

APPROVED

Rector of the Educational Institution
"Mozyr State Pedagogical University
named after I.P. Shamyakin"

V.N. Naunyka

"28" April 2026

REVIEW OF THE OPPOSING ORGANIZATION

on Niu Wenjuan's dissertation

"The Commentary as a Media Discourse Genre:
the Cognitive-Pragmatic Aspect (in Chinese and English)"

for the degree of Candidate of Philological Sciences

in the specialty 10.02.20 – Comparative-Historical, Typological, and Contrastive
Linguistics

The correspondence of the dissertation content to the stated specialty and the field of science.

Niu Wenjuan's dissertation "The Commentary as a Media Discourse Genre: the Cognitive-Pragmatic Aspect (in Chinese and English)" according to the subject and the of object the research, methodology, content and results obtained corresponds to specialty 10.02.20 – comparative-historical, typological and contrastive linguistics.

The applicant's scientific contribution to solving a scientific problem with the assessment of its significance.

Niu Wenjuan's research contribution to the stated research problem – identifying the structural, cognitive-semantic and linguopragmatic characteristics of the commentary genre in Chinese and English media discourse has a complete and independent character, and has significant meaning for the development of comparative linguistics, cognitive linguistics and media linguistics.

The relevance of this work is determined, on the one hand, by the dynamic development of the media discourse and the transformation of its genre system, which requires a new understanding of accepted approaches. On the other hand, despite the prevalence of the commentary in contemporary Chinese and British media, its linguistic nature, particularly its cognitive-pragmatic organization in languages with different structures, remains understudied. This dissertation fills this gap by offering a comprehensive comparative analysis of the genre's structural, conceptual, and communicative-strategic characteristics. The applicant has for the first time introduced and implemented an integrative approach to the analysis of the

commentary genre, combining the structural, conceptual and tactical-strategic levels, which made it possible to develop the cognitive-communicative model of this genre based on two languages with different structures.

Firstly, the candidate's contribution to refining and linguistically defining the commentary genre itself is significant. Based on the critical analysis of existing definitions in the Chinese and European traditions (which often confused the genre with the style, the publication form, or other genres such as analytical articles), Niu Wenjuan proposed her own working definition of the commentary as a stable written textual form with a clear communicative purpose – explaining, assessing, establishing causes, and predicting future developments of an event, situation, problem, or phenomenon. This definition, which takes into account the unity of function, structure, and linguistic means, became the theoretical basis for all further analysis.

Secondly, the key contribution is the identification and verification of the universal semantic structure of the commentary in both languages. The candidate empirically proved that the prototypical commentary model has the form PNAC (Problem – News – Author's Analysis – Conclusion), in which each component has specific verbal markers. It was found that in Chinese, expressive-evaluative adjectives and adverbs are more often used to express authorial analysis, while in English, modal verbs, comparative constructions and causal clauses are used. This conclusion is highly significant because it provides the first formalized, comparable structure of the genre, allowing not only to identify the commentary among other media genres but also to create algorithms for its cognitive-communicative modeling.

Thirdly, the key theoretical contribution is the construction of the two-layer conceptual organization of the commentary. Based on the analysis of dictionary definitions, contexts, and, what is particularly valuable, the results of the original psycholinguistic free association experiment (involving 160 native Chinese and English speakers), the candidate identified the key concepts of "news" and "opinion". For the first time, their cognitive content is described in detail, allowing for an objective comparison of national linguistic identities and explaining why the same genre tasks are solved by different linguistic means.

Fourthly, a significant candidate's achievement is the identification of the hierarchy of communicative strategies and tactics in the commentary genre. It has been proved that two dominant strategies – information and persuasion – are implemented through a set of ten tactics. Niu Wenjuan not only compiled a taxonomy but also carried out a quantitative analysis of their frequency of use and identified cross-linguistic differences in linguistic representation of tactics under consideration.

