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Newspaper Coverage of the South Korea-U.S. Free Trade Agreement:
A Framing Analysis

A Thesis Presented for

the Master of Science

Degree

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Yeonah Park

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ABSTRACT

This study compared how four English-language newspapers in the United States and South Korea covered the Korea-U.S. Free Trade Agreement (KORUS FTA). A content analysis using QDA Miner was conducted for 354 articles from the *New York Time*, the *Washington Post*, the *Korea Herald*, and the *Korea Times* to determine how each paper framed the topic. Overall the newspapers' media framing aligned with their national concerns and interests.

The literature review supported the idea that identifying frames in natural language articles and investigating the relative highlighting of issues was important in analyzing news coverage. The two Korean newspapers gave the issue of the KORUS FTA four times more news coverage than the two U.S. papers. The Korean public showed their concerns by rallies against the KORUS FTA during the negotiations. Opinion pieces of the U.S. newspapers gave their audiences generalized information on this issue while opinion stories of Korean papers focused on for-or-against debates about the KORUS FTA. The U.S. and Korean newspapers covered various industries differently reflecting the relative importance of those industries to each country if the treaty were approved eventually by the U.S. Congress and the Korean National Assembly. In addition, this research found that news stories in papers from both nations followed episodic frames, whereas opinion articles used thematic frames.

This study provided empirical evidence to contribute to journalism scholars, journalists, and audiences for a better understanding of media framing.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

According to framing analysis, the media, through their new coverage, draw the public's attention to certain aspects or themes about particular issues or events. The concept of framing is derived from agenda-setting, which is a subcategory of cognitive media effects. According to McCombs (1997), "framing is the selection of a restricted number of thematically related attributes for inclusion in the media agenda when a particular object is discussed." Even though agenda-setting and framing analyses share the basic assumption that the media decides what people think about, Gamson & Modigliani (1987) state that the frame suggests what the controversy is about, the essence of the issue (p.143). Media framing is an important concept in journalism research because understanding media framing can help researchers understand the way people think about and interpret events and public issues.

The purpose of this thesis is to apply the concept of media framing to examine how newspapers in the United States and South Korea covered a cross-national issue: the Free Trade Agreement between the two nations. A systematic content analysis was conducted on four newspapers, two U.S. national newspapers and two major English-language newspapers from South Korea. This study examines how different countries' newspapers portrayed the same issue of the Korea-U.S. FTA. No previous research has dealt with this topic in the context of media framing.

Potential Significance of the Study

Entman (1993) says the media framing has important implications for the political communication research field.

Frames call attention to some aspects of reality while obscuring other elements, which might lead audiences to have different reactions....Framing in this light plays a major role in the exertion of political power, and the frame in a news text is really the imprint of power—it registers the identity of actors or interests that competed to dominate the text.

This study has the potential to examine whether framing exists cross-culturally when newspapers from two nations discuss a common topic. This thesis will shed light on whether the varying national interests of audiences of the papers, as applied to a political subject, are reflected in how the papers present the topic. The newspapers that are used in this study enjoy good reputations in their countries for presenting objective and unbiased coverage of important topics. According to previous agenda-setting and framing research, which will be reviewed in Chapter II, even at highly regarded, objective newspapers, reporters and editors structure stories around organizing elements or frames that emphasize some aspects of the topic while minimizing or omitting other aspects.

This study may help researchers further understand framing and help journalists become aware of how their structuring of stories leads readers to doubt that that they are receiving unbiased news accounts, thus damaging newspaper credibility with the public. This study will examine the idea that framing may occur even when credible journalists

follow the standards and commonly accepted techniques for reporting. Thus, it is possible for professional journalists to form media frames unintentionally in their coverage, even as they claim to be unbiased and objective.

Another importance of this study is that this study explores international, economic, and political issues between the United States and South Korea. The Free Trade Agreement between two nations is a recent issue covered by these four newspapers. The two countries started formal FTA negotiations on February 2, 2006, and their respective representatives signed an agreement on June 30, 2007. This study can be a starting place for academic research about the FTA between the U.S. and South Korea for scholars who are interested in the economic relationship between two nations, the Free Trade Agreement, and cross-national media framing.

The Korea-U.S. Free Trade Agreement (KORUS FTA)

The alliance between South Korea and the United States has been maintained for decades in the interest of both sides. Even though the environments of political, military, economic and international relations between the two nations have changed, the leaders of each country reaffirmed the “robust alliance” of these two nations in 2006.

The Korea-U.S. Free Trade Agreement (KORUS FTA) is a landmark bilateral trade deal that includes economic, political, and security matters. According to U.S. government data,¹ this FTA is the largest and the most commercially meaningful trade

¹ The Office of the United States Trade Representative
(http://www.ustr.gov/assets/Document_Library/Fact_Sheets/2007/asset_upload_file302_11035.pdf), (June 2007).

agreement made by the United States since the North American Free Trade Agreement in 1994. South Korea was the seventh largest goods trading partner to the United States in 2005, and the United States was Korea's second most important trade partner after China. In 2006, bilateral trade exceeded \$75 billion, with U.S. exports of \$30.8 billion and imports from Korea of \$44.7 billion.²

According to Kim (2007), "a free trade agreement is one form of a trading block, a preferential economic arrangement among a group of countries that reduces barriers to trade. Trading blocs have emerged as the most debated topic in world trade." Countries around the world are making efforts to pursue national interests by means of trading blocs, preserving the current global trading system under the World Trade Organization (WTO) (Kim, 2007, p.1).

Dent (2006) stated that "a free trade agreement is an undertaking by signatory parties to remove the trade barriers that exist between them in simple term" (p.15). According to Dent (2006), each party retains the ability to formulate its own trade policy toward third countries, i.e. non-parties. FTAs usually follow similar phases of development. The project is first officially proposed, which entails leaders or high government officials from each FTA partner agreeing to proceed to FTA negotiations, followed by FTA feasibility studies, or exploratory talks between officials from the parties concerned. These steps are normally followed by a feasibility or scoping study phase in which commissioned trade research bodies examine procedural and impact factors relating to the proposed FTA. The length of the negotiating phase of FTA project development can vary enormously. The negotiation phase then is followed by the signing

² Ibid.

of the FTA, normally by the premiers or trade ministers of the FTA partners. Thereafter, the agreement is ratified by the legislatures of each country. Once the FTA has been ratified, it then enters into force becoming a legally binding agreement between the signatory parties (Dent, 2006, p.17-18).

Kiyota & Stern (2007) discussed the key points of the KORUS FTA. For the United States this treaty would help foster economic growth and create higher-paying jobs and enable U.S. companies to increase their exports of goods and services to Korea and promote bilateral investment. Further this agreement enhances the strong U.S.-Korea regional partnership, which is a force for stability and development in Asia, and cooperation on military and security matters as well as bolsters strategic interests in the region. South Korea's goals, on the other hand, in seeking this pact would contribute to bilateral trade; increase economic welfare; provide more secure market access; rock in a variety of domestic reforms; and generate greater efficiency, productivity, and economic growth (Kiyota & Stern, 2007, p.1-3).

According to Schott (2004), traditionally, trade officials have tried to deflect demands for reform of their own trade barriers, acceding to the minimum change needed to complete a trade pact. Instead of limiting their own reforms, trade officials have tried to "out-reform" their competitors in an effort both to secure preferential access to key markets and, even more importantly, to lock in domestic reforms through contractual obligations and thus improve the investment climate in their markets.

According to a "Policy Brief" written by Schott (2007) of the Peterson Institute for International Economics,³ like any negotiated deals, the KORUS FTA is not the

³ The web site for the Peterson Institute for International Economics is at <http://www.iie.com/>.

optimal result for either country, but it provides important benefits to both nations to have strong economic, political, and cultural alliances. Schott states that the United States tends to open markets globally, locally, and bilaterally to expand market access for American goods and services. The KORUS FTA allows the United States to gain a bridgehead into the Asia-Pacific markets. It also gives Korea to access the U.S. market, preceding both China and Japan as the first nation in Asia to remove trade tariffs with the United States. According to Choi & Schott (2004), more robust alliance between South Korea and the United States will positively affect security matters in the Korean peninsula.

