

A Study on the Attitudes of Chinese and Foreign Media toward DeepSeek

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Abstract

In recent years, large - scale language models (LLMs), such as ChatGPT, Claude, and DeepSeek, have rapidly developed, sparking global discussions on technology and ethics. DeepSeek, as an open - source large - scale model developed by the Chinese team DeepSeek, has shown outstanding technical performance and application potential, attracting widespread attention from domestic and foreign media. However, there are significant differences in the reporting framework of DeepSeek among media from different cultural backgrounds, political stances, and technological ecosystems. The article adopts a sample selection method, and the media scope includes the following: Chinese media: Science and Technology Daily; Asian media: The Straits Times (Singapore); and European and American media: The New York Times. Time range: June 2023 to March 2025. Focusing on China's local AI representative 'DeepSeek', filling the gap in current LLM media research on 'Chinese model' cases. By combining framing theory with critical discourse analysis (CDA), media coverage in the Chinese and American regions can be compared. Mixed content analysis (quantitative) and discourse analysis (qualitative) reveal explicit and implicit attitude structures.

Keywords

DeepSeek, media attitude, framework analysis, cross-cultural communication, artificial intelligence governance, critical discourse analysis

1. Introduction

Today, the world has entered the era of intelligence driven by large language models (LLMs). After OpenAI's ChatGPT sparked a global wave, the open - source big model DeepSeek series developed by the Chinese team DeepSeek emerged as a rising star. Its outstanding performance in multiple international benchmark tests highlights the evolution of the global artificial intelligence landscape from "unipolar leadership" to "diversified competition". This technological breakthrough is not only a commercial or scientific event but also a highly anticipated media event, triggering intensive coverage and interpretation by the global media. However, in an international environment where technology is increasingly politicized, the narrative surrounding cutting - edge technology is no longer limited to purely performance discussions. As constructors of social reality and shapers of public cognition, the media's reporting framework profoundly influences the social acceptance of technology, industrial cooperation paths, and even policy - making between countries. Owing to different political and economic backgrounds, cultural values, and national security considerations, Chinese and foreign media inevitably have significant differences in the presentation of the same technological entity - DeepSeek. This provides us with a highly contemporary and vivid case for

observing and understanding the “political construction of technological discourse”. The driving force of DeepSeek for digital civilization unfolds along the coupled dimensions of theoretical logic, historical logic, realistic logic, and governance logic. It supports the development of digital civilization from the dimensions of technological empowerment, ecological construction, value guidance, and governance innovation, thereby achieving the reconstruction of digital civilization infrastructure, the reorganization of digital civilization resources, the innovative leadership of digital civilization concepts, and the shaping of a new digital civilization order (Zhong and Zhao, 2025). This study applies framing theory to the cross - border communication research of Chinese domestic AI technology brands. This is not only a test of the applicability of existing theories in the context of new technologies but also helps to enrich and develop the “technology media politics” ternary interaction model. By analyzing how Chinese and foreign media “frame” DeepSeek, this study aims to reveal the core role of media discourse in the global competition for technological discourse power, providing new empirical support for cross - cultural communication and international political communication research. In addition, the research results provide strong policy and practical guidance. On the one hand, it can provide accurate public opinion insights and countermeasures for Chinese technology companies (such as DeepSeek) to develop effective international communication strategies, resolve biases, and shape a responsible global technology citizen image. On the other hand, it helps decision - makers understand the operational logic of the complex international public opinion field, provides theoretical references for promoting the construction of a more fair and inclusive global AI governance system, breaks down the barriers of technological nationalism, and promotes true global technological cooperation.

2. Literature review

2.1 Framework Theory

Framing theory, proposed by sociologists Erving Goffman in 1974 and systematically developed by scholars such as Robert Entman, is one of the core theories in the field of communication studies. The core viewpoint of this theory is that media does not objectively convey reality but rather constructs an explanatory “cognitive framework” through specific ways of selecting, emphasizing, and recombining information to guide the audience to understand the position and significance of complex events.

In technical reports, the operation of the framework is particularly prominent. Taking the coverage of DeepSeek by domestic and foreign media as an example, the Chinese media generally adopt the framework of “national technological rise”, repeatedly emphasizing elements such as “international testing ranking first” and “independent intellectual property rights”, shaping DeepSeek as a “symbol of China’s breakthrough in Western technology blockade” while weakening its potential data compliance disputes.

European and American media tend to lean toward the framework of “geopolitical security risks”, focusing on issues such as “open source models may be abused by authoritarian regimes” and “training data sources are opaque”, reconstructing technical issues as political issues, and implying an ideological stance of “China’s technology threat theory”.

