

Cultural Exchange and Media Evaluations Behind Transnational Business Acquisition
Between China and the United States: A Qualitative Study of Dalian Wanda-AMC

A thesis presented to
the faculty of
the Scripps College of Communication of Ohio University
and the Institute for Communication and Media Studies of Leipzig University

In partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degrees

Master of Science in Journalism (Ohio University),
Master of Arts in Global Mass Communication (Leipzig University)

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August 2018

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This thesis titled
Cultural Exchange and Media Evaluations Behind Transnational Business Acquisition
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Abstract

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August 2018

3756623

Cultural Exchange and Media Evaluations Behind Transnational Business Acquisition
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Despite the vast acquisition by American businesses of Chinese companies, little is known about the reverse, the acquisition by Chinese of American companies. The general image of Chinese companies and the Chinese market is developing and growing instead of strong and well-developed. In 2012, Chinese Dalian Wanda Group acquired the United States' second-largest cinema line— AMC, for a price of \$2.6 billion, which surprised the world. As a Chinese student, the researcher was curious about how American newspapers and Chinese newspapers frame this acquisition and whether cultural discount and cultural imperialism involved. 12 Chinese newspapers, and 13 American newspapers, articles were analyzed with five descriptive categories. The researcher found that American newspapers held a more positive and supportive position compared to Chinese newspapers, although American newspapers showed negative attitudes and disagreement of China's tight restrictions and Chinese market piracy problems. Both sides doubted their respective native companies' capability to complete this acquisition.

Dedication

I dedicate my thesis work to my family and many friends. A special thanks to my loving parents, Duyi Zhao and Shufang Lin, whose words of encouragement, comfort, and push for tenacity ring in my ears.

I also dedicate this thesis to my many friends who have supported me and inspired me throughout the process. I will always appreciate all they have done, especially Xiaoyu Wu for helping me develop my theory skills and design my procedures, and Shaowen Ma for encouragement and entertaining.

I dedicate this work and give special thanks to my roommate Huaijing Wang for delicious homemade food, and two cute puppies, Cola and Momo, for being there for me during my stressful time. Both of you have been my best cheerleaders.

Acknowledgments

I wish to thank my committee members who were more than generous with their expertise and precious time. A special thanks to Dr. Michael S. Sweeney, my committee chairman, for his countless hours of reflecting, reading, encouraging, and most of all patience throughout the entire process. The door to Prof. Sweeney's office was always open whenever I ran into a trouble spot or had a question about my research or writing. He consistently allowed this paper to be my own work, but steered me in the right the direction whenever he thought I needed it. He not only supported me in academic research, but also encouraged and comforted me in my daily life. It is impossible to finish this thesis without him. Thank you.

I would like to acknowledge and thank Dr. Bernhard Debatin and Dr. Carsten Junker for agreeing to serve on my committee. As the second readers of this thesis, I am gratefully indebted to them for their very valuable comments and suggestions on this thesis.

Finally, I must express my very profound appreciativeness to my parents for providing me with limitless support and continuous encouragement throughout my years of study and through the process of researching and writing this thesis. This accomplishment would not have been possible without them. Thank you

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Chapter 1: Introduction

In September 2012, Dalian Wanda Group Corporation (“Wanda”) announced the \$2.6 billion acquisition of American Multi-Cinema (AMC) Entertainment, a U.S.-based company. The acquisition created the world’s largest chain of motion picture cinemas. Wanda joined its 805 screens at 94 theaters, along with its huge organization of film production and distribution, to AMC’s 338 theaters and 4,865 screens. AMC retained autonomy over film programming at its theaters in 32 states, where more than 200 million people watched at least one movie in the year prior to the acquisition.

The acquisition was seen in both nations as a move by China to gain a greater share in the U.S. market, boosting attention and reputation for Chinese business, and marking another significant global act of cooperation and consolidation. It also was seen as a big step for China’s move toward more fully globalizing its economy, and for integrating elements of Chinese culture into the Western entertainment market. Wanda Chairman and President Wang Jianlin said that he wishes, in honor of China, to change the world’s perception of Chinese companies (Wang, 2016).

Despite the news of the acquisition being announced in laudatory press releases, some observers have raised questions about the larger issue of China buying into the U.S. market. In September 2016, a few months after Wanda bought another U.S. entertainment property, Hollywood production company Legendary Entertainment, 16 members of the U.S. House of Representatives signed a letter to the U.S. comptroller general asking whether large-scale foreign ownership of U.S. media was in Americans’ best interests.

“Should the definition of national security be broadened to address concerns about propaganda and control of the media and ‘soft power’ institutions?” the representatives asked. They urged the comptroller, head of the Government Accountability Office, to explore whether the federal government should more thoroughly scrutinize foreign investments.

A New York Times report on the letter stated,

Wanda is not a state-controlled enterprise, but the writers said that any Chinese company designated a “state champion” that benefits from “illegal subsidies” could pose a strategic, if not overt, national security threat. They said there have been “growing concerns about China’s efforts to censor topics and exert propaganda controls on American media.” (Wong, 2016)

Thus, what had been heralded as a business success story later was held up as a possible threat to national security.

In modern society, cultural influence, as a soft power, has become a measurement of comprehensive national power. During the 20th century, the United States energetically developed its media industry all over the globe, including such news and entertainment agencies as the major television networks American Broadcasting Company (ABC), Columbia Broadcasting System (CBS), National Broadcasting Company (NBC), Fox News, and Cable News Network (CNN). Media companies used their program content to spread American cultural value, such as materialism. A study from Fujioka and Neuendorf suggests that American media tend to address materialistic values by illustrating the comfortable and desirable lives of the middle-to-upper class,

which directly influences adolescents' future desires and life goals (Fujioka & Neuendorf, 2015). During most of the 20th century, China moved through a difficult period of economic development, from a largely agrarian society (which did not share in many of the Western values) to a modern industrial and technological giant. After decades of livelihood development, China finally has the ability to show Mandarin culture and values in Western, developed countries.

As a Chinese student studying mass communication in the United States and Germany, it is important and necessary for me to understand Chinese media development on the world stage, especially in the United States of America, because the U.S. is the largest and most influential purveyor of mass media around the globe and also is a role model for Chinese entertainment companies. To be specific, due to the Chinese firewall and internet regulations, Chinese people are not allowed to access American websites such as Google, Facebook, and Twitter. However, Baidu, China's largest search engine company, is considered as Chinese version of Google. In addition, Renren and Weibo were created as Chinese versions of Facebook and Twitter. As Americans were chatting online with MSN software, China's Tencent registered QQ as the first popular and widely used online chatting software in China. According to Tencent's official website, QQ's monthly active user accounts reached 861 million in March 2017, while its peak concurrent user accounts reached 266 million. Additionally, Tencent's most popular product as of summer 2017 is Weixin or WeChat, which is considered a Chinese version of What's app. The difference is that WeChat is most commonly registered and related to QQ account numbers instead of phone numbers, which is this operating method of

What's App. Combined with WeChat users, Tencent active user accounts climbs to 938 million by 2014 (Tencent, 2014).

Research about how Americans export culture and media to China and how Chinese audiences have received and reacted to Hollywood entertainment values is not a new field, as will be detailed in the literature review below. Researchers from both China and the United States continue to dig deeply into American cultural imperialism, especially in Asia and Africa. American cultural imperialism here refers to the dominance of American culture, and media in particular, keeping some developing countries dependent on American mainstream media, thus shaping the culture and values of the dominated country (Salwen, 1991). However, it appears that not many scholars focus their research topics on how leaders of Chinese industry expand their businesses in the U.S., particularly regarding how Chinese cultural output affects their business expansion.

This thesis focuses on the issue of Chinese companies purchasing U.S.-based companies, and how news media reporters react to such Chinese-American transactions. Specifically, the author will use newspaper reports on the business acquisition case of Dalian Wanda Group and AMC cinema to analyze Chinese and American media's attitudes and frames about transnational entertainment companies' acquisitions, and also dig into the ideas of "cultural discount" (Davis, 2009) and media imperialism behind these business acquisitions.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Cultural Discount

Cultural discount occurs when, in crossing a border, a cultural product loses some of its values in the cross-cultural translation (Davis, 2009). According to Davis (2009):

The concept of cultural discount was developed to explain the diminishment of value of cultural border-crossing media products. It assumes that most media products are produced for national markets, after which they might be exported if they can overcome the discount. (p. 4)

For example, American movies that touch on any aspects of Chinese history since the Communist Revolution of 1949 are likely to be intensely scrutinized by Chinese censors, and cuts or changes may be demanded before such movies can be shown on Chinese soil. These changes can range from political or militaristic overhauls to slight alterations to fit issues of the day. The 2012 U.S. remake of *Red Dawn*, originally a 1984 movie about a Soviet military invasion of the United States, posited the unlikely invasion of America by the North Koreans. Speculation centered on the choice of the enemy as a way to appeal to Chinese audiences and make the film acceptable to Chinese censors. In a quirkier example of cross-cultural adjustment, several minutes were added to the Chinese version of *Iron Man III* to show that Tony Stark, the playboy-turned-superhero, recharges his energy by drinking Chinese milk. Milk sales in China had just taken a huge hit because of mercury contamination; Stark no doubt was chosen to instill confidence that the milk had been made safe.

The case of Wanda and AMC Entertainment is one of a Chinese company seeking out Hollywood entertainment companies and studios to co-produce movies which aim at a Chinese national market. Thus, it is assumed that cultural discount occurs during the production procedure. Additionally, Wanda, as a Chinese business company, has purchased an American firm, and while this obviously expands its business across borders during the transaction, it may also contribute cultural discount to the acquisition.

To be specific, when Hollywood studios produce movies based on U.S. culture, such as *Transformers* and *Avengers*, they certainly bring American ethos to them. Audiences have a specific and accurate name for these type of movies — hero movies, which precisely points to the fact that these movies reflect American personal heroism, a strongly American ethos. Main characters in these movies are life savers who have extraordinary power to rescue people from miseries. In *Transformers II*, the good-guy space robot Optimus fights three enemies and sacrifices himself. In the *Avengers* series of movies, a weak enlisted man named Steve Rogers donates his body for an experiment to make humans more powerful in the face of deadly enemies. He becomes Captain America, but the transformation causes him to lose his best friend and his lover during the war. Quicksilver, whose super power is the ability to move extremely quickly, dies in a fight to save other heroes. These American superheroes choose to fight with enemies and protect innocent people and their team members, which is a classic representative of personal heroism. However, when Chinese companies and Hollywood studios co-produce movies for Chinese audiences, the merged studios understand the economic forces pointing toward insertion of a more Chinese ethos in those movies. In such cases,

Hollywood teams might give up some of their national cultural values during the production. And vice versa: Chinese media companies also lose some of their cultural values during this co-production.

Cultural Imperialism

Cultural imperialism is deeply related to dependency theory, which claims that developed countries keep developing nations eternally dependent on the developed nations' mainstream media, so that their culture could survive (Salwen, 1991). Cultural imperialism is the powerful nations' tool to keep their authority in developing nations instead of resorting to armed force and occupation (Salwen, 1991). Beltran (1978b) found that it is also considered as a spontaneous by-product of political and economic imperialism:

It is logical to expect a nation exerting economic and political influence over other countries to exert a cultural influence as well. When the influence is reciprocal with those of such countries, the case is one of balanced, legitimate and desirable intercultural exchange. But when the culture of a central and dominant country is unilaterally imposed over the peripheral countries it dominates at the expense of their cultural integrity, then the case is one of cultural imperialism. (p.

185)

Research, especially from the 1960s to early 1970s, of cultural influences of Western mass media in foreign cultures was impacted by the "limited effects" or "minimal effects" model of communication, which addressed that media users discriminatingly expose themselves to media. Media users more easily accept messages that have

perspectives that align with those of the users, and are slower to embrace messages with a level of ambiguity than those presented as certainties. Thus, this model emphasized that mass media's ability to re-enforce existing perspectives was much stronger than the ability to change values and attitudes (Salwen, 1991).

For instance, a study in Taiwan in 1965, when Taiwan did not have television signals covering the entire island, examined attitudes of children who watched TV versus those who did not. Study participants were fifth-grade TV viewers and non-viewers who were asked to mark solutions to practical problems that had either Oriental characteristics or Occidental characteristics. The researcher, Tsai, wanted to test his belief that Orientals and Occidentals vary in their "fundamental attitudes" toward (1) relations with nature, in which Orientals prefer greater harmony; (2) the passage of time and its effects on a person, in which most Orientals admire old people and the past; (3) the Oriental preference for "existence" versus the Occidental preference for "action"; and (4) relationships among human beings, in which Orientals hold a "family-goes-first" point of view and Occidentals desire individualism. Besides these four measurements, Tsai also tested their attitudes about travel, clothing, music, and magazines (Salwen, 1991).

The TV viewers, who watched television at least twice a week and in total more than four hours, were selected from an elementary school in Taipei. Nonviewers were from an area that television signals did not cover (Salwen, 1991).

TV viewers exposed to American television shared the same fundamental attitudes of TV nonviewers. Nevertheless, there was a huge gap in their support of American culture, so that TV viewers were seen as more "Americanized" by their

acceptance, even though overall they clung to traditional Chinese values (Salwen, 1991).

With this finding, Salwen (1991) applied the limited effects model and explained:

A child perceives TV selectively. If the new stimuli in a program run counter to central beliefs — that is, to existing knowledge, attitudes, and home background — they may not be perceived or, if perceived, rejected. Our TV-children hold strongly to views that are learned from the family, in school, and in other communication media. Even frequent, extensive exposure to the values of another culture, on television, does seem to influence this fundamental orientation. (p. 32)

In the latter half of twentieth century, scholars started an approach toward global communication that was characterized as media imperialism. In Fejes' study, he suggested that media imperialism was a tool to describe modern communication media's processes of creating, maintaining and expanding domination and dependence regularities all over the world (Fejes, 1981).

Other studies of media imperialism mostly focused on its role of "transnational corporations or media interests in shaping communications between developed and Third World countries" (Fejes, 1981, p. 286). Tyler Cowen's book *How Globalization Is Changing the World's Culture* proposes a question without a simple answer: "When Hollywood penetrates global markets, to what extent is American culture being exported?" (Cowen, 2009, p. 93). The American ethos of individualism, heroism, and romantic self-fulfillment are seamlessly inserted in Hollywood movies and ready for global market (Cowen, 2009). Based on this convenient condition, Cowen pointed out

that United States' culture, as one of the dominant cultures, takes a privileged way to export its values and structure the preferences of other countries (Cowen, 2009).

