

The Study on the National Image of China Shaped by the 2022 Beijing Winter Olympics from the Perspective of Appraisal System

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Abstract: The appraisal theory includes three subsystems: attitude, graduation and engagement system. Among them, the attitude system is the core of the appraisal theory. Since its proposal, scholars at home and abroad have analyzed the evaluation resources in various types of discourse, including applied research on news discourse, speech discourse, advertising discourse, and so on. China successfully hosted the 24th Winter Olympic Games in 2022. Domestic and foreign media have made a series of reports on the Beijing Winter Olympics. This study collected 20 news reports related to the Beijing Winter Olympics from the official website of China Daily from February 4th to February 21st, 2022. Based on the appraisal theory as the theoretical framework, it analyzed the high-frequency words in the reports from the attitude system to explore what kind of national image China shaped during the Winter Olympics.

The research results show that the news coverage of the Beijing Winter Olympics contains a large amount of evaluation resources. The most frequently used attitude resources in news reports are mostly positive ones, demonstrating China's enthusiasm for hosting the Beijing Winter Olympics and its ability to successfully host the event, highlighting China's image as a responsible major country.

Keywords: Appraisal theory; attitude system; Beijing Winter Olympic Games; national image construction; news reports

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1 Introduction

The successful hosting of the 24th Winter Olympic Games in Beijing in 2022, from February 4th to February 20th, 2022, brought China the attention of the international community. The 2022 Winter Games has greatly stimulated the enthusiasm of the Chinese people, enhanced national cohesion, provided an essential historical opportunity to accelerate the development of Beijing and brought China a chance to get closer to the center of the world stage. One of the important intentions of China in hosting the Beijing Winter Olympics is to enhance China's international image in the world, reduce stereotypes and prejudices against China from the outside world.

Among the numerous factors influencing the construction of a country's image, news dissemination plays a crucial role. News reports are the subjective dissemination of social hot events by editors, which will exert a subtle influence on readers' psychology, behavior and way of thinking(Liu & Han, 2004). Therefore, as one of the important official media in our country, China Daily has conducted all-round and detailed coverage of the Beijing Winter Olympics, which effectively spreads China's voice and reshapes its national image. This article uses the attitude system within the appraisal theory to analyze the news reports related to the Beijing Winter Olympics.

2 Theoretical Foundation

The appraisal theory was introduced by linguists Martin and White in the 1990s, and accordingly, the evaluation system was divided into three categories, namely the attitude system, the graduation system and the engagement system. The evaluation system is a complete set of resources that express attitudes through language(Wang & Ma, 2007).

The attitude system is the core of the appraisal theory, focusing on the response and assessment of behavior, and is subdivided into three subsystems: affect, judgment and appreciation. Interlocutors can systematically analyze the emotional elements in texts and discourse based on the attitude system. The evaluation resources within the graduation system mainly analyze the meaning of the discourse content by accommodating or restricting the viewpoints and positions of others. The evaluation resources within the engagement system can assess the interlocutor's attitude and viewpoint towards a certain matter or event through methods such as degree or measurement. This paper mainly focuses on the attitude system(Zhang & Hu, 2022). Its discourse analysis function is an important means to achieve interpersonal relationships and is of great significance to the construction of interpersonal meaning. Under the framework of evaluation theory, discourse is not only an objective expression of vocabulary, but also conveys attitudes and values through words(Wu & Zhao, 2022).

The attitude system is the core of the evaluation theory. Resources are classified into three categories based on the objects being evaluated: the evaluation of the value of things-appreciation, the evaluation of a person's character and behavior-judgment, and the expression of a person's emotions-affect(Li, 2004). Affect is the central component of the attitude system.

3 Research Methodology

3.1 Research Design

Corpus analysis can reveal the ideology as well as the attitudinal stance behind news discourse. This thesis is the analysis of selected news reports on Beijing 2022 Olympic Winter Games in China Daily from the perspective of Appraisal Theory. The research mainly uses qualitative methods with a combination of corpus collection. The first step of the research is to select thirty news reports to set up a small corpus. Additionally, the qualitative method is used to precisely present the analysis of these appraisal resources in selected news reports. In particular, the qualitative method is employed to analyze the features of distribution in terms of attitude system. The functions that appraisal

resources play in the selected data are also analyzed in detail by the qualitative method. Lastly, conclusion of the research can be got through the previous analysis.

3.2 Data Collection and Methodology

This paper chooses news reports from China Daily that are related to the Beijing 2022 Olympic Winter Games as research materials. During the Beijing 2022 Olympic Winter Games, that is from February 4th, 2022, to February 21th, 2022, the author downloaded 74 news reports from the China Daily website related to Beijing Olympic Winter Games.

Among the 74 reports, those on the results of individual competitions, those introducing commentators and the stories about volunteers were excluded. 20 reports on the opening and closing ceremonies, venues, equipment, transportation, epidemic prevention and control, and speeches of important figures of the Beijing Winter Olympics were selected, totaling 11,440 words.

