Multimodal Construal of Attitude in the Online City Guide of Guangzhou

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Abstract

This study conducts a social semiotic analysis of the online city guide of Guangzhou. Drawing on Martin's Appraisal theory with a particular focus on the semantic systems of attitude and graduation, this paper investigates the attitudinal meanings adjusted by graduation in both modes of language and visual images. It is revealed that positive appreciation resources are dominant among the three subsystems of attitude, with the pervasive use of reaction and valuation resources to stimulate tourist desires and promote unique identity of the city. Graduation resources, especially force, couple with attitude resources to upscale the positivity of the attitude and strongly align the readers into the same value position. The language and images in most cases coordinate with each other, with the evaluative meanings of visual images elaborating or extending those of verbal texts, whereas complementary intermodal relation exists in some cases, with the evaluative meanings conveyed by visual images and the verbal texts merely offering factual information. The findings may help to better understand the way online city guides achieve the communicative purposes through multimodal evaluative devices.

Keywords: Multimodal Discourse Analysis, Appraisal, Attitude, Online city guide, Guangzhou

1. Introduction

Traditionally, printed materials for city guides such as tourist brochures, guidebooks and pamphlets have been extensively used in tourism to advertise and market the city; however, in recent years, with the development of internet, digital forms of communication are employed predominantly and increasingly take the place of printed materials. Studies in tourism marketing and destination branding suggest that internet is an effective tool to market a city (Law et al. 2010), for it has reshaped "the way tourism-related information is distributed and the way people plan for and consume travel" (Xiang and Gretzel 2010:179). Moreover, the fact that information communication has entered into a new era of digital visualization also make it a popular trend to communicate city information and deliver city images online. Online city guides attract readers and become effective carriers in representing, constructing and publicizing city images partly because they provide easily accessed and unlimited amount of city information about tourism attractions, local culture and the latest touristic activities through the internet. Another reason lies in that they are inherently multimodal, that is, they provide a wealth of appealing and persuasive information through multiple semiotic resources, especially language and images, both of which contribute to communicating desired images of the city, enabling readers to be fully engaged and persuading them to explore the city.

Early studies on printed and digital forms of city guides focused on either language or images, with fruitful results yielded. Researches have been conducted within the fields of translation studies, contrastive studies, discourse studies, tourism studies and destination marketing studies from various perspectives (e.g. Valdeón 2009; Kang 2016; Guijarro and Hernanadez 2001; Scarles 2004; Kaltenbacher 2006; Nigro 2006; Guo 2008; Sun and Luo 2016). In more recent years, scholars have paid close attention to the meanings construed by multiple semiotic modes and employed social semiotic approach to probe into the multimodal features of the materials created in particular social contexts. For example, Hiippala (2007) investigates multiple semiotic resources of the tourist brochures of Helsinki by drawing on the theory of metafunctionality proposed by Halliday (1978, 1994), especially the ideational metafunction, and connects the changes in the representation of the city to changes in society. He also further explores the generic structure of tourist brochures as multimodal artifacts, the factors shaping that structure and the change of the structure over time (Hiippala 2013). Yui Ling Ip (2008) and Francesconi (2011) conduct multimodal discourse analysis to examine linguistic and visual elements in printed tourist brochures as well. Yui Ling Ip (2008) attributes the persuasive power of tourist brochure of Hong Kong to its hyperbolic language and fascinating images. Francesconi (2011) concludes that the core values of Malta are promoted through the integration of both visual and verbal modes in brochure, with the former being the predominant communicative mode and the latter describing, clarifying, expanding and confirming the former one.

Tourism discourses are "assumed to be rich in evaluative meanings" (Kang 2016), which is the case for both the linguistic and visual mode; however, until now, despite the wealth of literature on the investigation of the linguistic mode, still not enough has focused on the evaluation construed by both the linguistic and visual modes in online city guides. As the

purpose of the city guides is to offer city information and eventually help to form positive city images in readers and persuade them to consume the tourism products or services provided, the key to their success lies mostly in whether the writers can strategically make use of the evaluation prosody to align readers through shared feelings. To better understand how online city guides construe evaluative meanings through co-deployment of verbal and visual resources, especially how readers are aligned attitudinally, this paper is intended to explore the multimodal meaning making process of the online city guide of Guangzhou from social semiotic approach informed by Systemic Functional Linguistics (Halliday 1978, 1994), specially focusing on the semantic systems of attitude and graduation in Appraisal within the interpersonal metafunction (Martin and Rose 2007; Martin and White 2005; Economou 2009). A close examination of the evaluation devices may help to better understand the way online city guides achieve the communicative purposes through both language and images.