The official document “FTA: United States and Republic of Korea Economic and Strategic Benefits,”⁴ reported

over the years the progress of the KORUS FTA has strengthened the range of intellectual property rights (IPR) protection and enforcement; resolved a series of standards issues in the automotive sector; improved market access for U.S. pharmaceuticals; initiated steps to partially reopen its market to U.S. beef exports; and most recently, the welcome announcement by Korea to significantly reduce its restrictions on movie screenings.

According to the official summary of the KORUS Free Trade Agreement,⁵ this agreement may bring benefits to the U.S. enhancing trade between two nations.

⁴ Available at (http://www.ustr.gov/assets/Document_Library/Fact_Sheets/2006/asset_upload_file582_8880.pdf), (February 2006).

⁵ Free Trade with Korea Brief Summary of the Agreement (http://www.ustr.gov/assets/Document_Library/Fact_Sheets/2007/asset_upload_file302_11035.pdf), (June 2007).

Under the KORUS FTA, roughly \$1.91 billion, or 64 percent, of Korea's agriculture imports from the United States immediately will be duty-free....In industrial goods, nearly 95 percent of bilateral trade in consumer and industrial products will be duty-free within three years of entry into force of the Agreement, with virtually all remaining tariffs eliminated within 10 years....The KORUS FTA marks an unprecedented step in eliminating the tariffs and non-tariff barriers that American auto makers have identified as the impediments to their success in Korea's large market. Also, the KORUS FTA will ensure that U.S. investors in Korea will have the same rights and enjoy equal footing with Korean investors. Most tariffs on bilateral trade will be removed in three years. The average tariffs between both countries are relatively low; however, the scale of bilateral trade is large. Although the FTA was signed by both countries on June 30, 2007, the ratifications by the U.S. Congress and the South Korean National Assembly remain unresolved.

The 1997/98 Asian financial crisis caused some disturbance regarding market access security in the region, and thus the KORUS FTA could, from one perspective, be seen as sending a signal that key East Asian countries like South Korea were not going to retreat to defensive protectionism, but rather continue to open its market to countries outside the region (Dent, 2006). In addition, according to Dent (2006), FTA was used to help expedite the process of post-crisis economic reform. The Korean government attempted to move from its economic nationalism to embrace globalism after this financial crisis.

For South Korea, free trade was a means to harness "foreign pressure" to help overcome entrenched domestic opposition to economic reform, restructuring and opening

up the economy generally (Schott, Bradford, & Moll, 2006). A FTA with the United States was conceived to help achieve such ends and make the country an “open trading nation.” Key issues for Korea include the exclusion of agricultural products from the FTA, the resolution of U.S. steel anti-dumping problems, the access of Koreans to the U.S. visa waiver program, and the coverage of production in the Kaesong Industrial Complex (Schott, Bradford, & Moll, 2006).

Choi & Schott (2004) explained the benefits of the KORUS FTA by industries removing trade barriers.

Both the United States and Korea have important economic stakes in the Asia-Pacific region that would be affected by a prospective FTA....Any trade relationship as sizable as that between the United States and Korea would naturally provoke a number of bilateral frictions....The United States has an extensive litany of complaints about Korean trade and regulatory practices that impede trade and investment by U.S. firms. The most enduring and prominent problems involve the auto sector, semiconductors, and agriculture. Restrictions on the import and sale of autos in Korea remain a source of major concern for U.S. firms. In agriculture, Korea still maintains very restrictive access to its rice market. Other U.S. concerns involve such areas as screen-time quotas,⁶ burdensome regulations in financial service sectors, and pharmaceutical pricing practices (p.178-193).

The KORUS FTA could yield significant welfare gains for both economies, if agriculture is included in the deal. Such a pact would also reinforce political and security

⁶ South Korea has operated a quota system under which theaters are required to screen Korean movies for at least 146 days each year.

relations at a time of increasing tension on the Korean peninsula. The liberalization of long-standing US barriers to South Korea exports of textiles, apparel, and steel would trigger loud rebukes from the U.S. industries already suffering sharp competition from Chinese suppliers (Schott, 2004, p.377-378).

Research Questions

My research questions are these:

Research question #1: How much attention did the two Korean newspapers and two U.S. newspapers give to the issue of the KORUS FTA?

Research question #2: What differences were there among the four newspapers in the presentation of news stories and opinion columns dealing with the KORUS FTA?

Research question #3: What kind of framing window did each newspaper present in reporting on the KORUS FTA?

Organization of Chapters

This work is divided into five chapters: introduction, literature review, research methods, results, and conclusions. Chapter I introduces the study, the significance of this research, the intent of the KORUS FTA, and the organization of chapters.

Chapter II describes previous research about framing analysis and explains its connection with the KORUS FTA. The research method is described in the Chapter III.

Chapter IV states the results and discusses the content analysis. Finally, Chapter V presents conclusions of this study, limitations of this research, and suggestions for future study.

CHAPTER II LITERATURE REVIEW

The Background and Concept of Media Framing

This thesis explores the differences between the ways U.S. newspapers and South Korean newspapers dealt with the Free Trade Agreement between the U.S. and South Korea from the starting date of formal negotiations to date the agreement was signed. To explain the different cultural contexts, I shall employ media framing analysis. This chapter concentrates on the previous framing analysis research.

The agenda-setting function of mass media refers to the idea of the effect of salience in media coverage. The mass media constantly present objects suggesting what individuals in their audiences should think about, know about, and have feelings about (Lang and Lang, 1966, p. 468). McCombs & Shaw (1972) interviewed 100 people who had not decided how to vote in Chapel Hill in a 1968 election. Then the researchers analyzed mass media serving those voters. This study showed that the mass media set the agenda for each political campaign, influencing the salience of attitudes toward the political issues. Voters tended to share the media's composite definition of what was important, strongly suggesting an agenda-setting function of the mass media.

Scheufele (2000) argued that agenda-setting relies on the notion of attitude accessibility. Mass media have the power to increase levels of importance that audience members assign to issues. In contrast, "framing is based on the concept of prospect theory; that is, on the assumption that subtle changes in the wording of the description of

a situation might affect how audience members interpret the situation.” Figure 1⁷ shows the different analytic model between agenda-setting/priming and framing.

Framing influences how audiences think about issues, not by making aspects of the issue more salient, but by invoking interpretation of incoming information.

Although the process of issue selection or agenda-setting by mass media necessarily needs to be a conscious one, framing is based on subtle nuances in wording and syntax that have most likely unintentional effects or at least effects that are hard to predict and control by journalists (Scheufele, 2000, p.309).

Pan & Kosicki (1993) stated the differences between the agenda-setting and framing analysis, using the topic of abortion as an example.

Working in the agenda-setting tradition, one would measure the location and length of the article and combine the findings with those from other articles dealing with the abortion issue. The article then contributes to an index of salience of the abortion issue in the news. Working in the tradition of media bias, one would measure how many pro and con statements on abortion the article contained and then aggregate the findings from similar articles. Missing from both of these types of analysis is how the abortion issue is discussed in the news and how the ways of talking about the issue are related to the evolution of the issue in political debates. That is what framing analysis attempts to provide.

McQuail (1994) wrote that “the entire study of communication is based on the premise that the media have significant effects” (p.327). Framing analysis is one of the media effect theories. According to McQuail, the history of research on media effects can

⁷ This figure and all other figures and tables are found in Appendix.

be divided by four stages. The main focuses of each stage are 1) influence of media messages on attitudes, 2) strong media effects and influence on attitude change, 3) cognitive effects of mass media, and 4) social constructivism.

