

This study employs an automated NLP pipeline to analyze sentiment in American news media coverage of the Chinese language between May 2020 and May 2025, a period characterized by heightened geopolitical and public health tensions. News articles were retrieved from the GNews database, which aggregates content from over 60,000 global sources. Keyword-based queries (e.g., “Chinese language”, “teaching Chinese”) yielded 91 English-language articles, which were manually filtered to remove false positives. The resulting corpus was processed using Microsoft Azure Sentiment Analysis, a pretrained transformer-based model that assigns probabilistic scores for positive, neutral, and negative sentiment at the document level.

Quantitative results indicate a strongly skewed sentiment distribution: 71% of articles exhibit negative sentiment, 21% positive sentiment, and 8% neutral sentiment. Negative sentiment is most frequently associated with discourse linking the Chinese language to ideological influence or national security concerns, while positive sentiment appears in contexts of cross-cultural exchange and educational collaboration. Temporal aggregation of sentiment scores reveals dynamic shifts across the five-year period. Negative sentiment peaks during 2021–2022 at 84%, corresponding to intensified pandemic-related discourse, followed by a measurable increase in positive sentiment to 33% in subsequent years.

The findings demonstrate that automated sentiment analysis can effectively capture macro-level evaluative trends in media discourse, while also revealing limitations in granularity and contextual sensitivity. In particular, neutral sentiment functions as a dominant default category in technology-related reporting, underscoring known challenges in sentiment modeling for informational genres. Overall, this study illustrates how NLP-based sentiment analysis can be integrated into Chinese linguistics research to quantify evaluative patterns in media discourse and to inform future work combining computational modeling with fine-grained discourse analysis.