Framing

Framing theory refers to the way the media present information to the audience and how that presentation may affect the way people process that information (Scheufele, 1999). In studies of what framing is, scholars state different and sometimes vague definitions and concepts. Due to those vague conceptualizations, "the term *framing* has been used repeatedly to label similar but distinctly different approaches" (Scheufele, 1999, p. 103). Erving Goffman brought frame analysis to the stage and carried the idea forward by his astonishing book *Frame analysis: An essay on the organization of experience* in 1974 (Goffman, 1974). To get to the original source of the idea, framing theory is first mentioned by an anthropologist, Gregory Bateson, in 1972, in his book *Steps to an Ecology of Mind*. He used "framing" to describe dreamers and their dreams. He wrote that a dreamer could not "dream a statement referring to (i.e., framing) his dream" (Bateson, 1972, p. 191). Additionally, Basteson (1972) also wrote:

Among human beings this framing and labeling of messages and meaningful actions reaches considerable complexity, with the peculiarity that our vocabulary for such discrimination is still very poorly developed, and we rely preponderantly upon nonverbal media of posture, gesture, facial expression, intonation, and the context for the communication of these highly abstract, but vitally important, labels. (p. 206)

In the mass communication field, framing is used to describe the way media convey information to the public. In order to encourage or discourage certain interpretations of events being described, the mass media address certain aspects and insert them within a selective context, and in this way, media have the power to influence people's judgment of reality. Nonetheless, media impacts are limited by a reciprocity between mass media and information receivers (Scheufele, 1999). "Media discourse is part of the process by which individuals construct meaning, and public opinion is part of the process by which journalists . . . develop and crystallize meaning in public discourse" (Scheufele, 1999, p. 105).

Scheufele pointed out that researchers should differentiate between media frames and individual frames. The concept of media frames serves "devices embedded in political discourse, and the function of individual frames is more similar to "internal structures of the mind" (Scheufele, 1999, p. 106). He said that individual frames are the "information-processing schemata" of individuals, and media frames are "attributes of the news itself" (p. 106). Or, to put it another way, one frame exists in the mind of the receiver, and another, independent of the receiver, in the media that transmit the information. Gitlin supported that idea that frames, "largely unspoken and unacknowledged, organize the world both for journalists who report it and, in some important degree, for us who rely on their reports" (Gitlin, 1980, p. 7).

In his research, Entman defines framing as a process of selecting partial elements of a particular reality and arranging a description that emphasizes connections within them to result in a particular expression (Entman, 2007). Framing changes and builds

audiences' understandings and preferences by priming. In other words, framing uses the salient parts of certain ideas to guide audiences' thoughts, feelings, and decisions, to follow a particular pattern (Entman, 2007). For example, Western news media prefer to focus on China's historical and ancient aspects instead of its modernization and high-technology development. Thus, people from Western countries tend to think that China is fascinated with its history but not well civilized. He also discusses the connection between framing and media content bias. Content bias, as Entman (2007) explains, exhibits "consistent patterns in the framing of mediated communication that promote the influence of one side in conflicts over the use of government power." (p. 166)

Chinese Media Industry & Wanda Group

The following literature review focuses on Chinese-American acquisition and acquisition business cases as well as literature that tests and examine theories applied in this study.

The idea of "media system" was first proposed in the book *Four Theories of The Press*, and it was structured from a political system (Duan & Takahashi, 2017). In this research, the authors explain that *Four Theories of the Press* was not a sufficient tool to explain the modern media system (Duan & Takahashi, 2017). However, they support the idea that a media system should be examined experimentally, and addressed a framework of four dimensions of media system in their research — "characteristics of structure of media markets, political parallelism, professionalization of journalism, and the role of the state" (Duan & Takahashi, 2017, p. 85). This framework has been tested to media system

researched not only in western countries, but also in Asia, such as China (Duan & Tkahashi, 2017).

In order to follow the Chinese communist system, Chinese government controls all sectors of the economy, including all types of media. The Chinese media system follows a strict hierarchical structure from central government to provinces, to cities and autonomous districts, and then to counties. As Pashupati (2003) and his colleagues explain, “The state administrations owned, supervised and regulated mass media at these three local levels, and each ministry had its offices at all levels.” (p. 255) Based on this structure, Chinese news reports are more likely to facilitate the state’s structural demands instead of educate the public, and the news content mostly comes from defining and reproducing the central dictations from the government (Yang, 2003).

2001 was a crucial year for China and the Chinese media industry, because China became a member of World Trade Organization (WTO). This extended the Chinese market to an international level and opened the door for Chinese media companies to go global, which also forced the Chinese government to import more foreign productions into Chinese market, including movies. In a few years after 2001, more and more Chinese media companies recombined, and conglomeration became popular. Besides that, many companies from other industries, such as real estate, expanded their businesses into the media industry. Since then, the Chinese media industry stepped into a flourishing time.

After decades of development, Dalian Wanda Group has now become a legendary, a star not only in the Chinese business field, but also on international stage. Curtin (2016) mentions Wanda’s huge business investments in Europe and America, such

as the purchase of the Edificio España building in Madrid and, in the sports world, a stake in the Atlético de Madrid football team. Richeri (2016) specifically further discusses Wanda's cinema development, its relationship with Hollywood, and box office profits it had earned. For example, Wanda purchased Odeon, the second-largest cinema line in the Europe, and the second-largest cinema line in Australia, Hoyts (Richeri, 2016). In *The Wanda Way*, a biography of Jianlin Wang, who is the chairman of Dalian Wanda Group, Wang introduces his growing path, Wanda's several important changes, turning points, and certainly Wanda's global strategy. The company's founder, Jianlin Wang, became a soldier after he dropped out of school. After his military service, he worked for government for a few years. However, he went into business in 1988, and until 1992, he established his real estate business in Dalian, a coastal city of Liaoning province, northeast China. With the development of Chinese economy, in 1993, he made the decision to expand his "housing" business to Guangzhou, the capital city of Guangdong province, south China, and it became the first cross-regional real estate company in China (Wang, 2016). Under the policy of "going global" from the Chinese government, Wang decided to invest in culture and the media industry. He started the cultural tourism industry in 2008, and four years later, with the acquisition of AMC, Wanda established Wanda Cultural Industry Group, and officially stepped into the movie and entertainment industry (Wang, 2016).

Dalian Wanda conglomerate is the number one private enterprise in China, and also the number one cinema chain in the world after it bought 100 percent of stock rights of AMC, the biggest cinema chain in the U.S., which also owns the number one cinema

line in the U.K. (Wang, 2016). In 2016, Jianlin Wang merged his second Hollywood film production company, Dick Clark Productions, valued at around \$1 billion. Early in January, he purchased LeGEndary Entertainment for \$3.5 billion. Jianlin Wang made another step to the core of the U.S. entertainment industry. Besides this, in 2015, Wanda Group merged Hoyts, the second biggest cinema line in Australia, opening another door for Chinese movie industry to get into the world market, and also made contributions to international film market.

American Entertainment Industry & AMC

Radio and television development emerged as forms of mass communication in the 20th century. After Italian engineer Guglielmo Marconi demonstrated radio and it became a popular hobby, people started to use “radio” as a short name of “radio wireless telegraphy” (Tebbel, 1974). In the United States, broadcasting was first used by the military, as the Navy took total control of radio during World War I. After the war, the federal government controlled the air waves. Compared with the conventional telegraph, experts saw radio as an interesting toy. When David Sarnoff proposed to use radio as a medium and make radio a “household utility” to bring music into houses by wireless, radio finally became a household instrument in the 1920s (Tebbel, 1974). In 1919, Radio Corporation of America (RCA) was formed, and Sarnoff became its leader (Tebbel, 1974). In 1920, RCA produced its first ‘Radio Music Boxes,’ and Dr. Frank Conrad started the first broadcasts on what is today known as station KDKA in Pittsburgh. Within one year, radio became a national fever, and stations were built all over the country (Tebbel, 1974).

Having the success of conveying sound through the air on radio waves, scientists and inventors all over the world began trying to transmit moving images in a similar function (Edgerton, 2016). The word “television” was coined by a Russian physicist, Constantin Perskyi, in 1900. However, the development of television was not smooth and easy. Many scientists from all over the world made contributions to the invention. Finally, from the mid-1930s to the postwar years, television technology became more common and TV programs started locally (Edgerton, 2016).

Supplementing paper media and radio and television programs, the film industry plays a key role in the America media industry as well as entertainment industry. Hollywood, California, became the center of the motion picture industry. Films were made predominantly to entertain, and their production became a huge moneymaking industry based on the creation and promotion of star actors (Hale, 2014). Kindem (1982) stated:

In addition to being a social phenomenon, which reflects a particular ideology, the Hollywood star system is a business strategy designed to generate large audiences and differentiate entertainment programs and products, and has been used for seventy years to provide increasing returns on production investments. (p. 79)

Film stars had a high degree of recognition among audiences, and could bring higher investments of film. From then on, Hollywood movie studios — such Big Five studios Warner Bros, Loew’s /MGM, Paramount, RKO, and Twentieth Century-Fox, and the Little Three studios, Universal, Columbia, and United Artists — became machines of film stars production (Kindem, 1982).

Nevertheless, instead of being treated as artists and talents, many of the Hollywood stars were shaped, controlled, exhausted, and abandoned by film studios, in order to best meet popular demand or to disseminate a new image and create a new demand (Kindem, 1982). Advertising campaigns were created to sculpt movie stars' images and to protect studio investments (Kindem, 1982).

In 1920s, with the American movie moving into a cash-flush period, large theater circuits vertically integrated, creating Hollywood firms with noteworthy power (Kindem, 1982). This integration allowed movies to be distributed to theater chains to maximize audiences. Large film producers started to purchase their own theater chains to manage access to audiences. After adopting the chain store business model, the American movie industry became a complete “big business” (Kindem, 1982, p. 104).

AMC, one of the main characters of this thesis, followed this chain theater business model. With its home base at the Regent Theatre in Kansas City, Missouri, the chain was renamed as AMC by the chief executive officer Stanley Durwood in 1961. With its multiple auditoriums, AMC became the first multiplex theatre in the world (AMC theatres, 2017). Backed by shareholder The Wanda Group, and after acquisitions of Carmike Cinemas in the U.S., and Odeon & UCI Cinemas in Europe, AMC now becomes the largest cinema chain in the world (AMC theatres, 2017).

China Influence

China's rapid development—China became the world's largest economy in 2014—continues to raise its reputation and global impact. Chinese economic development affects the global economic market deeply and widely, and this is especially

true in entertainment and the media industry. Wanda Group bought Europe's second-largest cinema line, Odeon, and the second-largest cinema chain of Australia, Hoyts (Richeri, 2016). It continues to seize more film market share all over the world. Besides Wanda, Chinese companies Tencent and Alibaba also invested in movie companies and entertainment companies in the West. For example, Tencent bought a game company for €6.7 billion in Finland. Overall, in 2015, China investors spent more than \$23 billion in Europe and \$15 billion in the U.S. (Jones, 2016). Not surprisingly, China increased its investment in the EU to €35.1 billion in 2016 (Mitchell, 2017). As we can see, more and more business corporations are on the expansion plan. China is not only gaining more economic influences in the U.S., but also has solidified its presence in the European market.

According to PricewaterhouseCoopers (PWC) data, Chinese cinema box office and screens will surpass those of the U.S. to become number one in the world at some point in 2017 (Garrahan, 2016). China's huge population is always a double-sided economic sword. On the one hand, it widens the gap between rich and poor while pushing Chinese economic development. On the other hand, it makes China a huge market of growing potential that is sustainable and has not been fully developed.

The growing foreign investment and economy lead the development of China's domestic economy. Residents' living conditions improve, which directly leads to higher demands on the entertainment and cultural industries. However, China's current entertainment production standards are relatively low, in other words, not suitable for residents' aesthetic tastes. Therefore, to import well-developed Western movie

production teams and entertainment companies has become necessary. Chinese investment tycoons, such as Wanda Group, Alibaba Group, and Tencent, cooperate with Hollywood movie teams, not only to bring them to China, but also to learn their excellent production skills and apply their high technologies in Chinese movie productions (Curtin, 2016). Nevertheless, due to income limits and consumer preferences, cinema consumption is still negligible in China compared with the U.S. (Richeri, 2016). Thus, Chinese cinema and entertainment markets are still a big lure for global hunters.

The U.S. Influence

After China joined the World Trade Organization in 2001, more international companies in media fields started to seek out partnerships with Chinese firms (Richeri, 2016). In addition, China also reciprocates its agreement on equal conditions for foreign companies, including movie production and entertainment companies. Thus, Hollywood, a representative of American media and entertainment industry, opens its Mandarin markets. A few years later, China became Hollywood's biggest overseas market. More and more Hollywood movies show Chinese characteristics and elements, such as the *Kung Fu Panda* movie series, and *Mulan*. Hollywood movies use Chinese actors (Jet Li, Michelle Yeoh), and even directors, such as Jackie Chan and Ang Lee. These evidences show the influences that China has on American movie market.

Additionally, Chinese companies and conglomerates impact the U.S. economically through mergers and acquisitions, and get financially involved in development of communication technology and better management systems (Sheng & Zhang, 2014). These investments and corporations boost the American economy and help

American audiences to know more about China and Chinese culture. Overall, it is a win-win situation for both economic and cultural aspects.

All in all, Wanda, as one of the top Chinese conglomerates, acquires the second-largest cinema chain in the United States, and reaches the most potential viewers in the cinema field. This acquisition case raises attention all over the world, especially in China and the U.S.: What should one make of this bold move by a Chinese enterprise into a motion picture industry that has been a cornerstone of American culture for more than a century? To put it simply, is it good, bad, or both—and for whom? Despite the rise of digital and social media, newspapers continue to exhibit significant trust among readers in reporting the news. A 2014 survey by the PEW Research Center ranking the most-trusted news media outlets in the United States, listed twenty-one news outlets “more trusted than distrusted.” All but four were traditional media: radio, television, newspapers, and one magazine (the *New Yorker*); specifically, the papers were *The Wall Street Journal*, *New York Times*, *Washington Post* and *USA Today* (Mitchell et al., 2014). Thus, it is significant to see how various traditional newspapers and news agencies have covered this business case. How do selected media in China and the United States assess this case? Do each country’s newspapers support this case or have doubts on it? This thesis selected eight newspaper agencies and uses twenty-five newspaper articles from both countries to discover how they analyze this case: what they consider important, and why.

Chapter 3: Methodology

Newspapers Selection

In order to have balanced opinions from both the American side and Chinese side, the researcher chose a total of 25 newspaper articles: 12 from Chinese newspapers and 13 from American newspapers. According to *statista.com*, a statistics aggregation site, the top five newspaper agencies in America by circulation are *Wall Street Journal* (WSJ), *New York Times* (NYT), *Chicago Tribune*, *New York Post*, and *Los Angeles Times* (LAT) (*Statista.com*, 2017). Aside from minor references relating to business ventures other than the acquisition of AMC, no articles could be found in the designated time period in the available data bases for the *Chicago Tribune* and *New York Post*. Thus, the researcher chose to limit the search to the WSJ, NYT, and LAT. The WSJ, NYT, and LAT are generally considered leaders of the “prestige press” in the United States, and LAT also provided the most in-depth newspaper coverage that could be found in the Wanda-AMC case (Boykoff, M. T, 2007; Boykoff, M. T., & Boykoff, J. M., 2004; Mishra, S., 2008). In the first round of searching newspaper articles, using the Lexis Nexis database and *newspapers.com*, the researcher found that the LAT had the greatest number of news stories about the Wanda-AMC acquisition case. The most likely reason is that Wanda and AMC held their press conference on the acquisition in Los Angeles in 2012. In addition, Wanda Group’s American headquarter is in Los Angeles, and its entertainment business is based in Hollywood, which is also in Los Angeles. Therefore, as a national and local newspaper agency, LAT became a crucial newspaper source in this thesis.