The fourth and present stage is mixed with both strong and limited effects of mass media. In other words, mass media have a strong influence on the recipients “by framing images of reality...in a predictable and patterned way” (McQuail, 1994, p.331), but media effects are limited by an interaction between media and audiences. The concept of framing is characterized by social constructivism. This theoretical background explains why different newspapers under the different social construction have different points of view.

In Goffman’s work (1974), the central logic of frame analysis was that a constructed message affects an individual’s perspectives and actions. Gamson & Modigliani (1987) define frame as “a central organizing idea or story line that provides meaning to an unfolding strip of events and weaves a connection among them.”

Entman (1993) defines framing as “*to select some aspects of a perceived reality and make them more salient in a communicating text, in such a way as to promote a particular problem definition, causal interpretation, moral evaluation and/or treatment recommendation* for the item described” (p.52, author’s italics). In other words, the media have a function to selective attribution to the audiences. Entman also explains that the “frames define problems, diagnose causes, make moral judgments, and suggest remedies” (Entman, 1993).

Selected and salient news by the reporters are received as information by the audiences while neglected stories are not prominent to the audience. Entman (1993)

defines salience as making a piece of information more noticeable, meaningful, or memorable to audiences. Based on his argument, newspaper readers are exposed to selected and salient information. This in turn influences people's perceptions and extends their retention of the issue.

Several studies have focused on framing effects of international issues. Examining the news stories about the U.S. downing of an Iranian plane and the Soviet downing of a Korean jet, Entman (1991) identified five characteristics of media texts that set a certain frame of reference and have a significant impact on information processing: important judgments; agency, or the answer to the question (e.g., who did it?); identification with potential victims; categorization, or the choice of labels for the incidents; and generalizations to a broader national context. Similarly, the research of Noakes & Wilkins (2002) showed how United States media frames of Palestinians changed between 1984 and 1998 and found that the "civil rights" frame gave a more positive representation of the Palestinians' struggle.

Iyengar (1991) differentiated between episodic and thematic media frames through a content analysis of network television newscasts. According to Iyengar & Simon (1993), "Episodic framing depicts public issues as concrete instances or specific events that are the results of actions by individuals. Thematic framing reports systemic problems in society on a more abstract level in the form of general outcomes." Iyengar believes that the type of media framing influences how audience members attribute responsibility, so that choosing thematic frames over episodic ones might mean the attribution of responsibility shifts from personal to abstract societal causes (Iyengar, 1991; Iyengar & Simon, 1993).

According to Iyengar & Simon (1993), television news coverage of the Gulf War was heavily episodic or event oriented. The typical news story transmitted information about specific developments or live occurrence (p.377). They concluded that the audiences thought the way to solve the problem was not by diplomatic means but by military because themes of diplomatic, military, and social implications took episodic framing.

The concepts of episodic and thematic frames were mentioned by Pan & Kosicki (1993) similarly.

News reports are often conceived as stories. This feature of news discourse results from two factors. First, most news reports cover concrete newsworthy events—arbitrarily chunked concretes in a continuous flow of history. They are stories in the literal sense of describing events. Second, news is expected to orient audiences toward their communal environment and to help link audiences with the environment that transcends their limited sensory experiences. As stories, news discourse has recognizable organizations called scripts....Largely due to these characteristics of the news script, news often appears to be excessively fragmented, personalized, and dramatized to some of its critics. (p.60)

In cognitive psychological tradition, scholars argued that the structured array of signifying elements does set up parameters of a cognitive “window” through which news story is “seen.” In other words, the intended meaning of a news story had the capability of directing attention as well as restricting the perspectives available to audiences (Hall, 1980; Tuchman 1978; Pan & Kosicki, 1993). Scholars tried to test the direct effect of message framing to change the information of figures and numbers. These researchers

hypothesized that the manipulation of content could limit the individual's cognitive judgment when it required the person's selection or judgment. The result of research may show empirical evidence of media frame effects. If simple manipulation of words can affect the selection or judgment of public, it is also reasonable that news framing can similarly affect cognition or attitude toward the real world.

Recent research on media frames has focused on the arrangement of media text that can affect audiences by encouraging salience or prompting ignorance. Chong (1996) argued that the effect of media framing is to suggest the structured context to analyze news. However, the existence of news frames does not mean automatic audience effects from those frames. Even though framing analysis advances the agenda-setting function, it still needs more explanation of its potential to interact with audiences' beliefs, values, and previous experiences (Rhee, 1997).

Scheufele (1999) argued the limitation of framing analysis. Even though many researchers use the concept of framing in their studies, future research is needed to complete the framing analysis as a theoretical model.

The presentation of operationalizations and empirical findings show that the fractured paradigm to which Entman (1993) referred still exists. Even in the area of media effects, the concept of framing is far from being integrated into a consistent theoretical model. As a result of the numerous approaches to framing developed in recent years, the comparability of empirical results obtained in these studies is rather limited. Therefore, future research should integrate previous findings into a consistent model and fill in the missing causal links to develop a complete model of framing.

This literature review has presented the origin of the concept of media framing analysis. Chapter III presents the research method for analyzing the content, using the QDA (Qualitative Data Analysis) Miner software program, of articles from four newspapers of the U.S. and South Korea about the KORUS FTA.

CHAPTER III RESEARCH METHODS

Methods

This study addresses three questions: 1) How much attention did the two Korean newspapers and two U.S. newspapers give to the issue of the KORUS FTA? 2) What differences were there in the presentation of news stories and editorial columns dealing with the KORUS FTA? 3) What kind of framing window did each newspaper present?

The most appropriate method for this study is a content analysis; it enables the researcher to examine newspaper articles through a systematic numerical system that counts and ranks elements. Singletary (1994) stated that a content analysis looks for generalities, regularities, and patterns in information. The analyzer seeks to read counted elements, to understand context between sentences, and to test the consistency of information. It converts articles to numbers by counting particular elements of interest in each article.

Furthermore, Singletary (1994) said the elements that are counted should be manifest and obvious. However, there is also the idea of a latent aspect. He described the 10 steps of a content analysis: 1) select topic, 2) decide on sample or census, 3) define concepts or units to be counted, 4) construct categories, 5) create a coding form, 6) train coders, 7) collect data, 8) measure intercoder reliability, 9) analyze data, and 10) report results (p.284).

Newspapers Selected

To examine the different views in the South Korean newspapers and U.S. newspapers that reported about the KORUS FTA, this study analyzes coverage in two newspapers from each country from February 2006 to July 2007. Table 1 shows the trade treaty negotiations schedule. The U.S. and South Korea announced their intent to negotiate the Free Trade Agreement on February 2, 2006. Representatives from each nation signed an agreement on June 30, 2007. For the purpose of this study, the *New York Times* and the *Washington Post* from the United States and the *Korea Times* and the *Korea Herald* from South Korea were chosen. The *New York Times* and the *Washington Post* were selected because they are recognized as influential papers, read daily by political leaders and opinion leaders in the United States and because they provide more international news coverage than most other newspapers in the country. According to the Audit Bureau of Circulation, the circulation of the *New York Times* is 1,037,828 and the *Washington Post* has a circulation of 635,087 copies.

The *Korea Times* and the *Korea Herald* were chosen because they are published in English and have the largest circulations among English language newspapers in South Korea. The circulation of the *Korea Times* is around 150,000 to 200,000 and the *Korea Herald* circulates about 150,000. These figures are estimates because Korean publishers are reluctant to report exact circulation figures to the Korea Audit Bureau of Circulation. Table 2 shows circulation for the four newspapers. These two English-language newspapers have been published for more than 50 years in Korea. Also, these two papers are similar to the U.S. papers selected in that they are targeted to readers who are

concerned about and highly involved with what is happening in South Korea. Their audiences include political leaders and opinion leaders.

The method used for analyzing a large number of newspaper articles was content analysis. This thesis included the entire population of articles in the four newspapers about KORUS FTA. All articles were selected through the Lexis-Nexis database, using search key words “KORUS FTA,” “KORUS free trade agreement,” “FTA with the U.S.,” “free trade agreement with the United States,” “FTA with Korea,” “free trade agreement with South Korea,” “trade treaty,” and “trade pact” in the general search.

