

Reporting Activities of Chinese Correspondents in Japan from the 1960s and 1970s

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Abstract

Based on the framework of factors of the news selection process, this research discusses the news production of the Chinese correspondents stationed in Japan in 1960s and 1970s. The framework distinguishes among four analytic levels: institutional context, organizational routine, individual consciousness and the external reporting environment. By analyzing the historical materials such as memoirs and notes of Chinese correspondents, this study found that Chinese correspondents in Japan determined the direction of reporting activities by following the central leaders' instructions and the central government's documents. They identified specific news stories by conforming organizational routines and reporting guidelines. Moreover, they wrote the news story by integrating journalistic professionalism and personal recognition and understanding towards Japan. At last, they have gained the convenience from the people who are friendly to new China, whereas they still meet restrictions in news gathering and reporting in Japan. The reporting activities of Chinese correspondents promoted the establishment of diplomatic ties between China and Japan, which is in line with the needs of the foreign policy and the domestic policy of Chinese government in the early days of new China. The analysis offers a new perspective to summarize rules of international news production mechanism of Chinese media.

Keywords

International News Coverage, News Production Mechanism, Chinese Correspondents, Sino-Japanese Relations

1. Introduction

The globalization of information has greatly promoted the exchange of information between countries and gradually changed the way people perceive the world.

The expansion of international reporting scale leads to an increase in the flow of overseas information. Supported by the country's policies, the Chinese media have stepped up the international news coverage since the 2000s. Additionally, at the National Publicity and Ideological Work Conference in August 2013 in China, the president of China, Xi Jinping indicated that "telling China's stories, and conveying China's voice". China is now making a greater effort to increase its international outreach by promoting the integrated development of traditional and emerging media and building up a discourse system that is capable of effective international communication. In this context, many researchers have paid attention on the international news reporting of Chinese media. Many precious studies explored the characteristics and trends of the news coverages' text through the method of content analysis. However, little research has sought to explore the influencing factors of international news production in China. This research topic can be explored by analyzing correspondents' reporting activities.

Correspondents are the main characters in the international news production. Because the correspondents stationed overseas report on international current affairs, so they play an important role both internally and externally. They are in the process of collecting, compiling, and transmitting information, which directly affect the presentation of the "results" of news coverages, and then affect the trend of public opinion toward foreign country. The Characteristics and tendencies of news coverage content affect the formation of the people's awareness of the outside world. This study tries to explore the news production mechanism of Chinese media on reporting international news by taking the reporting activities of Chinese correspondents in Japan from the 1960s and 1970s as an example.

The period from 1960s and 1970s was the initial stage of the exchange of journalists between China and Japan. While measures to increase the international outreach in China have received much attention in recent years, in fact, as early as the 1950s, China's national leaders have attached importance to this topic. Since Chairman Mao declared that "Pipe up the earth so the whole world can hear us" in 1955, Xinhua News Agency began to send correspondents around the world to develop international news reporting. The Tokyo bureau of Xinhua News Agency was regarded as one important part of promoting the normalization of Sino-Japanese diplomatic relations. Since the two countries agreed to exchange correspondents in 1964, Chinese and Japanese correspondents have begun to be stationed in the other side country. This allows China and Japan to get first-hand information about the other side.

With the increasing of the information about the other side, it created more opportunities for these two countries to promote mutual understanding. After the normalization of Sino-Japanese relations in 1972, the media of the two countries created a favorable public opinion environment for the development of Sino-Japanese friendly relations. After 1990s the bias of the media news coverages by the media in two countries has led to the deterioration of the feelings of the

two peoples¹. However, few studies have focused on the news production mechanism, namely, how news coverage content is produced.

At the same time, there is a lack of a comprehensive and systematic examination of the historical changes in its news production mechanism. This is not conducive to a comprehensive understanding of the process of information dissemination between China and Japan, and it is also impossible to effectively provide reference opinions for improving the content of news coverage and improving the media literacy level of the audience. Only by making clear the production mechanism of international news and summarizing the production rules of international news can we understand the communication process, improve the communication strategy and improve the communication effect. This is exactly what some scholars have pointed out, the significance of studying the history of international communication (Liu, 2005), namely, how to effectively make the “context world” of media, the “fact world” of objective existence and the “concept world” of audience to achieve a harmonious and unified state. Given this background, focusing on reporting activities of Chinese correspondences in Japan in 1960s-1970s, this study aims to illustrate and explain the news production mechanism of international news coverage by Chinese media.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Factors Affecting the Production Mechanism of International News Reporting

