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**A Multimodal Discourse Analysis of English Tourism**

**Websites as a Destination Branding Medium: A**

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**A Multimodal Discourse Analysis of English Tourism  
Websites as a Destination Branding Medium: A Case Study  
of London and Beijing**

**英语旅游网站目的地营销的多模态话语分析：以伦敦和北京为例**

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Under the Supervision of Professor Wu Geqi

Submitted to School of Foreign Languages, Hangzhou Normal University

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# **A Multimodal Discourse Analysis of English Tourism Websites as a Destination Branding Medium: A Case Study of London and Beijing**

## **ABSTRACT**

In the Internet age, tourism industry attaches greater importance to the construction of websites, which are used as an important way of providing potential visitors with information and promoting tourism attractions and services. The role of tourism websites in attracting international tourists is worth exploring.

This thesis, taking the official tourism websites of London and Beijing as the research objects, analyzes how the two websites brand the destinations with linguistic devices and images, and then discusses their destination marketing strategies. Firstly, based on Hyland's interactional metadiscourse analysis framework (2005b), the frequency and distribution of stance and engagement markers on the two websites are explored. Secondly, images are analyzed with the interactive meaning framework based on Kress & van Leeuwen's visual grammar theory (2006). Similarities and differences between the two websites are compared and contrasted, and branding strategies employed by the website designers are discussed.

The analysis yields the following findings. In terms of linguistic devices, stance and engagement markers are substantially employed by the two websites and the former outnumbers the latter. However, the frequency of stance markers on London website is higher than that on Beijing website, suggesting that London writers are more inclined to project themselves into the texts. In addition, London website prefers to adopt more reader pronouns, directives and questions than Beijing website, demonstrating a stronger sense of tourism branding of London website. In terms of images, London website prefers images that bring the viewer and participant closer. Comparatively, Beijing website uses fewer images and the images lack direct eye

contact. The use of metadiscourse markers and images suggests the different branding strategies employed by the two websites in two different cultures. With the influence of Western culture, London website tries to promote the city by inviting readers into the discourse and create an emotional resonance with them. In contrast, influenced by traditional Chinese culture, Beijing website tends to promote the city by conveying objective and authoritative information.

Finally, this thesis provides some suggestions for online tourism promotion in aspects of linguistic devices and images.

**Key Words:** tourism website; multimodal discourse analysis; interactional metadiscourse; visual grammar theory; destination branding

# 英语旅游网站目的地营销的多模态话语分析：以伦敦和北京为例

## 摘 要

互联网时代下，旅游网站的建设越来越受到重视。旅游网站是为潜在的游客提供景点信息，宣传旅游景点和服务的重要途径，其对吸引国际游客的作用值得探讨。

本文以伦敦和北京官方旅游网站为研究对象，分析两个网站分别如何使用话语和图片来推销目的地，并探讨其目的地营销策略。首先基于 Hyland 的互动元话语模式(2005b)，论文分析了网站中的立场及介入标记词的频率及分布，然后基于 Kress 和 van Leeuwen 的视觉语法理论下的互动意义理论框架(2006)分析了图片。研究比较得出旅游网站多模态使用的异同并探讨网站设计者的营销策略。

研究表明，在话语方面，两个网站都使用了立场标记词和介入标记词，且前者用得比后者多。伦敦旅游网站比北京网站使用了更多的立场标记词，表明伦敦网站倾向于将作者自己投射到文本中。且伦敦使用更多读者指称、指令语和提问形式，体现了伦敦网站具有更强的营销意识。在图片方面，伦敦旅游网站首选能够拉近观众距离的图片，相比之下，北京网站使用较少的图片，且图片缺乏直接的眼神交流。元话语和图片的使用反映了两个网站在不同文化影响下采取的不同营销策略。在西方文化的影响下，伦敦网站试图通过邀请读者进入文本以及与读者产生感情共鸣的方式来推销城市，相比之下，在中国传统文化的影响下，北京网站则希望通过呈现客观和权威的信息来推销城市。

