argument was overreaching.

> One would be forgiven for thinking that Education Minister Angie Motshekga had announced that Mandarin was to become a compulsory language, or would henceforth take its place among the country's official languages. ("Editorial: Reject China's policies, not its lingo," 2015)

SADTU successfully introduced the frame, which touched on emotive and ideological aspects that resonated with other commentators and the media. The *Mail & Guardian* editorial was one of the few articles to reflect on the trade union's framing of the issue.

5.2.4. Absent or minimised frames

Frames have the ability to block out other points of view. To a large extent, the media accepted that the debate was one of imperialism versus globalisation, or an argument on national linguistic identity, which reduced use of other frames.

Noticeably absent was the *solidarity* frame, suggested by Zeleza (2008) as one of the main frames used when describing the China-Africa relationship. The solidarity frame describes China as a fellow developing country with no imperialistic ambitions. It sees Africa and China working together in South-South harmony.

The closest reference to the solidarity frame comes in the form of references to China's role in the

liberation struggle:

> The Chinese may be our comrades who supported our struggle for liberation, but why do we find it imperative to skill our kids in Mandarin instead of Zulu, Tsonga, Venda, Swahili, Xhosa, Swati, Pedi, Sotho, Ndebele, Khoisan, Afrikaans, English and sign language. (Mkhatshwa, 2015)

The implication is that solidarity with China due to a shared history may not be enough of a reason to make changes to language policy. This frame is perhaps too optimistic for the South African public sphere, which has a history of colonial incursions and hegemony.

5.2.5. Conclusion

The most common frames used in the reporting and commentary of the introduction of Mandarin in South African schools were *imperialism*, *globalisation* and *nationalism*. The first two mega-frames deal directly with the China-South Africa negotiation – is China a neo-coloniser, or is it merely trying to deepen its relationship with strategic countries?

The *globalisation* mega-frame was largely influenced by the frame of *deepening trade relations*. This indicates that among those who see China's role in South Africa as a function of globalisation, the economic consequences and de-marginalisation of South Africa from the world economy are focused upon.

Chinese imperialism was the most used frame within the *imperialism* mega frame. This view mirrors the tendency of western media to see the China-Africa relationship as a 19th century colonial master style relationship, rather than an interaction amongst equals.

The third mega-frame, *nationalism*, was introduced by the South African trade unions in order to apply pressure on the South African government to raise the profile of indigenous languages in schooling. This frame was enabled by the tenuous relationship that the South African public has with China.

5.3. Frame sponsors

The appearance of frames in a news text is not a process of natural selection, but rather is driven by strategic actors. These actors have different levels of framing power. Pan and Kosicki (2001) offer three sources of power: access to and control of material resources, strategic alliances and stock of knowledge and skills in frame sponsorship.

The authors suggest that in the political economy, framing sponsors are able to "subsidise" the

distribution of information, and that cost reduction is a key mechanism to increase framing power. The frame sponsor's use of their social standing, their institutional knowledge and/or material enables him or her to "promote his or her frame and to influence the language, context, and atmosphere of public deliberation concerning an issue." (Pan & Kosicki, 2001, p. 74)

Frame sponsors could be government officials, diplomats, trade unions, academics and citizens, among others. An effective frame sponsor subsidises the media, policymakers and the public by making information gathering easy, offering easy to use "sound bites", being readily available for interviews, and providing labels, exemplars and catch phrases that are ideologically or emotionally charged (Pan & Kosicki, 2001).

In this study, frame sponsors were identified as actors who were directly quoted or referenced in the text, or a named author of a letter or piece of commentary.

5.3.1. Nationality

Frame sponsors were overwhelmingly South African, with 68 out of 74 sources (92%). Chinese frame sponsors were represented five times (7%) and international frame sponsors (outside of South Africa and China) were represented once (1%).

Table 4: Frame sponsors by nationality

Nationality	Number of occurrences	Ratio
South Africa	68	92%
China	5	7%
International	1	1%

The results indicate that the Chinese voice was often excluded in reporting and analysis. The Chinese frame sponsors referenced included:
- two academics - Lyu Jiangao, director of the Confucius Institute at the University of Johannesburg (UJ) (Nkosi, 2015d) and Prof Yuanfang Yu, the head of the Chinese section of the department of modern foreign languages at Stellenbosch (Phakathi, 2015).
- a South African resident Emma Chen, who was born in Taiwan but now lives in Johannesburg (Nkosi, 2015c)

No Chinese government sources were found in the reporting sample. This represents a large gap in reporting as official Chinese government sources could offer insight into their motivations for

encouraging Mandarin as a subject choice. This confirms a previous study that showed that Chinese sources are "seldom quoted" and "nearly all of the news about China is filtered through non-Chinese mediators" (Robinson cited by Finlay, 2013).