Previous studies have examined the factors influencing international news coverage from different perspectives such as political and economic factors at the international and national levels, social ideologies change and economic development and the media system change (e.g., Wu, 2000; Beaudoin, 2007). Among them, “constructivism” provides a theoretical basis for examining the news production process. Tuchman pointed out that “the act of news production is the construction of facts”, “news production is a process of interaction between various elements”, “the process of examining news production should include individual practitioners, media organization and the social environment” (Tuchman, 1978: p. 12).

Beginning with White (1950), researchers have analyzed how individual journalists participate in news production, pointing out that news production is a complex process in which factors at different levels intersect and interact with each other. The framework of the “hierarchical influence theory of media content” first proposed by Shoemaker and Reese is an effective theoretical framework for analyzing the influencing factors of news production. This theory indicates that “in any system, news media coverage is constrained and influenced by factors from different levels and their combined forces” (Shoemaker & Reese, 1996). This theory provides the factors on news content at different levels from macro to micro. Specifically, it includes: the characteristics of media practition-

¹For detailed analysis results of the relationship between media coverage and public opinion in China and Japan, refer to Japanese scholar Kiyoshi Takai’s work.

ers, the daily operation mechanism of the media, the media organization, social institutions and social forces, and social ideology. At the same time, some scholars have pointed out that when using the framework provided by this theory to analyze international news reports, “it should be combined with the global context of international communication and the domestic context of news production”. The global and domestic contexts mentioned here can be understood as a trade-off between national interests and foreign policy. It distinguishes the factors that influence international news coverage from other types of reporting (Li & Liu, 2013; Liu, 2010). It can be assumed that the foreign factors including international relations and foreign policy are another important dimension affecting international news coverage.

2.2. Professional Role Cognitions of Chinese Journalists

Combined with the context of Chinese media system, the researchers explored the research topic of how Chinese journalists view their careers on different levels. Zhang, He, & Xu (2006) explored the value-orientation of Chinese Journalists in the period of social transform in China. They divided the value-orientation of Chinese journalists into three categories: employee-orientation, professionalism-orientation and mouthpiece-orientation. These value-orientations were influenced by the policies & regulations, capital factors and professionalism. Chen (2006) examined that the change of professional roles of Chinese journalists focusing on the impact of China’s press reform on individual journalists. According to Chen, four types of professional roles of Chinese journalists, namely propagandist, participant, merchant, and observer, coexisted in the cognition of Chinese journalists. Adopting the theoretical framework of influences on news, Tang (2015) analyzed Chinese parachute journalists’ reporting activities from three dimensions including practitioners’ dimension, news production routines, and media environment.

The foreign correspondents are passively or actively involved in the political events they cover (Zhao & Wang, 2021). Through the questionnaire survey, Liu & Meng (2018) found that the Chinese correspondents regard authenticity as the primary condition for judging news value. Also, the reporting should be consistent with the country’s diplomatic strategy and play a guiding role. By reviewing the nearly 100-year history of Chinese correspondents, Zhao & Wang (2021) indicated that Chinese correspondents shouldered different political responsibility influenced by the political background in different historical times. Therefore, the international news reporting activities of Chinese correspondents are closely related to the foreign policy of Chinese government.

Although the researchers examined the role cognition of Chinese journalists by different methods, such as interviews, questionnaires and experiential discussions, the categorization of factors influencing Chinese journalist role cognition is similar. Based on the precious studies above, the categorization can be concluded as “institutional context for Chinese media”, “organizational routine of Chinese media”, “individual consciousness of Chinese correspondents”. In order

to make it more adaptable to Chinese correspondents' reporting activities, based on these findings above, this study adds another dimension affecting reporting activities, namely interview environment, to investigate Chinese correspondents stationed in Japan. Also, there is inadequate research on the reporting activities of Chinese correspondents in the early days of the founding of new China. Since the founding of new China, Chinese journalism has changed significantly including the situation of Chinese correspondents. By analyzing the starting point of Chinese international reporting activities, it is helpful to understand the development of Chinese media's international reporting.