2. Online City Guide of Guangzhou

The data set of the online city guide for the present study is sourced from 'life of Guangzhou', a leading English portal website aiming to provide foreigners with diversified English news and useful information about the city of Guangzhou. As a metropolitan city located in South China, Guangzhou ranked the third among the mega-cities in China, following Beijing and Shanghai. It enjoys reputations such as the national historical and cultural city, the center of Lingnan culture, the national comprehensive portal city etc. It is also a world-class city with livable ecological environment, unique local culture and dynamic city life. Over the past two decades, with the globalization of economy, the city has attracted an increasing number of foreigners to live, study, work and tour, who constitute the major readership of the website. However, in recent years, with the quick urbanization process in mainland China, Guangzhou is facing great pressure of competition from other cities of similar and even of lower scale. Thus, the city has continuously made considerable communication efforts to enhance and publicize its city images so as to maintain its current national position, to further improve its international influence and to attract more investments, tourists and future residents from abroad.

The building of 'life of Guangzhou' is one of the efforts Guangzhou has made to market and brand the city. The website includes sections of 'know Guangzhou', 'do business', 'city guide', 'find services' and 'what's new'. The present study focuses on the 'city guide', which is the highlight section, providing comprehensive information about accommodation, transportation, museum and gallery, food and leisure, sights and attractions, sports and wellness. As it offers introduction to the city's general situation, it functions as the traditional brochure in this respect, while more updated and comprehensive information is available through the form of news reports which consists of both the verbal texts and visual images. In nature, it still belongs to the tourist genre and the communicative purposes of the city guide is both informational and promotional, offering information to people of foreign cultures to stimulate their desires and inspire their actions on the one hand and constructing positive images to promote the city of Guangzhou on the other. These purposes are inevitably manifested in the verbal and visual appraisal choices. A multimodal analysis provides insights into how the attitudinal meanings are construed and adjusted semiotically, how the readers'

emotions are aligned as well as how the city guides promote the identity of Guangzhou. As there are six columns in the 'city guide', eight pieces of the latest news till the end of August, 2018 of each column are selected, all of which are concerned with the information about Guangzhou, and altogether 48 pieces form the data for the present study.

The research is essentially a qualitative study. We annotate the data manually based on the subsystems of attitude and graduation resources. The annotation is then checked by a second researcher until consensus is achieved. To obtain the statistical results, however, we also consider the frequency and proportion of the resources. For the procedure of analysis, the linguistic mode is analyzed first to identify the core evaluation resources and then is checked whether the visual images follow the same vein to strengthen these evaluations or to complement them; through this process, we examine how both the verbal and visual modes establish writer-reader/viewer relationship as well.

3. Theoretical framework

3.1 Multimodal Discourse Analysis

The study of multimodal texts has gained considerable momentum since the early 1990's, and the current focus has "shifted to the multimodal discourse as the site of meaning-making activity" (Baldry and Thibault 2006: preface). Multimodal discourse analysis (MDA) is concerned with the analysis of discourse in which semiotic resources of various kinds such as language, images, color, sound, movement and so on work together for meaning construction. Among various perspectives that can approach multimodal discourse, MDA informed by Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) (Halliday 1978, 1994) is widely applied to interpret semiotic systems other than language (e.g. O'Toole1994; Kress and van Leeuwen 2006; van Leeuwen 1999; Martinec 2000; Matthiessen 2007). SFL regards language as social semiotic, which means "interpreting language in a socio-cultural context, in which the culture itself is interpreted in semiotic terms – as an information system" (Halliday 1978:2). Thus, SFL is a social semiotic approach, paying attention to not only text itself but also its relations to society and culture. As proposed by Halldiay (1978, 1994), three metafunctions -- ideational, interpersonal and textual are simultaneously realized by language. Ideational metafunction represents the world experience as well as constructs logical relations in that world, interpersonal meaning enacts social relations and textual metafunction creates coherent texts (Halliday 1978). In addition to metafunctions, some other key parameters in SFL include stratification, realization, instantiation, context, register, etc.

Following the fundamental principles of SFL, Visual Grammar (Kress & van Leeuween 2006) for images is created, mainly based on three metafunctions, which are renamed as ideational, interactive and compositional. Besides, intersemiotic relations are studied for meaning multiplying mechanisms (e.g. Lemke 1998; O'Halloran 2003, 2008; Royce 1999; Martinec and Salway 2005). Martinec and Salway's network (2005) will be taken up in this study, especially the system of logico-semantic to study the text-image relations in terms of evaluative stance, which includes expansion and projection, with the former further divided into elaboration, extension and enhancement. As online city guides are composed of language and images, we will investigate the evaluation encoded by these two resources respectively as

well as text-image relations.

3.2 Appraisal Theory for Language and Visual Image

As evaluative stance is our primary concern, one of the theoretical underpinnings of the present study is Appraisal theory. It is developed by Martin (2000) and Martin and White (2005), which evolves within SFL tradition and extends the interpersonal meaning. Among the three discourse semantic resources construing interpersonal meaning, appraisal is one of them, working together with negotiation and involvement (Martin and White 2005). Appraisal is concerned with "the kinds of attitudes that are negotiated in a text, the strength of the feelings involved and the ways in which values are sourced and readers aligned" (Martin and Rose 2007:25). It consists of three sub-systems: attitude, engagement and graduation (Martin and White 2005). With regard to the evaluative resources of language, the present study will mainly focus on the semantic systems of attitude in examining attitude values and graduation in exploring resources for grading the strength of attitude values.

