

Awareness-raising for Evaluative Expressions by Using the Lead of Newspaper Articles¹⁾

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Abstract

The use of evaluative expressions in the text does not only reflect the speaker/writer's attitude and viewpoint but also a value-system of the community which the speaker/writer belongs to. Awareness of an evaluative function of language can help mature learners to interpret the speaker/writer's intention and attitude behind the text. In this study, the concept of evaluation is applied to a second language reading class. Comparing lead paragraphs of four different newspaper articles on the same topic helped students who had very little or no experience in linguistic analysis to identify value-laden expressions. Reading a short passage about the same issue also enabled the students to predict the meaning of unknown words and expressions. The comparing process motivated the students to choose one article over others and promoted further reading of the text. The study also revealed inexperienced learners' misconceptions that if a newspaper article had fewer evaluative expressions the article kept an objective point of view and that certain media discourse could be free from the reporter's opinions.

Key words

evaluation, value-laden expressions, newspapers as a teaching material, critical approach, point of view, subjectivity

1. Functions of evaluation in text

Language is a site of conflicting ideas and point of view. Language cannot be neutral because it always involves expressions which reflect the speaker's or writer's attitude and stance toward what he or she is referring to. I will use the term 'evaluation' for such attitude and stance of the speaker or the writer which is reflected in text, following the example of Hunston and Thompson (2000). Hunston and Thomson define evaluation as a term which covers 'the expression of the speaker or writer's attitude or stance towards, viewpoint on, or feelings about the entities or propositions that he or she is talking about (2000: 5)'. The use of evaluative

expressions in the text does not only reflect the speaker/writer's attitude and viewpoint but also a value-system of the community which the speaker/writer belongs to. Evaluation is subjective, value-laden and involves comparison (Huston and Thompson 2000: 21). Evaluation can be realised by textual aspects such as lexis, grammar and textual organisation.

Hunston and Thompson (2000: 6–13) argue that evaluation in text has mainly three functions. Firstly, evaluation expresses the speaker's or writer's opinion of what s/he is expressing. A 'corporate raider' carries a negative attitude toward the occupation which the expression refers to compared with a 'fund manager'.

Another function of evaluation is to construct and maintain relations between the speaker /writer and hearer/reader. The following example demonstrates such a function of evaluation. In summer, 2006, the British source claimed that there was a plot that British suicide bombers were blowing up liquid explosives on passenger airliners, travelling between the U.K. and the U.S. This caused a tight security control, banning all liquids and gels in carry-on luggage. *Los Angeles Times* reported the incident not only from the authorities' point of view but also from travelling passengers' point of view.

(1)

Answers for Air Travelers

What happened ?

British authorities Thursday arrested 24 people who they said were plotting to blow up liquid explosives midair on possibly as many as 10 flights traveling between the United Kingdom and the U.S. ...

What are the new rules ?

All liquids and gels are now banned from carry-on luggage and purses, including bottles of water, cosmetics, shampoo, soaps and cans of shaving cream...

Are there any exceptions ?

Yes. If you are traveling with a baby or small child you can bring baby formula, breast milk or juice.

(*Los Angeles Times*, 11/08/2006)

The sub-headlines are all interrogatives, reflecting passengers' concerns about the cause of the tight security control and details of the new security rules. By introducing the interaction

between the readers', who are potential passengers, and the reporter's voices, the article functions not only as a news report but also representation of voices of an administrator and adviser.

The third function of evaluation is to organise discourse structure and indicate the significance of the previous text. The following example is from Edward Said's autobiography. He remembers corporal punishment which he received from their parents when he was a child and describes it:

(2)

He (my father) could be physically violent, and threw heavy slaps across my face and neck, while I cringed and dodged in what I felt was a most shameful way. I regretted his strength and my weakness beyond word, but I never responded or called out in protest, not even when, as a Harvard graduate student in my early twenties, I was bashed by him humiliatingly for being rude, he said, to my mother...When she suddenly lost her temper, my mother also flailed at my face and head, but less frequently and with considerably less force.

As I write this now it gives me a chance, very late in life, to record the experiences as a coherent whole that very strangely have left no anger, some sorrow, and a surprisingly strong residual love for my parents.

(Edward Said, *Out of Place*, 1999: 65)

The second paragraph shows Said's evaluation on his experience. Said, though feeling humiliated at the moment he was physically punished by his parents, especially by his father, long afterwards recalls his experience with love for his parents.