3. The Sino-Japanese Relations and Media's Reporting

The relationship between nations is significantly influenced by the "images" of countries held by peoples of other countries. Mass media contribute to people's understanding or misunderstanding of each other's country. In other words, media play a crucial role in the process of portraying a country's image. Based on the opinion survey on diplomacy conducted by the Cabinet Office, Government of Japan and the joint survey conducted by Genron NPO and Chinese side², there are four points can be concluded. First, most of Japanese impressions on China are positive before 1990s. Second, impressions of each other's country low throughout 2000s. Especially, Japanese public opinion of China drops over 30 years, the "unfavorable" impression of China in 2014 hits the highest level on record since the first survey conducted in 1978. There were 83.1% of Japanese people who don't feel affinity towards China. Third, historical issues between the two countries has been an important factor that effect the impressions of each country. Forth, media are the major contributor to Sino-Japan relationship. Historically, Japanese and Chinese have had minimal personal contact. Media coverage as a major information source in each country. Additionally, with large majorities cite news media of their own country as their main source of information to know the other side.

Due to the particularity and complexity of Sino-Japan historical relations, the forms and contents of media's coverage is closely related to the development trend of Sino-Japan relations, also the situation of the public's opinion. In different periods, the media on each side lays stress on different news frames to report the other side (Zhang, 2017). Prior to the 1990s, reports on both sides were mostly positive. This can be confirmed by the speeches of the first Chinese correspondents stationed in Japan and Japanese correspondents stationed in China at the symposium commemorating the 50th anniversary of the signing of the Sino-Japanese Journalist Exchange Agreement held in September 2015 in Hokkaido, Japan. Wang Taiping, a Chinese correspondent, mentioned that the press release covering characters who love Chairman MAO's thoughts and study his works was welcomed by Xinhua News Agency. Okoshi Yukio, a former corres-

²The survey results of the Cabinet Office of Japanese government and The Genron NPO can be linked through the following website: <http://survey.gov-online.go.jp/h26/h26-gaiko/zh/z08.html>; <https://www.genron-npo.net/world/archives/7379.html>.

pendent of Tokyo Broadcasting System Television, stated that he had a strong sense of atonement for the war when he worked in China resulting in a lack of objectivity in reporting. According to their recollection, they actively reported the friendly communication between the Chinese and Japanese people to promote the normalization of Sino-Japanese relations. However, the factors influenced news production of correspondents has not been explored in depth.

4. Research Questions and Methods

Based on the above theoretical framework and the achievements of previous research, this study examines the reporting activities of Chinese correspondents in Japan from four levels: institutional context of Chinese media system, organizational routine of Chinese media, individual consciousness of Chinese correspondents and the interview environment in Japan. The aim of the study is to analyze how different factors at these four levels affected the practical news reporting activities of Chinese correspondents in Japan. The period of analysis is from the establishment of the Tokyo branch of Xinhua News Agency in the 1960s to the first key node in the development of China's news and communication industry in the late 1970s. Specifically, the research questions are as follow:

Research question 1: What is the media institutional environment for international news reporting activities in 1960s-1970s?

Research question 2: What are the media organization's editorial policies and reporting priorities for Chinese correspondents in Japan in 1960s-1970s?

Research question 3: How do individual Chinese correspondents in Japan understand the role and function of the news reporting in 1960s-1970s?

Research question 4: What is the interview environment of the Chinese correspondents in Japan in 1960s-1970s?

In order to answer the research questions above, on the basis of combing and analyzing the general situation of Chinese correspondents stationed in Japan, this study adopts content analysis method to analyze the memoirs, journalist notes and report texts of Chinese correspondents in Japan in the late 1960s and 1970s. By checking the historical materials of Xinhua News Agency, the author confirmed the Chinese correspondents assigned to Japan in 1960s-1970s, shown in **Table 1**. Considering memoirs have the historical value of restoring history, reflecting the characteristics of the times and personal circumstances at the time of recall (Liao, 2018). The author collected the books and articles written by former Chinese correspondents assigned to Japan in 1960s-1970s individually and the books edited by China-Japan Press Promotion Association commemorating the exchange of journalists between China and Japan. These materials are a collection of the Chinese correspondents' memoirs and interview notes, the interviews on the Chinese correspondents indicating their memories of experiences and events that occurred in their work or life during the stay in Japan in 1960s-1970s. The memories recorded interview experiences and social observations at the front line of the report, reflecting the true state of history. These

Table 1. List of Chinese correspondents stationed in Japan in the 1960s-1970s³.