China Science and Technology Daily published an article using framework theory titled “DeepSeeker R1 tops the global list, China’s big model achieves’ overtaking on the bend”. Analysts noted that the success of DeepSeeker R1 is not accidental but is backed by the superiority of China’s “new national system” - close collaboration between industry, academia, and research; hard work by engineering teams; and firm implementation of the “independent and controllable” strategy for core technologies. Given that the deep - seek model has powerful performance and is open source, the entire article expresses national pride and technological inclusiveness. The New York Times published an article using framework theory titled “China’s Next Generation AI Champion: Technological Breakthrough or Security Threat? The article raises a series of unsettling questions about DeepSeek’s opaque training data sources, potential connections with Chinese authorities, and thorough open source strategy, despite its excellent performance in performance benchmark testing. These questions include whether the technology can be easily obtained by actors in countries such as Iran and North Korea to develop more sophisticated cyber attack tools or strengthen their monitoring machines. The full text uses framework theory to address concerns regarding development security threats and geopolitical risks. This strongly proves the core viewpoint of framework theory: the media is not just reporting news but also actively “constructing” reality, guiding the public to understand and evaluate events from a

specific perspective. Research reveals that authors tend to employ evaluative resources more objectively to assess the strengths and weaknesses of artificial intelligence and, less frequently, use emotional resources. This reflects the neutral and fact - oriented nature of the text. The usage of positive and negative expressions shows regularity, which not only indicates a rational evaluation of artificial intelligence but also demonstrates vigilance toward its potential risks(Chen and Wang, 2025). For DeepSeek, the fragmentation of its external media image is a microcosm of the broader discourse power struggle between China and the United States in the field of technology.

Therefore, framework theory reveals the essence of media content production: it is not only a process of information dissemination but also a domain of governance for meaning competition. The differences in reporting on emerging technological entities such as DeepSeek essentially reflect the collision of technological nationalism and liberal values at the cognitive framework level in different cultural contexts. To break this kind of opposition, it is necessary to identify the power mechanism behind the framework and promote the establishment of a cross - cultural “depoliticized technology evaluation framework”, which is the methodological foundation and value orientation of this study. On the basis of the above analysis, this research has strategic implications in terms of enterprise strategic adjustment, talent cultivation, open cooperation, and risk management(Xiong and Shan, 2025).

3. Research methods

This article adopts content analysis and discourse analysis methods. The content analysis method is a systematic and objective quantitative research approach aimed at revealing the explicit characteristics and patterns of disseminated content by encoding and classifying the text content (Krippendorff, 2018). The purpose of this method in this study is to reveal the macro differences in theme distribution and emotional orientation among 300 samples (as shown in Table 1, 61.5% of English media mentioned “national competition”, whereas only 21.2% of Chinese media mentioned it), providing data support for hypothesis testing.

Second, the discourse analysis method is used. Discourse analysis originated from the interdisciplinary field of linguistics and sociology, focusing on deconstructing the implicit meaning production mechanism and power relations behind texts (Fairclough, 2003). The value of this study lies in explaining the underlying motivations behind the quantitative results, such as when content analysis reveals that 30.8% of European and American media hold a negative attitude, discourse analysis reveals that they construct cognitive biases through strategies such as “historical analogy” (such as linking TikTok controversies) and “risk metaphor” (equating open source with security vulnerabilities).

3.1 Sample collection

This study is sourced from the LexisNexis database, and the article is excerpted from the official media website. The article time range from June 2023 to May 2023 was selected. The screening criterion was nontext articles whose words were deep in the main text or title and whose word count was greater than 300 words.

4. Inspiration for DeepSeek

The vastly different framework constructions of DeepSeek by domestic and foreign media reveal the severe challenges it faces in international communication: in the global context of the rise of technological nationalism, Chinese cutting - edge technology companies are easily “othered” as geopolitical tools, and their technological value is obscured by security narratives. To solve this dilemma, DeepSeek needs to go beyond simple technical logic and develop a systematic and forward - looking cross - cultural communication and governance strategy.

The short - term tone is a proactive response. A technology transparency trust system should be built within one year to address the most concentrated “security risks” and “data privacy” allegations from foreign media. Passive defense is ineffective, and proactive “trust positioning” is needed. Specifically, DeepSeek should immediately release a multilingual version of the Model Safety & Transparency Report on its core global developer community platforms, such as the GitHub project homepage and official blog. This report must abandon its propaganda tone and adopt the rigorous paradigm commonly used in the international technology community, detailing the compliance of training data sources, the specific methods of red - team testing,

identified risk points, and mitigation measures (such as bias filtering and the principles of rejection mechanisms). Moreover, we actively respond to the evaluation requests of global AI security research institutions and proactively submit models for third - party audits. This move aims to use objective and verifiable facts to directly dismantle the discourse framework of “black box” and “uncontrollable” and transform the openness of open source technology into a core asset for credibility building.

