

Media too biased on whaling, researcher says

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PhD candidate Tets Kimura.

Australia and Japan's national news reports on whaling are often biased, emotive and misleading, Flinders University PhD candidate Tets Kimura says.

A freelance journalist, Mr Kimura (pictured) has analysed and compared 99 newspaper articles from Australia and Japan as part of his UniSA master's thesis, with the findings published last month in *New Voices*, an Australian peer-reviewed journal specialising in Japanese studies.

Mr Kimura, who is now undertaking a PhD in Japanese fashion at Flinders School of International Studies, said his research showed the overall tone of reporting in Australia slants towards anti-whaling while Japanese journalism favours the practice.

"Both countries are guilty of producing bias stories – Australia's reporting is almost 80 per cent anti-whaling and about 60 per cent of Japanese reports carry pro-whaling tones," Mr Kimura said.

"However, Australia tends to use more emotion in its reporting of the issue, reflecting the public opinion," he said.

"Words such as kill, hunt and corpus are frequently used by Australian journalists whereas Japan tends to avoid language that provokes an emotional response."

According to Mr Kimura, the Australian media often refers to Japanese whaling "in Australian waters", which has no legal standing.

"Australian reporters believe Japan is hunting in Australian waters but the classification of Australian waters in the Southern Ocean is not legally valid internationally under the Antarctic Treaty."

Mr Kimura said the Japanese media is equally bias and often acts like a "public relations agency" for the Japanese government, particularly through the kisha (reporter's) club.

"Members of the kisha club are provided with privileged information by the Japanese government, with club access typically limited to corporate journalists.

"As a result it's very difficult for independent Japanese journalists to have an impact because of the domination by the corporate media, which

is tied to the government."

With no resolution in sight, Mr Kimura said [news reports](#) should provide comprehensive views that develop mutual understanding, rather than reinforcing "simplistic domestic positions".

"At the end of the day there is no easy answer because Australia's argument is based on ethics while Japan argues that it meets all the legal requirements to conduct whaling.

"Nevertheless, journalists need to expand their views beyond the domestic situation otherwise people won't be given the information they require to understand their civic duties in today's global village.

"The public ought to learn something new from the media but unfortunately, the current reports on whaling in both Australia and Japan are too nationally biased to convey quality information, thus threatening to worsen this international conflict."

More information: Read the findings here: [pdf.jpf-sydney.org/newvoices/6 ... newspaper kimura.pdf](http://pdf.jpf-sydney.org/newvoices/6...newspaper_kimura.pdf)

Provided by Flinders University

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