According to Martin and White (2005), the system of attitude contains three categories of feelings – affect, judgment and appreciation, usually realized lexically and grammatically. Affect construes emotional reactions, which can be classified by six factors: positive or negative, behavioral surge or mental process, reaction to emotional triggers or undirected mood, low, medium and high valued, realis or irrealis, un/happiness, in/security and dis/satisfaction; judgment is concerned with positive and negative assessment of people's characters and their behaviors, which can be divided into social esteem, including aspects of normality, capacity and tenacity, and social sanction, including those of veracity and propriety; appreciation is concerned with positive and negative evaluation of things, which encompasses three types: reaction, composition and valuation (Martin and White 2005). Attitudinal meanings can be directly or indirectly realized by lexicogrammatical resources. More technically and specifically, attitudes can be inscribed, by using evaluative lexis, or invoked, which includes provoked through using lexical metaphor and invited through using non-core vocabulary (flag) or ideational meanings without attitudinal lexis (afford)(Ibid). Graduation includes two subsystems: force and focus. Force adjusts the degree of feelings, covering assessments of intensification and quantification, while focus either sharpens or softens the boundaries between categories (Ibid).

Appraisal theory has been extended to study visual images in multimodal discourse (e.g. Economou 2009, 2014; Chen 2010; White 2014; Caple 2016). We will mainly follow Economou (2009) to examine appraisal in visual images and still we will focus on the systems of attitude and graduation. Martin and White (2005) regard visual images as resources to provoke attitude, the point of which has been explored further by Economou (2009). He proposes that the strategies for realizing attitudes in language are also operational in visual images, that is, attitude can be inscribed or invoked in the image, with visual ideational metaphor provoking, visual graduation flagging and visual ideational tokens affording (Economou 2009). Economou's (2009) framework is briefly outlined in the following. In terms of affect values, those with high intensity can be more easily inscribed through facial expressions, body movements and gestures, while more specific emotions with

low intensity are usually invoked through ambiguous facial expressions and other visual information in the image. The judgment is usually ascribed to the depicted person and is visually inscribed through "commonly understood body language or iconic gestures" (Economou 2009: 121). Appreciation is mostly invoked, with viewers being appraisers and things being depicted in images as target. Visual graduation system includes graduation force and focus. The main choices of force system are quantification, intensification and repetition, while the options for focus system encompass clarity, substantiation and completion.

Interactive meaning (Kress and van Leeuween 2006) in visual images is also concerned with the relationship among all the participants in the image producing and viewing processes, including the image producers, the viewers and the represented participants. It is realized through contact, social distance, attitude and modality (Kress and van Leeuween 2006). Economou (2009: 105) extends two aspects of the interactive meaning: "depicted social interaction between human participants in images" and "social relations between viewers and the image" and believes that in these two aspects, evaluation is more relevant than interaction for visual texts.

4. Analysis and Findings

In this section, we will start with the verbal analysis and then move on to analyze the visual images as well as intermodal relations. Attitude and graduation resources are explored respectively in both language and visual images.

4.1 Attitude Resources in Language

The 48 news texts selected from the section of 'city guide' contain a total of 21782 words, with 1180 clauses. There are altogether 796 occurrences of attitude resources in 598 clauses, which means attitude resources exist in half of the clauses. A more scrutinized analysis of the data show that precisely chosen attitude resources are pervasively used to create intriguing and persuasive texture, achieving the purpose of stimulating interests in readers and promoting city images. Dann (1996: 65) points out that tourism language "tends to speak only in positive and glowing terms of the services and attractions it seeks to promote". It is exactly the case with the online city guide under discussion. More specifically, the majority of the evaluative resources is concerned with the positive appreciation of tourism attractions such as sightseeing, leisure activities, accommodation and eating options, transportation means, sports, arts and performances, as shown in Table 1, which presents the number and percentage of the linguistic resources realizing three subsystems of attitude: affect, judgment and appreciation, with appreciation further divided into reaction, composition and valuation.

Table 1. Number and percentage of attitude resources

Types of Attitude	Affect	Judgment	Appreciation		
			Reaction	Composition	Valuation
Number	53 (6.66%)	63 (7.91%)	354(44.47%)	51(6.41%)	275(34.55%)
Inscribed	53 (100%)	49(77.78%)	345(97.46%)	51 (100%)	264 (96%)
Invoked	0 (0%)	14(22.22%)	9 (2.54%)	0 (0%)	11 (4%)
Positive	51(96.22%)	57(90.48%)	348(98.3%)	50 (98.03%)	271(98.55%)
Negative	2 (3.78%)	6 (9.52%)	6 (1.7%)	1 (1.97%)	4 (1.54%)