4 China's Image Construction of The Beijing Winter Olympic Games

A good image can enhance national cohesion internally and constitute a country's cultural soft power externally, thereby influencing the comprehensive national strength. From the perspective of the subject, the construction of image discourse includes three types: self-shaping, other-shaping and co-shaping(Chen & Jin, 2022). On the one hand, this paper analyzes the evaluations of China by leaders of other countries and the public; on the other hand, analyzes the image China has built up by itself. The words in sports news reports often contain the attitudes and thoughts of journalists. By retrieving high-frequency words, researchers can intuitively observe the discourse features presented in the text and the basic stances and attitudes held by the language users.

4.1 Friendly and United Partner

The 2022 Winter Olympics represented China's openness, inclusiveness and confidence in the context of sustainable development. It not only showcases the spiritual outlook of the Chinese people, but also presents the vision and achievements of an open China in integrating with the world, highlighting the image of civilization and harmony, telling the world about China's civilization, culture and connotation, and convey the image of a friendly and civilized country.

The news reports convey a positive national image of China by citing the comments of different identities on China's happiness, satisfaction and trust in. The repeated use of the word "together", "welcome", "willingness", "satisfaction" and "cooperation" sends the message that the Games bring the world together.

Example 1

The Chinese people like to welcome best friends and family to their homes during the Spring Festival, and today we welcome our dearest friends from around the world to the Beijing Winter Olympics. Given the extra pressure that comes with the COVID-19 pandemic, our gathering here at the Beijing Winter Olympics is especially precious and warm. Together for a shared future. IOC head says Beijing is ready for Winter Olympic Games

Example 2

It was due to the full cooperation between China and the International Olympic Committee and the strong support of all stakeholders that Games. As a statement the Chinese embassy in the ROK issued on Monday in response to the fuss indicates, that fully embodies the friendly and cooperative relations between the two countries and the united Olympic family and contributes to the continuous development of bilateral relations.

Opening ceremony costumes honor not shame

Words in example 1 "like", "welcome" and "together" belong to the semantic expressions of happiness. China welcomes the world with open arms, from the perspective of all Chinese people, expressing the positive feelings of the Chinese people towards the hosting of the Beijing Winter Olympics. China's open arms build up a China that is confident, enthusiastic, wonderful in hosting the games and sincere in treating its guests. The word "especially" belongs to judgement resource, which is an affirmation of the warmth and strength that the Beijing Winter Olympics have conveyed to the people in the gloom of COVID-19. It has a clear positive meaning and portrays a positive image of China as a nation. In example 2, "friendly", "cooperation" and "cooperative" express the willingness to cooperate and the unity of the participants such as the event organizers, the actors and staff of the opening and closing ceremonies. China has always been an image of a helpful and friendly country.

High-frequency words such as mascot(s), panda(s), and cultural demonstrate the appeal of Chinese culture. The cute and endearing image of Bing Dwen Dwen is deeply loved by athletes at home and abroad as well as the general audience. A large number of positive words such as "love", "warm" and "cute" demonstrate the fondness for the cute image of the mascot Bing Dwen Dwen. It presents the image of a lovely and endearing cultural China.

Example 3

The cuddly, peaceful, bamboo-eating creatures have come to symbolize China.As for Bing Dwen Dwen's popularity, Cao said he expected it to be popular, but did not expect it to become so popular. "Its ice shell is cold, but the image looks warm and lovely, I believe this kind of warmth can be something everybody feels." said Cao.

Pandas true mascots for Games, biodiversity

The key to building a good international image of China lies in spreading China's fine traditional culture, Chinese wisdom and Chinese responsibility to the world through mascots. Words like "peaceful", "cuddly", "warm" and "lovely" in example 3 express the image of Bing Dwen Dwen. The endearing image of Bing Dwen Dwen is a microcosm of China's friendly, charming and lovely national image.

As the host of this Winter Olympics, it is naturally more necessary to express an attitude of pursuing cooperation. The Beijing Winter

Olympics not only drove more Chinese people to participate in ice and snow sports, but also brought people from all over the world together to show the passion and glamour of ice and snow sports, as well as the colourfulness of different cultures.

4.2 Efficient and Innovative Professional

The Beijing Winter Olympics utilized independently innovative high-end technologies to implement the concepts of green and sustainable development, demonstrating China's image of daring to innovate and being efficient and professional. Words like "amazing", "advanced", "modern", "impressive" and "technological" appeared frequently in the reports, reflecting the overall positive evaluation of the opening ceremony of this Olympic Games by the media. Among these words, "impressive" and "amazing" are used most frequently in the reports.

Example 4

The closed-loop management of the Beijing Winter Olympic Games is efficient and the city is ready for the opening of the Games, Thomas Bach, We can say Beijing is ready. The amazing venues are ready. The Olympic villages are ready."..... "I think the most impressive and the most important achievement in the preparations is the fact that more than 300 million Chinese people have been introduced to winter sports during the preparation for these Olympic Games," he said.