These examples show that evaluation in text is not only conceptual recognition of text but also linguistic practice which is actually found in forms and expressions. These textual functions of evaluation can be important aspects which are to be focused on when one analyses textual evaluation.

2. Evaluation in media discourse

Newspaper articles can be an inspiring, authentic language teaching material when carefully chosen and appropriately exploited. They can bridge the classroom with outside worlds and promote students' knowledge and understanding of social environment. However, both

instructors and learners should be aware that media discourse is powerful in shaping social structures and certain ways in which society is viewed (Fairclough 1989, 1995a). Lemke's famous example is best to illustrate how media discourse can handle an issue and position the reader:

It can in fact sometimes be difficult to tell whether two different discourse formations are indeed talking about 'the same thing' or not...If one discourse says that the freedom fighters are being kept in a concentration camp, while the other says that the terrorists are being held in a prison, the reader has to do some substantial work to construct a unity between these discourses (Lemke 1995: 37).

Hodge and Kress (1979: 15) claim that such practices inevitably involve selection: 'All such descriptions involve language, and presenting anything in or through language involves selection'. The effects of media discourse are cumulative and pervasive because a choice of certain way to present an issue is made in a large scale and a number of people are exposed to it. Fairclough (1995b: 73) conclusively says, 'language is a material form of ideology, and language is invested by ideology'. Thus, media discourse invariably represents a certain point of view, whether it belongs to the reporter, the publisher or other forms of social institutions.

As a linguistic tool, the concept of evaluation in texts is a useful means for readers of media discourse to detect the writer's point of view. It is not very easy, however, to show the writer's point of view within a certain text to foreign language learners. This is partly because language learners often do not share the social, cultural background of the writer of the text and do not know the connotations of certain expressions. Another possible reason for learners' difficulty in recognising the writer's viewpoint might be that evaluation in text is not collection of distinct categories but it often involves comparative elements. Evaluation consists of anything which is compared to or contrasts with the norm. The reader is often required to infer what the writer compares to or contrasts with. Such inferential work on the part of the reader can be a burden for a language learner.

3. Application the concept of evaluation to second language teaching

Using newspaper articles is a good way to introduce the concept of evaluation because newspaper articles provide abundant clear examples of evaluation. Presenting a whole article on current issues, however, often discourages second language learners from reading on

especially when learners are not familiar with the textual organisation of newspaper articles and their vocabulary is insufficient for understanding the whole text of an article. Thus, the beginning part of an article, not the whole article, could be presented at an introductory phase. A small amount of text would enable the learner to focus on particular aspects which clearly signifies evaluative attitude of the writer such as adjectives and noun phrases. As Martin (2000) shows succinctly, adjectives are one of the clearest signals of emotional attitude, or *appraisal* of the writer or the speaker, toward what is referred to. The comparative aspect of such evaluation can be demonstrated in second language classroom by presenting multiple examples, preferably on similar topics.

4. Method

4.1. *Setting and participants*

This study, conducted in February, 2006, involved nine Japanese second-year students at a public high school in Kanagawa, Japan. The school emphasised language education, providing 2nd year students with 11 to 13 hours of English and three additional hours of another language (French, German, Spanish and Chinese) which the students were allowed to choose per week. The school was designated as a research school for English education (super English language high school) in the same academic year by the Ministry of Education and Science. All of the students who participated in this research were so called 'returnees', who had lived in English-speaking countries or had been educated at English-speaking institutions abroad for three to six years. Their TOEIC scores ranged from 605 to 955. Although their English proficiency level was relatively high, none of the students regularly read English newspapers, even those which were published in Japan, outside of the classroom. Only one case reported that the student's household subscribed for an English newspaper in the country in which she used to live and others said that newspapers which they had regularly read were published in Japanese. This shows that most of the students were not very familiar to English newspapers and their style.

Data for analyses consists of my notes which were taken during and after the class and the students' handouts which were collected after one week of the class when their follow-up assignment was completed.