However, one should also note that the issue largely concerns South Africans and their engagement with the Mandarin issue. The large percentage of South African voices indicates that this research reveals a credible view on South African perceptions on the introduction of Mandarin.

5.3.2. Type

Table 5 shows frame sponsor types and the number of times they were referenced.

Table 5: Number of articles by frame sponsor

Source type	Number of articles	Ratio
Trade Union	20	40%
Government	16	32%
SA Resident	12	24%
Academic	10	20%
Commentator	9	18%
NGO	3	6%
Editorial	2	4%
Study/Report	1	2%
Political Party	1	2%

Entman's perspective that the frame in a news text "is really the imprint of power" (Entman, 1993, p. 55) is reflected in the dominance of official frame sponsors, including trade union, government and academic sources. No article used a learner or a parent of a learner as a source. That is, the people most affected by the curriculum change were not reflected in the coverage. A university student was used as a source in only one article.

The coverage was centred around the conflict between the trade unions and the South African government. This is largely due to role of frame sponsors, who subsidised the frames, and the media organisation practices that find journalists more likely to use official sources than unofficial ones.

The views of citizens were found in published letters. Letters to the editor were included in the dataset because they are chosen by media practitioners - usually editors and sub-editors - and this sampling

reflects media routines. The inclusion or exclusion of points of view editorially is as indicative as source choices in news texts.

5.3.3. Frame sponsor analysis

The major frame sponsors were found to be the South African government and South African trade unions, who framed the introduction of Mandarin as *globalisation* and *imperialism/nationalism* respectively. In this section, I discuss the influence of the major frame sponsors.

5.3.3.1. The South African government

The South African government introduced the topic of the introduction of Mandarin to the public schools' syllabus in 2014 when the Department of Basic Education announced that a curriculum would be developed.

> At the time, Motshekga's spokeswoman, Troy Martens, was quoted in The Star's sister newspaper, the Cape Argus, as saying: "(China is) South Africa's biggest trading partner, it is important for our children to become proficient in (Chinese sage and philosopher) Confucius's language and develop a good understanding of Chinese culture." (Dipa, 2015)

The government used the frame of globalisation to describe the introduction as helping to *deepen trade relations* (24% of articles) and giving learners and schools the *freedom to choose* (16% of articles) the subject.

Although the government was referenced throughout the data period, some quotes were referenced repeatedly. The "Confucius" quote was referenced in five different articles (Dipa, 2015; Kuang, 2015; Nkosi, 2015a, 2015b, 2015c) with no updated comment from the South African government. This could be indicative of lazy or resource-constrained journalistic practice or the South African government's lack of framing ability through fresh messaging.

The government's framing choices are indicative of South Africa's deepening economic relationship with China. De Wet (2015) reflects on the relationship that has matured from "prettily worded intentions to practical steps".

5.3.3.2. Trade Unions

The South African Democratic Teacher's Union (SADTU) was the major sponsor of the *imperialism* and *nationalism* frames. As proponents of indigenous language education (both learning all subjects in your own language and learning indigenous languages as secondary subjects) the union framed the introduction of Mandarin as an attack on indigenous education.

The unions used the frames *replacing indigenous languages* (24% of articles), *Chinese imperialism* (22%), *government imposition* (8%) and *corrupt relationship* (4%).

By being in close contact with reporters, offering regular press releases ("South African Democratic Teachers Union website," n.d.) and by providing press-friendly sound bites, SADTU were able to steer the issue away from discussions around South Africa's deepening trade relationship and China's growing role in the world economy and towards discussions around South Africa's language policy and diplomatic naivety.

Once SADTU had introduced the *Chinese imperialism* and *replacing indigenous languages* frames, it was reinforced by several other commentators, letter writers and in editorial columns.

5.3.4. Conclusion

This study found that frame sponsors had a large part to play in the introduction and sustainability of frames. SADTU's role in South African society as one of the largest trade unions means that it can influence the frames in the media. The South African government likewise, with dedicated spokespeople and publicity materials, can influence media frames.

Both parties have access to and control of material resources, strategic alliances and frame sponsorship knowledge and skills that enable them to subsidise access to their preferred frames by the media. The two major frames - globalisation and imperialism - were largely subsidised by the South African government and SADTU respectively.