最后，本文从话语和图片两个方面对旅游网站营销提出一些建议。

**关键词：**旅游网站；多模态话语分析；互动元话语；互动意义理论；目的地营销



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# CHAPTER ONE INTRODUCTION

## 1.1 Research Background

With the development of the tourism industry, an increasing number of foreign visitors travel to China. Regarded as a sunrise industry in China, tourism becomes a new growth point of the national economy and plays an increasingly important role in driving national economic growth. As early as 2001, the World Tourism Organization forecasted that China would be the world's largest tourism destination by the year 2020 (Zhang Guohong, 2001, p1). As tourism enters a new strategic opportunity period, more and more Chinese cities propose new strategic goals to build world-class tourist destinations or world-famous tourist cities. Many cities devote to improving their city image for domestic and foreign tourists by promoting their tourism attractions and products. For example, Beijing has proposed the diversification of tourism resources and facilitation of tourism services. Shanghai has proposed the optimization of the tourism industry (Zhao Ziyan, 2017, p3). It can be said that their tourism development status is representative of the development of other popular tourist cities.

A few years ago, the traditional and original marketing channels for tourism destinations were television advertising, public relations and brochures. With the development of modern science and technology, the Internet has become one of the most convenient ways to promote goods and services. As Li (2010) noted, the Internet has become a significant sale and primary distribution channel in the tourism industry. Many Chinese tourism sites have created their own websites to distribute the English version of tourism texts to attract tourists from foreign countries. Such English tourism websites are obviously oriented for potential foreign tourists who may be interested in Chinese tourism attractions, for it gives potential foreign tourists some valuable information and helps them to understand the tourism destination. In this situation, the tourism website in English could be the first window through which potential foreign tourists get to know about the scenic spot. Therefore, the importance

of the English version of tourism websites should not be neglected. Beijing, the capital of China, is one of the world's leading centers for politics, economy and business and culture. Through the years' development, Beijing has become an international metropolis. At the beginning of the 21st century, Beijing proposed the strategic goal of building an international metropolis; that is, Beijing decided to use 10 years or so to construct the basic framework of a modern international metropolis (Liu Yufang, 2008, p104). Eight foreign languages versions can be found on Beijing tourism website, which are designed to let foreign tourists know more about Beijing tourism attractions and attracting them to visit Beijing.

Table 1-1 Number of Tourists Visiting Beijing from 2010 to 2018 (in millions)

	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
Foreign visitors	4.9	5.2	5	4.5	4.3	4.2	4.2	4.0	4.0
Total visitors	22.7	133.4	141.2	152.1	160.4	166.8	285	297	294
Percentage	21.6%	3.9%	3.5%	3.0%	2.7%	2.5%	1.5%	1.4%	1.4%

Data Sources: <https://www.statista.com/>

According to the data in Table 1-1, the total number of tourists to Beijing from 2010 to 2018 is increasing, but the proportion of foreign visitors is not on the rise. Table 1-1 tells us that the total number of foreign visitors to Beijing is about 4 million and does not increase significantly each year, accounting for only around 2% in the total number, which is much lower than that in other international metropolis like London. Therefore, Beijing's international development still has a long way to go. Specifically, how to improve its appeal to foreign tourists and brand the destinations around the world are the topics worth studying.

This thesis intends to analyze how Beijing tries to promote its tourism attractions to international tourists. To find out whether the website is designed effectively or not, the official tourism website of London is taken as a reference. The reasons why the tourism website of London is used can be explained as follows. First, the number of

foreign tourists in London continues to grow each year, and reaches as high as 20 million these years which is five times that of Beijing. Second, the number of foreign tourist accounts for 60% of the total number, which means London has succeeded in attracting foreign tourists (see Table 1-2). Based on the analysis, the thesis tries to propose possible suggestions for tourism website construction.