Regarding the Chinese newspaper articles in the sample, they were selected from the most famous and influential newspapers in China: *Reference News*, *People's Daily*, *Yangtse Evening News*, *Guangzhou Daily*, and *China Daily*. According to statista.com (2012), the first four are China's leading newspapers by circulation, and *China Daily* (CD) is the leading English-language newspaper in China, and has a circulation of 900,000, which reaches not only Asia, but also Europe, Africa, and the Americas (Chinadaily.com.cn, 2017). In this transnational acquisition case, CD devoted much coverage, both in terms of story numbers and story length. Similar to the American newspaper source selection, it proved unwieldy to use all five newspaper agencies as sources. *Yangtse Evening News* does not offer a searchable option on its website, which is the only practical way for researchers to find news stories, so the researcher used *Guangzhou Daily* instead. In addition, Beijing is the capital and official news center of China, so inclusion of a Beijing newspaper would make the sources more comprehensive and authoritative. Thus, for the Chinese newspaper articles, the researcher finally chose *Reference News* (RN), *People's Daily* (PD), *Guangzhou Daily*(GD), *Beijing Daily* (BD) and *China Daily*(CD) as sources. All the Chinese language resources were translated into English by the researcher, and the researcher included the original Chinese version in the analysis to serve as a reference and to provide the opportunity for readers to verify the translation verification.

Wanda announced this acquisition in May, 2012 and completed it in September, 2012. Thus, the electronic resources were searched within 2012, especially with a focus on May and September, using the keywords Dalian Wanda Group and AMC. News

agencies' official websites and Lexis Nexis were two sources channels that the researcher applied in this thesis. Newspaper articles from *New York Times*, *Wall Street Journal*, *Reference News*, *People's Daily*, *Beijing Daily*, and *Guangzhou Daily* were found through searches of their official websites. Newspaper articles from *China Daily* and *Los Angeles Times* were downloaded from Lexis Nexis. Articles that were from official websites were searched by timeline, from January 1, 2012 to January 1, 2013, and read by the researcher carefully to select essentials that mainly focused on Wanda-AMC case, and filtered duplicates out.

The researcher applied "Wanda group" as key words to search newspaper articles in Lexis Nexis. (A search of the single keyword "Wanda" returned too many stories to sort, as Wanda is also a common female name in English-speaking countries.) The researcher then selected California as a geographical limitation of the Lexis Nexis search to find the California newspaper that published the most stories about the acquisition. That proved to be the *Los Angeles Times*, and the researcher once again limited the period under analysis from January 1, 2012 to January 1, 2013. After determining all these settings for the key word search, the researcher refined the search for the term "AMC" within the results. This returned 16 results. Furthermore, the researcher filtered out duplicates and read the remaining stories carefully to examine whether their contents were rich enough to do an in-depth framing analysis. At last, the author had five essential articles from *Los Angeles Times*. The same method was applied to the source *China Daily*, which gave the researcher four rich-in-content articles. The stories from these two

papers were added to those found through website searches to create the total of 25 stories (13 American and 12 Chinese).

A simple frequency analysis was applied to these selected newspaper reports, to result in descriptive statistics and prepare for an in-depth and repeated reading and framing analysis. In addition, the researcher used the NOOJ (<http://www.nooj-association.org/>, a natural language processing software) to pair the key words with the most commonly used other words, such as adjectives and verbs. NOOJ provides a hard count of the most common pairings, allowing a second layer of assessment of the descriptors, and ultimately, providing the raw material to help develop the frames of these news stories. The researcher employed a quantitative analysis to the result of NOOJ, by counting the most frequently appeared vocabularies that pair with key words. However, NOOJ does not provide pronouns, such as “they”, “he”, “that”, so the research has to go over all newspaper articles and selects out descriptive vocabularies by carefully reading.

Framing Package

In his article *Strategies to Take Subjectivity Out of Framing Analysis* (Van Gorp, 2010), Baldwin Van Gorp offers that the terms the “frame package” as a mean of analyzing texts. First he discards the term used by previous researchers, “media package,” because he suggests it sounds as if it is limited to a description of media content as assembled through media routines. Although he does not elaborate on such routines, one would suppose he refers to the way that journalists seek out sources, attribute information not readily verifiable, and construct raw data into a story format by

relying on narrative and making linguistic choices. But such choices do not exist in a cultural vacuum. Van Gorp expands the notion of media package analysis by using “a logical chain of reasoning devices” (p. 91) to link media content to broader social and cultural themes, and thus construct his frame packages. For example, one might suppose that the hypothetical choice of the now-anachronistic term “Red China” instead of “mainland China” or simply “China” would resonate with readers of a certain age who grew up during the Cold War and who considered post-1947 China to be part of a global, communist threat. Or, for another example, the metaphor of “inscrutable” China would anthropomorphize the nation to match historical, American racial stereotypes of Chinese as strange and untrustworthy—stereotypes that contributed to widespread anti-Chinese rioting in the United States in the 1880s. Van Gorp argues that the spectrum of conceivable frames should be subjected to a “logical chain of reasoning” (p. 91) to form the frame packages. It is difficult to precisely map out the steps of such a logical chain that would apply in all possible cases. However, in examining the possible frames, he says researchers should begin by focusing on the “manifest elements”—the clear and obvious linguistic devices that a writer uses to enhance understanding. Based on previous research, Van Gorp lists five common manifest framing devices: metaphors, historical examples, catchphrases, depictions, and visual images. Additionally, other elements that make contributions to descriptions and narratives, such as themes and subthemes, lexical choices, sources, quantifications and statistics, and appeals, are all considered as framing devices (Van Gorp, 2010, p 91). He claims that total count of words numbers and pictures in an article, the format of a text, the position a news article is placed, and editing and

production are called formatting devices, and they are important, too, because they function the ways how audiences receive and absorb the emphasis of the issue being framed (Van Gorp, 2010, p 91). With regard to reasoning devices, Van Gorp (2010) writes, they relate to the defining purposes of frames, and develop a way of “causal reasoning” (p. 91). Reasoning devices, he especially added, do not need to be obviously described in a mediated interpretation (Van Gorp, 2010, p 91).

When doing a framing analysis, Van Gorp (2010) suggests researchers to build a frame matrix that each row acts as a frame package and each column states framing, formatting, and reasoning devices by which the frame shows itself (p. 93). In that way, frame packages will build itself gradually during the procedure of collecting, coding, and analyzing texts. Figure 1 is an example Van Gorp used in his article of a formed frame package from a news abstract on a Canadian newspaper, *National Post*.

Table 4.1 Framing and Reasoning Devices in a Newspaper Article About Poverty

Source text	Framing devices	Reasoning devices
[...]The Christians and the crack addicts meet for breakfast every Thursday in a downtown park. [...]	Contrast of actors: Christians vs. crack addicts; description of visual scene: having breakfast as an everyday activity	
It is not a happy scene. Sadly, it is too familiar. [...]	Emotional appeal: sadness, compassion	'Familiar' refers to omnipresence of poverty
But here in B[ritish] C[olumbia]'s bible belt, feeding the poor and the afflicted is cause for concern. [...]	Context: Bible Belt refers to the ascetic Protestants. Lexical choice: afflicted	Feeding the poor as iconic and ultimate act of charity
"Cheerios build relationships." According to others, Cheerios cause trouble. [...]	Symbol / synecdoche: A brand of cereals is used as 'pars pro toto', a symbol for charity	Seemingly illogical causal relationship between harmless charity and problems
The place is overrun with pushers and drug users. [...]	Lexical choices: overrun, pushers, and drug users	Drug users cause problems just by being there (no actual examples of them causing trouble are given); do drug users belong to the poor people?
Even with its stunning scenery, the mountains and the rich farmland that surround it, it is like any other community in Canada: Threatened by drug user use and uncomfortable with the rising tide of homelessness.	Description of visual scene with contrast: idyllic scenery vs. misery; metaphor 'rising tide' that refers to an unstoppable overwhelming force	Drug users but also homeless people are perceived as threatening

Note. From "Please don't feed the homeless," by B. Hutchinson, May 24, 2008, National Post, pp. A7, A8.

Figure 1. Screen shot A, an example from “Strategies to Take Subjectivity Out of Framing Analysis”, by Baldwin Van Gorp, 2010, p. 95.

This thesis will borrow Van Gorp’s frame package method and coding skills to build a frame package based on 25 articles mentioned above. Each article will have its own frame matrix similar to figure 1. Start from then, Van Gorp (2010) suggests to form a codebook of the frame matrix and better to find clusters of coded devices. That is to say, the researcher, the coder, should find similarities and groups of coded devices instead of analyzing them separately. The next step is to count the frequencies of each coded item in one article. As Van Gorp (2010) explains, “The higher the number the higher the chance the different devices within a particular text are able to evoke a schema in the mind of the reader that is in line with the frame to which the devices refer.” (p.

101) By doing so, the result of the calculation, a number of indexes of each item, could be used to determine the number of dominated frames, one or several.

In the coding process, this thesis may use more than one coding techniques, such as multidimensional coding questions, and, or, a list of framing mechanisms and focal point questions. Multidimensional coding is to code elements or dimensions that define a story, such as the author's gender, and the certain term the author used to describe an issue (Tankard, 2008). Figure 2 is an example that Tankard (2008) used in his article to illustrates multidimensional framing analysis. According to Tankard (2008), a list of framing is a measurement that is based on a theoretical definition of framing which is that a frame is the dominate concept of a news report and can be determined through the use of selection, exclusion, and elaboration (p.100). In addition, each frame might be defined from specific keywords, catchphrases, and images. Figure 3 is the example questions he uses to explain the function of identify framing.

Framing as a Multidimensional Concept

Another approach to measuring media frames is to conceive of framing as involving various elements or dimensions of stories. In a study of coverage of abortion news, Swenson (1990) coded eight elements or dimensions that defined story framing:

1. Gender of the writer.
2. Placement of the article (front page, editorial page, first section but not page 1, other).
3. Terms used to refer to the pro-choice group (pro-choice, abortion rights, pro-abortion, antilife, combination, not applicable).
4. Terms used to refer to the pro-life group (pro-life, right-to-life, antiabortion, antichoice, combination, not applicable).
5. Whether the woman's rights or the fetus's rights are considered paramount.
6. The morality orientation of the article.
7. Discussion of when life begins.
8. Terms used to refer to the fetus.

Figure 2. Screen shot B, an example from empirical approach to the study of media framing by Tankard, 2008, p. 99.

We also identified a list of 11 framing mechanisms, or focal points for identifying framing:

1. Headlines and kickers (small headlines over the main headlines).
2. Subheads.
3. Photographs.
4. Photo captions.
5. Leads (the beginnings of news stories).
6. Selection of sources or affiliations.
7. Selection of quotes.
8. Pull quotes (quotes that are blown up in size for emphasis).
9. Logos (graphic identification of the particular series an article belongs to).
10. Statistics, charts, and graphs.
11. Concluding statements or paragraphs of articles.

Figure 3. Screen shot C, an example from empirical approach to the study of media framing by Tankard, 2008, p. 100.

However, in this thesis, newspaper articles were old articles found online and were not able to trace its original page placement and typesetting. Thus, framing mechanism might not be applied eventually.

Metaphor

In newspaper story writing, metaphorical description is a common way to express authors' attitudes and depict events and stories. In this research, the researcher expects to perceive newspaper authors' value on this business acquisition through their vocabulary selections by using metaphor. Krennmayr divides metaphorical use in newspaper reports into three categories: "hard news" that involves business sections and international news; "sciences" that contain natural, social, and applied sciences; and "soft news," which focuses on arts and leisure (Krennmayr, 2015, p 541). And she finds that "hard news" stories more frequently use metaphor than the other two types of news (p. 541). In this thesis, the Wanda-AMC acquisition case belongs to "hard news," as it event-based, timely, and significant.

Leach (2000) explains how metaphors work:

The notion that metaphors can "transfer over" (meta pherein) meaning from one concept to another as an aid to our understanding and description, as well as being a persuasive tool, comes from the ancient Greeks. In this sense, metaphor works by creating an analogy between two concepts. (p. 216)

She notes that one of the common uses of metaphor is in poetry and creative writing.

However, metaphor can also be employed in many convincing discourses and scientific writing (Leach, 2000, p. 216).

In her research, Krennmayr's (2015) explains that metaphor has the power to make some parts of a communication stand out while obscuring others. When news reporters deliberately address some issues, they may choose to use metaphor to convey their emotions or opinions to readers. The most important thing is to reveal "ideologies and persuasive messages" that are hidden behind these metaphors (p. 531). Metaphor usage is tightly combined with the theme of the topic and is impacted by the audiences, the "production circumstances of a text," and the situation of its use (p. 532). Today, metaphors used in newspapers typically are easy to read and understand, and act as a strong tool in shaping public opinion, and thus metaphor can be applied as "rhetorical tools to create attitudes toward certain topics" (Krennmayr, 2015, p. 542). Thus, this thesis aims to use metaphor to examine newspapers' valuation and position regarding the Wanda-AMC acquisition. Krennmayr's procedure of selecting metaphorical use is processed by the researcher, using the MIPVU (Metaphor Identification Procedure VU University Amsterdam), which "requires a word-by-word manual analysis" (p. 534). In other words, it is the researcher who decides whether an expression is using metaphor (p. 534). Similarly, in this thesis, the researcher conducts metaphorical selection manually by herself.

Personification

Using a person to indicate a physical object might be the most obvious ontological metaphor (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980, p. 33). In newspaper articles, it is very common to express "nonhuman entities in terms of human motivations, characteristics, and activities" (p. 33). By employ personification analysis, the researcher might receive

more information and hidden meanings behind newspaper authors' personification use. For example, "The talks between AMC and Wanda have intensified in recent weeks..." (LAT0509). In this case, "talks" is a human activity that actually refers to negotiations and discussions between representatives AMC and Wanda. However, Lakoff and Johnson (1980) point out that "personification is not a single unified general process" and each personification "differs in terms of the aspects of people that are picked out" (p. 33). The examples, such as "inflation has attacked the foundation of our economy" and "our biggest enemy right now is inflation" show that inflation is a personification use (inflation is an attacking, powerful foe), but the metaphor here is not using a person to refer to inflation, rather, to be more specific, an opponent (p. 33-34). In other words, "inflation" here does not represent a particular person, but a category of people, such as evildoers. Therefore,

personification is a general category that covers a very wide range of metaphors, each picking out different aspects of a person or ways of looking at a person.