It is clearly presented in Table 1 that the total number of appreciation resources reaches 680, accounting for 85.43% of all the attitude resources, the highest among the three subsystems. The percentages of the resources of affect and judgment are quite small, with only 6.66% and 7.91% respectively. Besides, the majority of the resources are positive and inscribed. There are mainly three reasons accounting for these statistical results. One is concerned with the content of the texts and the main purposes. Given the facts that the texts in the online city guide are all about the information introducing and recommending hotel services, transportation means, art exhibitions, food markets, wine festivals, scenic spots, sports activities, etc. and the main purposes are to provide useful information and to promote city images, it is reasonable that positive appreciation resources constitute the dominant type and the other two resources are used marginally, as appreciation evaluates products, performances, natural phenomena, etc. from the aesthetic perspective, while affect expresses personal feelings and judgment evaluates people's characters and behaviors. Besides, technically, Martin and White (2005: 45) point out that appreciation can be regarded as institutionalized feelings, which "take us out of our everyday common sense world into the uncommon sense worlds of shared community values". In other words, appreciation contains appraisers' feelings; however, they appear to be more objectified after being converted into the evaluation of things, thus more convincing than subjective and personalized affect. Lastly, different from news reports that usually employ invoked attitude to become neutral and to give readers more interpreting room, the texts in the city guide are mostly inscribed, aiming to impress and align the readers at the first sight. In the following, the three subsystems of attitude resources are examined in a more detailed way.

4.1.1 Appreciation

There are three variables of appreciation: reaction, composition and valuation. Reaction is related to affection, including the quality – whether people like the things and the impact – whether the things grab people; composition is related to perception, including balance and complexity of the things; valuation is related to cognition about whether the things are worthwhile (Martin & White 2005). According to Table 1, reaction and valuation resources are employed much more than composition, accounting for 44.47%, 34.55% and 6.41% respectively. By using reaction resources that can stimulate emotive and desiderative affections of readers as well as valuation resources that emphasize the ideational worth of the attractions in Guangzhou, the writers align readers from different perspectives. More specifically, Table 2 shows the frequency of linguistic resources realizing reaction and valuation (only those appeared twice or more are counted).

Table 2. Frequency of appreciation resources

	resources	number	resources	number	resources	number
reaction	fresh	11	good	8	seasonal	3
(quality)	award/awarded/recognition	10	paradise	8	splendid	3
	delicate/delicacies	10	beautiful	6	comfortable	2
	free	10	nice	5	fine	2
	peaceful/quiet/tranquil	9	outstanding	5	magnificent	2

	yummy/delicious	9	flawless/perfect	3	pleasant	2
reaction	thrilling	6	awe-inspiring	3	exciting	2
(impact)	interesting	5	refreshing	3	fascinating	2
	amazing	4	dazzling	2		
valuation	new	22	popular	9	recent(ly)	6
	first	17	Western	9	landmark	6
	diverse/diversity/various/a variety of	17	Cantonese	8	local	6
	traditional/tradition	17	historic(al)	7	modern	5
	renowned for/famous/well-known/known for	16	classic	6	important	4
	international	16	creative/innovative	6	signature	4
	different	14	cultural	6	original	3
	unique/distinctive/special/exceptional	13	European	6	authentic	2
	ancient	9				

It can be inferred from the results in Table 2 as well as the examination of these linguistic resources in their immediate co-texts that, through describing glamorous qualities of the city attractions, employing positive feeling-grabbing words, as well as framing various aspects of the city as unique and worthwhile, the verbal texts function to stimulate the readers' intuitive desires to explore and experience the city life portrayed. In this process, the readers' positive perceptions of the city are also strengthened. In the following, we will mainly focus on frequently appeared reaction and valuation resources in Table 2 as they are salient in the data.

(1) Reaction

Reaction to things is further divided into quality and impact. The recurrent items of the quality resources are mainly used to evaluate three types of attractions in Guangzhou: food, places and services. Modifiers and nominalizations such as "fresh", "delicate/delicacies", "yummy", "delicious", "seasonal" and "fine" are adopted to depict or refer to the quality of various kinds of food in Guangzhou, including desserts, fruits, snacks, dishes, afternoon tea, etc., which tease readers' taste buds and enable them to conjure up an image of Guangzhou as a food paradise. When place and environment such as city views, buildings, locales, hotel vibes, and natural sceneries are described, words such as "peaceful", "quiet", "tranquil", "good", "beautiful", "splendid", "magnificent" and "pleasant" are used, which are highly appealing to readers. The frequently employed words "outstanding" describing hotel services and "free" describing city services such as Wifi, tour, shuttle bus, exhibition, performances and jazz shows indicate that service philosophy of excellence, consideration and convenience in different aspects of city life is advocated and that readers can live a convenient and comfortable life in Guangzhou. In addition to adjectives and nominalizations realizing quality of the things, as shown in examples 1 and 2, some values can also "get formalized in systems of awards" (Martin and White 2005: 45), as shown in examples 3 and 4. In example 3, Four Seasons Hotel Guangzhou is "awarded" the honor of five stars, implying the recognition of its high quality of the hotel services and facilities. It is the same case with the example 4, this time by using the noun "award" to evaluate the architecture of Cantonese Opera Museum, as

winning the Luban Award means its architectural quality ranks the highest and no more other descriptive words are necessary.