Fifthly, the main achievement of the candidate's scientific contribution is the development of the original cognitive-communicative model of the commentary in Chinese and English. This model graphically and substantively unites two levels: the cognitive (a two-layered conceptual sphere with the central concept of "news", the peripheral concepts of "accident", "incident", "event", "problem" and the related concept of "opinion") and the communicative (a tactical-strategic complex implementing strategies of informing and persuasion). It's important that the candidate demonstrated the functional determinacy of the tactics distribution according to the model's levels: for example, the tactics of referring to an event and comparison are primarily implemented in the "news" layer, while the tactics of argumentation, evaluation, and analysis are implemented in the "opinion" layer.

The structure of the dissertation logically reflects the main directions of the research. In the introduction and general description of the work the choice of the research topic is substantiated, its subject and object are formulated, the goals and objectives of the study are defined, and the provisions submitted for defense are outlined. In the first chapter the theoretical foundations of the study of the commentary in the field of the mass media discourse are presented and the main methods to solve research problems are applied. Works that specified the main directions of scientific research in the fields of discourse analysis, media linguistics, cognitive linguistics and pragmalinguistics are analyzed. The algorithm for cognitive-communicative modeling of the commentary is developed. In the second chapter the cognitive-semantic space and the structure of the commentary in Chinese and English are examined and compared. In the third chapter the essence of the communicative-pragmatic organization of the Chinese and English commentary are revealed and its cognitive-communicative modeling is carried out. In the conclusion the theoretical and practical results of the dissertation research are summarized, the main conclusions are presented, and recommendations for the practical application of its results are provided. The appendices contain information on the methods of verbalizing components in the semantic structure of the commentary in Chinese and English (A); linguistic means of actualizing communicative tactics in the commentary in Chinese and English (B); information on the implementation of the research results (C).

The main provisions and results of the dissertation are reflected in 11 publications: 3 articles in peer-reviewed journals recommended by the Higher Attestation Commission of the Republic of Belarus (1,97 author's sheet), 4 articles in collections of scientific articles (1,65 author's sheet), 4 publications as materials of scientific conferences (1,61 author's sheet). The total volume of published works is 5,23 author's sheets. One publication was co-authored with the scientific advisor, candidate of philological sciences, associate professor A. V. Sazhyna, one

publication – with the scientific advisor, candidate of philological sciences, associate professor A. V. Sazhyna and professor of Novi Sad University B. Radic-Bojanic.

Specific scientific results (indicating their novelty and practical significance) for which the applicant may be awarded with the academic degree.

In the dissertation “The Commentary as a Media Discourse Genre: the Cognitive-Pragmatic Aspect (in Chinese and English)” Niu Wenjuan is the first to introduce and substantiate a comprehensive cognitive-pragmatic description of the commentary genre as an independent type of the media discourse using data from two languages with different structures (Chinese and English).

For the first time, the universal semantic model of the commentary has been established and experimentally verified, including four essential components: problem (P), news (N), author’s analysis (Ac) and conclusion (C). Specific verbal markers in Chinese and English were identified for each component.

The author conducted a systemic cognitive modeling of the conceptual sphere of the commentary genre, revealing the key concepts of “news” and “opinion” as well as the peripheral concepts of “incident”, “event” and “problem”.

For the first time, the tactical-strategic matrix of the commentary genre has been compiled, demonstrating that the two dominant strategies (information and persuasion) are realized through a common set of tactics, but with different frequencies and using different linguistic means in Chinese and English.

The new idea is the two-level cognitive-communicative model of the commentary genre, in which the conceptual level (“news” → “opinion”) is functionally correlated with the communicative level (strategy implementation tactics).

In general, the obtained results represent an independent, complete research that contributes to the development of contrastive linguistics, cognitive linguistics and media linguistics.