4.2. *Procedure*

This study was incorporated as the third hour in a three-hour session for learning about Eng-

lish newspapers and their reports. The class emphasised reading and writing activities, although it also involved listening activities and discussions. The headlines and the lead paragraphs of four articles from different newspapers on the same topic were presented (part I of the classroom handout, appendix). The topic of the articles was the arrest of Horie Takafumi, founder of the Tokyo-based Internet company, Livedoor. Horie Takafumi was arrested on January 23, 2006 for alleged securities laws violations. The purposes of the class were (1) to have students compare four articles in terms of content and evaluative expressions and (2) to have students select and read one of four articles in its entirety.

Comparing the leads of different newspapers on the same topic has several pedagogical advantages. The topic which is discussed by multiple newspapers is likely to be familiar to students, and the fact that they have background knowledge on the issue helps students to understand its broader context. Reading more than one short passage about the same issue enables students to predict the meaning of unknown words and expressions, and this can boost students' confidence in their current reading activity. The comparing process can lead to students' choosing one article over others and promote further reading of the text.

Leads of articles from different newspapers tend to have common elements of the incident which the articles report such as people who are involved, the time and the place the incident occurred and why and how it occurred. When these common elements are presented in different expressions, these expressions function as elaboration to each other. If a student read the lead of one article and finds some expressions which are unknown to him or her, the leads of other article can provide clues to the meaning of the unknown expressions. Oh (2001) shows that elaborated textual input significantly enhances the reading comprehension of students at both high and low proficiency levels.

Another advantage of comparing different texts on the same topic is that the process can shed the light on the relative nature of evaluation in texts and make this aspect clearer to the students who were not aware of it. Martin (2000: 145) states, referring to semantic resources in text which negotiate emotions, judgements and valuations:

The relevant resources all involve grading, which is to say that the meanings involved can be adjusted by degree to reflect the strength of the evaluation.

Comparison makes it easier even for students who have very little or no experience of linguistic analyses to identify value-laden expressions and their relativity.

4. 2. 1. *Listening activity*

The class began with a listening activity. Four leads from different newspapers were presented. Two were from American newspapers and another two were from British newspapers. The parenthesised words were omitted from the students' handouts, leaving eight blanks in the four leads.

(3)

Los Angeles Times, January 23, 2006

Japanese Web Mogul Arrested for Alleged Securities Violations

By Bruce Wallace, Times Staff Writer

TOKYO—Japanese prosecutors (1. arrested) iconoclastic Internet mogul Takafumi Horie and three business partners today, whisking them off to a Tokyo detention center in a nationally (2. televised) police cavalcade to face allegations they broke securities laws.

(4)

The New York Times, January 24, 2006

Investigation of Livedoor Leads to Arrest of Its Founder

By JAMES BROOKE (NYT); Business / Financial Desk

Takafumi Horie, the brash Internet (3 entrepreneur) whose rise captivated Japan until an investigation into his business practices panicked the Tokyo Stock Exchange, was arrested Monday night on (4. charges) that he had violated securities exchange law.

(5)

The Times, January 23, 2006

Japanese internet guru arrested

By Rhys Blakely, and agencies in Tokyo

Japanese prosecutors today arrested Takafumi Horie, the (5. celebrity) chief executive of Livedoor, the internet services provider, for suspected securities laws (6. violations).

(6)

The Guardian, January 24, 2006

Livedoor chief arrested and locked up in Tokyo jail

Justin McCurry in Tokyo

Exactly a week after investigators marched into his plush offices in Tokyo, Takafumi

Horie, the iconoclastic CEO of the (7. Internet) empire Livedoor, was last night languishing in a cell following his arrest on suspicion of spreading (8. false) financial information to investors to boost his company's share price.

Having students guess appropriate words for the blanks, the teacher read out each lead paragraph so that the students could fill in the blanks.

4. 2. 2. Focusing on adjectives

After the topic of the articles was discussed, the teacher asked what adjectives were used in the text (question 1 of part I on the handout). Since adjectives are a clear marker of evaluation, highlighting adjectives in the texts would help students understand the writers' point of view. Adjectives which are used in each text are shown in Table 1:

	Adjectives
<i>Los Angeles Times</i>	Japanese, alleged, iconoclastic, televised
<i>The New York Times</i>	brash
<i>The Times</i>	Japanese, chief, suspected
<i>The Guardian</i>	plush, iconoclastic, false, financial

Table 1 Adjectives used in the lead paragraph of four newspapers

Los Angeles Times and *The Guardian* have the most adjectives while *The New York Times* has only one.