	Name	First term of office		Second term of office	
		Period	Affiliation	Period	Affiliation
1	Ding Tuo	1964.09-1964.12	Xinhua News Agency	1978.05-1979.11	Xinhua News Agency
2	Liu Deyou	1964.09-1974.06	Guangming Daily	1972.06-1978.06	Concurrently serving as Xinhua News Agency
3	Li Hong	1964.09-1965.09	People's Daily	/	/
4	Tian Jianong	1964.09-1965.09	Beijing Daily	/	/
5	Liu Yanzhou	1964.09-1968.09	Wenhui Daily	the beginning of 1974-the end of 1980	Wenhui Daily
6	Li Guoren	1964.09-1965.09	China News Service	/	/
7	Liu Zongmeng	1964.09-1965.09	Ta Kung Pao	/	/
8	Chen Bowei	1965.10-1966.09	People's Daily	1979.09-1983.01	People's Daily
9	Jiang Daoding	1969.01-1973.05	Xinhua News Agency	/	/
10	Wang Taiping	1969.05-1973.08	Beijing Daily	/	/
11	Li Shouzhen	1969.10-1970.10	People's Daily	/	/
12	Wu Xuewen	1979.04-1982.10	Xinhua News Agency	/	/
13	Wang Dajun	1979.12-1983.12	China Youth Daily	/	/

are important data basis for perfecting the research on the factors affecting the production of international news coverage of Chinese media.

At the same time, the study verifies relevant policies and regulations of international reporting as supplementary evidence for analysis and interpretation. It aims to reveal various influencing factors in the production process of international news in China and provide a reference for understanding the transformation of media reality and objective reality in international communication activities.

5. Findings

5.1. The Context of Chinese Media System

The institutional context refers to stable and universal rules regulating and limiting the activities and its relationships in the process of communication (Yang, 2006). Due to the characteristics of the media in China, the international coverage of Chinese media is closely related to politics. In different historical periods, the relevant central departments of Chinese government have formulated and promulgated a series of policies and documents on international reporting activities. The policies and documents guide the way of media's international

³The first to ninth names on the list are first group of Chinese correspondents to Japan. The first group of Chinese correspondents claimed that they belong to different agencies, but they were all managed by Xinhua News Agency.

reporting activity, also set the content and selection criteria for international news.

For example, in the early days of the founding of the People's Republic of China, the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China issued a special directive on international reporting, *Provisions on the Propaganda of International Current Affairs* (《关于国际时事宣传的规定》) (August 27, 1952) (Lang, 2003: p. 220), which clearly pointed out that “the reports and comments on international current affairs are completely concentrated in the central government. After reviewing by the central government, these are published by Xinhua News Agency and *People's Daily*.” “No reports or comments shall be published without the consent and approval of the Central Committee.” For reasons of “diplomatic considerations”, (the media organizations) must report to the central government in advance if they need to publish separate reports and commentaries in local newspapers. International news coverage of Chinese media is an important part of China's diplomacy activities. During this period, only Xinhua News Agency and *People's Daily* held the right to speak out, but they were assured consistent statements and release of appropriate information internally and externally. In addition, “for certain major political events, the central government will make decisions and notify to all localities if it's necessary to mobilize the public or organizations to express support, sympathy or protest so as to form nationwide public opinion”, “After receiving the notice, all localities may publish relevant news and commentaries in accordance with the spirit of the Xinhua News Agency report and the *People's Daily* editorial”. Because it is closely related to China's diplomatic work, in the early days of the founding of the People's Republic of China, the central government stipulated that only Xinhua News Agency and *People's Daily* could report and evaluate international news. Also, the purpose of the unified caliber of media is to serve the work of guiding the domestic and foreign public opinion.

In addition, another example is from the *Resolution of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China on Improving the Work of Newspapers* (《中共中央关于改进报纸工作的决议》) (October 25, 1954) (Office of the Central Propaganda Department(now: the Publicity Department of the Central Committee of the CPC), 1994: p. 181). It is pointed out that “national newspapers should regularly publish various comments and commentaries on international issues, and always explain our foreign policy... They should often expose imperialist plots of aggression and war and their internal contradictions, support international peace movements, support the just struggles of the oppressed nations and the people, and carry out internationalism education to the broad masses of the people”. It is evident that the central authorities have laid out specific and detailed requirements for international reporting and propaganda work, and have clearly defined the angle and direction of the central authorities in reporting international news, in which the central authorities control the reporting, the Xinhua News Agency and the *People's Daily* have the right to speak out, and the local media have followed and implemented the pattern.