1) Russian king crabs, Boston lobsters, oysters, crayfish and other **fresh** seafood from around the globe are awaiting you! (Get a bite of freshness at GZ's first Hema Fresh)

2) You can savor **delicacies** here like milk pudding, strawberries and yoghurt. (Best hiking spots in Guangzhou)

3) Four Seasons Hotels and Resorts announced that Forbes Travel Guide has **awarded** its Guangzhou hotel five stars, its highest honor. (Forbes Travel Guide gives Four Seasons Hotel Guangzhou its highest service ranking)

4) In 2016, it won the most honorable **award** of the construction industry in China — the Luban Award for Chinese Architectural Engineering. (Cantonese Opera Museum)

The total number of the resources realizing impact is only 47 among 354 occurrences of reaction. Both reaction variables -- impact and quality have strong links to affect (Martin & White 2005). Compared with quality, impact, which is related to people's emotive effects, usually expresses a strong aesthetic experience and is more powerful to trigger people's feeling towards the things. However, just the same as the fact that affect resources are used rarely in the city guide, impact resources are used much fewer than quality resources to avoid being too subjective and personalized. Besides, Yui Ling Ip (2008) points out that too many such words may sound like cliché. The most frequently used impact resource "thrilling" mainly describes activities that can be found in Guangzhou, as in example 5. Similar words to describe activities also include "exciting" and "interesting". In this way, these activities seem alluring to readers and worthwhile for them to be involved in. Guangzhou is also depicted as a vibrant and dynamic city that has much fun to offer. When performances, views, buildings, food and products are referred to, impact resources such as "amazing", "awe-inspiring", "refreshing", "dazzling" and "fascinating" are used, serving to attract readers' attention and stir their desires, as in example 6.

5) Want to try some **thrilling** activities occasionally to dispel the boredom of day-to-day life? Here we have some recommendations for you. (Chalking out a 72-hour stopover in leisure-oriented Guangzhou City)

6) Hampton by Hilton presented an **amazing** performance and drew great attention from honored guests, investors and media attendees. (Hampton by Hilton presents Plateno Group Collection)

(2) Valuation

Valuation resources are widely used in the city guide, which emphasize the ideational worth of the things. Their use is closely related to the context of situation, which contains three variables: field, tenor and mode, referring to the subject matter, the participants and the type of the text respectively (Halliday 1978). According to Martin and White (2005: 57), "valuation is especially sensitive to field since the value of things depends so much on our institutional focus". Our data is tourism discourse aiming to promote tourism products or

services that should be essentially distinctive and differentiated by their positioning relative to the competition and by their personality, "which comprises a unique combination of functional attributes and symbolic values" (Hankinson and Cowking 1993:10). Besides the filed, our data analysis shows that the types of recurrent items of valuation resources are also closely related to tenor (addressing international audiences) and mode (online city guide). Thus, valuation resources are mainly categorized into three types based on the context of situation.

The first type is field specific. Words such as "unique", "distinctive", "special", and "exceptional" emphasize the differentiation of one thing from another in the promotion, as shown in example 7. Words such as "landmark", "signature", "popular", "famous", "classic", "authentic", "original", "creative" and "innovative" stress the significant status and specialty of the buildings, locales, operas, cuisine, decorations, etc. which are worthwhile to be recommended to visit and experience, as in example 8. Words such as "different" and "diverse/diversity/various/a variety of" are used to describe recreational activities, eating choices, sports venues etc. indicating various options the readers can make to meet their interests and needs, as in example 9. Guangzhou is also depicted as a considerate and hospitable city in this way.

7) Here is a list of 10 Guangzhou hotels and restaurants that offer **unique** afternoon tea. (Where to have your afternoon tea in Guangzhou: a guide)

8) On top of the mountain stands the **landmark** Five-Ram Statue, which was built in 1959 and is a government-protected cultural site. (Best hiking spots in Guangzhou)

9) Whether it is wedding planning, home decoration, fine food, or children-themed recreation, Anhua Mall offers **diverse** shopping experiences to explore. (Check out Baiyun's new and glitzy shopping mall)

The second type of valuation resources is more tenor specific. As the city guide is particularly addressed to the people of foreign cultures, the information featured with Chinese culture, especially local characteristics is particularly preferred. The local culture and heritage are commoditized into products "intended for the satisfaction of contemporary consumption demands" (Tunbridge and Ashworth 1996:7). Words such as "traditional", "Cantonese", "local", "ancient", "historic(al)" are frequently used, which are intended to draw foreigners' attention to explore these exotic and unfamiliar things. They also help to shape Guangzhou with a unique identity and position it as distinct among other competitive cities. On the other hand, to draw close the psychological distance of the foreign people, "international", "modern", "European" and "Western" used to modify architecture, city life, desserts, music festivals, restaurants, air flights, exhibitions, shows, etc. convey the messages that foreigners can also live a convenient and familiar life in Guangzhou where they may find their own cultures. In this way, Guangzhou is valued as a city with an extraordinary fusion of contrasting images, such as historical and modern, localized and internationalized, East and West, traditional and pioneering, as shown typically in example 10.