The search for the 16-month period yielded 40 articles from the *Washington Post*, 23 articles from the *New York Times*, 142 articles from the *Korea Times*, and 149 articles from the *Korea Herald*, for a total of 63 stories from U.S. newspapers and 291 stories from the Korean newspapers.

Coding Procedure

This content analysis was designed to determine what frames existed in newspaper texts. The unit of analysis for this study was each newspaper article.

Items for a coding sheet follow:

- 1) date of publication
- 2) name of newspaper (the *New York Times*, the *Washington Post*, the *Korea Times*, and the *Korea Herald*)
- 3) story type (news story, news brief, editorial, and opinion column)

4) focus of article (KORUS as main focus or KORUS mentioned among other trade agreements such as NAFTA or Korea-Chile FTA)

5) main subject of each KORUS FTA-focused article (negotiations schedule, meaning of the agreement, or predictions about treaty)

6) negotiating topics and objectives listed in articles (agriculture, automobiles, services, foreign investment, textiles and apparel, pharmaceuticals, Kaesong industry complex, and others)

7) story presentation (episodic, thematic, or neither)

8) article with more supporting arguments for the KORUS FTA than opposing arguments

9) article with more arguments opposing the agreement than supporting arguments

10) sources cited in articles (government official, business/industry representative, labor representative, and others)

Iyengar's frames were adopted for this study to analyze newspaper articles. The story presentation means how each story was written. The category of episodic frame included the self explanatory stories and specific event-oriented stories such as the official negotiations schedule and negotiating topics (agriculture, automobiles, textile, Kaesong, and others). The concept of thematic frame was applied to articles that gave more background information or investigative and analytic stories on such issues as importance of this FTA and predictions about the effects of this FTA for the two nations or worldwide. News stories and opinion columns were tabulated separately to test the hypothesis that these two different categories would show different frames.

For example, “The United States and South Korea launched talks yesterday to forge one of the biggest U.S. free-trade deals ever, with both sides acknowledging that they will face fierce resistance from Korea's heavily protected farmers” (Feb. 3, 2006, the *Washington Post*) was coded as an episodic frame. In the case of “The difficulty in passing the Korea-Chile FTA, which took almost a year to ratify, indicates the difficulties that lie ahead for the Korea-U.S. FTA at the domestic level. To make matters worse, the tone of growing popular nationalism in response to the opening of Korean markets would possibly get tied to anti-Americanism” (Feb. 8, 2006, the *Korea Herald*) was coded as a thematic frame.

For all articles, the numbers of supporting and opposing arguments for the KORUS FTA were counted. Each article was coded as either supportive of the treaty or in opposition to the KORUS FTA by determining which idea was presented in the most sentences, often quotations from sources, within the article.

Reliability

Intercoder reliability refers to levels of agreement among independent coders who code the same content using the same coding instrument. (Wimmer & Dominick, 2006) Scott’s pi was applied to the results from 70 articles randomly selected from the total 354 coded articles for accuracy of intercoder reliability.

$$\text{Scott's pi} = \frac{\% \text{ observed agreement} - \% \text{ expected agreement}}{1 - \% \text{ expected agreement}}$$

According to Wimmer & Dominick (2006), Scott's pi corrects the coefficient of reliability for agreement due to chance. To achieve this, we must differentiate between the "percent observed agreement" and the "percent expected agreement." The percent observed agreement is measured by the coefficient of reliability. The percent expected agreement (i.e., the agreement expected solely due to chance or random fluctuation of scores) must be separately calculated.

In order to ensure that the 70 sample articles coded and tested for intercoder reliability represent the entire population of the sample, two coders (the author and an independent coder) randomly selected 15 articles from the U.S. newspapers and 55 articles from South Korea newspapers. There were 291 Korean newspaper articles and 63 articles from the U.S. newspapers; therefore, 15 articles from the U.S. newspapers and 55 articles from Korean newspapers were approximately 25 percent of each category.

The reliability for simple choices such as story type and focus were 100 percent. The agreement regarding supporting/opposing argument and sources cited were 85 and 91 percent respectively. For the main subject, including topics, the agreement percentage was 77 percent. These Scott's pi figures are within the acceptable range of reliability for content analyses.

CHAPTER IV

RESULTS

The number of articles about the KORUS Free Trade Agreement, selected from four newspapers, totaled 354. The two Korean newspapers had 291 articles, while the two American newspapers had 63 stories about the FTA between the United States and South Korea. As shown by Table 3, the two Korean newspapers devoted at least four times more frequent as much news coverage to the FTA news and opinion pieces as the two American newspapers reported.

Several factors may account for the greater amount of coverage in Korean newspapers. This FTA pact would be Korea's largest FTA, while for the United States it would be only its largest in Asia. Even though South Korea has risen to be the 12th largest economy in the world, it has had little experience in launching FTAs with trading partners. The KORUS FTA is the fifth attempted FTA after ones with Chile, Singapore, the Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN), and the European Free Trade Association (EFTA). The United States, however, was much more experienced at opening its markets worldwide. Thus, American editors may not consider this topic to be particularly newsworthy. Table 4 shows the present status of free trade agreements within two countries.

Perhaps Korean newspapers covered the KORUS FTA more attentively than American papers because the United States is a more important economic partner to South Korea than South Korea is for the United States. According to the United States Trade Representative, South Korea was the seventh largest U.S. goods trade partner in

2005. The U.S. was the second most important trading partner to Korea. Secondly, the concept of the FTA is not as familiar for South Koreans as for U.S. audiences, prompting Korean newspapers to provide more coverage to their readers. All Korean free trade agreements have come into effect during the past four years. The South Korea and Chile free trade agreement went into effect in 2004, and FTAs with Singapore, EFTA, and ASEAN began in 2006 and 2007. Finally, the KORUS FTA had been more controversial politically in South Korea than in the United States. All newspapers covered Korean rallies of farmers, workers' unions, and film workers during the negotiations.

As shown by Figures 2 and 3, American newspaper content was 75 percent news stories and 25 percent opinion articles (editorial and opinion columns combined), while the Korean papers included 81.7 percent of news and 18.3 percent of opinion stories. In the U.S. newspapers, 23.2 percent of the news articles were "news briefs" that mainly focused on the official schedule of the KORUS FTA negotiations. Figures show that these two American newspapers gave their audiences more opinion pieces about the KORUS FTA in proportion to total coverage than the Korean papers offered in opinion pieces.

Newspapers' opinion stories from both countries include the official FTA procedures, importance of the pact, and ratifications of the U.S. Congress and the Korean National Assembly commonly. If ratified by legislative bodies of both nations, the KORUS FTA will serve both countries' interests to expand the bilateral economic opportunities in the free trade market.

The U.S. newspaper editorials or opinion columns generally mentioned the KORUS FTA with other free trade agreements, such as Columbia, Peru, and Panama.

Only five editorials and columns from the total of 13 placed the main emphasis on the KORUS FTA. More than half of the U.S. editorials and opinion columns mentioned the KORUS FTA with other issues such as other trade agreements, North Korea, and domestic issues.

Korean newspapers had 24 opinion pieces about the KORUS FTA. In 65 percent of those editorials or opinion columns, the KORUS FTA was the primary issue discussed. Among topics in these articles were the importance or meanings of the KORUS FTA, the benefit of this FTA, anti-FTA rallies, and political criticism to the present administration.

The Korean opinion pieces expressed the hope that the FTA will produce positive spillover effects on the broader bilateral relationship. For example, observers consider the FTA as a means of strengthening the U.S.-Korea alliance. They stated that the two countries need to boost their strategic relationship mainly due to bilateral strains over major alliance issues, primarily caused by different views about how to handle concerns involving North Korea and China. Many Koreans, the editorials said, expect that the FTA will have even broader strategic effects. This FTA can elevate the standing of South Korea in Northeast Asia by boosting its status as a middle-ranking power. It might conceivably help Korea to play this role not only by boosting its economic performance but also by ensuring that the U.S. remains a strategic and economic counterbalance to China and Japan. Furthermore, Korean officials expect that the FTA will produce a better climate for pursuing North-South trade and investment on the Korean peninsula. These were among ideas expressed in the opinion pieces in the two Korean newspapers.