What they all have in common is that they are extensions of ontological metaphors and that they allow us to make sense of phenomena in the world in human terms—terms that we can understand on the basis of our own motivations, goals, actions, and characteristics. (p. 34).

Nevertheless, the line between metaphor use and personification use sometimes is hard to distinguish. Thus, in order to separately discuss metaphor and personification in this thesis, when news texts use descriptions such as "lick chops" and "talks" to describe a

company or a firm's business strategy, they are considered as personification, not metaphor.

Lexical Choices

The majority of primary analysis of discourse analysis is the lexical choice analysis in newspaper texts (Richardson, 2006, p. 47). Meanwhile, besides metaphor and personification, the researcher finds that lexical choice is the third major mean of newspaper authors on delivering the Wanda-AMC case. Vocabularies express characteristics of "society" and of "value judgments" sometimes, both connoted and denoted meanings, and these contain all types of vocabularies, especially "nouns, adjectives, verbs and adverbs carry connoted in addition to denoted meanings" (p. 47).

The appearance of making lexical choice a way of "perspective-taking" matches the appearance of "spatial perspective-taking" and the beginning of "pretend-play", and both of them are assumed to have "the ability to alternate perspectives on the same entity" (Clark, 1997, p. 31). Lexical choice could help speakers or writers to highlight some information while absorbing and dimming the rest. It is a means by which a person conveys the perspectives he chooses on particular occasions (p. 6). To be specific, Clark (1997) explains, writers or speakers "should be able to highlight criterial properties, affect the amount of detail addressees take into account, and affect the interpretations they make" (p. 3).

In this thesis, all lexical choices are selected by the researcher, who believes that the vocabularies are trying to convey specific information that carries the newspaper reporter's perspectives.

Chapter 4: Results

In this research, the author first used NOOJ to examine the most frequently paired words and expressions with key words: Chinese government, Chinese market, Wanda Group, AMC, and Jianlin Wang. After the first round of comparing, the researcher found that NOOJ cannot recognize and test all key words, because some key words are represented by pronouns such as “they,” “he,” and “it,” in a context in which the antecedent noun is not evident to the software. That also means that NOOJ cannot read text and list all pair-words. Thus, the researcher decided to examine all newspaper articles by herself and selected key words through repetitive readings. This is a burdensome process and limits the amount of data that can be coded.

The researcher summarized five assessment items to examine how each article frames each item and whether the frame is positive, negative, or neutral. These items are: Chinese market, Chinese government, Wanda Group, AMC, and the acquisition deal itself. Positives and negatives are dependent on depictions and sentences that are used to describe these five items in each article. The Chinese newspaper articles examined had a total of 98 positive depictions while American newspaper articles had 134 positive descriptions regarding these five items. To be specific, Chinese articles had nine depictions of Chinese market, five of the Chinese government, 30 on Wanda Group, 20 on AMC, and 34 on this acquisition case. American articles had 27 depictions of Chinese market, 12 of Chinese government, 37 of Wanda Group, 15 of AMC, and 43 of this acquisition case. Turning to the negative depictions, there were 28 from Chinese articles and 25 from American articles. Within these negative depictions, Chinese articles had

zero comments on Chinese market and Chinese government/authority, while American articles had two and six negative comments, respectively. The researcher created the following tables to illustrate the data:

Table 1.

Total number of positive and negative descriptions of each country's selected newspapers.

	<u>Chinese Papers</u>	<u>U.S. Papers</u>
Positive descriptions	98	134
Negative descriptions	28	25

The following table compares positive descriptions of each item between the two countries' selected newspaper articles.

Table 2.

Total number of positive descriptions of each item.

	<u>Chinese Papers</u>	<u>U.S. Papers</u>
Chinese market	9	27
Chinese government/authority	5	12
Wanda Group	30	37
AMC	20	15
The acquisition deal	34	43
Total	98	134

Table 3 displays the differences between negative descriptions of each item between the two countries' selected newspaper articles.

Table 3.

Total number of negative descriptions of each item.		
	<u>Chinese Papers</u>	<u>U.S. Papers</u>
Chinese market	0	2
Chinese government/authority	0	6
Wanda Group	6	1
AMC	14	7
The acquisition deal	8	9
Total	28	25

In order to easily refer to each newspaper article when mentioning and analyzing it, the researcher created code names for all of them based on their newspaper agency's name and their published dates. For example, the article "*Wanda 'eyes bigger picture' with reported AMC deal*" from *China Daily* on May 10, 2012, is named CD0510. Most of the collected articles were published on different days and have different code names, however there are two newspaper agencies that both published two articles in one day. The article "*万达将成世界最大影院运营商 (国际视点) (Wanda Is Going To Be the Largest Cinema Operator In the World (International View))*" and "*万达并购 AMC 落幕 曾遭质疑交易金额达 26 亿美元 (Wanda And AMC Acquisition Falls Curtain, Was Questioned Transaction Amount Reaches \$2.6 Billion)*" were both published on September 6, 2012, by *People's Daily*. The researcher named them PD0906-1 and PD0906-2 to differentiate them. The same function was applied to the article "*AMC: A*

Big Fish for Wanda” and “*Chinese Conglomerate Buys AMC Movie Chain in U.S.*,” which both appeared in the *Wall Street Journal* on May 21, 2012, are coded as WSJ0521-1 and WSJ0521-2. For clarification, the researcher lists all of article titles and their code names below:

Table 4.

Code names and articles	
Code name	Original headline
CD0510	Wanda 'Eyes Bigger Picture' with Reported AMC Deal
CD0522	Wanda's AMC Deal A Ticket to Global Role
CD0525	Making The Right Moves
CD0727	Wanda's AMC Deal Gets Nod from Regulators
PD0522	大连万达 26 亿收购 AMC 新一幕"蛇吞象"上演 (Dalian Wanda Acquired AMC for \$2.6 Billion, Is This a New Act of “A Snake Eats An Elephant”?)
PD0525	万达收购全球第二大院线 AMC 华语片的春天来了? (Wanda Acquired the Second-largest Cinema Line in The Globe, is Chinese Movies' Spring Coming?)
PD0906-1	万达将成世界最大影院运营商 (国际视点) (Wanda Is Going To Be the Largest Cinema Operator In the World (International View))

(continued)

Code name	Original headline
PD0906-2	万达并购 AMC 落幕 曾遭质疑交易金额达 26 亿美元 (Wanda and AMC Acquisition Falls Curtain, Was Questioned the Transaction Amount of \$2.6 Billion)
RN0522	美媒：万达斥资 31 亿美元收购 AMC 公司 (American Media: Wanda Spend \$3.1 Billion US dollars on Merging AMC)
RN0524	外媒：万达收购美国院线推进中国影响力 (Foreign Media: Wanda's AMC Acquisition Is for Pushing China Influence)
BD0522	万达收购 AMC 成全球院线老大 或成最大民企跨境并购 (Wanda Acquires AMC and Becomes The Big Boss of World Cinema Line, Might Become The Largest Transnational Acquisition by A Private Company)
GD0528	万达收购 AMC 留三大疑问 物有所值还是赔钱赚吆喝 (Wanda's AMC Acquisition Left Three Questions, Worth for Money or Lose Money to Earn Shouts)
LAT0509	AMC May Be Sold to Chinese Cinema Firm; Wanda Group Would Get Foothold in U.S., And AMC Would Get Access to Tight Market
LAT0521	Chinese Firm to Acquire AMC; Dalian Wanda Group's \$2.6-billion Purchase Would Create the World's Largest Cinema Owner.

(continued)

Code name	Original headline
LAT0522	AMC Deal May Prompt Others; Wanda's Move to Buy Theater Chain Could Spur More Chinese to Invest in Hollywood.
LAT0703	Chinese Billionaire Seeks a Foothold in Hollywood; Wang Jianlin, Who is Pushing for Film Partnerships and AMC Deal, Says He is Eager to Work with U.S. Studios in China.
LAT0905	China's Wanda Set to Add U.S. Assets; The New Owner of AMC Plans to Invest \$10 Billion in Firms in The Next Decade.
NYT0522	Deal Expands Chinese Influence on Hollywood
NYT0524	Chinese Power Player Places Risky Bet on Moviegoing
NYT0924	After AMC Acquisition, Chinese Mogul Sees \$10 Billion in New U.S. Investment
WSJ0521-1	AMC: A Big Fish for Wanda
WSJ0521-2	Chinese Conglomerate Buys AMC Movie Chain in U.S.
WSJ0522	A Beijing Ticket to Hollywood
WSJ0523	Chinese Tycoon Sees Deals Beyond AMC
WSJ0725	Chinese Firm Receives Permission to Buy AMC Chain

Metaphor, personification, and lexical choices were found to be three major framing devices in these 25 newspaper articles. Newspapers use these rhetorical devices to help express articles' main themes to readers; and in addition, word choices may represent smaller shades of meaning about particular events and issues. In this thesis, the

researcher summarized all three rhetorical devices that appear in 25 newspaper articles. There are a total of 14 articles that use metaphors, 14 articles that include analysis-worthy lexical choices, and seven articles that use personifications, and most of them are from American newspapers (See Appendices A, B, and C for metaphor, personification, and lexical choices respectively). The remaining articles, were read but their plain language did not have special framing devices. These articles were BD0522, GD0528, PD0525, PD0906-2, RN0524, and WSJ0725. It is not hard to determine that nearly all of plain-language articles were from Chinese newspapers; there was only one American newspaper did not use any framing devices.

That is one difference between two countries' newspapers. Chinese newspapers in the sample were more likely to express events and tell stories with simple and direct vocabularies and sentence structures, while the American newspaper articles tended to use words that required some background knowledge to understand their shades of meaning, such as "red-velvet curtains" (WSJ0521-1), or an interesting description with metaphor, such as "cream of the crop" (WSJ0521-1). For example, instead of saying AMC is not the top cinema line in the U.S., the author chose to use an indirect and imagination-required phrase (not the cream of the crop) to underline the same meaning. Do Chinese newspapers use metaphors at all? The answer is yes, such as *大连万达 26 亿收购 AMC 新一幕"蛇吞象"上演 (Dalian Wanda Acquired AMC for \$2.6 Billion, Is This A New Act of "A Snake Eats An Elephant"?)* (PD0522), *万达收购全球第二大院线 AMC 华语片的春天来了? (Wanda Acquired the Second-largest Cinema Line, Is*

Chinese Movies' Spring Coming?) (PD0522), and 万达并购 AMC 落幕 曾遭质疑交易金额达 26 亿美元 (Wanda and AMC Acquisition Falls curtain, Was Questioned the Transaction Amount of \$2.6 Billion) (PD0906-2).

Headlines

These two articles use metaphor and myth in their title. “蛇吞象” (a snake eats and elephant) springs from the second half of a Chinese myth, “人心不足蛇吞象” It translates roughly as “A human’s heart will never be satisfied, and it is like a snake trying to swallow an elephant”. There were many story versions of this story. The researcher’s attempt at translation of this widely known Chinese tale will use plain and simple words to explain the common version of the myth. In ancient times, there was a snake species, called “Bashe,” which had huge body (approximately 250 meters long). The snake ate an elephant, and it took three years to digest the meat and spit out the bones. The moral of this story is that if it is very difficult to swallow an elephant, even for a snake as huge as Bashe, then it is a gross act of overindulgence for a normal snake to try to do so. Chinese people use this story to describe greedy people. Different versions lead to the same meaning—do not overestimate yourself, and do not be greedy. In this newspaper article, the author uses a snake to metaphorize Wanda, and AMC is the metaphor of the elephant. All in all, the author is questioning this acquisition and Wanda’s capital capability.

The American newspapers in the sample sometimes indicate their perspectives in their headlines, such as *AMC: A Big Fish for Wanda* (WSJ0521-1), and *Chinese Power Player Places Risky Bet on Moviegoing* (NYT0524). These two also doubt the wisdom of

the Wanda-AMC deal: one questions Wanda's strength, and the other is skeptical of the cinema industry. Articles such as *Making The Right Moves* (CD0525), *Wanda's AMC Deal A Ticket to Global Role* (CD0522), and *Deal Expands Chinese Influence on Hollywood* (NYT0522) deliver an obvious and strongly positive position from their headlines. They support the deal, affirm the deal, and give credit to the deal, although, from an American point of view, NYT0522 might be more descriptive than positive (it depends upon whether Chinese influence is seen as a good thing; growth is usually seen as a positive in Western economies, but Chinese influence may carry some negative weight). Most of the headlines are written in plain language with figure descriptions and general information about the acquisition. In RN0522, the newspaper author uses “斥资” (spend a huge amount of money) to describe Wanda's payment to close this deal. In China, this word is specifically used to describe a positive—a luxury, an extravagant item whose purchase requires a huge amount of money, such as a beautiful jewel. It shows that the author sees this deal as a very high-value step for Wanda.

The researcher also coded the gender of the newspapers' authors. However, Chinese names do not have a clear line between male and female names—not as English names normally do. For example, Richard Verrier, the author of LAT0509, and Michael Cieply, the author of NYT0520, are almost certainly male names. But when considering Chinese authors such as “耿诺” Nuo Di and “周南焱” Nanyan Zhou, the authors of BD0522, it is hard to distinguish their gender simply by their names, because both males and females could use those names. Although the researcher listed all American

newspaper authors' names, no significant difference between female and male authors was found.

Metaphor

Metaphor was a major framing device found in these 25 newspapers, and most of the metaphors were used to describe positive aspects of this deal—two companies and the Chinese (movie) market. Authors used “ticket” to metaphorize the acquisition deal, such as CD0522 “*Wanda's AMC Deal a **Ticket** to Global Role*” and “Though the **big-ticket** deal came as a surprise to many industry watchers. . .” from CD0525. “Big-ticket” indicates the large scale and huge amount of money involved in this deal, and also implied that the deal made a connection for Wanda to get onto the global business stage. On the other hand, American newspapers tended to use “pipeline” to describe the deal, such as “acquiring AMC gives it a **pipeline** into two of the world's largest theater markets . . .” (LAT0521) and “acquiring AMC gives it a bigger **pipeline** into two of the world's largest theater markets. . .” (LAT0905). “Pipeline” refers to the connection between Wanda and Chinese and American movie markets. A “bigger” pipeline means that this is not the first such connection, and Wanda has already had other businesses in the global market, but this now addresses the importance and scale of this acquisition.