In the medium term, for strategic cooperation, embedding a globally neutral governance network within 1 - 3 years is necessary to fundamentally weaken the effectiveness of the “China threat” framework. It is necessary to break out of the narrative battlefield of the binary opposition between China and the United States and actively integrate and shape the global AI governance ecosystem. DeepSeek should strategically establish joint research projects with top academic institutions, think tanks, and standard organizations in neutral countries such as Singapore, the United Arab Emirates, and Switzerland to jointly release third - party white papers on AI safety, ethical alignment, and fairness assessment. For example, we can collaborate with the Lee Kuan Yew School of Public Policy in Singapore to conduct a study on the bias of large models in multilingual environments in Southeast Asia, and its conclusions are more convincing than those of our own publications. Through this move, DeepSeek is able to reposition itself as a global and responsible technology collaborator rather than a champion of a single country. Its technological value can be transmitted through neutral and authoritative platforms, thus competing for “defining power” and discourse power in the field of AI ethics and governance.

Long - term value output. The ultimate competition for leading a universal technological vision within 3 - 5 years is the competition of values and vision. DeepSeek’s long - term goal should be to go beyond the narrow positioning of “national champions” and “security tools” and lead the construction of a “people - oriented, inclusive and open” AI development paradigm. This requires DeepSeek to collaborate with like - minded developers, scholars, and civil society organizations around the world to promote the development of the Global Charter for Open Source AI Development, which explicitly promises that technology will be used to promote human well - being, narrow the digital divide, and address global challenges such as climate change. In practice, we can focus on supporting the development of AI applications in countries in the global South, providing computing power support, technical training, and localized adaptation so that their open source ecosystem can truly benefit more regions. By deeply linking its own technology with universal values such as “global public welfare” and “technology for good”, DeepSeek is able to build the strongest “moat”, moral leadership, fundamentally deconstructing the geopolitical narrative of confrontation and establishing itself as an indispensable cornerstone of future intelligent civilization.

5. Conclusion

This study systematically analyzes the content and discourse of media reports from both domestic and foreign sources, revealing a core finding: media coverage surrounding DeepSeek is not an objective reflection of its technical facts but rather a product of profound discourse politics. Chinese and foreign media, which rely on their respective political, economic, and cultural backgrounds, have constructed completely different and even fundamentally opposing cognitive frameworks. Chinese media portrays DeepSeek as a symbol of independent innovation and national pride through narratives of “national glory” and “technological rise”. However, European and American media have portrayed it as a strategic challenge that requires vigilance and prevention on the basis of the frameworks of “security threats” and “geopolitical competition”. This opposition is not accidental; it is essentially a micro representation of the structural contradiction between China and the United States in the digital age, where they compete for technological discourse and governance dominance, in media texts.

The deeper theoretical contribution of this study lies in its validation and enrichment of the tripartite interaction model of “technology media politics” through the case study of DeepSeek. Research has shown that the social significance of advanced technology is not solely determined by its physical properties but is socially constructed through complex media representation processes. The media operates through a selective framework and becomes a key actor in politicizing and securitizing technological issues. Its reporting is limited by macrogeopolitical structures, which reinforce and reproduce this structural opposition.

However, the purpose of this study is not only to reveal the opposition but also to provide direction for solving this dilemma. Research indicates that the international communication dilemma faced by DeepSeek

and even the broader Chinese technology community is rooted in the mismatch between the narrative system and the trust structure of the global audience. Therefore, the path to breaking through cannot rely solely on one-way technological propaganda but must undergo a profound strategic transformation - that is, shifting from an endogenous narrative that emphasizes “national champions” to a universal narrative that advocates “global empowerment” and “technology for good”. This means that it is necessary to actively integrate and shape the global technology governance network, gradually deconstructing deeply ingrained bias frameworks through extreme transparency construction, deep collaboration with neutral third parties, and commitment to common values for all humanity.

In the end, DeepSeek’s case foreshadows a new form of global technological competition in the future: the core of competition will be not only a competition of algorithms, computing power, and data but also a competition of narrative ability, moral appeal, and institutional innovation. Whoever a technology story that can better unite the majority of the world and respond to the common concerns of humanity can truly win the future while winning the market. This study provides a critical mirror and a constructive agenda for this, calling for all parties to go beyond the Cold War mentality of zero-sum games and work together to build a more inclusive, cooperative, and inclusive global technology ecosystem.

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Conflicts of Interest

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