10) Guangzhou – home to 14 million people – is a livable city balancing **modern** living with

a relaxed and **traditional** way of life. (Chalking out a 72-hour stopover in leisure-oriented Guangzhou City)

The last type is concerned with the mode. As the city guide is online, one of the biggest differences that can distinguish it linguistically from printed brochures is that it can provide the latest information to the readers. The online channel allows it to update the events that happen most recently. In this respect, online city guide is a colonization of the news genre, as the information possesses the news values of recency. An event is more newsworthy if it is more recent (Bednarek 2006). Recency is reflected in the frequently appeared "new/latest" (23 times) which describe things such as "new Grand Ballroom", "a new look", "a new cooking technique", "a new exhibition" and "the latest art exploration". Additionally, the online city guide also registers the news value of superlativeness, which means the more X, the better (Bednarek 2006). For example, there are 17 occurrences of "first", as in "the first food festival", "the first time", "the first themed shopping center", etc., which emphasize the news worthiness of the events or the entities by being the first.

4.1.2 Affect and Judgment

Although affect and judgment do not constitute the salient types of evaluation resources, their patterns in the online city guide still deserve mentioning. Affect expresses people's emotions directly. While too many affect resources may seem personalized and unconvincing, appropriate use of them can render the texts infectious. There are two major sets of positive affect in the data: happiness and satisfaction, which involve the moods of feeling happy and fulfilled. All of these resources direct to specific emotional triggers, which make them effective to influence the readers. The most frequently used affect to express happiness is "enjoy", which appear 29 times. Besides, there are also words and phrases such as "cheer up", "joy", "happy", "delighted", "love" and "fond of". The resources realizing satisfaction include verbs and adjectives, such as "please", "admire', "satisfy", "impressed", "enthusiastic", "spoke highly of" etc. The appraisers of these resources are "you" or the third person like travelers, visitors, customers, audience, etc, as in examples 11, which make the affect less subjective.

11) **Guests** are literally in the clouds, **enjoying** the best views of the Pearl River. (Where to have your afternoon tea in Guangzhou: a guide)

Judgment resources are used to construe attitudes towards people and their behaviors. Although the online city guide is mainly to promote things, people constitute an important part of the city image. Besides, the quality of the services and performances are also closely related to the people who provide them. Thus, the judgment resources in the data are mostly dealt with social esteem, as in examples 12 and 13. Example 12 uses "pragmatic", "hardworking" and "tolerant" to describe the special qualities Guangzhou people possess. The adjective "professional", which has to do with capacity, appears 10 times in the data, most of which are to describe people who are qualified and befitting in what they do, as in example13.

12) Guangzhou people are **pragmatic** and **hardworking**, and they also enjoy life and are

tolerant to multi-culture. (Jazz in October: from 'master's hall' to 'jazz night')

13) More significantly, **professional** Western Chef will be preparing imported beef ribs and local authentic pork ribs. (Crowne Plaza presents country western music fest)

4.2 Graduation Resources in language

The online city guide not only includes a wide use of linguistic resources to construe positive attitudinal meanings, but also those to up-scale the attitudinal meanings for greater degree of positivity. The combination of both attitude and graduation resources makes the online city guide highly glowing and appealing. As there are far more resources realizing force (242 instances) than focus (10 instances), we only discuss the subcategories of force conveying the sense of upscaling.

Force covers assessments of intensification and quantification. Intensification, which refers to the scaling of qualities and processes, is further divided into two lexicogrammatical classes of isolating and infusing, with the distinction turning on whether the scaling is realized by a separate lexical item or not (Martin and White 2005). Quantification is concerned with scaling related to number, mass or presence and extent, which is typically realized through an isolated, individual item modifying the graduated entity (Martin and White 2005). There are 108 instances of intensification that operate over qualities and 24 over processes, while there are 110 instances of quantification scaling entities. One of the most salient features is that the majority of intensification resources operating over quality are comparatives and superlatives, such as "better", "best", "most", "highest", "largest" etc., accounting for 69.4%. In example 14, superlative is used to realize upscaling of the intensity of the qualities of "being good". In addition to isolated intensifications, infused ones conveying the highest value are also easily found, such as "superb", "flawless", "unprecedented", "high-class" etc. These two types of resources emphasize the values of the things to the greatest extent; however, Yui Ling Ip (2008) also points out that exaggeration is reflected in such word choices to serve to glamorize tourist attractions, as if the chocolate desserts are "the best" (example 14), there can be nothing that can be compared to them. Needless to say, such exaggeration is commonly seen in the promotional genre.

14) Guests can taste **the best** chocolate desserts in the privacy of the lounge. (Where to have your afternoon tea in Guangzhou: a guide)

Another salient feature is that there is a prevalent use of quantification resources, especially those applying to grading number, such as "many", "unlimited", "hundreds of", "abundant", etc. The majority of the quantified entities are concrete. The quantification resources give readers the impression of being descriptive and thus objective, as exemplified in examples 15, yet it flags attitudinal meanings, as the worthiness of visiting these tourist sites is stressed, that is, there are a lot to be seen.