4. 2. 3. Focusing on references

The teacher asked how Horie was referred to in the text (question 2 of part I on the handout). As well as adjectives, references to a person can be heavily loaded with the writer's evaluation. The references to Horie are shown in Table 2:

	references
<i>Los Angeles Times</i>	Japanese web mogul, iconoclastic Internet mogul
<i>The New York Times</i>	its founder, the brash Internet entrepreneur
<i>The Times</i>	Internet guru, the celebrity chief executive of Livedoor
<i>The Guardian</i>	Livedoor chief, the iconoclastic CEO of the Internet empire Livedoor

Table 2 References to Horie in four newspapers

All the excerpts have two different references to Horie. Most of the references include

evaluative adjectives and nouns.

4. 2. 4. *Articles with a neutral tone and with a subjective viewpoint*

After examining the meanings and connotations of adjectives and Horie's various references in the texts, the teacher asked the third question of the handout: 'Which newspaper keeps a neutral tone and which involves a more subjective point of view of the reporter?' Evaluation can be realized not only by adjectives and noun phrases but also by verbs and other syntactic forms such as active/passive voices and modality. However, the previous tasks on the adjectives and references to Horie and this question seemed to have led most students to a decision to choose one paper which had fewer evaluative expressions.

4. 2. 5. *Comparison between English and Japanese articles*

As a follow-up assignment, students were handed the complete articles of the four newspapers and were asked to choose one of them to read and answer the questions on the handout (part II, appendix). The question of the handout which is closely related to the present study is the third question of part II: 'Do you find any differences in the ways of reporting between the article of the Japanese newspaper and the one you read?' The handouts were collected in the following class a week later.

5. **Comparison of the leads and awareness-raising on evaluation**

Although the students were not familiar with articles of English newspapers and the concept of evaluation, the comparison of the leads of articles from different papers on the same topic seemed to promote the students' understanding of the texts and helped them to recognise that some expressions in newspaper articles were loaded with evaluations. In this section, the students' reactions to each task will be discussed. Since the information which was given to the students was quite limited, their decision on subjectivity and neutrality is most likely to have been influenced by the preceding tasks. After linguistic elements which were *not* mentioned in the class are discussed, the significance of teaching the concept of evaluation to inexperienced learners will be explored.

5. 1. *Understanding the content*

Since the news was recent, all the students seemed to be familiar to the topic. In the listening activity at the introductory phase, at first students listened to the teacher read each of the lead

paragraphs and just wrote down what they heard. But as the listening activity went on, the students started to make correct guesses for the blanks in the latter part by themselves. The first blank which was correctly guessed was no.6 (violations) in the third article, and the rest brackets were appropriately filled out before the teacher finished reading the entire lead. Presenting the four paragraphs on the same proposition could have promoted the students' understanding of the content and helped the students choose appropriate expressions for the blanks.

5. 2. *Evaluation on adjectives: 'interesting'*

The students well understood the grammatical term 'adjectives'. Seven out of nine students chose 'celebrity' as an adjective. This suggests that the modifying function of the noun was correctly grasped by the students. A student asked the meaning of 'iconoclastic', which appeared in *Los Angeles Times* and *The Guardian*. The teacher explained the meaning of the word and added that the adjective had a positive connotation by giving a provocative, vivid impression rather than negative meaning.²⁾ Another adjective, 'plush' which appeared in *The New York Times*, was explained in terms of collocations. 'Plush' is often collocated with a hotel or pieces of furniture such as a sofa to describe their luxuriousness. 'Brash' was also unfamiliar to the students, and the teacher explained that the adjective was similar to 'bold' in meaning, suggesting a rather negative connotation.

When the teacher asked what adjectives in the four leads suggested, a student said, 'these adjectives make the articles more interesting and entertaining.' Since the students were not exposed to the concept of evaluation at this moment yet, this student's reaction was simple and straightforward. But it also gives an insight that evaluative expressions can draw the reader's attention and, thus, generate the reader's involvement into the textual world.

5. 3. *A protagonist's image suggested by references*

How the main protagonist of the incident, Horie, was referred to in the texts reveals the writers' judgment and evaluation on the person. Out of eight references to Horie which appear in the leads, four included the adjectives and the noun which were discussed in the previous task (*iconoclastic* Internet mogul, the *brash* Internet entrepreneur, the *celebrity* chief executive of Livedoor, the *iconoclastic* CEO of the Internet empire Livedoor). Such repetitive attention to certain expressions emphasise the evaluative aspects of these forms while downplaying other linguistic elements of evaluation with inexperienced learners.

