

Original Paper

Analysis of Tourism Copywriting for Chinese International Teachers from a Multimodal Perspective

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Abstract

International Chinese language volunteers often need to introduce Chinese tourism culture when teaching abroad. Due to the inability of learners to personally experience China in foreign environments, it can have a significant impact on teaching effectiveness. The multimodal form of combining images and text can more intuitively help overseas Chinese language learners understand and understand China, enrich their Chinese language learning after class, and satisfy their curiosity and longing for China. This article uses Halliday's multimodal theory to organize and analyze 43 tourism texts edited by international Chinese language volunteers in teaching from four aspects: cultural level, contextual level, meaning level, and formal level. It also summarizes the precautions that Chinese language international teachers should pay attention to when writing tourism texts.

Keywords

Tourism copy, Multimodal, International education of Chinese language, Volunteer

1. Introduction

The Internet, as a carrier of cultural dissemination, is a tool that international Chinese language teachers or volunteers can use. It adopts multimodal forms such as audio, images, and videos to create online media and publish or use it in class, which has become a skill that international Chinese language teachers must master. International Chinese language volunteers need to rely on online media for teaching Chinese online, sharing their teaching experience, selling Chinese language courseware, and publishing Confucius Classroom press releases. Hanban attaches great importance to the copywriting and editing skills of Chinese language volunteers and has arranged copywriting and editing courses during volunteer training, with tourism copywriting as the teaching entry point.

International Chinese language volunteers often need to introduce Chinese tourism culture abroad. The foreign environment can have a significant impact on teaching effectiveness due to learners not being able to experience China firsthand. The multimodal form of combining graphics and text can more intuitively help overseas Chinese learners understand and understand China, enrich their Chinese learning after class, and satisfy their curiosity and longing for China.

At present, there are numerous studies analyzing tourism promotion from a multimodal discourse perspective, with most of the materials focused on tourism promotion videos, posters, tourism English, etc. There are few discourse studies analyzing tourism copywriting from a multimodal perspective, and most of them focus on discourse analysis of urban tourism promotional videos. However, there is very little research on tourism texts written by international Chinese language teachers. This article uses Halliday's multimodal theory to organize and analyze 43 tourism texts edited by international Chinese language volunteers in teaching from four aspects: cultural level, contextual level, meaning level, and formal level. It also summarizes the precautions that Chinese language international teachers should pay attention to when writing tourism texts.

2. Theoretical Basis

At present, the academic community refers to discourse that uses two or more modalities simultaneously as "multimodal discourse". Multimodal refers to multiple modal information, including text, images, voice, video, etc., which can be understood as a way of carrying information. Nowadays, the internet is a multimodal society, and various professions deeply rely on the integration and utilization of various symbolic resources.

When conducting an analysis of Chinese international teachers' internet tourism copywriting, this study mainly referred to the four hierarchical system proposed by Zhang Delu (2009) in the framework of multimodal discourse theory analysis. The cultural aspect includes lifestyle habits, thinking patterns, daily expressions, etc. It is an ideology that is influenced by social conventions and influences subtly. The level of context includes contextual factors such as discourse scope, expression methods, and language tone, which also constrain the development of communication. The meaning level includes conceptual meaning, communicative meaning, etc. in the context. At the formal level, each modality has a specific pattern system. Visual modalities are presented through visual expressions such as visual grammar, while auditory expressions are presented through auditory expressions such as listening grammar. At the formal level, different modalities are interconnected and integrated into a whole, with complementary and collaborative relationships, jointly constructing the discourse meaning of the whole. Based on Zhang Delu's multimodal discourse theory analysis framework, the author analyzed the content in the text that conforms to the four levels of the analysis framework. Through analysis, the author pointed out the advantages and disadvantages of Chinese volunteer writing at these four levels, as well as the overall significance of the joint construction of visual and textual modes in the text, and proposed improvement suggestions.

3. Analysis of Tourism Promotion Copywriting

Below, we will conduct a specific analysis based on the tourism promotional texts of international Chinese language volunteers.