Figure 4 shows the percentage of articles that included information about each industry that would be covered by this FTA. For example, 23.7 percent of the Korean

newspaper articles mentioned agriculture, whereas only 11.1 percent of the articles in U.S. papers included agriculture. During this FTA negotiation, newspapers portrayed South Korea as more sensitive to agricultural issues, and the United States more sensitive to car and textile industries concerns. Korean newspapers gave attention to industries in this order: 1) agriculture; 2) beef import; 3) textile; 4) auto; and 5) the Kaesong issue. The U.S. newspapers emphasized industries in this order: 1) auto; 2) beef import; 3) agriculture; 4) textile; and 5) labor.

The amount of coverage to industries in these four newspapers reflected the relative importance of each industry in the respective nations. In South Korea, farmers opposed opening the rice market to the United States. The FTA deal may cause the loss of tens of thousands of farming jobs and up to \$2.2 billion in agriculture revenue as cheap American corn, soybeans, and processed foods come in, according to studies by South Korean economists. In other words, this deal will generate export opportunities for U.S. farmers to promote economic growth and create better-paying jobs in the United States, Korean experts claim. Thus, Korean papers emphasized the agricultural aspects of the FTA. South Korean farmers seem convinced that a free trade deal will result in less protection and that cheaper U.S. goods will endanger their livelihoods. To show their opposition to the treaty, farmers staged protest demonstrations in many areas of Korea during the negotiations, and both the Korean and the U.S. newspapers published news and opinion articles about these protests.

Beef imports were another hot issue in the agriculture part of the proposed agreement, because South Korea had banned importing U.S. beef after an outbreak of mad cow disease in late 2003. Before the ban, South Korea had been the world's third-

largest consumer of American beef, importing \$800 million a year. In the KORUS FTA, South Korea agreed to phase out the 40 percent tariff on American beef over 15 years.

On the other side, the process of auto negotiations was discussed frequently in the United States newspapers. According to the United States Trade Representative (USTR), only 5,000 American cars were sold in Korea in 2005, while South Korean automakers sold 800,000 vehicles in the United States. The gap accounted for 80 percent of the \$13 billion United States trade deficit with South Korea in 2005, according to the newspaper articles. The KORUS FTA calls for the United States to eliminate the 2.5 percent tariff on South Korean cars with engines smaller than 3,000 cubic centimeters, phase out the 25 percent duty on trucks over the course of 10 years, and remove tariffs, which average 8.9 percent. In addition, Korea committed to address specific auto non-tariff barriers, including current standards to ensure not impeding the market access of U.S. autos and to create an Autos Working Group to serve as an early warning system to address regulatory issues that may develop in the future.

This FTA includes removing tariffs on textiles, clothing and shoes, as well as recognizing products made at the inter-Korean industrial complex in Kaesong, North Korea. Both sides also agreed to discuss the treatment of goods made at an industrial park in Kaesong in North Korea, a capitalist experiment by South Korea in engaging its neighbor. Because the project has drawn criticism from the United States, Kaesong was among the topics coded in this content analysis.

The U.S. is reluctant to include Kaesong in its negotiations with South Korea because of a number of thorny issues, the newspapers reported. Some labor standards and human rights advocates have argued that the North Korean regime exploits its workers in

Kaesong. Also, North Korea does not meet internationally recognized core labor standards. Rights to organize and bargain collectively are absent entirely in autocratic North Korea. In addition, the North Korean government retains a large share of the \$57.50 per month paid to each North Korean worker. In fact, Schott, Bradford, & Moll (2006) claim that North Korean workers net was less than \$3 per month.

According to the policy forum of Nautilus,⁸ these labor and human rights concerns add to the considerable list of U.S. problems with North Korea, which include North Korean nuclear proliferation, drug trafficking, U.S. currency counterfeiting, and other illicit, illegal, and objectionable behavior that already poses serious political impediments to an extraterritorial extension of the FTA to products from Kaesong. If labor and human rights are not adequately addressed, the Kaesong issue could very well damage the prospects for the ratification process in the U.S. Congress to failure (Kim, 2007, p.11).

Another goal of this thesis was to examine the presentation styles of the two categories of newspapers to see whether they differed according to the use of episodic and thematic frames. As shown by Table 5 and Figure 5, the four newspapers used both episodic and thematic frames in their articles, and some articles fit neither frame. For the U.S. newspapers, 34.7 percent of news stories were coded as using an episodic frame, while 79 percent of news stories had an episodic frame in Korean newspapers. In case of opinion stories, 50 percent of the U.S. column pieces had a thematic frame, while 61.8 percent of a thematic frame was used in Korean newspapers. Generally, news stories had more episodic frames than thematic frames, and opinion columns presented more

⁸ A Proposed Korea–U.S. Free Trade Agreement and Kaesong Industrial Complex, (<http://www.nautilus.org/fora/security/07007Suh.pdf>), (January, 2007).

thematic frames than episodic frames. News stories from both countries focused on informing readers about specific events rather than giving abstract points about the agreement. The opinion stories more often presented in-depth views analyzing this FTA.

Two U.S. newspapers contained 13 articles labeled “brief news”, which were coded under the “neither” category because brief news simply informed about the official schedule of the FTA and reported no in-depth news. The news stories about free trade with the KORUS FTA only mentioned were coded under “neither.” This is the reason the neither category is much greater in U.S. papers’ news stories than the Korean articles.

The greater differences between episodic frames and thematic frames in the news stories and opinion pieces in Korean papers indicated that news stories were primarily fact-based, while opinion stories portrayed the KORUS FTA in a broader view to Korean audiences. In other words, the U.S. newspapers gave more mixed views between episodic and thematic frames in the news stories and opinion stories to the audiences.

Another aspect of this study was to count the number of supportive and non-supportive statements toward KORUS FTA and then code each article in one of these categories according to which category had the greater number of statements. The Korean newspapers contained more opposition articles (52.3 percent) than supportive articles to the KORUS FTA in their combined news and opinion articles. Only 10.7 percent of articles in the American papers contained more statements opposed to the trade agreement than statements in support of it. Even though the U.S. newspapers coverage was around 10 percent anti-FTA, half of the articles concerned rallies of farmers, workers’ unions, and film workers against the FTA. Korean farmers’ protests against the FTA were severe and these incidents were covered more extensively by the press in

South Korea than in the U.S. No public protest among U.S. workers was reported in these articles. Instead U.S. opposition was framed in the political arena between Democrats and Republicans. Table 6 shows which words are included in the news articles coded as in opposition to the treaty. Each word could be repeated in the same article; therefore, the sum of each word used in all the articles exceeds the whole total number of articles.

The opposition to the FTA in the United States news coverage came from the debates of Democrats and Republicans on issues such as environmental protection or workers' rights. However, the anti-FTA in South Korea was from the people such as farmers, labor unions and actors. A noticeable phenomenon in South Korea was the rising anti-American sentiment with anti-FTA actions or comments. News about farmers' rallies was republished in other opinion and news stories reproduced through other opinion and news stories in American newspapers. In other words, one news source covered the farmers' rallies, and this led to reproduction in other news sources in Korea and the U.S. Even though the newspapers covered same issue, the KORUA FTA in Korea and the U.S., one issue can be overlooked and the other can be internationally newsworthy.

Government officials were the most frequently cited sources in newspapers from both countries, 54.2 percent in U.S. papers and 56.8 percent in the two Korean papers (see Table 7 and Figure 6). This finding is not surprising, as previous research has shown that the U.S. news media rely heavily on official government sources (Graber, 2006, p.92-94). No similar research of Korea newspapers were found in databases available through the UT Hodges Library. In the United States, members of Congress comprised more than one-third (37.5 percent) of the sources in the "government official" category.