With regard to the specific situation of the reporting on Japan, Liu Deyou, one of the first members of the Chinese correspondents stationed in Japan, recalled that all the correspondents stationed in Japan studied the work guideline of the LT Trade⁴ Office, the situation of Sino-Japanese relations, and China's diplomatic policy toward Japan, and the reporting policy and the professional knowledge of compiling press releases at the seminar held by the first batch of Chinese correspondents stationed in Japan. The specific reporting policy was explained as "in the complicated situation of Sino-Japanese relations, (the Chinese correspondents) should pay attention to long-term foothold, do not 'give others a handle' (Sun, 2016)".

Relevant central leaders of Chinese government directly review press releases, and guide news reporting work. They also proposed to expand channels and widely obtain information. For example, Wang Taiping recalled that Premier Zhou Enlai instructed Chinese correspondents in Japan to extensively understand various situations in addition to reading newspapers in order to achieve the goal of understanding Japan and publicizing China (China-Japan Press Promotion Association, 2004). Wu Xuewen recalled that Liao Chengzhi, who was directly responsible for the work related to Japan in the central authorities, also proposed to the specific work of the Chinese correspondents stationed in Japan to "do more investigation and research, do more interviews and reports, and do not just copy Japanese newspapers" (Ma, 2001). When Wang Taiping returned to China in January 1972 to report for duty, Premier Zhou mentioned that "(the Chinese correspondents) are on the front line should observe calmly, grasp the situation accurately, and seize the opportunity to promote the development of China-Japan relations." The Chinese correspondents stationed in Japan are believed to play an important role in promoting Sino-Japanese relations when China and Japan did not establish diplomatic relations. At the same time, there are instructions for the specific content of the news coverage: "Because the political situation is volatile and changeable, so we should not take it lightly, and in the future, we should take the political situation as the focus of our news coverage. To report more information and put forward more views and suggestions (related to the situation of Sino-Japanese relations)" (China-Japan Press Promotion Association, 2004). Besides, the leaders of central government are wary of the countries of different political systems with Chinese. For example, Liu Deyou mentioned that Vice Premier Chen Yi made everyone pay attention to "Japan is a capitalist country just like a 'big dyeing vat'" so the Chinese correspondents should "get out of the mud without staining" (Sun, 2016). The Chinese government's diplomatic position and national interests in the context of the times determine the topic, angle and content of international media reports concerned Japan or Sino-Japanese relations.

The ideology of Chinese correspondents in Japan was also influenced by the

⁴It refers to the semi-official and semi-private trade activities between the People's Republic of China and Japan based on *the Sino-Japanese Long-term Comprehensive Trade Memorandum* in 1962, in the absence of formal diplomatic relations between the two countries, the establishment of liaison offices and the use of funds guaranteed by the government.

historical background of Chinese society. For example, Sun Dongmin pointed out that in the late 1970s and early 1980s, “the rectification of chaos in the ideological field and the promotion of the spirit of seeking truth from facts had a major impact on the change of thinking style (of Chinese correspondents) . These provided a favorable ideological guarantee for the news reporting activities of Chinese correspondents stationed in Japan” (*China-Japan Press Promotion Association, 2004*).

5.2. The Organization Routine of the Chinese Media

Factors such as the ownership of media organizations and the operating mechanism inevitably affect the value orientation of media practitioners. In the early period of the founding of New China, Xinhua News Agency was the only media organization that was able to send correspondents overseas. The information of international news is uniformly managed, compiled and distributed by Xinhua News Agency. There are three historical stages of international news coverage activities of Xinhua News Agency: First, before the founding of New China, Xinhua News Agency copied the information from foreign news agencies and then compiled the information; Second, in the period from the founding of New China to 1950s, Xinhua News Agency sent airborne reporters to conduct interviews and reports to convey news to China; Third, after the 1950s, Xinhua News Agency sent resident reporters to establish an independent international news network (*Ma, 2001*). Sources of information concerned Japan, before the establishment of the Tokyo branch of Xinhua News Agency in 1964, were basically attached to the “Japan News Agency” foreign news agencies and research materials for news compilation and distribution. Besides, the reporters of Xinhua News Agency conduct interviews with Japanese groups visiting China or accompany Chinese delegations to Japan to conduct interviews abroad (*Ma, 2001*). After the establishment of the Tokyo branch of Xinhua News Agency, Chinese correspondents began to be stationed in Japan. So that the scope and the scale of news coverage in Japan were expanded largely.