Figure 1. Colorful Danxia



Figure 2. Plateau Snowy Mountains

The above two images are copywriting materials from the Hanban Volunteer Online Training copywriting teaching course. The teacher assigned tasks through brainstorming and asked volunteers to discuss the tourism copywriting of Figure 1 and Figure 2 in groups within 10 minutes. This writing did not make specific requirements for the content, word count, and other conditions of the copywriting, but instead focused on observing the volunteers' basic abilities in copywriting and thinking dimensions. Figure 1 shows the colorful Danxia in Zhangye, Gansu, with typical regional characteristics and rich and colorful imagery, such as a colorful palette, blue sky, hot air balloons, Danxia landforms, etc. The second picture shows a snowy mountain on the plateau. There is also a man and a woman wearing ethnic minority clothing in the picture. The man looks at the woman, while the woman looks at the distant scenery and puts her arm on the man's shoulder.

Ten minutes after the task assignment in the training, each group will type the discussed copy on the interface, and the teacher will comment on it one by one. A total of 43 tourism copies were collected from the international Chinese volunteer group on site, including 20 copies from Figure 1 and 23 copies from Figure 2. Based on Zhang Delu's (2009) multimodal discourse theory analysis framework, the areas in Figure 1 and Figure 2 that meet the four levels of the analysis framework were statistically analyzed. The compliance is shown in Table 1. Through the compliance in Table 1, the advantages and disadvantages of Chinese volunteer copywriting in the four levels were pointed out, as well as the overall significance of the joint construction of visual and textual modes in the copywriting.

The first level is the cultural level, which needs to reflect the thinking mode of Chinese people in the copywriting, specifically manifested as imagery, poetry, etc. in tourism copywriting. The second level is the contextual level, where copywriting needs to be edited in a specific context, such as in Chinese social apps. Since one of the goals of Chinese language international volunteers is to spread Chinese

culture overseas, the audience is more likely to be overseas Chinese Americans or foreigners. If editing in Chinese, it is necessary to be careful not to use too difficult words and explain some images. The third level is the meaning level, where travel copywriting needs to meet interpersonal meaning and constrain discourse meaning. The editor of the copywriting needs to guide the audience to communicate in the comment area, write within the allowed word count range, and should not be too long. For example, the maximum limit for graphic editing in Xiaohongshu is 1000 words, including punctuation and search tags. The fourth level is the formal level, where images and text should be coordinated, complementary, and combined with each other. In copywriting, attention should be paid to echoing the images and text.

Table 1. Copywriting and Organizing Data

Level	Specific performance	Tourism copy (Figure 1)	Tourism copy (Figure 2)
Cultural level	There is a Chinese mindset	20 articles	22 articles
Context level	In a specific context	6 articles	3 articles
Meaning level	Discourse is constrained by discourse mode	14 articles	9 articles
At the formal level	The coordination and complementarity between images and text	19 articles	13 articles

According to Table 1, among the tourism texts edited by international Chinese language volunteers, there are 20 texts that reflect cultural aspects, accounting for 100% of the total 20 texts in Figure 1. There are 6 texts that reflect contextual aspects, accounting for 30% of the total number of texts in Figure 1. There are 14 texts that reflect meaning, accounting for 70% of the total number of texts in Figure 1. There are 19 texts that reflect formal aspects, accounting for 95% of the total number of texts in Figure 1.

Among the tourism texts edited by international Chinese volunteers on site in Figure 2, there are 22 texts that reflect cultural aspects, accounting for 95.7% of the total 23 texts in Figure 2. There are 3 texts that reflect contextual aspects, accounting for 13% of the total texts in Figure 2. There are 9 texts that reflect meaning, accounting for 39.1% of the total texts in Figure 2. There are 13 texts that reflect formal aspects, accounting for 56.5% of the total texts in Figure 2.

3.1 Cultural Level

When writing a copy, the chosen image should be expressed in appropriate language. In different cultural contexts, copywriting should be edited according to the specific contextual context. According to Table 1, tourism texts written by international Chinese language volunteers can reflect the characteristics of Chinese culture at the cultural level, such as:

- (1) One ladder, one color, layer by layer dyeing the fields. Which fairy is happy, rouge, water powder, lying on the mountain?
- (2) You watch the scenery in the snow, and those who watch the scenery watch you in the snow. The bright moon has decorated your window, you have decorated others' dreams.