Again, this is not surprising because the U.S. papers reported the antagonism between Democrats and Republicans in Congress over the Korean-U.S. trade agreement and trade agreements in general. There was not much difference in percentages between the other categories of sources: president, business representative, labor representative, university/institute within the two countries' newspapers.

CHAPTER V CONCLUSIONS

This thesis shows that media frames exist in news coverage of the KORUS FTA. The U.S. newspapers and Korean newspapers framed coverage according to the national concerns and interests within their respective nations.

These research questions guided the research for this thesis:

RQ #1: How much attention did the two Korean newspapers and two U.S. newspapers give to the issue of the KORUS FTA?

RQ #2: What differences were there among the four newspapers in the presentation of news stories and opinion columns dealing with the KORUS FTA?

RQ #3: What kind of framing window did each newspaper present in reporting on the KORUS FTA?

Korean newspapers allocated much more space than the U.S. papers to explain the benefits, meanings, and concerns of this FTA, because Korean audiences were less familiar with free trade agreements than U.S. audiences. In addition, Korean newspapers covered the public rallies against the FTA, while such public actions did not exist in the United States. Newspapers from the two countries also differed in the topics editors chose to emphasize in their coverage. U.S. newspapers highlighted the auto and labor sectors, which are the most controversial aspects of the treaty in the United States. Agriculture, film entertainment, and the Kaesong issues are more salient to the Korean newspapers.

Newspapers' editorials and opinion columns from both countries included the official FTA procedures, importance of this agreement, and ratifications of the U.S.

Congress and the Korean National Assembly generally. The opinion stories in Korean papers emphasized the importance of establishing a trade relationship with the U.S. The opinion pieces in the U.S. newspapers, on the other hand, showed more concern about official schedules and worldwide trade agreements rather than focusing specifically on the KORUS FTA.

The four newspapers used both episodic and thematic frames in their articles, and some articles fit neither frame. Generally, news stories in papers from both countries followed episodic frames, whereas opinion articles used thematic frames. Neither category included brief news and news stories that were not primarily focused on the KORUS FTA. News story articles from both countries' newspapers emphasized on event-oriented issues about this agreement while the opinion stories presented in-depth views analyzing this FTA.

These results correspond to previous framing research, which indicates that the media typically approach topics in ways most meaningful to their audiences. Thus, it is reasonable that these newspapers would allocate amounts of coverage of various aspects of the KORUS FTA in proportion to the relative importance of each issue to their own audiences. Reporters and editors apparently based their judgments concerning relative importance on information from government sources, which far outnumbered other sources in both the Korean and U.S. newspapers. This heavy reliance on government sources, at least for the U.S. press, corresponds to findings in previous scholarly studies.

This research adds to the body of literature about framing and the reliance of government sources. An understanding of framing can help both journalists and consumers of journalistic products. The roles of journalists are to present facts fairly, to

organize information in a logical order, and to draw from a wide variety of sources encompassing varying opinions about controversial subjects. Journalists need to understand and keep in mind the existence of media frames and conscientiously strive to avoid frames that lead to unbalanced or biased news coverage. Media audiences likewise need to become more knowledgeable about journalistic conventions regarding framing so that consumers can consider that alternative ways of presenting particular news stories may exist. Further, in this age of globalization, reporters, editors, and their audiences need to gain a better understanding of the world beyond their individual communities or nations so that they can become better citizens and have more knowledge and potential control over decisions that affect their daily lives.

Like most master's theses, this study has some limitations. First, this is a case study of media coverage of the KORUS FTA. It is important in showing how news framing works for a timely event between the two nations, but further studies would be needed in order to generalize these findings. Second limitation is the use of English-language newspapers published in South Korea instead of using newspapers published in the native language of the country. While the two Korean newspapers share characteristics with the U.S. papers used in this study, analyses of Korean-language newspapers are needed to see whether those papers covered the topic differently.

By using the body of research about framing and a content analysis, this thesis adds to previous studies and provides a foundation for future research. This free trade agreement between the U.S. and Korea combined politics, economics, and international relations. This thesis demonstrated how media framing works in this combined issue environment. Assuming that the KORUS FTA is eventually ratified by the U.S. Congress

and Korea National Assembly, the process of enforcing this FTA might be a good future study. This study can be the basis of future framing studies comparing the economic relationships of two nations.

One significance of this study and an idea for future research is the finding that media framing occurs across cultures. While scholarly research concerning agenda setting and framing in Korean news media may exist, none could be found in the extensive print and online resources of the UT library or its interlibrary partners. This may be the first or among the first such framing study of Korean-produced media. Future cross-culture studies of media framing could enlarge the body of literature and test for differences in this aspect of news presentation among multiple cultures.

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APPENDIX

Table 1. The KORUS FTA Negotiations

Date	Negotiations Schedule
Nov. 2004	Agreement with Preliminary Negotiation
Feb. 2005	The First Preliminary consideration executive board meeting (Seoul)
March 2005	The Second Preliminary consideration executive board meeting (Washington)
April 2005	The Third Preliminary consideration executive board meeting (Washington)
Feb. 2006	Start of negotiations
March 2006	Preliminary Session (Seoul)
June 2, 2006	The First Formal Negotiation (Washington)
July 2006	The Second Formal Negotiation (Seoul)
Sep. 2006	The Third Formal Negotiation (Washington)
Oct. 2006	The Fourth Formal Negotiation (Seoul)
Dec. 2006	The Fifth Formal Negotiation (Washington)
March 2007	End of Formal Negotiation
April 2007- June	90-day the U.S. Congressional review Period
June 30, 2007	Agreement Signed

Source. Office of the United States trade representative and Ministry of Strategy and Finance of Republic of Korea

Table 2. Circulation of the Four Newspapers

	Newspapers	Circulation
U.S. Papers	New York Times	1,037,828
	Washington Post	635,087
Korean Papers	Korea Herald	150,000
	Korea Times	150,000-200,000

Note. The Audit Bureau of Circulations (2007, September) reported the U.S. newspapers. The circulation of the Korea Times is around 150,000 to 200,000(University of Pennsylvania - African Studies Center) and the Korea Herald circulates about 150,000(Project Syndicate). These figures are estimates because these two Korean newspapers did not report their circulations to the Korea Audit Bureau of Circulations.

Table 3. The Number of Articles from Four Newspapers

	Korean Papers		U.S. Papers		
	The Korea Herald	The Korea Times	The Washington Post	The New York Times	Total
News	119	138	19	17	293
Briefing	0	0	8	5	13
Editorial	19	2	7	1	29
Column	11	2	6	0	19
Total	149	142	40	23	354

Table 4. Bilateral Trade Agreement of the U.S. and South Korea

	In Force	Pending Congressional Approval	Pending Incompletion	Others
United States	Israel NAFTA Jordan Chile Singapore Australia Morocco Bahrain	Columbia Panama South Korea	Peru Oman	Malaysia Thailand SACU UAE
Republic of Korea (South Korea)	Chile Singapore EFTA ASEAN (merchandise)	U.S.	ASEAN (service and investment) Japan	Canada Mexico India MERCOSUR

Source. Office of the United States trade representative and Ministry of Strategy and Finance of Republic of Korea

Table 5. Story Presentations by Frames

	U.S. Papers (N=63)				Korean Papers(N=291)			
	News(N=49)		Opinion Columns(N=14)		News(N=257)		Opinion Columns(N=34)	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Episodic	17	34.7	4	28.6	203	79	8	23.5
Thematic	4	8.1	7	50	37	14	21	61.8
Neither	28	57.2	3	21.4	17	7	5	14.7

Pearson Chi Square for U.S. papers' news v. Korean papers' news, 83.9, $p < .001$

Pearson Chi Square for U.S. papers' opinion columns v. Korean papers; opinion columns, 0.6, $p > .001$