Xinhua News Agency has formulated the guiding ideology and “rules” for foreign correspondents and foreign branches, namely, “Based on foreign countries, Domestic-oriented, Facing the East, adopting a global vision”, “Learning to report in an objective perspective, taking a stand in objective facts.”, “Seeking common ground while reserving differences and strive for a long-term foothold.”, “Paying equal attention to both inside and outside, while completing public reporting, foreign correspondents must also complete the reporting tasks of public reference and internal reference.” It clearly stipulates that foreign correspondents should shoulder the task of “eyes and ears” of the party and the people; “run the society diligently and frugally, heighten vigilance, strictly guard state secrets, and resist the corrosion of bourgeois ideology.” Due to the complicated international and domestic situation at that time, China does not have diplomatic relations with many countries, so (the international reporting) it requires

extreme vigilance (Ma, 2001).

5.3. The Professional Role Perception of Chinese Correspondents

The personal values and work attitudes of individual media practitioners affect the process of news production. The cognition, like how Chinese correspondents stationed in Japan view their profession, what role they should play, and what kind of functions they should play, affect their selection of news sources and the process of editing news.

In the period when the scope of reporting activities was restricted, the information and news concerned Japan was limited in China. At that time, due to the war between these two countries just ended, the Chinese nation's understanding of Japan was basically based on the huge national hatred brought about by the war. The same is true of Chinese correspondents in Japan. However, after starting work in Japan, the Chinese correspondents in Japan said that there was a contrast between the national hatred brought about by the war. For example, Wang Taiping said, "From the country shrouded in the atmosphere of the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution to the developed capitalist country of Japan, the contrast between the two countries is so great that I have suffered a huge impact on my thinking. It led me to start meditating more" (China-Japan Press Promotion Association, 2004). Liu Deyou believed that Japan's "defeat" was "subjugation", but after arriving in Japan, "the first impression is that the whole of Japan is full of vitality" (Sun, 2016). I was "impressed by the Japanese people's spiritual civilization of hard work, good at learning, abiding by discipline and law, and paying attention to public morality" (China-Japan Press Promotion Association, 2004). At the same time, because many Japanese nationals expressed friendship to Chinese correspondents, (the Chinese correspondents) still cannot forget the kindness of Japanese peoples (Duan, 2005). This change of view of Chinese correspondents has led their news reports to focus on many advanced aspects worth learning which can serve the construction of their motherland. The Chinese correspondents also distinguished the Japanese public from the Japanese militarists and promoted the improvement of Sino-Japanese relations through their news reporting. Chen Bowei mentioned that "(I) introduced Japan's achievements and hoped that my reporting can stimulate and reflect on my countrymen". The reason why the Chinese correspondents put the anti-war and hope for peace in Japanese society as the focus of the report is that "there is actually an expectation and exhortation in the depths of the heart, and these understandings of practicing peace and anti-war are the roads that the Japanese nation should take" (Sun, 2016).

Regarding the concept of journalistic professionalism, Chinese correspondents recognize that news reporting should be time-sensitive, objective, authentic. Also, the reporting should be in-depth. For example, Chen Zhijiang pointed out that "reporters must abide by the principle of truth, pay attention to social effects, and cannot indiscriminately report without principle, more cannot create

fake news”⁵ (Sun, 2016). It has also been pointed out that Chinese correspondents are a profession of “pursuing novelty and seeking knowledge”. “Chasing the new—facing new things every day; seeking knowledge—career determines that journalists should adapt to a wide range”, “Reporting on Japan needs a broad international perspective, objective truth-seeking, to prevent partial generalization, to prevent ‘100% doctrine’, that is, ‘all good or all bad’ approach” (Sun, 2016). Sun Dongmin indicates that “international journalists should have extensive knowledge and keen insight” (China-Japan Press Promotion Association, 2004). It is necessary to “extensively contact society and collect news sources and information” (Sun, 2016).