Both examples (1) and (2) reflect the sense of rhythm in Chinese poetry. Example 1: There is a gentle and implicit beauty in the style of the graceful and restrained style of poetry, using layers of terraced fields of different colors to describe the colorful Danxia, and using the makeup of a fairy to describe the color of the colorful Danxia, which has a clear and refined beauty. The word “dye” carries a dynamic beauty of rendering and haloing. Example 2 uses Bian Zhilin’s modern poem “Broken Chapters”, which is fresh and simple, and contains philosophical ideas. It cleverly blends the scenery in the eyes of women and men into the same picture, combining the beautiful and picturesque snow with rich and meaningful emotions, giving people infinite imagination. The cultural level is the level that makes communication possible. Chinese volunteers are mostly undergraduate or graduate students with certain knowledge of Chinese culture. However, due to a lack of experience in copywriting, some of the wording, although beautiful, is difficult for beginners and intermediate level Chinese learners to understand. Moreover, due to the lack of understanding of Chinese cultural poetry among beginner and intermediate Chinese learners, it is difficult to appreciate the rich connotations in poetry.

3.2 Context Level

Communication is constrained at the contextual level, and copywriting needs to be edited in specific contexts. The goal of this copywriting editing is to promote Chinese tourist attractions, and the audience should be targeted towards overseas people or Chinese learners who use overseas social media, want to learn about Chinese tourism information. In this context, it is best to have English copywriting to assist social media users in understanding while editing Chinese copywriting. Chinese volunteers often overlook contextual constraints when writing copywriting tours. For example:

- (3) Mo Dao Sang Yu is late, and the sky is full of “rosy clouds” (Danxia)

Never say too late because of old age Even at two the sky is still full of sunshine

- (4) Here comes a more romantic confession than Murong Yunhai! 520 with TA like this.

The Chinese language used in Example (3) is very condensed, with Chinese characteristics in its wording, while embellishing the image of Danxia. The word “late” is a pun, indicating that the sky is getting late and the age is also increasing. In the English part, it is expressed in direct language, and English and Chinese are integrated and complementary. The Chinese part has a subtle beauty that is difficult to understand, which is highlighted in the English part. It is suitable for both Chinese and English contexts. Example (4) has a typical numerical intention of “520”, which can provide a good cultural interpretation. Foreigners may not know that China’s “520 Festival” is a homophonic “I love you”. Couples often date on May 20th, and copywriters need to consider Chinese learners from different regions in the context. Editors overlook the contextual constraints of English conditions.

3.3 Meaning Level

The communication method, content, and tone constrain the meaning of the article. When publishing a copy on the overseas internet, attention should be paid to using network symbols to combine the meaning of the copy, such as labeling with “# keyword” and “@ recommended destination”. These are special symbols born under the influence of network culture. When editing tourism copywriting, nearly half of the volunteers ignored the meaning of the article, resulting in the ambiguity of the copywriting meaning. For example:

(5) The colorful glow in my dream sprinkles on this northwest territory @Zhangye

The colored haze of dreams sprinted in this northwest land @Zhangye

(6) Challenge a seal god# Colorful Danxia #Zhangye, Gansu # Colorful Xiangshan

(7) How to make him understand with a glance.

Example (5) uses three images of “dream”, “colorful glow”, and “northwest”, and uses the @ symbol to point out the location of “Zhangye” in the northwest region. Users can learn more information by clicking on “@ Zhangye”. Example (6) Using a label about the colorful Danxia, indicating the location of Zhangye, Gansu in Figure 1, with clear copy meaning. Users can directly click on the label to learn about all content posted by other bloggers labeled with “Zhangye, Gansu”. Example (7) is the copy of Figure 2, which has a vague meaning. The editor did not start from a travel perspective and only described the actions of the characters in Figure 2. Although it echoes the actions of the male and female protagonists in Figure 2, the user still does not know where the location of Figure 2 is and does not understand the meaning of the image.

3.4 At the Formal Level

Multimodal includes modes such as text, images, voice, and video, each with a unique form of expression. Different forms combine and supplement each other to construct the overall meaning, making the expression more accurate and richer. Chinese volunteers can pay attention to the mutual resonance between different modalities when editing tourism texts, but some of the texts lack complementary effects. For example:

(8) Ding ~ Please taste the rainbow cake with your eyes

Ding ~ please enjoy the freshly baked rainbow cake with your eyes

(9) People who have flowers do not need a mansion

Example (8) Using text mode to simulate message prompts, the rainbow cake is compared to a colorful Danxia, and then the colorful cake is tasted with the eyes, giving a synesthesia that combines taste and vision. Each mode is independent but closely combined, echoing and supplementing each other. Example (9) is the copy of Figure 2, using flowers as a metaphor for the woman in Figure 2. “The person with flowers” refers to a man. Although the textual form shares some similarities with the image, the combination is not close enough, and the copy can still be used in other images without specificity. Moreover, the copy does not specify the location, which not only fails to leverage the advantages of textual mode, but also diverts users’ attention to other places.