6. Discussion

This research sought to analyse how the press framed the introduction of Mandarin in the South African school curriculum. Framing theory was operationalized using the "list of frames" approach. Through data collection and analysis three mega frames were identified – imperialism, globalisation and nationalism. The most prominent sources were the South African government, who sponsored the *globalisation* frame and the South African Democratic Teacher's Union, who sponsored the *imperialism* and *nationalism* frames.

In the following chapter I will outline some key discussion points that emerged in the findings.

6.1. Binary frames

The previous chapter revealed three mega-frames – imperialism, globalisation and nationalism. The first two – imperialism and globalisation – relate directly to the China-South Africa relationship. The third, nationalism, relates to South Africa's ongoing negotiation of language and power, the role of indigenous language, and perceptions around foreign influence of language policy.

Both the imperialism and globalisation frames are found in Zeleza's (2008) identification of major China-Africa frames. Zeleza notes a third discourse, solidarity - the view that China is a similarly developing country, is part of the South-South dialogue and has no imperial ambitions - which was not found in the text.

The frames reflect a deeper China-Africa narrative that suggests binary thinking continues to pervade the debate. This point is argued in Siswa's (2015) reflection on the Mandarin issue:

> White/black; white-rich/black-poor; East-authoritarian/West-democratic. It is an intensely contested public space of knowledge production, and this announcement fell squarely into this moist, befuddling public space, ready to transform simple announcements into potentially political and destructive diatribes. ...
> (Siwisa, 2015)

The binary that was evident in the texts was that of imperialism versus globalisation. Either China was the 'red dragon' ready to engage South Africa in a colonial-style relationship, or it was a partner, offering Mandarin as a way to nurture and strengthen its relationship of equals with South Africa. This binary was often presented in the same article, with each view given equal weighting, leaving the reader to decide, and sometimes express their view through letters.

There is some reassurance however that the South African media's understanding of the China-Africa relationship is becoming more considered. The *Mail & Guardian's* reflection on South African policy issues with China – such as the trade imbalance and cheap Chinese imports – suggests a more nuanced reading of the relationship ("Editorial: Reject China's policies, not its lingo," 2015). Dialogue and debate on South Africa's diplomatic engagement is more profitable than sensational headlines about imperialism or China's developmental efforts in Africa.

The third mega frame - that of the importance of indigenous languages in the education system - suggests another type of binary thinking. A zero-sum argument was central to the frame, which indicated that if Mandarin were introduced, other language subjects would suffer. The argument also extended into other subjects such as maths and science being undermined by the option to learn Mandarin. This framing offers a very narrow spectrum of debate – either you are for or against indigenous languages; you cannot be pro-Mandarin and pro-Zulu, for instance.

6.2. Frame relationships

This study has implied connections between the different frames identified. The *Chinese imperialism* frame for instance, relates to the *government corruption* and *government impositio*n frames in that colonisation requires the naive cooperation of the national government for a foreign power to gain control of its economic affairs. The *deepening trade frame*, *freedom to choose*, *cultural understanding* and *job opportunities* frames relate to one another under the overarching theme of globalisation. The distinction between these two sets of frames is how South Africans see their interaction with a global superpower - either an unequal relationship of naked imperialism or one of mutual understanding and growing interconnectedness.

The identified frames also connect back to deeper, more abstract or macro frames that pervade South Africa's current media landscape. One is the *powerlessness* frame, which minimises the role of public process and deliberation, suggesting that the government does not consult broadly on policy issues. This frame is reflected in ongoing debates about the role of public protector, the introduction of e-tolls, and the security upgrades of the president's private home at Nkandla. Another could be described as the *laager* frame - the idea that foreigners are "taking over" and that South Africa needs to insulate itself from external forces.

The issue of indigenous languages was a persistent frame because it relates to South Africa's continued battle with colonial languages. English, the most widespread international language, is not immune to criticism in the South African context. The introduction of Mandarin, therefore, invokes an earlier and deeper frame of indigenous language marginalisation that persists since the original colonisation of South Africa by the Dutch and the British.

An essential powerlessness is evident in the imperialism and nationalism mega-frames, as actors struggle to come to terms with South African government's schizophrenic agenda, which purports leftist ideology but integrates deeply with the global market. The opaque nature of government policy also feeds into anxiety and fear, which is represented in the letters to the editor by concerned South African citizens. The globalisation frame however shows an optimistic view of South Africa's engagement with China.