When Horie's references were discussed, the students mentioned his Japanese nickname

'Horiemon' several times. The endearing nickname, which derived from a cartoon character, was associated with his casual attire in public, and therefore, the students' image of Horie might have been different from Internet 'guru' or 'mogul'. Thus, the teacher explained that 'mogul' and 'guru' connote the charismatic leadership of a person who had great influence on the Internet businesses. The teacher also mentioned that such expressions suggested that Horie's entrepreneurship was more highly regarded in the U.S. and the U.K. than in Japan.

5. 4. *Clues to evaluation which were not instructed and students' decision on articles*

The fourth task was to choose a lead which kept a neutral tone and another which involved a more subjective point of view. Since some students were not sure of the meanings of 'neutral' and 'subjective', the teacher showed examples: 'the chief executive of Livedoor' was a neutral expression to refer to Horie compared to 'Internet mogul' which involved more evaluation on Horie from the reporter's point of view. Upon review, the students agreed that *the Times* kept a neutral tone and *the Guardian* gave an impression that the paper was written with a more subjective point of view of the reporter. The students' decision was most likely based on the appearance of the adjectives and the references to Horie in the previous tasks because the students were not provided with information on other linguistic clues to evaluation. Thus, students might not have taken other evaluative elements into account. Before discussing the students' decision and its implications, examples of other linguistic elements in each of the four leads which suggest the reporter's subjectivity or valuation will be briefly mentioned.

5. 4. 1. *Los Angeles Times*

Los Angeles Times keeps a conservative tone in the lead by focusing on the authoritative power of prosecutors. The subject of the sentence is 'Japanese prosecutors' while the objects of actions of 'arrest' and 'whisk off' are Horie and his business partners. These two verbs used in the active voice clearly suggest the power relationship between the two parties, in which prosecutors are the authority and Horie and his partners are the subordinates. The adverbial phrase, 'in a nationally televised police cavalcade' indicates the reporter's viewpoint more as of the audience of a TV report rather than as a reporter who is reporting the scene, suggesting the reporter's distanced stance from the incident. 'Police cavalcade' is also a value-laden expression, emphasizing a visual impact of the procession of police cars and its power. The contextual subject of 'to face' is Horie and his partners, and the non-finite verb clause implicates the reporter's valuation that the authority's power does not allow Horie and his company to escape from the allegation.

The cause of Horie's arrest is stated with the reporter's valuation. Although 'allegation' is a legal term which allows for the possibility that the allegation is false, 'broke' in 'they broke securities laws' suggests that the prosecutors assume that Horie was aware of his violation.

5. 4. 2. *The New York Times*

The New York Times loads the reporter's heavy evaluation on Horie's business in the relative clause. The subject of the relative clause, 'rise', a nominalisation of evaluation which allows no argument about his business success is imposed upon the reader. The verb and the object of the relative clause, 'captivated Japan' emphasize Horie's powerful, revolutionary entrepreneurship and its nation-wide effects.

In the subordinate clause of the relative clause, the effect which the investigation had caused on the stock market is described by 'panicked'. Such appraisal of the effect on the stock market involves subjectivity of the reporter and the communities that the reporter is related to. The reason for Horie's arrest is captured with a stronger term, 'charges', than 'allegation'. 'Charges' can more strongly insinuate a type of guilt.

5. 4. 3. *The Times*

Like *Los Angeles Times*, *The Times* starts the sentence with 'Japanese prosecutors' as the subject of the active voice, and Horie is positioned as the object. However, fewer evaluative expressions are involved in the lead. The cause of Horie's arrest is stated in a weakened form as 'suspected securities laws violations' compared with 'allegations they broke securities laws' in *Los Angeles Times*. The combination of the -ed participle and the nominalisation of the act can only give the reader a vague idea about the reason and the significance of Horie's arrest.