The successful solution of the dissertation’s objectives is facilitated by the use of an effective research methodology based on cognitive-semantic, componential, contrastive, discourse analysis, psycholinguistic experimentation, statistical processing of linguistic material and modeling according to the specificity of the subject and the object of study. The reliability of the conclusions and recommendations formulated in the dissertation is supported by a broad theoretical and methodological framework, formed through a thorough analytical review of the scientific literature on the stated problem. All stages of the research are supported by quantitative processing of linguistic material, which is reflected in six figures and two tables presented directly in the dissertation text and two tables

in the appendices, making the dissertation's provisions and conclusions more illustrative, reliable and verifiable.

The theoretical significance of Niu Wenjuan's dissertation lies in its considerable contribution to the fields of cognitive linguistics, media linguistics, speech genre theory, linguopragmatics and contrastive linguistics. The author's cognitive-communicative model of the commentary represents an integrative theoretical generalization that can serve as a foundation for further research on other media genres in languages with diverse structures. The results deepen our understanding of how the author's cognitive strategies are realized through linguistic means and how cultural factors affect the organization of persuasive discourse in contemporary media in China and the UK.

The practical and social significance of this study lies in the possibility to use the definition of the commentary and the structural model (PNAcC) for genre identification in real-world media practice, as well as in teaching media text analysis and their creation. The data obtained can be directly applied to the development of methods for contrastive analysis of the media discourse and in translation practice, as they allow predicting and explaining cross-linguistic differences in the expression of the same genre scheme. A number of means for the linguacultural analysis of media texts have been developed: the identified differences in cognitive features help explaining the nationally specific methods of presenting information and argumentation in the Chinese and British press. The tactical and strategic matrix worked out by the author can be used as a basis for teaching effective verbal influence in the media. The practical significance of the constructed cognitive-communicative model of the genre lies in its potential as a prognostic tool for creating texts within a given genre.

The main conclusions can be applied in further scientific research in the fields of rhetoric, intercultural communication theory, the typology of native and foreign languages, in the educational process of teaching Russian and Chinese as native and foreign languages, and in translation practice.

The economic significance of this dissertation correlates with the possibility to use the obtained results in creating courses and writing textbooks on discourse analysis, media linguistics, cognitive linguistics, linguopragmatics and genre studies; in teaching cognitive-pragmatic analysis of the media discourse in university courses on philology, journalism and communication theory; in writing academic monographs and theses. The principles for analyzing the cognitive-communicative space of commentary texts in two languages can be used to develop algorithms for automatically recognizing communicative tactics in media texts in languages with different structures.

The correspondence of the scientific qualifications of the applicant with the academic degree for which he/she is applying.

The dissertation's content demonstrates the competence and academic maturity of the researcher, who successfully solved a complex and pressing scientific problem – identifying the structural, cognitive-semantic and linguopragmatic characteristics of the commentary genre and establishing similarities and differences in their linguistic representation in Chinese and English.

The dissertation and the abstract are fully compliant with the requirements set in paragraphs 24–26 of the Regulations on the Awarding of Academic Degrees and Conferring Academic Titles in the Republic of Belarus.

All of the above allows us to state that Niu Wenjuan's academic qualification corresponds to the degree of Candidate of Philological Sciences in specialty 10.02.20 – Comparative-Historical, Typological and Contrastive Linguistics.

Disadvantages of the dissertation.

Niu Wenjuan's dissertation is distinguished by its consistency, depth, substantive integrity and structural unity. Such key components of the study, as the theoretical framework, the methodology used, the results obtained, the conclusions formulated, and the manner in which they are presented – have no objections. However, it seems possible to formulate some remarks and questions, the discussion of which could help clarify and define certain of the author's research points.

The following remarks, which are more of a discussion nature and do not detract from the overall high rating of the work, are the following:

1. The author adopts a genre-discursive approach, but fails to pay proper attention to the controversial nature of the concept of “genre” in modern linguistics, especially in the context of the hybridization of media genres and the appearance of new internet formats. The commentary has a constant PNAC structure but the genre boundaries are not defined: how can one distinguish the commentary from the analytical article, the review column, or the blog? The author lists the differences but does not provide operational criteria for distinguishing between complex borderline cases.