At the same time, the Chinese correspondents in Japan believed that it was necessary to serve the party’s external and internal work. For example, Li Shouzhen mentioned that “For the reference of relevant departments and leaders and headquarters, the most important political, economic and social events in Japan, the relevant reports and comments by Japanese newspapers and the reaction to China were sent back to the Xinhua News Agency.” (Sun, 2016).

5.4. Interview Environment in Japan

The environment of collecting news source and editing news article impact the international news reporting activities. Based on the analysis of the memoirs of Chinese correspondents stationed in Japan, the author found that the activities of Chinese correspondents in Japan was restricted and monitored by Japanese politics force. “In the late 1960s and early 1970s, according to the regulations of the Japanese government, Chinese correspondents had to apply to (the Japanese side) 24 hours in advance to go out to go to work excepting for Tokyo and Kanagawa-Ken.”, “When (Chinese correspondents) going out, especially (Chinese correspondents) going to other places, we must travel with two people.” However, the “tailing” of the Japanese police had less impact on the journalists themselves than on the interviewees. For example, Liu Deyou has mentioned that “it (police surveillance) causing psychological pressure to the interviewee”. Also, it is also an important means for the police to grasp the agenda of Chinese correspondents’ activities by tapping the telephone. Some Chinese correspondents also believed that the safety of their travel has been guaranteed. As Liu Yanzhou said, “The police’s stalking has also played an important role in ensuring the personal safety of Chinese correspondents before the two countries established diplomatic relations and in the situation of the anti-China forces were rampant” (China-Japan Press Promotion Association, 2004). Before diplomatic relations between the two countries was established, the two sides have maintained vigilance against each other to a certain extent because the two countries have different

⁵Lu Ye and Pan Zhongdang point out in their papers that Chinese journalists are influenced by four factors in constructing their own professional discourse: “The Requirements of the Party’s propaganda work, the Western concept of journalism professionalism, the sense of historical mission of Chinese literati and the temptation and domination of the market economy” (Lu Ye, Pan Zhongdang, “The Imagination of Fame: Social Transformation and the Professionalism Discourse Construction of Chinese Journalists”, Taipei: Journalism Research, 2002).

political systems and historical backgrounds.

Although the Chinese correspondents in Japan had to deal with many difficulties in their work, they also received assistance. For example, they received assistance from various parties concerned including Japanese media. Chen Bowei recalled that he had received assistance in collecting news resource and news information from journalists of various Japanese newspapers, “(Chinese correspondents) are often given priority when interviewing politicians and celebrities”, “This shows that (the Japanese side) attaches importance to Sino-Japanese relations and the news organization to which the Chinese correspondents belong, because they know that the Chinese correspondents report will influence the readers in China” (Sun, 2016).

5.5. The Themes of News Coverage

Under the interaction of various factors, the results of individual practitioners’ concrete practices are finally presented in the form of news products. According to the recollection of the Chinese correspondents in Japan, there were three main points in the Japanese-related reports of the Chinese media at that time. First, the theme of Sino-Japanese friendship. For example, “actively reporting on the good stories of friendship between the two countries’ peoples to flatter the bilateral relations like a honeymoon.” However, some Chinese correspondents pointed out that when reporting on the contents of Sino-Japanese friendship, it is necessary to carry the content of “anti-hegemony,” that is, to “report on the anti-US patriotic struggle of the Japanese people rising above the waves, to expose the pro-American, anti-China, and revival militaristic acts of the Japanese reactionary authorities, as well as the campus struggles and street demonstrations carried out by young Japanese students under the slogan of rebellion is reasonable and understands universities.” This was the second theme of The Japanese-related reports of the Chinese media at that time: the theme of anti-conspiracy and anti-hegemony (Sun, 2016).

Li Shouzhen indicated that it is necessary to “focus on interviewing and reporting on the rallies and demonstrations of people from all walks of life and young students in Japan against US military bases, against the revival of militarism, as well as Sino-Japanese friendship activities.” In addition, Wang Dajun recalled that the contents of the Japan-related reports of the 1970s spared no effort to report on the activities of Japan from top to bottom to ask the Soviet Union for “northern territories” (Sun, 2016).