15) On both sides of the tree-lined Garden Avenue, there are **more than 150** examples of European architecture, mostly of British and French styles. (Chalking out a 72-hour stopover in leisure-oriented Guangzhou City)

To summarize, in the online city guide, the attitude resources in language are mainly consisting of those realizing appreciation, which are highly positive and mostly inscribed, emphasizing the reaction and the valuation of the tourist attractions in order to serve for the purposes of both informing and "selling". Graduation resources interact with attitude resources to upscale the degree of attitudinal meanings, which construes the writer as "maximally committed to the value position being advanced and hence as strongly aligning the reader into that value position" (Martin and White 2005: 152).

4.3 Attitude and Graduation in Images

In our data, accompanying visual images play an important role in conveying attitudinal and graduation meanings. There are altogether 287 images, among which, 239 are photographs, 7 tables, 15 GIF animations, 4 cartoon pictures, 6 posters, 9 collages, 7 illustrations and maps. Photographs dominate among all types of visual images, partly because their power to represent the reality naturally and objectively. However, as they also function to promote the tourist attractions, they are highly selective and the reality in the photos is mediated by photographers "using their photographic techniques, knowledge and artistic expertise to convey atmospheres, moods and feelings" (Scarles 2004: 43) in order to influence the viewers. Besides more images of various kinds can be found in the online city guide than printed brochures due to its unlimited space, another difference lies in its distinctive GIF animations which make the images dynamic and vivid, thus more appealing to viewers.

Compared with verbal texts, visual images are considered to be more powerful in triggering readers' attitudinal response because of different ideational meanings that can be afforded by two semiotic modes (Economou 2014). A close exploration of the visual images shows that the majority of them invoke positive appreciation (accounting for 81%), while only a few inscribe or invoke positive affect and judgment, the result of which is more or less in line with the proportion of attitude types of verbal texts.

Positive appreciation is conducive to building and reinforcing positive impressions in the viewers' mind about the city as appreciation is usually invoked in viewers as appraisers. The target of appreciation may be either the image as a whole or any depicted element in the image (Economou 2009). For the images in our data, the depicted elements include human behaviors and non-human participants, covering main attractions of the city, such as food (55 images), scenic spots (45), restaurants and leisure places (38), art and craft exhibits (30), transportation means and facilities (20), recreational and sports activities (15), performances (11), etc. Among them, non-human participants account for the majority, the subjects of which can please the viewers to the greatest extent, especially delicious food and scenic spots with local features. They also echo the evaluative stance in the verbal texts that Guangzhou is a food paradise and has a lot of fun to be explored.

The appreciation is mostly based on the viewers' reaction towards the targets in terms of its quality and impact as well as the valuation of the targets being assessed. For instance, Fig. 1 invokes positive appreciation values, especially in terms of quality. It depicts a plate of cakes as part of the afternoon tea offered by the hotel of Ritz-Carlton. It is rendered with high modality with fully saturated, highly modulated and diversified colors, maximum pictorial

details as well as brightness. Besides, it adopts "sensory coding orientation" (Kress & van Leeuween 2006:165), in which the pleasure principle dominates and viewers can enjoy the cakes sensually and affectively merely from their appearances. In the data, all the food depicted is either in close or medium shot, with high modality and sensory coding orientation, thus can be appreciated for their qualities. For Fig. 2, at the first glance, it also invokes appreciation in terms of the quality of the fried chicken as being "savory" and "enticing", yet that the chicken is still wrapped in the lotus leaf and hull made of clay also make it unique. Therefore, the photo can be appreciated in terms of its valuation as well. Fig. 3 portrays human participants and their performances. The characters are depicted in medium long shot which establishes social relationship between the characters and the viewers who can have a closer examination of them. The ideational tokens such as traditional clothing, make-ups and hairstyles of the depicted figures as well as the setting of the performance invoke appreciation values including quality assessment like "pretty", reaction like "fascinating" and valuation like "classic" and "distinct".

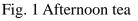Fig. 1 Afternoon tea   Fig. 2 Chicken   Fig. 3 A dream in red mansions

While most of the images invoke appreciation, inscribed affect can be found in 15 photos and collages. The emoters include both foreigners and domestic tourists, who are mostly portrayed as involving in the activities or interacting with tourist attractions. Happiness is inscribed through exaggerated jumping and facial expressions as in Fig. 4 and Fig. 5. The triggers are the activities they are involved in, such as running marathon and taking exercises. In Fig. 5, the medium close shot of the foreigner, the frontal camera angle, and the direct gaze of the man also create a close personal distance between the man and the viewers, which implies the welcoming and inviting of the viewers to join him. Thus, with inscribed affect, the emoters depicted function both as tourism attractions and facilitators to tourism.

Fig. 4 Marathon participant   Fig. 5 People taking exercises

Among all the images, there are still some that invoke positive judgment, especially in terms of capacity. In Fig. 6, the sportsman skateboarding on the sea can be positively judged in terms of capacity, more specifically, as being professional, for his attributes such as postures and skills acting as ideational tokens. It is the same with Fig. 7, in which the depiction of the chef's cooking in the environment of the open kitchen invoke positive judgment of the chef

as being capable and professional. As Economou (2009) points out, appreciation, judgment and affect can simultaneously interact with each other through complicated ways, which enables more complex evaluative stance and power in images than in language. For instance, besides judgment, Fig 6 can also invoke positive appreciation of the sportsman's action as being fantastic.