Positive descriptions such as “beachhead” are extremely supportive of this acquisition case (LAT0703). In this article, “beachhead” expressed the deal’s significance of China in Hollywood, and confirmed the expected success of this deal. A beachhead is a landing zone in a new country that one expects to expand; again, expansion typically is seen as a positive, unless there is some sinister connotation (see the discussion about

“foothold” below). In LAT0522, the author mentions that this deal would “**turn the traffic** in the other direction, setting the stage for a string of similar moves by other Chinese investors. . .” “Turn the traffic” is using metaphor to represent the current situation that Chinese companies are investing in America instead of former situation, which was almost always American companies investing in China. It addresses the significance of this deal. Moreover, cultural imperialism is involved when the author used “turn the traffic” because of the inherent historical information that most previous acquisitions were headed by American companies. In the original article, the author does not give more explanation of this phrase, which also means that readers understand the situation and accept it as a normality. The tacitly understood thought that Americans invest in China is a representation of imperialism.

Besides the supportive standpoint, there are also doubts and questions toward this deal, such as LAT0522. The author quotes from James Marsh, and the author says he is confused about this deal, “scratching [his] head.” The *Los Angeles Times* depicts this acquisition as a “foothold” of a Chinese company in the American market (LAT0509). “Foothold” has some aggressiveness suggested in this choice of word. “Foothold” also could be used as a military term, “a place from which an advance (as for military operations) is made.” When an army has a foothold on another’s territory, it looks to expand. From American newspapers’ standpoint, it seems that a foreign company looking to expand businesses in America is not beneficial for local businesses. That could be seen as saying that Wanda is not welcome; on the other hand, if profits increase for one investor, they increase for all.

One of reasons that some newspapers doubt the wisdom of Wanda's acquisition intention is that AMC had been losing money for years. As CD0525 said, "AMC has been **in the red** for some time now" and is "hardly the **cream of the crop**. . . ." (WSJ0521-1). In some analysts' point of view, there is no reason for a powerful Chinese conglomerate to buy an in-the-red American company. However, some Chinese newspapers hold different opinions. They questioned Wanda's strength to acquire the second-largest cinema line in North America. As PD0522 and PD0906-1 expressed doubt, this deal might be a new act of "a snake eats an elephant." It seems that both countries were not totally optimistic about their local companies, but respected their overseas rivals. LAT0703 even predicted that Jianlin Wang could become a Chinese Jack Warner—the head of Warner Bros. studios during the golden age of Hollywood. One newspaper talked about Chinese government using "red-velvet curtains" to indicate the level of secrecy behind aspects of the deal. "The reasons behind a Chinese company's decision to buy the second-largest chain of U.S. movie theaters . . . are still **shrouded** behind the **red-velvet curtains**." (WSJ0521-1) The author indicated that China is an extreme keeper of secrets and would not be transparent with business acquisitions. The phrase "red-velvet curtains" refers to the fact that China is a communist country, and the flags—both the Communist Party's flag and national flag—are red. The word "shroud" is another negative depiction of China, because the author could have used other verbs to express the meaning of "hiding." However, the author chose "shroud," which commonly is used to mean the cloth to cover a dead body. The author's negative emotion of China is apparently showing.

Personification

In personification use, aggressive vocabularies take a big portion. For example, both NYT0904 and LAT0522 use “foray” to describe Wanda’s acquisition: “possibly more theaters were on Wanda’s list of prospects, as well as a possible **foray** into film production.” (NYT0904) “Foray” normally is used to describe human actions, especially military actions. But here, the author uses it to describe Wanda’s business investment plans. If NYT is aiming at Wanda’s investment, LAT uses “foray” to describe an expected array of actions by a broad range of Chinese companies. “Wanda may be the first **foray**, but I guarantee they are not the only ones **licking** their **chops** at these American properties.” (LAT0522) In this description, the author uses a quotation to express the threat that Chinese companies pose to American companies. Especially, the phrase “licking . . . chops” conveys Chinese companies’ hunger of taking over American companies. China looks forward to a delicious meal of American business. “licking chops” is normally used by human beings and animals, but here the author uses it between two companies. Thus, it is considered as personification. Furthermore, the author also uses “scoop up” (LAT0522) to indicate Chinese companies’ capital capability and investment impetus in America. Once again, it addresses that Wanda and this acquisition are not welcome.

Another major use of personification appears on descriptions of the Chinese market and American market. Interestingly, “pry open” is used for both markets. In LAT0509, “China’s biggest theater company is trying to get a foothold in the U.S. by picking up some or all of AMC Entertainment Inc., an arrangement that could further **pry**

open the market for Hollywood films in the world's most populous country.” In this article, “pry open” indicates that the Wanda-AMC deal helps Hollywood to open Chinese market. However, in NYT0520, the author says, “Wanda might eventually use newly acquired American theaters to help **pry open** an export market for Chinese-made films.” Here, the author means that this deal helps Chinese movies to open American market. These two articles are both from American newspapers, but use the same phrase to describe two different markets. It indicates that both markets are new to each other and American newspapers hold a neutral position on both sides' purposes. However, “pry open”, the phrase itself contains aggressive connotation. When it is used to describe gaining more market share for each country, American newspapers express an invasive tone. It also acknowledges that in these early stages of Chinese-American business deals, entry into the other's realm is not easy. Instead, it is like prying open an oyster to get at the pearl. LAT0509 analyzes the Chinese market domestically and internationally with personification framing. “China has been aggressively expanding its own entertainment industry, both to **boost** the country's global influence or "soft power" and to **feed** the demands of a **surging** middle class.” The Chinese entertainment industry is growing very fast nowadays. The Chinese middle class is now the major engine of entertainment consumption, and they have higher requirements and expectations of entertainment products, including movies. To satisfy or to “feed” their demands could increase the Chinese general economy. The Wanda-AMC deal is a typical example of expanding entertainment industry internationally.

Lexical Choices

Most lexical choices are used to compliment the Chinese market, Wanda Group, and this acquisition. In this section, the researcher will only discuss extreme lexical choices as applied to those three. Other normal positive and negative descriptions will be discussed in their independent sections. Through all 25 articles, there are only two negative descriptions of Chinese market. One is that “no major U.S. theater chain has expanded into China,” indicating its being closed off, and the other focuses on Chinese piracy (LAT0521). While others speak highly of China’s fast-growing market, LAT0521 pays attention on its “rampant piracy” of entertainment media.

Among Chinese articles, two use “斥资” (spend a lot of money) to describe the scale of this case and Wanda’s strength (for a detailed discussion, see the Titles section). NYT0524 uses “empire” to define Wanda Group. “Empire” is obviously bigger than a “conglomerate” (LAT0521), and shows more respect from the author. This respect is especially evident in LAT0521, in which the author quotes from Jianlian Wang: “This transaction will help make Wanda a **truly** global cinema owner” This sentence is from Wang’s Chinese statement in the press conference. And its original Chinese script is: “此次并购将有助于万达成为一个**真正的**全球化的电影院线。” (This acquisition will help Wanda to become a really global cinema line) (Xu, 2012). As a native Chinese speaker, the researcher would not translate “真正的” as “truly,” but as “really.” “Truly” is a stronger positive than “really,” and contains personal emotions, especially respect.

Additionally, “truly” erases other possibilities, in this case, extremely emphasizes the significance of Wanda Group and the deal.

Regarding this acquisition, extreme vocabularies such as “fantastic” (LAT0509), “landmark deal” (LAT0522), “pioneering deal” (LAT0522), and “impressive” (LAT0522) are all positive and supportive depictions of the deal. Phrases such as “the largest investment to date” appears twice (LAT0521 and LAT 0522). Newspapers also repeatedly used the word “step” to portray the deal, and “biggest moves” from WSJ0521-2, and “a big leap forward” from LAT0521. Those positive descriptions mainly address either the scale or the amount of money of the deal.

Within all lexical choices, there are two that particularly drew the researcher’s attention. In LAT0521, the author initially wrote: “It gives Wanda a foothold in the U.S. movie theater business through what **some analysts** view as a **‘trophy’ acquisition.**” And then, the author moved to the sentence, “**Some industry analysts** said it’s less clear what Wanda gets from the deal.” Thirdly, he said: “They (analysts) **questioned** the strategic value of Wanda owning a large theater chain in North America, given long-term attendance declines.” It is obvious that these three sentences are all questioning and doubting the acquisition, and are considered as negative depictions of the deal. Most importantly, these questions and doubts are all from “analysts,” especially “industry analysts”—although not named, they are assumed to be experts about such financial deals. The author gave negative description an expertise credit. The same situation happened again in LAT0522, the next day’s newspaper: “Some **analysts** have **questioned** how the deal benefits Wanda” However, when talking about the positive

depiction of the deal, the author wrote: “But **other observers predicted** Wanda would benefit from buying AMC.” Comparing “industry analysts” to “other observers,” the “analyst” is professional, formal, and expert, and it gives credit to the source. But “observer” does not have that meaning. Anyone can observe, regardless of their skill or knowledge. “Predicted” is also uncertain, which shows the author’s negative uncertainty of this case. It forms an obvious contrast to former descriptions. When people doubt this deal, they “question” it, and they are “analysts,” not ordinary people without background knowledge. When people choose an optimistic position of this deal, they “predict,” and they are “observers,” not experts, not professional analysts. The nuance of the word choices shows the author’s intention, suggesting to readers that the opinion of analysts is more trustworthy than that of observers.

Besides that, “a large theater chain” addresses another problem: will it be easier if it’s not a large and a chain theater? “North America” also points out one of the doubt reasons, would it be better if it’s not a North America theater? “Long-term” and “declines” describe AMC’s current situation, meaning that it might not be a good investment, still being negative against Wanda. It seems that the author picks his position instead of using plain language to convey others’ opinions.

When authors refer to Chinese government, “tight restrictions” (LAT0509, LAT0521) and “tight controls” (LAT0522) are frequent vocabularies. These terms show authors’ dissatisfaction with Chinese regularities and authorities. Fortunately, China “recently agreed to **ease** some of the restrictions.” Indeed, China increases the number of imported

movies to 34, from 20, and it is a good news for Hollywood movie studios seeking greater profits overseas.

Chinese Government

The researcher found two perspectives in positive descriptions of the Chinese government. The first group mainly focused on Chinese authority's foreign movie policy, to increase the number of imported movies and to ease restrictions. CD0525, LAT0509, and NYT0524 mentioned that the Chinese government either "increased the import quota of revenue-sharing foreign movies from 20 to 34" (CD0525), or "ease[d] some of the restrictions, allowing more foreign movies into the country" (LAT0509), or "[would] allow more American companies to distribute more movies and reap a greater share of the box office in China" (NYT0524). These comments show the Chinese government's friendly side and would push China to gain a larger place on global stage. The second group talks about Chinese policies that focus on China and Chinese "soft power." For example, RN0524 states that the Chinese government "全面加强了对电影、动漫和其他流行文化主题的重视 (enhances attention on movies, cartoons, and other pop-culture themes)". NYT0524 stated that the Chinese government was "encouraging Chinese companies to 'go global'" and "bolster China's 'soft power' capabilities to extend its cultural influence internationally." In order to raise up Chinese "soft power," Beijing authorities were "encouraging China's companies to buy foreign brands and assets" (WSJ0523). The author indicated that Wanda was one of those encouraged companies.

One central idea is expressed in negative descriptions, and that is China's tight restrictions on movie imports. Although China increased the import amount from 20 to

34 annually, it still “maintains tight controls on the number of foreign movies” (LAT0522). Other articles, such as LAT0509, ALT0521, and WSJ0522, mention the same concern.

Moreover, RN0524 has a point of view that focused on the Chinese government but without a positive or negative attitude. “中国共产党把电影和其他娱乐看成在海外传播中国影响力的手段，万达进入美国是国家尝试的一部分。(Chinese Communist Party sees movies and other entertainments as ways of spreading China influences overseas, and Wanda gets into America is part of nation’s attempt)”. From China’s and Wanda’s view, it might be a positive description of the Chinese government’s plan in which Wanda could also earn profits and expand its brand name. However, from American perspective, it might contain a threat to domestic businesses, which is considered as a negative point of view.

Chinese Market

Regarding the Chinese market, the Chinese and American newspapers attitudes are consistent. Almost all of the sampled articles complimented the Chinese market, especially the growing film market. The researcher divided positive descriptions into four groups:

- a) general description of Chinese expanding market;
- b) descriptions mentioning that China has surpassed Japan to become Hollywood’s biggest oversea market;
- c) descriptions that use figures;
- d) sentences that mention the number of imported movies.

(a) There are 11 newspaper articles using “**expanding** film market” (CD0510), “**booming** film market” (CD0522), and other similar adjectives to compliment China’s fast-growing market—for example, “**rapidly growing** Chinese market” (LAT0521), “**burgeoning** Chinese market” (LAT0905), “**explosive growth**” (WSJ0522), and “**rapidly growing**” (WSJ0522). Chinese newspapers also speak highly of the Chinese market, “处在上升期的中国电影产业却是风景这边独好 (Chinese film market has a better scenery because of its **increasing** period)” (PD0906-1). The most supportive example is LAT0509, which not only discusses the Chinese film market, but also its entertainment industry (“**aggressively expanding** its own entertainment industry”), theater industry (“also **rapidly expanding** its theater industry”), and Chinese modernization (“modernizing **so quickly**”).

(b) The Chinese market has surpassed Japanese market and now becomes Hollywood’s largest overseas market. Five newspapers noticed this and addressed it/China is “the biggest foreign market for Hollywood films” (LAT0521), and “the second-largest film market in the world” (CD0522).

(c) Besides such selective vocabulary, newspapers also used specific figures to assist their descriptions. To be specific, articles would mention the box office growing by a particular percentage, such as “电影票房销售额增长 30% (box office sale grows 30%)” (RN0522), and “climbed 29% to 13.1-billion-yuan last year” (WSJ0522). Other articles such as LAT0703 and LAT0521 used the same data to compliment Chinese box office sales.

(d) NYT0520 examined the situation from a different angle, beginning with Chinese importation of movies. It said the Chinese government “expanded its 20-film import quota to 34 [per year].” With this growth, the Chinese market would raise its box office by screening more big-budget production movies, and Hollywood has greater opportunity to gain more profit in its largest foreign market.

There was only one newspaper that talked about the negative side of Chinese market, and it did so from two perspectives. As noted above, one was that “no major U.S. theater chain has expanded into China,” and the other was “rampant piracy” (LAT0521). This two statements not only are negative toward Chinese market, but also show disagreement with the actions of the Chinese government, its authorities, and those who illegally copy (pirate) movies with ostensible support from above.

Wanda Group

Wanda, a Chinese conglomerate whose “增幅达到 60% (growth rate reached 60%)” (PD0906-2), built its initial business on real estate and now is China’s largest cultural investment capital (BD0522). Most descriptions of Wanda have one common key phrase— “the largest cinema chain,” either China’s largest cinema chain or its track to become the world largest cinema chain. Similar to depictions of AMC, newspapers used business scale and ranking to indicate Wanda’s position in the world. GD0528 even noted that Wanda “将引发又一场中国企业的好莱坞并购潮 (might trigger another round of Chinese companies’ Hollywood acquisition)”. However, some people questioned Wanda’s capital source, because its “资产负债率已高达 89.9% (asset-liability ratio was as high as 89.9%)” (PD0906-2). The author of PD0906-2 pointed out his question, “动辄

数十亿美元的并购和投资，万达的钱从哪里来? (With frequent acquisitions and mergers that reach more than \$1 billion, where does Wanda's money come from?)". Thus, newspapers guessed that Wanda had a tight relationship to Chinese government, so that it could have privileges, since “万达与中国进出口银行签订了战略合作协议中国进出口银行将对万达的文化、旅游产业及跨国并购业务提供金融支持 (Wanda signed strategic corporation contract with Export-Import Bank of China, which will financially support Wanda's cultural industry, tourism industry and transnational acquisition)” (PD0906-2).