5. 4. 4. *The Guardian*

The reporter's voice is almost like an omniscient third-person narrator's in fiction, and the headline and the lead have a number of evaluative expressions which show the reporter's subjectivity. The headline reports not only Horie's arrest but also its consequence as 'locked up in Tokyo jail'. The description goes back to a week before, depicting the police investigations as 'investigators marched into his plush office'. The verb, 'march', involves the reporter's evaluation of the police as an army-like force. The reporter also depicts Horie as 'languishing in a cell' on the previous night, when the reporter could not have actually seen him in the cell. The reason for his arrest is more detailed with evaluation than any other leads: 'suspicion of spreading false financial information to investors to boost his company's share price'. Although

the one who ‘suspects’ is the prosecutors, the contextual subject of ‘spread’ and ‘boost’ is Horie and these verbs suggest Horie’s active involvement in the incident. Out of the four leads, the reporter’s subjectivity is most clearly indicated in various linguistic forms in this particular article.

5. 4. 5. *Reflection on students’ decision on subjective and neutral leads*

The students agreed that *The Times* kept a neutral tone and *The Guardian* gave an impression that the paper was written with a more subjective point of view of the reporter. This straightforward, unanimous agreement on these two newspapers of the students needs to be explored further. The students’ decision was most likely to be based on the evidence of the adjectives and the references to Horie in the previous tasks, and the students could have noticed very few of the elements which suggested the reporter’s evaluation or subjectivity discussed above. The instructor’s choice of features to study could greatly affect the learners’ judgment especially when learners are inexperienced in this type of activity.

The instructor could easily manipulate the learners’ decision by using an article which involves fewer adjectives modifying nouns and a relatively neutral reference to Horie. The following is the headline, subhead and lead of Kyodo News which were adopted by an English newspaper published in Japan.

(7)

Livedoor’s Horie Arrested

ValueClick deal could be either crime or loophole

Kyodo News

Prosecutors arrested Livedoor Co. President Takafumi Horie and three company executives Monday night on suspicion of securities law violations, investigative sources said.

(The Japan Times, 24/01/06)

In (7), no adjectives are used, and Horie is referred to by a neutral expression. However, the article has other features which strongly suggest the reporter’s evaluation. The subhead has expressions heavily loaded with subjectivity, ‘crime’ and ‘loophole’, one of which implicates that it is assumed that Horie violated the securities law. The reporting clause at the end also suggests that the main information source is investigators, not Horie’s party. Inexperienced learners could miss these evaluative elements and categorise this article as one that keeps a neutral tone if the instruction was only on adjectives and references to Horie.

Other pitfalls also remain. Students tend to confuse neutral expressions with neutrality of articles. Although no news report is free from the writer's opinions and evaluations, inexperienced readers tend to believe that neutrality can be achieved by some media discourse by reporting definite facts. Another trap for inexperienced learners is that they tend to draw a line between being neutral and being subjective only on the conditions or clues the instructor indicates and they often miss its relative nature of evaluation. The students' comments on the article which they chose for their reading assignment reflect such misconceptions.

5.5. *Students' judgments on the full articles*

In the reading assignment, six out of nine students chose to read the entire article of *The Times*, two selected *The Guardian*, and one chose *The New York Times*. The students' comments on how English papers are different from Japanese equivalents can be related to what they learned about evaluation in text in the previous class. The focus of attention in this task is how students understood and described media discourse whether it might be English or Japanese rather than their comparison between English and Japanese newspaper articles.

Out of six students who chose *The Times*, three students commented that the article of the paper was easy to read. Their valuation on easiness to read seems to be associated with the fact that the text has less evaluative expressions. In excerpts from the students' writing, the newspaper which the student chose for the assignment is indicated in the bracket. Student A compares articles of the English newspapers with those of Japanese papers.

Student A (*The Times*):

I think the Japanese press sometimes seems to use more indirect expressions compared to the English papers. English papers sound easier than Japanese papers. Japanese papers tend to use more difficult words and expressions.

This student implies that English papers use more direct, less difficult words and expressions. Another student compares the article of *The Times* with other English articles.

Student D (*The Times*):

Unlike other foreign newspapers, *The Times* is simple and short. *The Times* doesn't have the reporter's opinion.

It is quite reasonable that the student associates the brevity of the text with its simplicity. It

seems to be problematic, however, that the student claims that *The Times* doesn't have the reporter's opinion. It might be true that *The Times* have less evaluative expressions than other articles at least at the lexical level. However, this does not mean that article does not include the reporter's opinions as the student says. For example, the report says, assuming causality between Horie's arrest and price changes in stock market, 'News of the raid consequently sparked turmoil in Japan's stock market'. Here the disjunct, 'consequently', clearly shows the reporter's or the publisher's evaluation. Student A might have misunderstood that if the reporter uses relatively neutral expressions, the reporter does not show his opinions.