In summary, the Chinese part of the Chinese volunteer tourism copywriting is better than the English part. It is indeed smoother to express ideas and opinions in one's native language, but it cannot balance the understanding of overseas audiences. The cultural advantage is the ability to grasp important images in images, such as Danxia, Colorful Palette, and Snow Mountain, and to use text to depict the image based on the image. Volunteers with deep textual skills can integrate the image into poetry and give the image a strong Chinese color. The disadvantage is that the wording overlooks the Chinese proficiency of overseas media users, making it difficult to use words. The advantage of the contextual aspect is that it can take into account different audiences from different countries. Some volunteers can write texts in English, but the disadvantage is that some images are difficult for foreign audiences to understand, such as the "520" digital image, which needs to be explained in the text. The advantage of the meaning aspect is that it can use special symbols suitable for the network for tourism copywriting editing. The disadvantage is that it ignores the discourse constraints of "tourism copywriting", lacks key information about tourism locations, and leads to ambiguity in the meaning of the copywriting. At the formal level, the advantage is that some copywriting can allow multimodal meanings to echo and supplement each other, but the disadvantage is that the textual mode deviates from the theme of "tourism".

4. Notes for Copywriting

Based on the above analysis, we can see that there are many aspects to pay attention to in copywriting. The following aspects are particularly important:

Firstly, copywriting needs to avoid a "combative" discourse style, an "aggressive" stance, and an "aggressive" communication posture. The communication between Chinese language volunteers and overseas media is more about dialogue and exchange, rather than fighting or attacking.

Secondly, the inappropriate publication method of the copy results in low attractiveness and even being banned. Single publishing content, high frequency of tweets, all forwarded content, or thousands of posts per hour without original content can easily lead to account suspension. Before editing the copy, it is necessary to find the appropriate image and positioning for this account, publish relatively high-quality content at the appropriate frequency, and maintain regular and uninterrupted updates to make it easier to accumulate fans. Editing content that is interactive, dynamic, and original, while also considering the target audience group of the account, such as age, city, gender, and achieving results, so that overseas people can see practical, interesting, and fun content, and continue to attract more fans.

In addition, Chinese volunteer teachers can showcase rich and colorful Chinese culture on their accounts or transfer offline teaching content to online platforms to expand their teaching influence. The content of the copy can be expanded from different perspectives, and it is recommended to start with a cultural comparison perspective. The core of self-media is action, and continuous and stable content producers have obvious advantages in terms of attractiveness. Self-media is also a carrier for Chinese volunteers to record their overseas lives, thoughts, and feelings. Through their own growth and progress, writing content is more motivated, fulfilling, and sustainable.

5. Epilogue

This article explores the advantages and disadvantages of Chinese volunteers' editing of tourism texts in the classroom from four aspects: culture, context, meaning, and form from a multimodal perspective. It is found that: firstly, volunteers can grasp the cultural aspects of tourism texts well, especially the main images of tourist attractions, and some volunteers can combine Chinese cultural knowledge to write. Secondly, at the formal level, although different modalities can echo each other, they deviate from the theme of tourist attractions. Finally, there are significant issues with tourism copywriting at the contextual and semantic levels. At the contextual level, attention needs to be paid to the difficulty and special imagery of the copywriting in Chinese, while at the semantic level, attention needs to be paid to providing key information about tourist attractions. In addition, Chinese language volunteers need to pay attention to language style, stance and attitude, original content, release time and frequency, and release perspective when editing tourism copywriting.

Copywriting should be combined with aspects such as culture, context, meaning, and form. Chinese volunteers can capture excellent perspectives on Chinese culture, but due to a lack of experience in copywriting, the application of context, meaning, and form is still relatively unfamiliar. Language is the carrier of culture, and a prominent and unique style of copywriting not only helps to introduce Chinese culture to the world, but also increases the interest of Chinese language learners in personally experiencing the scenery in China. For Chinese language volunteers, being a blogger to share teaching routines or introduce the beauty of China is also a new attempt. When completing overseas assignments, it is full of valuable memories and has its own memory mobile notebook.

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