Table 6. Key Words from Opposition News Coverage of the KORUS FTA

	Korea Herald (N=149)	Korea Times (N=142)	Washington Post (N=40)	New York Times (N=23)
Anti-FTA	11.4%	15.5%	-	-
Oppose	5.4	12.0	15.6%	13.0%
Anti-America	14.1	13.4	13.3	4.3
Protest	13.4	16.2	2.2	13.0
Farmers' rallies	7.4	9.2	-	8.7
Total "CONS"	52.3		10.7	

Table 7. Sources by the U.S. and Korean Newspapers

	U.S. Newspapers (N=63)			Korean Newspapers(N=291)		
	N of Sources	% of Sources	N of Article (%)	N of Sources	% of Sources	N of Article (%)
Government Official	77	54.2	32(50.8)	378	56.8	125(42.9)
President	8	5.6	4(6.3)	28	4.2	18(6.2)
Business Representative	23	16.2	8(12.7)	54	8.1	49(16.8)
Labor Representative	6	4.2	4(6.3)	21	3.1	11(3.8)
University/Institute	19	13.3	10(15.9)	123	18.5	43(14.8)
Others	9	6.5	5(8.0)	61	9.3	45(15.5)
	142	100	63(100)	665	100	291(100)

Pearson Chi Square for U.S. papers' number of sources v. Korean papers' number of sources, 11.9, $p > .001$

Pearson Chi Square for U.S. papers' number of articles v. Korean papers' number of articles, 4.2, $p > .001$

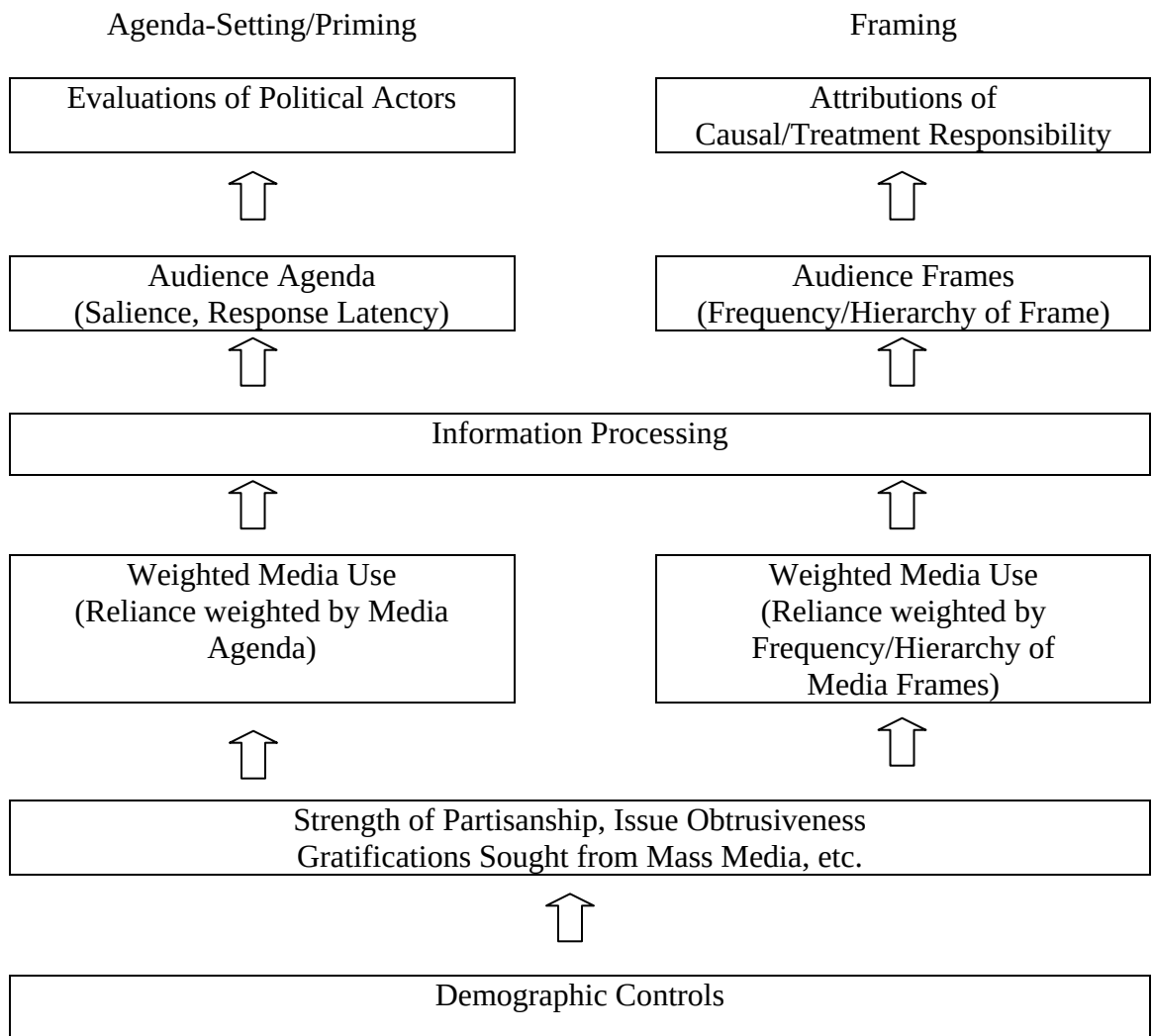


Figure 1. Analytic Model of Agenda-Setting, Priming, and Framing (Scheufele 2000, p.311)

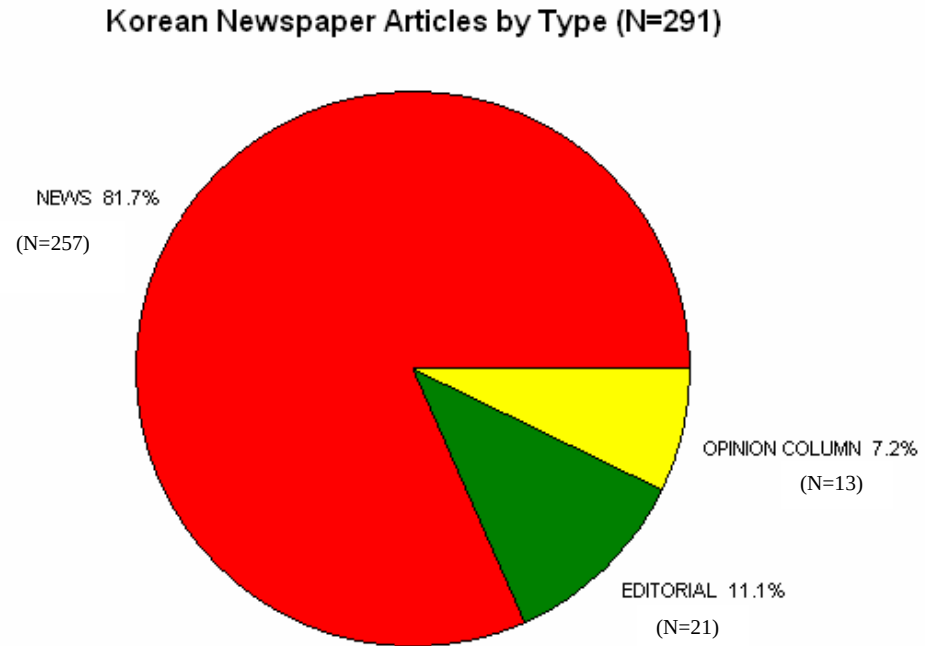


Figure 2. Korean Newspaper Articles by Type (N=291)