The third theme is the experience of Japan’s economic development. One Chinese correspondent pointed out that during the Cultural Revolution, “I did not dare to report positively on Japan’s achievements and experience in developing the economy.”, “When reporting on the Japanese economy, it is always emphasized that Japan has fallen into a serious economic crisis and small and medium-sized enterprises have collapsed”, because “for fear of being labeled as a sublime foreigner and creeper, I dare not report on the development of the Jap-

anese economy and scientific and technological achievements head-on.” “In the past, the dogmatic one-sided view of Japan’s market economic system overemphasized its negative effects and ignored its positive role in rational allocation of resources and the promotion of productive forces development” and the perspective of reporting on Japan’s economic development experience in the 1970s has changed. “Focus on experiences that can be used as references in China’s modernization drive.” “In order to meet the needs of learning from developed countries, we should look for other stones that are conducive to the modernization of the motherland.” It can be seen that after China decided to take the line of reform and opening up in 1978, the focus of the state’s work shifted from taking class struggle as the center to economic construction as the center, and advocating the spirit and style of emancipating the mind and seeking truth from facts. This has also had a profound impact on news reporting work, and it is also reflected in Japan-related reporting work of Chinese correspondents (Sun, 2016).

6. Summary and Discussion

Through the analysis above, it is found that the news reporting activities of Chinese correspondents in Japan are the result of the combined action of the macro level of China’s media institutional situation, the medium level of the organization routine of Chinese media organizations, the micro level of the cognition of the media role of Chinese correspondents, and various factors from the interview environment in Japan.

Firstly, China’s institutional context clearly stipulates that foreign-related reporting activities should obey and cooperate with the government’s diplomatic work. This is confirmed by published policies on international reporting, as well as by the recollections of Xinhua’s international department editors and Chinese correspondents in Japan. At the same time, in the mechanism of international news production, the central leadership of Chinese government holds the final decision on whether the important manuscripts of news coverage can be published. In the early days of the founding of China, there were relatively frequent changes in policies and many unstable factors in domestic and foreign situations, so when there were deviations in Chinese correspondents’ understanding of policies, the central leaders directly raised questions and guided journalists’ news reporting activities.

Secondly, according to the policies and guidelines of the central government, the organization routine and news selection standards of media organizations are formulated. The routine and news selection standards constructed the framework of news production and determined the scope and content of news coverages. It is in line with the central government’s instructions that Chinese correspondents stationed in Japan should resist the “corruption of bourgeois ideology” while reporting for both public and internal reference. At the same time, the routine and standards revealed the focus of Japan-related reports, such as “peace, friendship, for the four modernizations” seven words. Media organiza-

tions construct and dictate common standards of professional logic to Chinese correspondents by emphasizing what is worth reporting.

Thirdly, while observing the rule of objectivity, truthfulness and timeliness of news reports, it is more important for Chinese correspondents stationed in Japan to have a “stand”. Based on the memories of Chinese correspondents, the points of the reporting activities were “Sino-Japanese friendship”, “against conspiracy and against hegemony”, and “Japanese experience in economic development”. These contents are under the management control mechanism of media organization in China. This “standpoint” is not only affected by the regulation from the macro level and the medium level, but also related to the Chinese correspondent’s personal emotion of “hatred” for Japan caused by the war and their ideological change after they arrived in Japan. The Chinese correspondents have realized the functions of “mouthpiece”, “eyes and ears” and “building platform” in their reporting activities in Japan.

In summary, from the perspective of constructivism and based on the theory of hierarchical influence of media content, this study analyzes the production mechanism of the Chinese correspondent stationed in Japan from the realization of the mutual dispatch of Chinese and Japanese correspondents to the end of the 1970s. The Chinese correspondent reported on Japan under the influence of the above four levels. By using the memoirs of Chinese correspondents in Japan as analytical materials, this study is a new attempt to provide a new perspective on the production mechanism of international reporting activities of Chinese media. At the same time, the results of this study provide reference for understanding the current international reports of Chinese media.

Although the data attracted from memories are valuable materials for research, it is necessary to recognize the limitations of being the object of scientific research analysis. There may be such deviations due to political positions, personal feelings, or memory bias. Therefore, the analysis results may deviate from authenticity and objectivity. In the future, this shortcoming will be filled by further enriching research materials and other research methods like interview.

Conflicts of Interest

The author declares no conflicts of interest regarding the publication of this paper.

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