Student E says that the article of *The Times* keeps a neutral tone as well as the Japanese newspaper.

Student E (*The Times*):

The article of *The Times* is similar to that of the Japanese newspaper; they are both keeping a neutral tone, making sentences simple, and trying not to use too many adjectives.

This student pays attention to linguistic aspects of English and Japanese articles. It is true that fewer adjectives and adjectival phrases which modify noun phrases would be found in Japanese newspapers. However, their relatively neutral tone in this aspect does not mean that Japanese newspaper writers maintain neutrality. They show their point of view by other linguistic means,³⁾ just as the writer of the article in *The Times* does.

In regard to subjectivity and evaluations in articles, Student F has a similar misunderstanding that Japanese newspapers report only facts and maintain complete neutrality. Student F compares *The Times* with a Japanese article and assesses *The Times* as 'more biased'.

Student F (*The Times*):

The Japanese newspaper explained how the incident occurred and what happened since then, while *The Times* put more emphasis on what effect the incident was going to have on others, especially on the stock market. *The Times* seemed more biased, too. The Japanese newspaper wrote only the definite facts.

This student's comparison between the Japanese article and the one in *The Times* is reasonably based on the contents of the respective articles. Besides, this student seems to have understood that the article of *The Times* showed the reporter's opinion by referring to the

causal relationship between Horie's arrest and stock prices. This shows that Student F grasped an evaluative element in the English article which was not instructed in class. In spite of this, the student failed to recognise a similar non-factual element in the Japanese text.

Student F said that *The Times* was more biased while Japanese papers were less biased because they had only facts in their articles. The student seems to have double misconceptions about media discourse. The first misconception is that if a newspaper article includes predictions or other non-factual elements, it is biased. Clearly, bias should be separated from non-factual discourse. Assumptions, predictions and hypothesis can be non-biased while one's view about a fact can be biased. Another misunderstanding is that Japanese newspapers have only definite facts in their articles. Student F's comment along with Student D's, '*The Times* doesn't have the reporter's opinion' revealed their misconceptions that media discourse consists only of factual reporting and that media reports can be neutral.

Two students who chose *The Guardian* for their reading assignment, which was loaded with more evaluative expressions than *The Times*, mention that the article has 'more adjectives and opinions' (Student C) and is 'more interesting to read' (Student B).

Student C (*The Guardian*):

I think the English one has more adjectives and opinions of the writer.

This student's comment clearly reflects the effect of instruction on adjectives and associates adjectives with the reporter's opinion. Likewise, Student B seems to be affected by the instruction.

Student B (*The Guardian*):

The Guardian uses expressions like "entrepreneur" but Japanese newspapers don't. The *Guardian* makes the article more interesting to read.

It is remarkable that this student recognised the noun, 'entrepreneur', had an evaluative function even though an explicit instruction on evaluation which was indicated by nouns was not given in the class except for the references to Horie. Student B also regards the text which has more evaluative expressions as 'interesting'. This suggests that value-laden expressions could have aroused the reader's interest especially in *The Guardian* and this made her choose the article.⁴⁾

Student B's comment also implicates a belief that Japanese newspapers do not have

evaluative expressions. This is most likely due to the effect of the classroom instruction which emphasised the adjectives and the references to the protagonist. This student failed to recognise other linguistic elements which suggested the writer's point of view in the Japanese article. Such misunderstandings could also derive from the tendency of inexperienced learners to capture evaluations as distinct categories such as evaluative versus non-evaluative.

6. Implications

Comparing lead paragraphs of different newspaper articles on the same topic by focusing on adjectives and references to the main protagonist can function as introductory material for instructing evaluation in texts. The activity also helps to develop students' vocabulary and motivates students to choose their favourite article. The majority of participants of this study chose an article with fewer adjectives and value-laden references to the main protagonist. The students commented that such types of text were easier for them to read. The participants' feedback also suggested that learners who were unfamiliar with the concept of evaluation could be more dependent on the classroom instruction for certain aspects of evaluation and could miss other evaluative resources in the text.