Furthermore, Wanda's cinema plazas are always in city centers that can affect the local GDP. Thus, as the author wrote, “万达模式受到了很多地方政府的青睐 (Wanda business model is favored by many local governments)” (PD0906-2). To be specific, the author said of Wanda's privilege:

这一优势，直接体现在拿地和土地价格上。通常，万达的项目都是当地重点招商引资项目，各种手续开绿色通道，有些地方还会在土地出让时设定特殊条件，以实现“定向出让”。在二三线城市，万达项目的土地价格会低于周边项目 30%，甚至更多。有的三四线城市甚至还会将土地出让金再度返还给万达。(With this advantage, it directly reflects on how Wanda gets land and the price of the land [Chinese land belongs to the country]. Normally, Wanda's programs are locally important business attraction programs, and own many “green tunnel (VIP line).” Some local governments design special

conditions for Wanda when selling lands, in order to make “directional transfer (to transfer particular land to particular companies) for a limited time.” In some second-tier and third-tier cities, the land price for Wanda’s program would lower 30%, sometimes even more, than other programs. In some third-tier and fourth-tier cities, local government even returns land-transferring fees (the equivalent term to “earnest money” in the United States.) to Wanda. (PD0906-2)

However, the author does not give any proof of his allegations, and does not cite a source. To apply on this acquisition case, all these questions indicate that the Chinese government offers Wanda a privileged way to get huge loans to make sure the acquisition could be successful.

AMC

Descriptions of AMC are simple and obvious. Ten Chinese newspapers and 11 American newspapers used “the second-largest cinema line” in America, in North America, and in the world. Some of them gave specific screen information about AMC to indicate its worldwide scale. For example, in BD0522, the author wrote that AMC “拥有北美票房最多的前 50 家影院中的 23 家 (owns 23 out of 50 highest-box-office cinemas in North America)”. To describe a business’s scale and compare it to others would give readers an impression that this business is successful and valuable. Negative descriptions mainly focus on a) AMC’s “负债率太高 (high debt ratio)” (BD0522), b) “负债为 34.84 亿美元，资产负债率为 95.7% (its debt was \$3.484 billion, and asset-liability ratio was 95.7%)” (PD0906-1), and c) “long-term attendance declines” (LAT0521). These

statements directly show that AMC had been losing money for years, and it was not a profitable company, also indicating questions and doubts that analysts expressed about why Wanda purchased AMC. Only RN0524 wrote that “(猜测它会被用作中国政府推动国际软实力的渠道 (it is guessed that AMC will become the channel for Chinese government to push its international soft power)”. It is surprising that this kind of guess appeared in a Chinese newspaper, because normally the intentions of the Chinese government are the subject of news media outside China. In China, such conjecture is often frowned upon unless sanctioned officially or unofficially.

Acquisition Deal

Both American and Chinese newspapers agree that this acquisition could create the largest cinema operator in the world, and would make Wanda a truly global owner. (CD0522, CD0727, RN0522, LAT0521, NYT0520, WSJ0522). This acquisition deal becomes the world’s largest “overseas cultural investment by private firm” (CD0522). The phrase “largest oversea investment” appears frequently in 10 articles from both American and Chinese newspapers. This hints that both countries acknowledge this deal’s scale and influence in the world. Some newspapers see this deal as being “far beyond a financial transaction” (CD0525). For example, LAT0905 depicted the deal as creating a bigger “pipeline” between China and America. RN0524 and LAT0905 suggested that the deal might lead to another round of Chinese companies investing in the U.S. It might also expand the Chinese market for American companies (LAT0509). Certainly, the author of RN0524 mentioned that “收购将鼓舞中国政府推进该国软实力的行动 (the deal encourages Chinese government’s action of pushing ‘soft power’ in

America).” Negative comments mainly focused on “lack of obvious synergies” (RN0524, WSJ0521-1). A source from PD0906-2 expressed concerns that “很难看到这桩并购的投资收益(it is hard to see the profit of this deal)”, and LAT0521 “questioned the strategic value of Wanda owning a large theater chain in North America.” Indeed, AMC has been losing money for years while Wanda keeps growing domestically and internationally. It is reasonable that people have questions about this strong-versus-weak acquisition. However, as GD0528 pointed out, it might be “一次出于虚荣的购买行为(a purchase out of vanity)”.

This thesis examines how the Wanda-AMC acquisition was framed by Chinese newspapers and American newspapers, and the selected texts are examined in five directions: Chinese government, Chinese (movie) market, Wanda Group, AMC, and the acquisition. The result shows that American newspapers have more positive and supportive descriptions of this acquisition deal. Additionally, compared with Chinese newspapers, American newspapers were more likely to use personification as part of their framing device. Furthermore, this thesis also attempted to examine if both countries newspapers address the issues of cultural discount and cultural imperialism. However, the researcher does not find any clear evidence that conforms to those two theories.

Chapter 5: Summary & Discussion

In this thesis, the researcher used 25 newspaper articles, 12 from China and 13 from America, to examine the framing differences, cultural discount differences, and cultural imperialism differences, between selected Chinese and American newspapers. However, the result found no obvious indicators for cultural discount or cultural imperialism to appear in these 25 articles.

For the newspaper selection, the researcher used newspapers.com, Lexis Nexis, and newspaper agencies' official websites to search newspapers that had rich content about Wanda-AMC acquisition. After employing several filters to obtain the most useful sample, the researcher finally chose 25 articles among more than 200 newspapers. And then, in her method, the researcher applied NOOJ to these 25 articles with five key words: Chinese government, Chinese market, Wanda Group, AMC, and Jianlin Wang, to find the most frequent depictive words and phrases paired with these five key words. This practice helped the researcher begin to see commonalities among the data, suggesting further investigation. However, the NOOJ results did not directly lead to conclusions in the results section. Overall, this researcher's experience with NOOJ was mixed: good for suggesting paths of inquiry and possibly seeing things not seen before, but not necessarily useful when doing a qualitative analysis, which still requires deep thinking about the text.

The researcher found that the examined American newspapers contain more positive and supportive descriptions of this acquisition deal. Both countries' newspapers use metaphor and lexical choices as part of their major framing devices, while within these 25 articles, only American newspapers used personification. Regarding the content,

both countries have doubts and questions of Wanda's real intention to acquire AMC. Among those doubts, LAT0522 writes, "Some analysts have questioned how the deal benefits Wanda. . ." and "But other observers predicted Wanda would benefit from buying AMC." With lexical choices of "analysts" "questioned" and "observers" "predicted", these two sentences show the reporter's subjective attitude of this acquisition deal. Regarding key examination items: Chinese government and Chinese (movie) market, there was no description found in Chinese articles. In other words, when the examined Chinese newspapers reported this acquisition deal, they avoided comments about the domestic government and market, but focused instead on two companies and the deal itself. On the other hand, when American newspapers reported these two items, there were only a few negative descriptions, unfriendly and impolite (see 1, 2, and 3 below), and they were limited to China's tight restrictions, the number of imported movies allowed per year, and Chinese movie market piracy problems. In general, American newspapers spoke highly of Chinese growing market and the potential profit it can make.

Some framing devices that applied in both countries' articles seem not friendly and polite. Many metaphors and lexical choices that frame this acquisition in military terms, as if Wanda is either an aggressor, directly confronting the American business world, or like a soldier on reconnaissance to check out the enemy's base, using terms such as "foray", "beachhead", and "foothold".

1. A military frame emphasizes the gains and losses, and the cost of battle. Military conflicts typically have winners and losers in the short term, whereas in the business world there may be instances where two parties both get what they want — a

“win-win”. Military frames also suggest long-term goals, as what is won in the short term may be expanded (or reduced, or lost) in the long term.

2. There is also the frame of one giant devouring another and the possible benefits and concerns of the giants. For example, “蛇吞象(a snake eats an elephant)” means that AMC is a giant piece of meat that is swallowed by Wanda, but also indicates that Wanda, as a giant, might not digest AMC easily. In this frame, one party (the one eaten) must die so the other might live. But, as in the case of the snake, the consuming party also might suffer.

3. And finally there are frames about the mystery figure – the unknown and inscrutable Chinese, a frame that means Chinese always hide their real intentions behind their faces. For example, Chinese “shroud” their meanings behind the “red-velvet curtains”, and people need to “pry open” it to see the truth. This frame, unknown in China, has deep roots in the United States stemming from the introduction of waves of Chinese immigrants to the American West in the mid-1800s to help construct the transcontinental railroad for cheap wages. For example, one study of pre-Civil War American newspaper coverage of the Chinese concluded that the failure of missionaries make Christian run out of the “Celestials” raised alarms about their strangeness. The study found that coverage of the Chinese often described them as “stupid, vile, filthy, pagan, dishonest, perverse, barbarous and depraved.” (Cronin & Huntziker, 2012, p. 88) Likewise, a study of Utah newspaper coverage of Chinese immigrants from their arrival in 1869 through the end of the century found them to be characterized as “industrious and private”, shutting themselves off from local residents in communities where they could

gamble and smoke opium in “dens of hell.” (Kirk, 2010, p. 229-30) Together, these descriptions historically have depicted the Chinese as inscrutable to a large degree, and unpleasant once Westerners penetrated their masks. The language of some of the American newspaper articles studied for this thesis builds upon these negative stereotypes.

A variety of framing devices may work together to enrich and enhance an intended message. For example, in the *Los Angeles Times* story “Chinese Billionaire Seeks a Foothold in Hollywood,” the reporter said the pending acquisition could give China a “beachhead” in Hollywood. A beachhead is a military metaphor, as it is the first stage in an amphibious invasion; the D-Day beachheads on Normandy in June 1944, once consolidated and expanded in conjunction with Soviet military offensives in the east, presaged the collapse of Nazi Germany. Likewise, in the same article the reporter, interviewing Wang, said he “commands” a vast commercial empire. This underscores the military metaphor: Not only is Wang seeking a beachhead, he personally is the general in charge of the invasion. The reporter makes the military metaphor explicit later in the story by adding the detail that Wang is a “17-year army veteran.” The next metaphor following the description shifts from the militant to the dynastic: He “built his empire from scratch.” One does not literally “build” an empire (unless one is in the construction industry). Empires typically are handed from ruler to heir, or are seized by force. To “build . . . from scratch” refers to creation from nothing; “scratch” referred to a line scratched in the dirt, behind which runners would take their places before a race. It also has come to mean “nothing.” This metaphor, when combined with the militant one

explored above, suggests that if Wang is indeed a corporate general, he is more like a conscripted soldier who rose up the ranks, through battlefield promotion and decoration, than the scion of a military family whose path to success was greased by appointment to a military academy and a high-ranking officer as a parent. Wang is strong, he is aggressive, and he is self-made, having won the race without any advantage regarding his starting point.

In this thesis, the newspaper articles came from two countries that represent the Western world and Eastern world. When analyzing these articles, the researcher expected cultural discount and cultural imperialism to appear as a main topic because the acquisition case is transnational. Before analysis, the researcher hypothesized that such cultural phenomena would be deduced during the expression and framing of the acquisition when American newspapers reported on a Chinese company and Chinese newspapers reported on an American company. In addition, the researcher also presupposed that cultural imperialism might appear during newspaper reporters' lexical choices. Therefore, the researcher expected cultural discount and cultural imperialism to exist in many, if not all, of the twenty-five newspapers. However, after careful scrutiny and analysis, the researcher did not find any manifest evidence of cultural discount and cultural imperialism. The total cost for Wanda to acquire AMC was actually more than \$2.6 billion, which was absolutely a shocking amount in transnational business field. At this circumstance, media are careful with their lexical choices when covering a business as huge as this. Especially, American newspaper agencies in this thesis were more business oriented, and Wanda-AMC acquisition did not affect their financial situation and it was

not necessary for them to critique. Chinese newspaper agencies in this thesis were most state media that barely touched on sensitive topics that might affect the success of this acquisition. Thus, articles from both countries did not analyze this acquisition from cultural imperialism and cultural discount perspectives.

Based on newspaper writers' comments on this business acquisition, it is obvious that both countries welcome companies to cooperate with each other in the future. Other media companies could use Wanda-AMC as a successful acquisition model to guide future transnational business deals. The product of entertainment industry could gain money for more than one market. For example, an American-produced movie could earn money in American market and also in Chinese market. Since this acquisition only happen in the higher level when Wanda acquires AMC, it does not really impact AMC's domestic box office. In other words, it is a win-win situation. In addition, Chinese newspapers might could give more patience and tolerance on domestic companies, and provide a confident and supportive national business environment.

Last but not least, there are limitations and deficiencies in this thesis. One of limitations is the quantity of the newspaper articles that the researcher collected. If future researchers could enlarge the collection amount, there will be a deeper and more comprehensive analysis of the acquisition. Secondly, Chinese newspapers were translated by the researcher, a journalism major and Chinese student with no background education in any translation courses, who uses plain and simple vocabularies and languages to translate Chinese newspaper articles that are well-written and well-organized by

professional journalists and reporters. In future analysis, if the researcher could have professional translated articles, the research might be more accurate and precise.

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Appendix A: Metaphor

CD0510

Source text	Framing devices	Reasoning devices
Wanda “ eyes bigger picture ” with reported AMC deal.	metaphor	“Eyes bigger picture” indicates Wanda’s larger plan behind this deal.

CD0522

Source text	Framing devices	Reasoning devices
Wanda's AMC deal a ticket to global role	metaphor	This deal makes Wanda a global company.

CD0525

Source text	Framing devices	Reasoning devices
...purchase...is expected to pave the way for a fresh round of mergers and acquisitions by Chinese companies in the entertainment and culture sector.	metaphor	“Pave the way” indicates that the purchase becomes an example and a connection between Chinese companies and American companies, which may stimulate more business corporation between these two countries.
Though the big-ticket deal came as a surprise to many industry watchers	metaphor	“Big-ticket” indicates the large scale and huge amount of money involved in this deal, and also implies the deal makes a connection for Wanda to get into global business stage.
...AMC has been in the red for some time now.	metaphor	“In the red” indicates that AMC has been losing profit for some time.

PD0522

Source text	Framing devices	Reasoning devices
大连万达 26 亿收购 AMC 新一幕"蛇吞象"上演 (Wanda Acquired AMC for \$2.6 billion, a new act of "a snake eats an elephant"?)	metaphor	"A snake eats an elephant" is used to say people who cannot digest what he takes.