IOC head says Beijing is ready for Winter Olympic Games

The report mentioned that the opening ceremony under the background of the epidemic will be "simple" but "innovative". For the first time, artificial intelligence motion capture technology was employed, demonstrating China's innovative technologies and advanced level in the field of science and technology. President Bach's speech demonstrates his satisfaction with China hosting the Olympic Games this time. Words "amazing" and "impressive" show quick development of China. These high-technology innovation embodied in venue construction, infrastructure, technology, service and other aspects, reveals the new era of China's strong technology strength.

Example 5

..... the use of novel technologies in sports will help improve the quality and effectiveness of sports development and promote deepened integration of mass fitness and health. Take the impressive and amazing Big Air Shougang for example.

"The fastest ice" showcases fruits of innovation

Positive judgement resources "improve" and "promote" in example 5 directly showed that through the organization and implementation of the "Science and Technology Winter Olympics", China has overcome a number of key core technologies, transformed loads of green low-carbon technologies, and built a batch of demonstration projects. The word "impressive" adopted by the journalist shows that Big Air Shougang realized the reuse of competition venues and industrial heritage. It is the first venue in the history of the Winter Olympics to be permanently retained and used. In 2008, Shougang was closed in order to create a green environment. While in the Beijing Winter Olympics, it appeared in front of the world with a brand new gesture. The creative design of "Big Air" adheres to the concept of sustainable development and frugality.

China has successfully demonstrated its talent and ability to the international community. The successful hosting of the Winter Olympics demonstrates China's commitment and responsibility as a major country. It demonstrates China's speed, strength and efficiency as well.

4.3 Safe and Trustworthy Responsible

In the context of the epidemic, the proportion of attitude resources can better reflect the attitude tendencies of media in various countries towards fighting the epidemic(Deng & Yang, 2022). China has taken strict measures to ensure the safety of competitors during the Olympic Games. During the Winter Olympics, the media's news reports on the epidemic mostly utilized affect resources and appreciation resources. Words "effective", "satisfaction", "believe", "healthy" and "safe" appear many times in reports. Among all 20 news reports, the word "safe" appears 33 times. China still held the Winter Olympics as normal under the circumstances of the epidemic, which indicates that China has made thorough preparations to deal with all kinds of unexpected situations.

Example 6

Bell said that she had concerned about eating in the dining hall before arriving at the village, but now she feels very safe. "... the people that I've been talking feel very safe." China is relying on science-based and targeted epidemic prevention measures to protect the health and safety of all participants. We have overcome many difficulties and made huge efforts to ensure the smooth operation of the Beijing Winter Olympics.

Beijing Olympics: Unity is the solution to global threats

Example 7

"We can feel very safe in the closed loop despite challenges of the global pandemic," he added. "This closed loop so far is highly efficient." "I think that we all witness to the fact that China is doing everything to make the Games safe for every participants."

IOC head says Beijing is ready for Winter Olympic Games

These resources not only demonstrate the international community's positive support for the Beijing Winter Olympic Games, but also reflects the fact that China's strong comprehensive national power and international influence. In example 6, "overcome" and "smooth" express China's determination to overcome all the difficulties and ensure the smooth holding of the Beijing Winter Olympics, which is conducive to the construction of an image of a country that is not afraid of difficulties and is positive. Words "effective" and "safe" show China's executive ability. Athletes use "safe" to praise the epidemic prevention measures of the Winter Olympic Village, believing that China provided a high-quality event experience while ensuring safety. In example 7, the president of the International Olympic Committee, Bach, highly praised China's epidemic prevention measures. He uses "safe" and "efficient" to show his trust and satisfaction to China's measures during the Games. It is China's strong willpower and execution that enable the 2022 Winter Games to be completed successfully. China has

demonstrated to the world through strict epidemic prevention measures, advanced technological means and efficient execution capabilities that can still ensure the safe in the context of the epidemic, thereby shaping a reliable, safe and responsible national image.

It is essential to express the crucial role of the Beijing Winter Olympics in promoting global solidarity and safeguarding people's lives, helping to boost the confidence of people around the world to unite to overcome difficulties, gathering the great power to jointly overcome the epidemic, and demonstrating China's global aspirations and sense of responsibility.

5 Conclusion

The data indicates that the resources of positive attitudes are much more than those of negative attitudes. Among all attitude resources, appreciation resources are used the most, while judgement resources are used the least. This paper indicates that there are many expressions in news reports about the quality, influence and social value of the Beijing Winter Olympics. The use of these resources conveys positive signals to domestic and foreign audiences, proves the positive impact of the successful hosting of the Beijing Winter Olympics, and builds a positive national image of China. The analysis results show that China Daily has successfully constructed a positive national image of "friendly and united", "efficient and innovative" and "safe and trustworthy" through its related reports on the Winter Olympics. The news reports of the Beijing Olympic Winter Games have shown China's positive international image in the world and have reduced stereotypes and prejudices about China. By the analysis of news reports on the Beijing Winter Olympics from the perspective of Appraisal Theory, the huge efforts that China has put into can be seen better, and contributions that China has made to stimulate the development of the Olympics can be known better as well as news discourse can be understood more deeply.

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