The participants' comments on their assigned articles revealed that some of them confused value-laden expressions with the writer's opinion or bias. Indeed value-laden expressions can be attributed to a writer's opinions and biases. But the opposite is not always true. A writer's opinions and biases are not necessarily expressed by value-laden expressions. Another prevailing misconception among the learners was that media discourse consists of only factual reporting. In retrospect, the instruction to the students on value-laden expressions was clearly insufficient to ensure that learners understood that non-factual discourse could be interwoven into a factual report and that this was a discursive practice.

Learners tend to be less tolerant toward comparative nature of evaluation which is reflected in linguistic forms and lexis, and they tend to choose one out of only two choices: evaluative or evaluation-free. Instruction at a textual level, not only at a lexical level, would enable learners to understand that any discourse more or less involves the writer's, the narrator's, the protagonist's or the community's valuation and never achieves evaluation-freeness. The instruction needs to be carefully given so that learners can understand that the concept of evaluation is comparative and involves gradation.

7. Conclusion

This study has shown that the concept of evaluation can be introduced into second language reading instruction by comparing leads of newspaper articles on the same topic. Distinctive evaluative elements such as adjectives and references to the main protagonist could be presented as an introductory phase. The students' feedback revealed their misconceptions about media discourse, evaluation and the relationship between factual statement and neutrality. Inexperienced learners tend to miss the reporter's subjectivity which is loaded on both factual and non-factual discourse in news reports.

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- 1) This paper was written based on the presentation given at the 45th JACET annual convention in Osaka on 10th September 2006.
 - 2) 'Bad' or 'good' connotation or semantic prosodies (Louw, 1993) of a word or an expression can be analysed by corpus-based research. I used the British National Corpus for this judgement.
 - 3) For example, a Japanese news article says: 'Livedoor Co. President Horie's arrest has caused the situation in which suspect Horie's resignation would be inevitable' (President Horie Arrested, 24/01/06, Yomiuri Shimbun). This sentence is predicting a consequence of Horie's arrest, which is not a fact but the reporter's opinion. The modality and adjective suggest the writer's evaluation, but the students in this study were not provided with information that such features could be linguistic clues to evaluation.
 - 4) Zhanzi (2003) reports her successful classroom instruction on appraisal resources, which focused on evaluation in texts related to emotional stances, affect, judgment and appreciation. She reports that the instruction greatly helped the students to interact with autobiographical text on language acquisition.

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Appendix: Handout for the class

Area Studies for Returnees : Newspapers

Part I

1. *Los Angeles Times*, January 23, 2006

Japanese Web Mogul Arrested for Alleged Securities Violations

By Bruce Wallace, Times Staff Writer

TOKYO—Japanese prosecutors (1.) iconoclastic Internet mogul Takafumi Horie and three business partners today, whisking them off to a Tokyo detention center in a nationally (2.) police cavalcade to face allegations they broke securities laws.

2. *The New York Times*, January 24, 2006

Investigation of Livedoor Leads to Arrest of Its Founder

By JAMES BROOKE (NYT) ; Business/Financial Desk

Takafumi Horie, the brash Internet (3.) whose rise captivated Japan until an investigation into his business practices panicked the Tokyo Stock Exchange, was arrested Monday night on (4.) that he had violated securities exchange law.

3. *The Times*, January 23, 2006

Japanese internet guru arrested

By Rhys Blakely, and agencies in Tokyo

Japanese prosecutors today arrested Takafumi Horie, the (5.) chief executive of Livedoor, the internet services provider, for suspected securities laws (6.).

4. *The Guardian*, January 24, 2006

Livedoor chief arrested and locked up in Tokyo jail

Justin McCurry in Tokyo

Exactly a week after investigators marched into his plush offices in Tokyo, Takafumi Horie, the iconoclastic CEO of the (7.) empire Livedoor, was last night languishing in a cell following his arrest on suspicion of spreading (8.) financial information to investors to boost his company's share price.

Task and questions

1. Underline adjectives.
2. How is Horie referred to in each article ?
3. Which newspaper keeps a neutral tone and which involves a more subjective point of view of the reporter ?
4. Which newspaper refers to the effect of the incident ?

Part II Reading Assignment

Choose one newspaper article out of *Los Angeles Times*, *The New York Times*, *The Times* and *The Guardian*.

Name of the newspaper you chose:

1. What information sources does the reporter use to write the article ?
2. What consequences or effects does the reporter predict ?
3. Do you find any differences in the ways of reporting between the article of the Japanese newspaper and the one you read ?