PD0525

Source text	Framing devices	Reasoning devices
华语片的春天来了? (is Chinese movies' spring coming?)	metaphor	It uses spring to describe that Chinese movies are going to expand a bigger market and make more profits.

PD0906-1

Source text	Framing devices	Reasoning devices
实现盈利, 或者是否会出现"蛇吞象"似的消化不良? (Make profit, or "a snake eats an elephant" shows up?)	metaphor	A snake eats an elephant is used to describe people who are not satisfied, and never get enough, and try to take something that they are not able to handle.

PD0906-2

Source text	Framing devices	Reasoning devices
万达并购 AMC 落幕 (Wanda and AMC acquisition falls curtain)	metaphor	It is a metaphor use to describe the acquisition case is closed.

LAT0509

Source text	Framing devices	Reasoning devices
China's theater company is trying to get a foothold in the U.S. by picking up some or all of AMC Entertainment Inc.,...further pry open the market for Hollywood films in the world's most populous country.	metaphor	"Foothold" and "pry open" are using metaphor and personification. "Foothold", there is some aggressiveness suggested in this choice of word. Foothold also could be a military term. "A place from which an advance (as for military operations) is made." When an army has a foothold on another's territory, it looks to expand.
...it could open more doors to Hollywood films in China.	metaphor	It indicates that Hollywood films have more opportunities in Chinese market.

LAT0521

Source text	Framing devices	Reasoning devices
...acquiring AMC gives it a pipeline into two of the world's largest theater markets...	metaphor	The author uses "pipeline" to describe the connection between China and America.

LAT0522

Source text	Framing devices	Reasoning devices
...could be a catalyst for similar acquisitions...	metaphor	The author uses metaphor here.
... turn the traffic in the other direction, setting the stage for a string of similar moves by other Chinese investors...	metaphor	"Turn the traffic" is using metaphor to represent the situation that Chinese companies are investing in America than before when it is always American companies investing in China. "Stage" and "string" are also metaphor methods, and they mean that this deal is a first try for other Chinese investors and a connection

		and model for other investors. It is a positive description of this deal.
...Wanda "may be the first foray , but I guarantee they are not the only ones licking their chops at these American properties."	metaphor	"Foray" indicates an unhappy feeling of Wanda as well as Wanda-AMC deal.
...AMC is a highly leveraged theater circuit.	metaphor	It is a negative description of AMC because it has high debts.
"I'm kind of scratching my head on it," said James Marsh...	metaphor.	He is confused.
...raise their global profile by scooping up blue-chip American entertainment properties.	metaphor	"Scooping up" is using personification to indicate that Wanda holds the dominant position in this deal. "Blue-chip" means that AMC is a valued company and this deal is a reliable investment that operates for many years.

LAT0703

Source text	Framing devices	Reasoning devices
...China's first beachhead in Hollywood.	metaphor	"Beachhead" expresses the deal's significance of China in Hollywood, and laterally confirms the success of this deal.
"He could become something like a Jack Warner with Chinese characteristics," said David Wolf...	metaphor	The author uses Jack Warner to indicate Wang.

LAT0905

Source text	Framing devices	Reasoning devices
Fresh on the heels of spending \$2.6	metaphor	"Fresh on the heels" shows that the deal is new happened.

billion to buy AMC Entertainment...		
...acquiring AMC gives it a bigger pipeline into two of the world's largest theater markets...	metaphor	“Pipeline” means the connection between Wanda and Chinese and American movie markets. “Bigger” “pipeline” meant that this is not the first one, and Wanda has already had other businesses to the global market.

NYT0520

Source text	Framing devices	Reasoning devices
The industry has been looking to China for a vast new reservoir of ticket buyers for Hollywood movies...	metaphor	“Reservoir” indicates that Chinese market is an unused resource, a positive description of Chinese market.
...the deal grants an exit to private equity investors who have sought to cash out their interests in AMC...	metaphor	“Exit” here indicates opportunities. “Cash out interests” means investments.

WSJ0521-1

Source text	Framing devices	Reasoning devices
...are still shrouded behind the red-velvet curtains .	metaphor	Negative description of China and Chinese government. “Shroud” and “red-velvet curtains” indicates that China is an extreme secrete keeper. In this case, the author doubts China’s intention of behind this deal.
And AMC is hardly the cream of the crop ...	metaphor	“Cream of the crop” indicates the top or the best of a category. Here, the author means that AMC is not the number one in theater industry.
Observers will just have to sit back and wait for this	metaphor	This “particular plot” means Wanda-AMC deal and the real intention behind this.

particular plot to unfold.		
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WSJ0522

Source text	Framing devices	Reasoning devices
Now, Mr. Wang is wooing friends in another exotic territory: Hollywood.	metaphor	“Wooing friends” indicates business corporations.

WSJ0523

Source text	Framing devices	Reasoning devices
...to use its financial firepower to strike deals abroad.	metaphor	“Firepower” is a metaphor to express Wang’s strong and powerful economic capacity.

Appendix B: Personification

LAT0509

Source text	Framing devices	Reasoning devices
China's biggest theater company is trying to get a foothold in the U.S. by picking up some or all of AMC Entertainment Inc.,... further pry open the market for Hollywood films in the world's most populous country.	personification	"Foothold" and "pry open" are using metaphor and personification. "Foothold", there is some aggressiveness suggested in this choice of word. Foothold also could be a military term. "A place from which an advance (as for military operations) is made." When an army has a foothold on another's territory, it looks to expand.
The talks between AMC and Wanda have intensified in recent weeks after AMC pulled the plug on a planned stock offering to raise as much as...	personification	"Talks" and "pull the plug" are normally human beings' actions. The author uses personification here.
China has been aggressively expanding its own entertainment industry, both to boost the country's global influence or "soft power" and to feed the demands of a surging middle class.	personification	"Boost" and "feed" are using personifications.
...it would partner with the animation...	personification	It shows a friendly connection between these two companies cooperation.

LAT0521

Source text	Framing devices	Reasoning devices
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AMC already has forged ties with China's film industry.	personification	The author uses personification here.
It gives Wanda a foothold in the U.S....	personification	The author uses personification here.

LAT0522

Source text	Framing devices	Reasoning devices
...raise their global profile by scooping up blue-chip American entertainment properties.	personification	“Scooping up” is using personification to indicate that Wanda holds the dominant position in this deal. “Blue-chip” means that AMC is a valued company and this deal is a reliable investment that operates for many years.
...the Wanda deal could presage another wave of foreign buying in Hollywood.	personification	“Presage” means negative prediction. Apparently, the source does not support this deal and does not want foreign countries to invest in Hollywood.
...Wanda "may be the first foray , but I guarantee they are not the only ones licking their chops at these American properties."	personification	“Licking chops” is using personification and also shows that Wanda and other investors are not welcomed.

NYT0520

Source text	Framing devices	Reasoning devices
Wanda might eventually use newly acquired American theaters to help pry open an export market for Chinese-made films.	personification	This point of view represents American experts' views, but this view is not public and the source is anonymous. “Pry open” shows that the market is new to Chinese films.

NYT0524

Source text	Framing devices	Reasoning devices
...and reap a greater share of the box office in China...	personification	“Reap” is a personification use.

NYT0904

Source text	Framing devices	Reasoning devices
...as well as a possible foray into film production.	personification	“Foray” normally is used to describe human actions, especially military actions. But here, the author uses it to describe Wanda’s business investment plan.

WSJ0523

Source text	Framing devices	Reasoning devices
The deal raised eyebrows in the industry...	personification	“Raised eyebrows” indicates unexpected emotion. In this case, American industry is questioning and having some doubts of this deal.

Appendix C: Lexical Choices

CD0525

Source text	Framing devices	Reasoning devices
US movie chain purchase helps Dalian Wanda break into North American entertainment market.	lexical choices: helps	This sentence puts the deal ahead of Wanda, addresses the dominant position of this deal. Other descriptions mainly focus on Wanda, put Wanda on the subjective position, address Wanda's benefit from this deal.
...the Dalian Wanda deal is being touted as the right approach...	lexical choices: touted	A positive description of this deal.

CD0727

Source text	Framing devices	Reasoning devices
Wanda's AMC deal gets nod from regulators	lexical choices: gets nod	"Gets nod" indicates that the deal is proved by regulators.
...returned to profitability in the first half of the year with Wanda's injection of capital .	lexical choices: injection of capital	It indicates the importance of Wanda's capital.

PD0906-1

Source text	Framing devices	Reasoning devices
...该集团斥资 26 亿美元正式收购 AMC 公司。 (...the conglomerate invested \$2.6 billion to officially acquire AMC Entertainment Inc.)	lexical choices: 斥资	"斥资" normally is used for investment of a huge amount of money.

RN0522

Source text	Framing devices	Reasoning devices
万达斥资 (spend tons of money)31 亿美元收购(acquire)AMC 公司	lexical choices: spend tons of money, merge	“斥资” normally is used for investment of a huge amount of money.

LAT0509

Source text	Framing devices	Reasoning devices
China’s biggest theater company is trying to get a foothold in the U.S. by picking up some or all of AMC Entertainment Inc.,...further pry open the market for Hollywood films in the world’s most populous country .	lexical choices: biggest, foothold, pry open, the world’s most populous country.	“Biggest” and “the world’s most populous country” are positive descriptions of Wanda and China, confirm Wanda’s position in China and China’s position in the world. Also, “foothold” and “pry open” are using metaphor and personification. “Foothold”, there is some aggressiveness suggested in this choice of word. Foothold also could be a military term. “A place from which an advance (as for military operations) is made.” When an army has a foothold on another’s territory, it looks to expand.
AMC, the second-large movie theater chain in the U.S....	lexical choices: the second-largest	The scale of a company or an enterprise indicates its income and its influence, domestically and internationally. The bigger a company is, the richer it is, and the more powerful it is. Descriptions of a company’s scale directly represent its capability. Thus, it is a positive depiction of AMC.
...would make Wanda the first Chinese company to establish a major presence in the	lexical choices: first	It affirms Wanda’s position, and celebrates its first place.

North American movie theater business.		
...gain access to China's burgeoning market.	lexical choices: burgeoning	A positive description of China's market
Wanda Cinema Line Corp. is the largest cinema chain in China...	lexical choices: the largest	Positive description
...costs related to its acquisition of Kerasotes Showplace Theatres of Chicago....	lexical choices: acquisition	Business and formal, no emotional feelings
Among the biggest theater circuits, only Cinemark Holdings Inc. and National Amusements Inc....	lexical choices: only	Addresses these two companies. It shows the author's preference of these two companies.
...announced a joint venture with ...	lexical choices: a joint venture	Business and formal. No personal feelings.
China is also rapidly expanding its theater industry.	lexical choices: rapidly expanding	Affirms China's development, and gives positive confirmation.
Hollywood studios, however, have been frustrated by tight restrictions on the ...	lexical choices: frustrated, tight restrictions	"Frustrated" is personified. "Tight restrictions" shows dissatisfaction of China's movie import rules.
...recently agreed to ease some of the restrictions...	lexical choices: ease	Personification. It shows a little bit of satisfaction of Chinese government's change of the rules.
...welcomed the prospect of	lexical choices: prospect	Positive description
...it would be another amazing step into the China market, which is modernizing so quickly	lexical choices: another amazing step, modernizing so quickly.	"Another amazing step" is a positive description of AMC. The word "another" not only affirms this deal, but also gives positive credit to former deals. By saying China's fast modernization, it shows a positive confirmation of China's development.
...it would be fantastic ...	lexical choices: fantastic	Extremely positive description

Source text	Framing devices	Reasoning devices
A Chinese conglomerate took a big leap forward into the U.S. market late Sunday by acquiring AMC Entertainment Inc., the nation's second-largest theater chain.	lexical choices: conglomerate, a big leap forward, acquiring, second-largest	“Conglomerate” and “a big leap forward” are positively used to describe Wanda and its deal with AMC. “Acquiring” is formal and business, no emotional meaning. “Second-largest” is a positive confirmation of AMC’s position in the U.S..
It was the latest in a flurry of high-profile deals...	lexical choices: a flurry of, high-profile	Positive description of the deal.
...an agreement to acquire AMC'....	lexical choices: acquire	Business, professional, formal.
The transaction , valued at \$2.6 billion, would create the world's largest cinema owner, the companies said in a statement.	lexical choices: transaction, create, largest.	“Transaction” is business, formal, and professional, no personal feeling involved. “Create” addresses the deal’s significance. “Largest” affirms Wanda’s position in the world. First-hand source from the companies.
...marks the largest investment to date by a Chinese company in the U.S. entertainment industry.	lexical choices: largest investment to date	Addresses the significance of this merger case.
... some analysts view as a "trophy" acquisition .	lexical choices: some analysts, “trophy”, acquisition.	“Analysts” give credit to people who discussed this acquisition, not anybody else, but analysts, people who are professional and experts in field. And it is not a source from one analyst, but some, more than one experts confirmed the point of view. It gives reader more credit of what the author stated. “trophy acquisition” makes this an absolutely advantage deal for Wanda. It seems that buying AMC is a prize for Wanda that costs nothing.