6.3. The construction of frames

While framing theory is sometimes criticised as multi-paradigmatic, some researchers see this as a strength (D'angelo, 2002; Reese, 2001). It, for instance, offers value in both the constructionist and critical paradigms. Critical in that dominant frames are usually associated with power and constructionist in the way that journalists and readers use their own frames to make sense of the world (Reese, 2001, p. 19).

Following the constructionist paradigm, what does framing analysis tell us about how the South African media operates?

The Mail & Guardian was first to report SADTU's view on the issue in April 2015, giving a platform to the trade union to call it the "worst form of imperialism that is going to happen in Africa" (Nkosi, 2015a). This coverage gave prominence to the trade union who was using the issue to push its indigenous language agenda.

Ironically, after publishing several articles that gave prominence to SADTU's view, the Mail & Guardian editors called for more pragmatic thought in an editorial in August entitled "Editorial: Reject China's policies, not its lingo":

> Perhaps it is the legacy of the years of isolation under apartheid, but it would appear that South Africans remain remarkably insular to this day. That is probably why some are so opposed to Mandarin being phased in as one of the nonofficial, optional languages offered at our public schools from next year - and why there is resistance to what they believe is another sign of China's colonial-style relationship with Africa. ("Editorial: Reject China's policies, not its lingo," 2015)

Firstly, the media thrives on conflict and controversy. The issue was presented as a conflict between SADTU and the South African government, with both frames given near equal weighting. The more radical frame – that of imperialism – was given a significant amount of attention due to its conflict orientation, with SADTU constantly berating the SA government, accusing it of diplomatic naivety at

best, and corrupt cronyism with China at worst.

Secondly, the media has a symbiotic relationship with frame sponsors. Frame sponsors subsidise the generation of news by making it easier for journalists to gather information and write a story. These subsidies include close relationships with reporters, regular press releases and speeches, and providing the framing language that makes it easier for reports to encapsulate an issue. SADTU's opening stance in the *Mail & Guardian* headlined "Teaching Mandarin at school 'will colonise SA anew'" on April 8 provided the platform for a debate on the issue that lasted several months. Without SADTU's frame sponsorship, the issue may have been relegated to the letters section (which was the only place where *Chinese imperialism* framing had been presented up until that point).

Thirdly, there was a sensationalist aspect to some of the coverage. *The Times'* "Sorry, my China, but Mandarin classes can 'hamba'", lead with a paragraph stating: "Why is the government handing over our land to colonialists?". This sensationalism contributes to a lack of nuanced discussion on the issue and to binary, zero-sum thinking.

Reflecting on this, one gets the sense that the South African media's dominant normative role as a watchdog of the government and a platform and forum for debate (Burton, 2010) has led to the Mandarin issue being sensationalised in the media. A critical view of the South African government's diplomatic relationship with a foreign power is necessary in holding the government to account. However the scrutiny imposed on a seemingly routine language policy pronouncement is somewhat unjustified. The example of the *Mail & Guardian* shows how the media's normative values can give rise to a story of government imposition that then is dismissed as "insular" by the same editors only a few months later.

A more pragmatic reading of the China - South Africa relationship would be that both countries have a lot in common. Both "talk left and walk right", with domestic ideologies that are at odds with the global market that they interact with. Europe and the US are much larger foreign direct investment contributors to South Africa than China, which makes them important trading partners as well, despite South African government rhetoric that suggests that the Chinese relationship is the first priority. Likewise, China itself has a diverse international portfolio of investment. Chinese outbound foreign investment in Africa only constitutes between 4% and 8% of its international portfolio, according to two 2013 estimates (García-Herrero, n.d.). Therefore, there is a stark distinction between domestic ideological discussion, for instance South-South solidarity, and how South Africa and China relate to the world (Anthony, 2016).

6.4. Framing and counter-framing

It is important to note that while frames do sometimes lend themselves towards a pro or anti-China position, frames do allow space for counter-arguments. The frame "Chinese imperialism", for instance, sets the terms of the debate around South African sovereignty. Of interest in this study is the amount of space this frame is given in the South African media versus the frame of *improving cultural understanding*.

Frames should not be confused as positions on a particular policy (Gamson & Modigliani, 1989). Although *China as imperialist* is not in favour of China, it does allow for some level of controversy in discussing the extent of China's imperialism, the type of imperialism (for instance, economic imperialism versus cultural imperialism) and the likely impact. However, within this frame, China's role as some form of imperialist is not brought into question.