2. The dissertation primarily analyzes the commentary on socially significant events. What were the criteria for selecting the material?

3. While describing the cognitive characteristics of concepts, the author relies on quantitative data. What are the reasons for the difference in the structure of the concepts “news” and “opinion” in Chinese and English?

4. The research describes a free association experiment with 80 native Chinese speakers and 80 native English speakers. The selection criteria for respondents other than age (18+) and media consumption are not specified. It is unclear whether education level, professional affiliation, or regularity of reading the commentary (as opposed to the news in general) were taken into account. There is also no information on how the stimuli were presented (“the commentary in the press”, etc.) and whether associations related to other genres were excluded.

5. The cognitive-communicative model (Figure 3.1) declares that tactics for strategy realization are distributed according to layers of the cognitive structure: some tactics are predominantly active in the “news” layer, while others are predominantly useful in the “opinion” layer. However, this distribution is not empirically supported in the dissertation text. For example, no quantitative data is given on how often the tactic of reference to the source of the event occurs in the “news” section of the text compared to the “opinion” section.

These remarks do not affect the main theoretical and practical results of the dissertation and do not underestimate its scientific value.

The final part.

Niu Wenjuan’s dissertation research corresponds to specialty 10.02.20 – Comparative-Historical, Typological and Contrastive Linguistics. This research contains new scientifically substantiated theoretical and experimental results, the totality of which is significant for the development of specific scientific fields (discourse linguistics, cognitive linguistics, linguistic pragmatics).

Therefore, in accordance with paragraphs 19 and 20 of the Regulation on the Awarding of Academic Degrees and Conferring Academic Titles in the Republic of Belarus, the academic degree of Candidate of Philological Sciences in specialty 10.02.20 – Comparative-Historical, Typological and Contrastive Linguistics may be awarded to Niu Wenjuan for the following fundamentally new scientific results:

- identifying the prototypical semantic structure of the commentary as a media discourse genre and verbal markers of its components in Chinese and English;

- determining the specificity of the conceptual organization of the commentary in the Chinese and British media discourse, represented by the key concepts of “news” and “opinion”, whose cognitive features are formalized into the “core – close periphery – far periphery” system;

- defining the features of the linguopragmatic organization of the Chinese-language and English-language commentary, represented by general strategies of information and persuasion, as well as a system of tactics and linguistic means that actualize them;

– developing the algorithm for cognitive-communicative modeling of the commentary in the Chinese and British media discourse, including the conceptual component (an interconnected set of core and peripheral concepts) and the tactical-strategic component determined by linguocultural peculiarities.

The report was discussed and approved at the meeting of the Problem Council for philological sciences of the educational institution “Mozyr State Pedagogical University named after I.P.Shamyakin”, held on April 28, 2026 (Minutes No. 2 of April 28, 2026).

The report of candidate Niu Wenjuan was heard at the meeting of the Problem Council for philological sciences of the educational institution “Mozyr State Pedagogical University named after I.P.Shamyakin”. The candidate answered all questions.

The meeting was attended by 11 people, including 1 doctor of philological sciences and 10 candidates of philological sciences.

Voting results: 11 (eleven) – for, none against, none abstaining.

Chairperson:

Doctor of Philology, Professor,
Professor, Department of Belarusian and Russian Philology,
Mozyr State Pedagogical University
named after I.P.Shamyakin



S.B. Kurash

Expert:

Candidate of Philological Sciences, Docent,
Head of the Department,
Department of Foreign Languages and Methods of Teaching
Mozyr State Pedagogical University
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A.V. Kavaliova

Secretary:

Candidate of Philological Sciences,
Head of the of Postgraduate Studies Department
Mozyr State Pedagogical University
named after I.P.Shamyakin



A.V. Burkova

I certify the signatures of S.B. Kurash, E.V. Kovaleva, A.V. Burkova
Head of the Personnel Department
Mozyr State Pedagogical University
named after I.P.Shamyakin

I.M.Kulikova

28/04 2026