Fig. 6 sportsman   Fig. 7 chef

For the images in our data, visual attitude is also up-scaled mainly through graduation force. According to Economou (2009), there are three options for raising visual graduation force: quantification, repetition and intensification. Quantification in visual space covers three types: number, amount/mass/size and extent; intensification is achieved through brightness and vividness to scale textual quality (Economou 2009). For instance, the appreciation in Fig. 1 is up-scaled by repetition of six cakes, which are all individually distinct and can arouse viewers' appetite. Besides, visual quantification values such as the close up and the big sizes of the cakes as well as the intensification value of the brightness also raise the invoked appreciation of the cakes in terms of quality. Therefore, graduation and attitude coordinate to construe evaluative meanings. Specifically, force interacts with attitude to increase the degree of that attitude.

4.4 Intermodal Relationships

Through the above analysis of the evaluative meanings encoded by both the verbal and visual modes, it is found that in the majority of cases, both modes are attitudinally committed, which means evaluative meanings are taken up in both language and visual images. The images expand the verbal texts in various ways to co-articulate the evaluative stance, mainly through elaboration or extension. For Fig. 1, the attitude encoded in the verbal description of the afternoon tea covers appreciation, with evaluative lexis such as "luscious", "superb", "seasonal", "sumptuous", "crisp" to assess the quality of cakes. Therefore, the photo articulates the same attitude with the verbiage, with the image elaborating the verbiage. For Fig. 2, the evaluative lexis such as "new (cooking techniques)", "new (look)" and "trendy (food concept)" as in comparison to "traditional (food)" makes the attitudinal stance of the wrapping in the photo more clear and specific in terms of valuation. On the other hand, the image extends the attitudinal meanings in verbiage by adding the evaluation of the dish in terms of quality. For Fig. 3, the Yue opera is valued as "classic", "famous", "most-often performed", "highest-grossing" and "traditional" in the verbal texts, while the visual image not only conveys its valuation, but also adds the evaluation in terms of impact such as "fascinating" and quality such as "pretty".

Still in some cases, images complement the verbal texts to construe evaluative stance. In these cases, it is the images rather than the verbal texts that convey the evaluation meanings. For instance, in both Fig. 4 and Fig. 5, inscribed affect of "happiness" is represented, yet the verbal texts simply provide information without indication of affective meanings of the participants. Images mainly function to draw the attention of the viewers and invite them to participate in the activities.

5. Conclusion

This article has investigated the multimodal meaning making process of the online city guide of Guangzhou, especially focusing on how attitudinal and graduation meanings are construed through both language and visual images and how they interact with each other to align the readers into the value position of the writers. In this process, we also investigate how the identity of Guangzhou is constructed and promoted.

It is found that attitudinal and graduation resources are pervasively employed in both language and visual images and they play a critical role in stimulating tourist consumptions and promoting unique identity of the city. In both modes, positive appreciation resources to evaluate things are dominant among the three subsystems of attitude, with subcategories of reaction and valuation overwhelming that of composition. The frequently used reaction resources highlight and promote Guangzhou as a food paradise as well as a dynamic and vibrant city with various locales catering to different needs, considerate services and diverse recreational activities, while the valuation resources emphasize the distinct aspects of the city with contrasting images that are worthwhile to explore and experience. Besides, some valuation items are unique to the online city guide, which distinguish it from printed brochures. Though affect and judgment resources are not widely used in both modes, as direct sources to depict people's feelings and judge people's behaviors, they are conducive to infecting the audience subjectively and constructing the city identity through people's behaviors. Graduation resources, especially force, couple with attitude resources to upscale the volume of the attitude and strongly align the readers into the community of shared values. The language-image relation in most cases is co-instantiation, in which both modes commit to construing evaluative stance, with the evaluative meanings of visual images elaborating or extending those of verbal texts. In some cases, the intermodal relation is complementary, as the evaluative meanings conveyed by visual images endow the whole text evaluative stance, whereas the verbal texts merely offer factual information.

The analytical results are closely related to communicative purposes of the online city guide and the context of situation. Representations and evaluations of various aspects of the city are motivated by communicative purposes, which are to provide useful information and promote the city identity to foreigners with different cultural and social backgrounds so as to gain more economic opportunities. Therefore, highly positive evaluative stance is adopted and the audience is aligned in the same value position. It is found that the specific choices of evaluation resources are also connected with the field, tenor and mode, especially those frequently appeared valuation resources. As the cities in China are becoming increasingly homogeneous, it is no easy task to distinguish one city from another. Therefore, to stand out

among the cities, communication efforts need to be strengthened for city publicity and promotion. It is hoped that this multimodal exploration of the online city guide of Guangzhou can shed some light on how evaluation resources in various semiotic modes align the audience with the intended values in tourism discourse and thus facilitate city promotion.

Acknowledgement

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