... acquiring AMC gives it a pipeline into two of the world's largest theater markets...	lexical choices: acquiring	“Acquiring” is professional, formal, and business. The author uses “pipeline” to describe the connection between China and America.
...more clout in negotiating with major Hollywood studios eager to expand into the rapidly growing Chinese market.	lexical choices: clout, negotiating, eager to expand, rapidly growing.	“Clout” is a daily, oral use vocabulary, much easier to let readers understand the meaning. “Negotiating” is professional, formal, and business. “Eager to expand” shows the strong will of Hollywood studios coming to Chinese market. “Rapidly growing” is a positive description of Chinese market, and also an explanation for Hollywood studios’ strong will of expanding business in China.
...make Wanda a truly global cinema owner ...said Wang Jianlin, Wanda's chairman and president.	lexical choices: a truly global cinema owner.	First-hand source, directly quotes from Wanda’s chairman. This is translated from Chinese, and the researcher had seen the original sources. As a native Chinese speaker, the researcher will not translate “真正的” into “truly”, but “really”. “truly” is strongly positive instead of “really”. “Truly global” emphasized Wanda and the deal. Truly erase other possibilities out.
"As the film and exhibition business continues its global expansion, the time has never been more opportune to welcome the enthusiastic support of our new owners," AMC Chief Executive Gerry Lopez said.	lexical choices: welcome the enthusiastic support	First-hand source, directly quotes from AMC’s CEO. These are carefully selected vocabularies that show his strongly eagerness of Wanda’s acquisition.
...China saw a 30% increase in box-office sales...	lexical choices: saw, increase	“Saw” is personified. “Increase” affirms Chinese box-office’s profit as well as Chinese movie market.
...passed Japan as the biggest foreign	lexical choices: biggest foreign market	It affirms Chinese movie market’s position in the world.

market for Hollywood films.		
The nation is in the midst of a multiplex building boom to provide entertainment to a growing middle class.	lexical choices: boom	A positive description of China's current situation and Chinese market. It also provides a background information of Chinese market as a potential bedding for the coming description of Wanda.
Leading much of the multiplex growth is Wanda Cinema Line Corp.,...	lexical choices: leading, growth	A positive description of Wanda, it affirms Wanda's position in the industry in China.
... expand its homegrown entertainment industry and extend its global influence , or " soft power ."	lexical choices: expand, extend, global influence, soft power	"Expand" and "extend" are positive descriptions of confirming China's growth. "Global influence" and "soft power" state out China's intention and goal.
AMC recently shelved plans...	lexical choices: shelved	Negative description of the plans.
Some industry analysts said it's less clear what Wanda gets from the deal...	lexical choices: some industry analysts	Doubt of this deal by some experts, not ordinary people. "Analysts" give credit to people who discussed this acquisition, not anybody else, but analysts, people who are professional and experts in field. And it is not a source from one analyst, but some, more than one experts confirmed the point of view. It gives reader more credit of what the author stated. Sources from person in the field.
They (analysts) questioned the strategic value of Wanda owning a large theater chain in North America , given long-term attendance declines .	lexical choices: questioned, a large theater chain, in North America, long-term...declines.	"Questioned" shows the doubt and worry of this deal. "A large theater chain" addresses the problem, will it be easier if it's not a large, a chain theater? "North America" also points out the doubt reason, would it be better if it's not a North America theater? "Long-term" and "declines" describe AMC's current situation, meaning that it

		might not be a good investment. Negative against Wanda.
The number of tickets sold at theaters in the U.S. and Canada fell to 1.28 billion last year, a 4% decline from 2010 and the lowest level since the mid-1990s .	lexical choices: fell, decline, lowest level since the mid-1990s.	Addresses the concern from industry analysts. It states the declining North American market again.
But <u>other observers</u> predicted Wanda would benefit from buying AMC.	lexical choices: other observers, predicted.	From “industry analysts” to “other observers”. “Analysts” are professional, formal, and expert, and it gives credit to the source. But “observer” does not have that meaning. “predicted” is also uncertain, shows author’s negative uncertainty of this case. It forms an obvious contrast refer to former sentence. When people doubt this deal, they “question” it, and they are “analysts”, not ordinary people. When people stand on a good position for this deal, they “predict”, and they are “observers”, not experts, professional analysts. Two different word choices show the author’s intention, obviously. Don’t give more credit to observers, but pay attention to analysts.
...China has really arrived on the global stage on the cinema side,” said Rance Pow...	lexical choices: arrived on	“Arrived on”, not welcome, but compelled to accept the truth.
This will give Wanda a big operating advantage in China...	lexical choices: a big operation advantage	Affirms the advantage this acquisition brings to Wanda.

Hollywood studios have been frustrated by rampant piracy in China and tight restrictions on the number of foreign films...	lexical choices: rampant piracy, tight restrictions.	“Rampant piracy” shows the author’s strong disagreement of these people and this issue in China. “Tight restrictions” shows the author’s negative attitude of Chinese government’s import rules.
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LAT0522

Source text	Framing devices	Reasoning devices
...Dalian Wanda Group's landmark deal to buy AMC...	lexical choices: landmark deal	“Landmark deal” side depicts Wanda’s strong, powerful strength and position, and also positively affirms this merger deal’s significance.
...pairs China's biggest theater operator with the second-largest chain in the U.S....	lexical choices: Biggest, second-largest	Positive confirmations
... marks the largest investment by a Chinese company...	lexical choices: marks, largest	“Marks” is used to describe large and important actions, so here the author gives credit to this deal. “Largest” is another positive description of this deal.
...Hollywood companies striking business deals in China.	lexical choices: striking	“Striking” shows the unbalanced power and ability between Hollywood companies and Chinese companies. And there is a little discriminate and ironic within the tone of this sentence.
...you will see other incursions made into the American entertainment industry...	lexical choices: incursions	“Incursions” shows the negative emotion of Wanda-AMC deal.
Some analysts have questioned how the deal benefits Wanda...	lexical choices: analysts, questioned	The author expresses uncertainty of this deal by using analysts’ doubts. It is a negative concern of this deal.

...theater admissions in the U.S. and Canada have been in a long-term decline .	lexical choices: long-term, decline	The author provides negative background information of theater field in North America, and especially addresses that the negative situation is a “long-term” decline.
As for the growing Chinese market...	lexical choices: growing	The author gives positive confirmation of Chinese market.
...Wanda's ownership of AMC may have no effect on the distribution...	lexical choices: no effect	It addresses that the deal is not worthy for Wanda, and side depicts the author’s negative position on this deal.
...the government maintains tight controls on the number of foreign movies...	lexical choices: maintains, tight controls	“Maintains” indicates that the unsatisfied has been a long time. “Tight controls” expresses the unsatisfied emotion toward Chinese government.
I don't see the strategic synergies of the deal...	lexical choices: don't see, synergies	The sentence directly expresses the negative position of this deal.
...this is more of a vanity purchase than anything else.	lexical choices: vanity purchase	“Vanity purchase” gives negative credit to this deal.
By creating the world's largest theater company...	lexical choices: the world's largest	“The world’s largest” gives positive credit to this deal as well as these two companies.
...Wanda could use its size to negotiate favorable terms with major Hollywood studios in the world's two largest film markets.	lexical choices: favorable terms, the world's two largest	“Favorable terms” mean that Hollywood studios have better opportunities and Wanda can cooperate with. “The world’s two largest” gives positive credit to American and Chinese markets.
Wang Jianlin, the billionaire who controls Wanda...	lexical choices: billionaire, controls	“Billionaire” is the word to describe Jianlin Wang. “Control” expresses his power and position in Wanda
...had 13.6% of China's box-office market share last year -- good for first place even though it ranks seventh in the number of cinemas (86) and fourth in the number of	lexical choices: first place, seventh, fourth	“First place”, “seventh”, and “fourth” provide background information of Wanda’s position. On the one hand, it affirms Wanda’s number one box office share; on the other hand, it points Wanda’s ranking which are not number ones.

screens (730, including 288 3-D screens), consulting firm Artisan Gateway said.		
...they're one of the highest-end chains ," Wu Renchu...	lexical choices: high-end chains	The author uses in-field expertise's comments of Wanda to show its scale.
...a pioneering deal at the time that sparked China's cinema-building boom.	lexical choices: pioneering deal, sparked	"Pioneering deal" approves Wanda's first position of starting a new model of cinema. "Sparked" states that China's cinema market is not mature at that time, so that Wanda could be the important one.
...to acquire under-valued Western assets as part of the nation's years-old "going out" development strategy.	lexical choices: under-valued, years-old, going out	"Under-valued" points out Chinese companies' investment objects, not expensive Western companies, but undervalued. "Years-old" addresses that the strategy is not new, but has been processed for years. "Going out" actually means Chinese external propaganda strategy.
Culture, especially film, has been cited as a key component to China's ambition to wield more so-called "soft power."	lexical choices: key component, ambition, wield.	"Key component" addresses film's importance in nowadays China. "Ambition" is a positive description of China's future plan. It could be interpreted in both positive and negative way.
Chinese features have done poorly in front of American audiences, in part because of weak distribution .	lexical choices: poorly, weak distribution	Negative description of Chinese films.
Feng Pengcheng, a professor...called the AMC deal impressive .	Lexical choices: impressive	The author uses a professor's angel to show his comment on this deal. "Impressive" is a strongly positive description of this deal.

LAT0703

Source text	Framing devices	Reasoning devices
<p>Already a massive collector of Chinese art, Wang, who counts an executive jet and an 80-foot yacht among his personal prizes, is China's 11th-richest man and poised to acquire his biggest trophy yet.</p>	<p>lexical choices: already, massive, personal prizes, 11th-richest, poised, biggest trophy</p>	<p>These words all show Wang's sufficient capital power.</p>
<p>Wang already commands a vast commercial empire...</p>	<p>lexical choices: commands, vast</p>	<p>Addresses Wang's economic power and his business scale</p>
<p>In an interview inside his headquarters 21 floors above an Imax theater in Beijing's central business district, Wang dismissed skepticism about the AMC deal, said he was eager to do business...and addressed nagging rumors that Wanda was under investigation for ties to disgraced government official Bo Xilai.</p>	<p>lexical choices: headquarters 21 floors, above an Imax theater, central business district, dismissed skepticism, eager, nagging rumors</p>	<p>"Headquarters 21 floors", "above an Imax theater", and "central business district" all express his economic power. "Dismissed skepticism" shows that Wang does not care about doubts of his AMC deal, and he just wants to do business. "Nagging rumors" indicates Wang's beneath attention of it.</p>
<p>...he was also eyeing hotel and retail investments...</p>	<p>lexical choices: eyeing</p>	<p>It means that Wang is seeking other businesses.</p>
<p>...a company saddled with debt and short of growth prospects in an industry that is decidedly mature.</p>	<p>lexical choices: saddled with debt, short of growth prospects,</p>	<p>Negative description of AMC and theater industry.</p>

	decidedly mature	
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LAT0905

Source text	Framing devices	Reasoning devices
Dalian Wanda Group is poised to make more acquisitions in the U.S. entertainment industry.	lexical choices: poised	“Poised” shows the Wanda’s sufficient capital in a ridicule way.
The sale to Wanda creates the world's largest cinema operator and marks the largest acquisition ...	lexical choices: world’s largest, marks, largest	“World’s largest” confirms Wanda’s position in the world. “Marks” is usually describing impressive deals, confirms the importance and the scale of the deal laterally.
...acquiring AMC gives it a bigger pipeline into two of the world's largest theater markets...	lexical choices: bigger, pipeline	“Pipeline” means the connection between Wanda and Chinese and American movie markets. “Bigger pipeline” mean that this is not the first one, and Wanda has already had other businesses to the global market.
...more clout in negotiating with major Hollywood studios eager to expand into the burgeoning Chinese market...	lexical choices: clout, eager, burgeoning	“Clout” and “eager” express Hollywood studios’ strong willing to get more Chinese business. “Burgeoning” shows Chinese growing market, a positive description.
Wang reiterated that Wanda...is committed to invest \$450 million in renovations and upgrades	lexical choices: reiterated	“Reiterated” expresses Wang’s strong intention to invest more
...the reinvestment will give AMC an edge over competitors,” Wang said.	lexical choices: edge over	It is a positive description of this deal.

“...This will be remembered as a historic event. ”	lexical choices: historic event	“Historic event” points out the significance of the deal.
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NYT0520

Source text	Framing devices	Reasoning devices
...Mr. Lopez aggressively expanded food and beverage offerings in AMC theaters after taking charge in 2009.	lexical choices: aggressively expanded	“Aggressively” strongly addresses the ambition of expanding strategy.
The current deal offers Wanda a point of entry to the North American movie market.	lexical choices: a point of entry	It is a positive description of this deal.
In addition to its theaters, Wanda produces and distributes films in China.	lexical choices: in addition,	Author laterally addresses Wanda’s big and powerful business scale while introducing its background information.
...some American executives have privately said that Wanda might eventually use newly acquired American theaters to help pry open an export market for Chinese-made films.	lexical choices: American executives, privately, pry open	This point of view represents American experts’ views, but this view is not public and the source is anonymous. “Pry open” shows that the market is new to China.

NYT0524

Source text	Framing devices	Reasoning devices
Chinese Power Player Places Risky Bet on Moviegoing.	lexical choices: power player, risky bet	“Power player” indicates Jianlin Wang and his Wanda Group. “Risky bet” is an explanation of this deal from the author.

...and reap a greater share of the box office in China, the world's fastest-growing economy.	lexical choices: fastest-growing	"Fastest-growing" is a strongly positive description of China's economy.
Wang Jianlin, a rags-to-riches tycoon , is taking over AMC Entertainment...	lexical choices: rags-to riches, tycoon, taking over	"Rags-to-riches" indicates that Wang is a hardworking man. "Tycoon" states his current position. "Taking over" shows Wang's absolute control of AMC.
His \$17 billion empire includes...	lexical choices: empire	"Empire" indicates Wanda Group's business scale.
In an interview at his spacious headquarters in Beijing...	lexical choices: spacious	"Spacious" addresses and highlights Wang's richness.
...pushing an overhaul of Chinese media and entertainment properties...	lexical choices: overhaul	"Overhaul" indicates major changes and a lot of changes. It means to make things much better and more efficient.
But whether Wanda...can make a success of such a big acquisition and create a global property and entertainment brand is debatable , analysts say.	lexical choices: debatable	Author cites doubts of Wanda from experts. It illustrates doubtful thoughts of Wanda.
One of the biggest experiments in this area is being undertaken by Mr. Wang...	lexical choices: biggest experiments, undertaken	"Biggest experiments" and "undertaken" indicate Wang's capability.
...who has turned a tiny real estate venture into a national brand.	lexical choices: tiny, national	Author uses "tiny" and "national" to form a contrast impression to address Wang's ability.
...a colossus with 183 million square feet of land under	lexical choices: colossus	A positive description of Wanda Plaza.

development or operation.		
...when box office receipts are sluggish and American film producers are looking to China?	lexical choices: sluggish	A negative description of American film market
...Mr. Wang is eager to establish himself as China's first global corporate chief.	Lexical choices: eager	"Eager" indicates Wang's ambition of business success.
Financing such a big deal in a tough credit environment , and with China's property market in a slump , was some feat .	lexical choices: tough credit environment, a slump, feat	"Tough credit environment" here indicates American market, a negative description of American market. "A slump" and "feat" are positive descriptions of Wanda's acquisition.

NYT0904

Source text	Framing devices	Reasoning devices
...Wanda's vast and growing importance as an owner and operator of hotels, resorts and cultural businesses in China.	lexical choices: vast and growing importance	Author directly points out Wanda's significant position in China and its business influence in China.

WSJ0521-2

Source text	Framing devices	Reasoning devices
...in one of the biggest moves yet by a Chinese company to break	lexical choices: biggest move, break into	One of the "biggest moves" addresses this deal's huge scale and importance. "Break into" indicates the difficulty to get into U.S. industry.

into the U.S. industry.		
The deal comes as China pushes to develop its own culture industry...	lexical choices: pushes	“Pushes” addresses Chinese government’s intention and urgent willing of developing culture industry.
China also has been championing efforts to build film production companies...	lexical choices: championing	“Championing” is a positive description of China. In this case, it means that China is very confident and powerful to do to build film production companies.

WSJ0523

Source text	Framing devices	Reasoning devices
To rev up consumer awareness, he also will prod AMC to launch major advertising campaigns.	lexical choices: rev up, prod Increase inactions.	“Rev up” here indicates increasing inactions and rising alertness of something. “Prod” means to speed up, and to accelerate. In this case, it suggests that AMC will benefit Chinese company and makes profit quickly. Rise alertness of something. To speed up something.



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