Some commentators, such as Fred Khumalo, see imperialism as a natural effect of globalisation and that the public should choose their colonisers. This framing limits the terms of the debate:

> In fact, one of my friends says he will defend US imperialism with his life, because he can't imagine himself being colonised by the Chinese. (Khumalo, 2015)

The frame *China as corruptor* invites readers to consider whether the introduction of Mandarin is symptomatic of a corrupt South African government. While there may be counterclaims arguing *for* the South African government, the mere fact that this frame is given oxygen is what should excite framing researchers. This frame ties into a deeper mistrust of the South African government, which gives the frame plausibility.

7. Conclusion

I started this research by asking how does the press frame the introduction of Mandarin into the South African school curriculum. In order to do this, I identified frames that related to the China-South Africa relationship and then asked how often these frames are used, and which sources are most prominent in advancing particular frames.

The introduction of Mandarin as an optional language resulted in 50 articles during the research period of March to October 2015. The amount of media coverage was disproportionate to coverage of other languages such as French, German or Hindi in the school curriculum. Any one of the other 13 languages could be subjected to the same criticism that the subject is taking up resources that could be better spent on indigenous languages or other subjects such as mathematics or science. The reason for Mandarin being the subject of so much scrutiny has much to do with the current media framing of the China-South Africa relationship and the power dynamics evident in language policy.

The research found that the China-South Africa relationship is framed in either *imperialism* or *globalisation* terms. The main frame sponsor of the imperialism frame was SADTU, who invoked the frame in order to push forward another agenda - that of indigenous language demarginalisation. The influence of the imperialism frame, which presented frequently, indicates that the frame implies a pattern on the social world that is easily understood and shared.

It is important to note that the issue was highly politicised and driven from political agendas. This is evident in the lack of non-elite sources such as students and teachers. The research findings may have shown more positive framing had more public school-going learner sources been interviewed and more "human interest" angles sought. It suggests that further China-South Africa soft-power engagements may be susceptible to political framing.

The most cited sponsor of the globalisation frame was the South African government. Its message was largely related to deepening trade relations and giving schools and learners the freedom to choose the languages they learn and teach. The globalisation frame positions South Africa as a credible global player, negotiating terms with foreign powers that are mutually beneficial. This frame is also deeply rooted in the South African media – the ability of South Africa to attract foreign direct investment and trade with other countries is a common theme.

The role of language in South Africa was frequently discussed under the frame of *indigenous*

languages first. Language policy is seen as a function of power. Those in power determine what languages are promoted within the country. This frame intersects with the *Chinese imperialism* frame as the introduction of Mandarin is seen as a promotion of Chinese interests and a de-prioritisation of indigenous languages.

The research confirms that Chinese sources are mostly absent from reportage. This slants coverage negatively as their intentions have to be interpreted and relayed by proxies. Official sources predominated, indicating that the media represented an elite contestation driven by institutions that support shared and persistent ways of understanding the world. The only outlet for South African citizen viewpoints was the letters and opinion sections of the newspaper.

The lack of teacher or governing body frame sponsorship suggests that there is a lack of agency on the part of schools to encourage foreign language learning, perhaps due to lack of resources or a deeper insularity. As South Africa emerges as a global player, we would expect more schools in South Africa to request foreign language subjects instead of waiting for the government to "impose" it "without consultation".

China's soft-power approach extends to language policy. The experience of other African countries suggests that China will continue to extend its language and culture into the African continent, with varying levels of success. The receptiveness of Africans to language policy changes is a good indicator of the success of China's soft-power initiatives.

The issue of the introduction of Mandarin in South African schools proves to be a useful barometer on the receptiveness of South Africa to Chinese soft-power initiatives. It is clear that the issue was highly politicised and driven by elite frame sponsors. The framing analysis suggests that the South African public sphere continues to grapple with understanding what the China-South Africa relationship means for the future of the country, vacillating between fears of the "yellow peril" to a warm opening embrace of a developmental partner. How the media sets the terms of this debate, through framing, may have a strong influence on whether public debates evolves past the binary and into a more nuanced reading of this important bilateral relationship.

This research contributes to media research on China in Africa by offering deep analysis on a single topical case study rather than a broad baseline measurement of China-Africa media sentiment, and responds to calls for deeper qualitative analysis on China-Africa reportage. The research also contributes to understanding the representation of language policy on the continent. Of interest for future research is the lack of Chinese frame sponsorship in the South African media, which may be hindering its soft-power diplomacy. The media framing of the South African government as an

authoritarian rather than democratic voice when discussed within the context of China-Africa topics, may also offer fertile ground for future research.

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