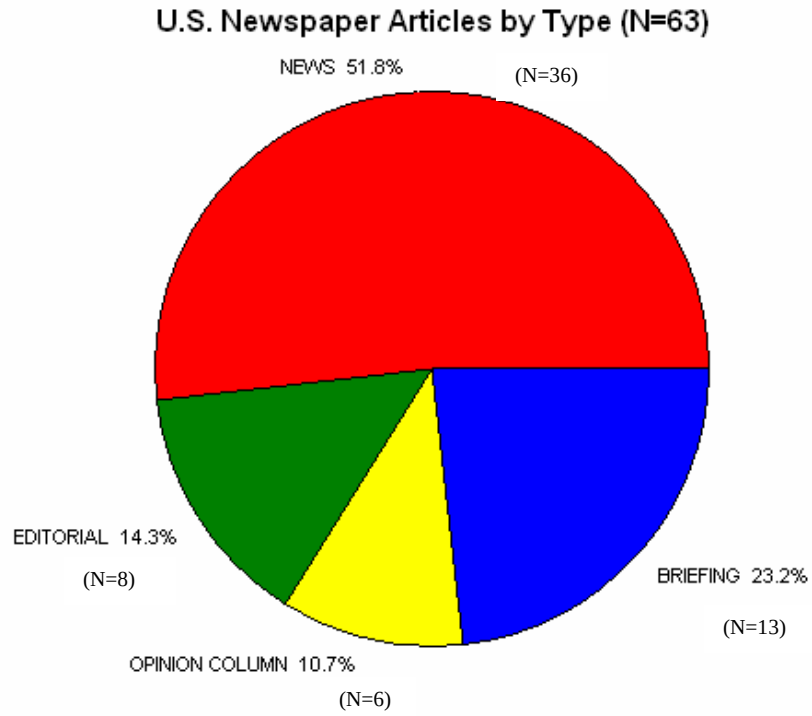


Figure 3. U.S. Newspaper Articles by Type (N=63)

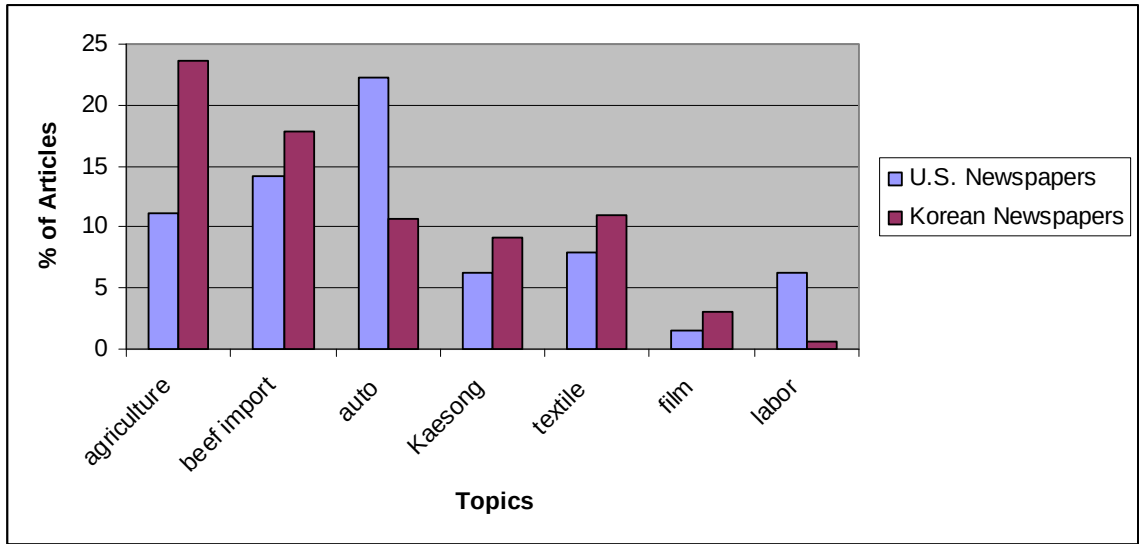


Figure 4. Topic Frequencies by the U.S. and Korean Newspapers

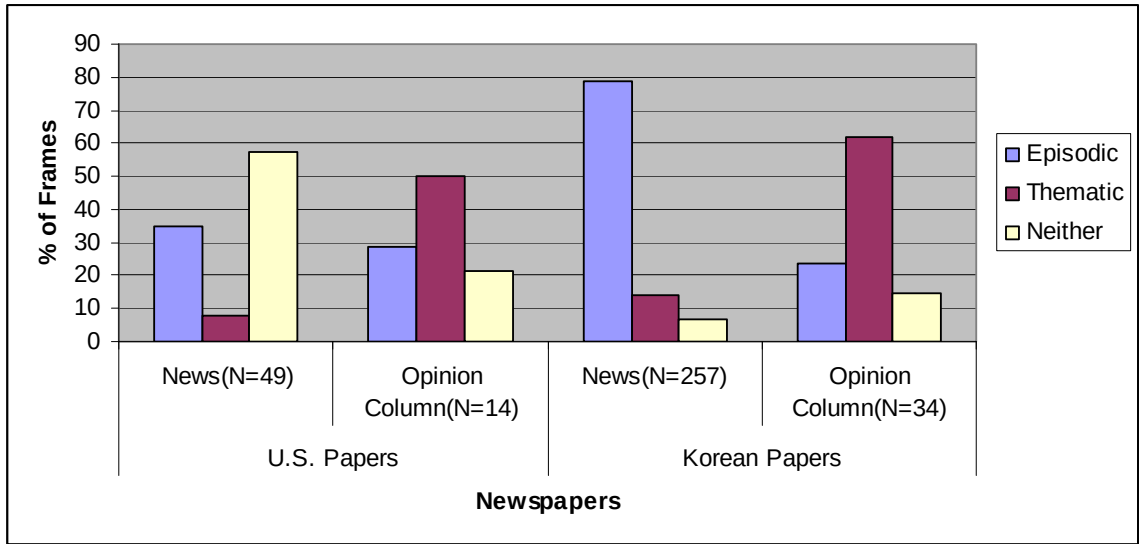


Figure 5. Story Presentations by Frames

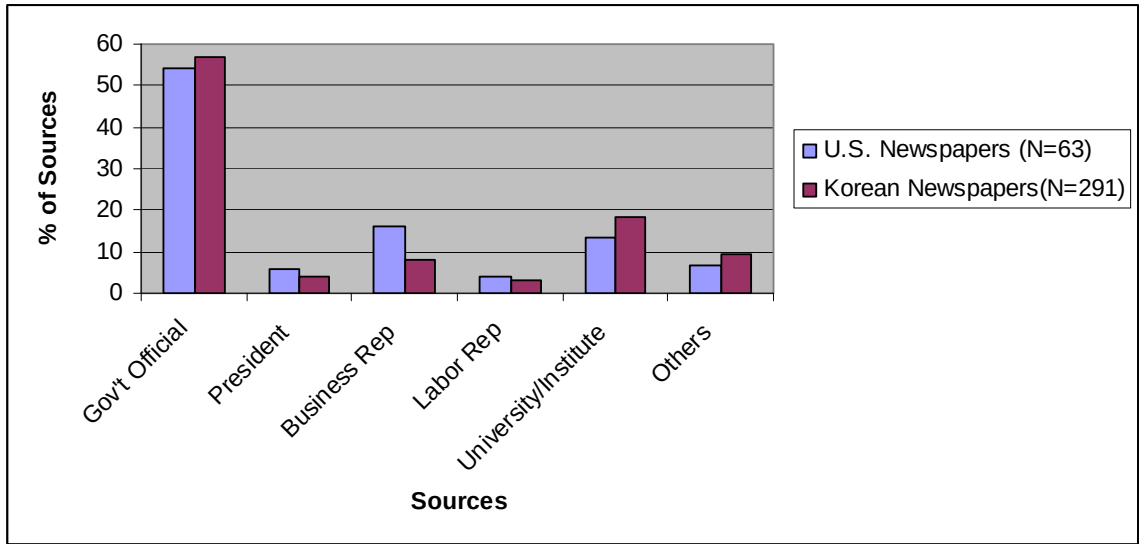


Figure 6. Percent of Sources by the U.S. and Korean Newspapers

VITA

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