Table 1-2 Number of Tourists Visiting London from 2010 to 2018 (in millions)

	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
Foreign visitors	14.7	15.3	15.5	16.8	17.4	18.6	19.1	19.8	20.7
Total visitors	26.1	26.4	27.6	29.1	28.8	31.5	31.2	32	32.8
Percentage	56.3%	58.0%	56.2%	57.7%	60.4%	59.0%	61.2%	61.9%	63.1%

Data Sources: <https://www.statista.com/>

## 1.2 Research Objectives and Significance

This thesis intends to find out how Beijing tries to promote its tourism attractions to international tourists by comparing its official tourism website ([www.visitbeijing.com.cn](http://www.visitbeijing.com.cn)) with that of London ([www.visitlondon.com](http://www.visitlondon.com)), both of which are local government-sponsored tourism websites. In order to make a detailed and comprehensive analysis of the similarities and differences between the two tourism websites, the following three questions are to be answered:

- (1) What are the similarities and differences between London and Beijing tourism websites in terms of linguistic devices and images?
- (2) What branding strategies are adopted by London and Beijing respectively?
- (3) What are the possible reasons for the differences between the two destinations in promoting tourism attractions?

It is believed that such a study is necessary and significant in that we can recognize Beijing tourism website is different from London tourism website in terms of multimodality.

The significance can be concluded from the following two aspects: (1) Theoretically, different from previous discourse analysis based on language, this

thesis analyzes the websites on a multimodal level, which can help expand and enrich discourse analysis. (2) Practically, this thesis intends to help Beijing tourism website designers to understand the branding strategies of overseas popular tourism discourse, and hence to help Beijing tourism website play a larger role in promoting the tourism attractions by attracting more international tourists.

### 1.3 Research Methodology

Both quantitative and qualitative methods are involved in this study. This thesis selects eight sections on London and Beijing tourism websites as the source of data (four in London and four in Beijing), 9,347 in total (4,651 in London and 4,696 in Beijing). The shortened form “London website” and “Beijing website” are used in this thesis to refer to the two tourism websites respectively. Also, “London writer” and “Beijing writer” are used to refer to the designers of the two websites respectively. The author chooses four sections from Beijing websites. One is “About Beijing” which is a general introduction to Beijing, and the other three are “Things to do”, “Routes and strategy” and “Accommodation” which are top attractions, tour routes and accommodation. The author chooses “Glance at London”, “Things to do”, “Traveler information” and “Accommodation” from London website, which are similar in content with the sections on Beijing website. The number of words and images in each section is displayed in Table 1-3.

Table 1-3 Number of Words and Images on London and Beijing Tourism Websites

London	Sections	Glance at London	Things to Do	Traveler Information	Accommodation	Total
	Number of words	585	780	2360	926	4651
	Number of images	7	42	15	21	85
Beijing	Sections	About Beijing	Things to Do	Routes and Strategy	Accommodation	Total
	Number of words	1367	1802	982	545	4696
	Number of images	2	4	4	4	14



Since the discourses on Beijing website are daily updated, the discourses and images analyzed in this thesis are selected from January 1st, 2019 to December 31st, 2019. In order to make the analysis comparable, we also select the content on London website within the same period. First, based on the interactional metadiscourse analysis framework, the author manually classifies and calculates the occurrences and ratio (per 1,000 words) of stance and engagement markers on the two websites. Next, the frequency and distribution of these markers on the two websites are calculated and analyzed respectively. Then, different features and functions are discussed. As for images, this thesis also selects images from eight sections on two websites as the source of data, with the numbers of 99 in total (85 for London and 14 for Beijing). And then the author analyzes the images from the perspective of interactive meaning with examples. After the similarities and differences between the two websites are compared and contrasted, the thesis discusses the possible reasons and proposes branding strategies for online tourism promotion.

#### 1.4 Organization of the Thesis

This thesis is made up of six chapters. The first chapter serves as a general introduction to the whole research background, purpose and significance of this study, and the research methods. Then, in the second chapter, the research of tourism websites is reviewed. The third chapter describes the analytical framework used in this study. Chapter four presents the study of the similarities and differences of linguistic devices and images on two tourism websites in terms of interactional metadiscourse and interactive meaning. Then, the next chapter discusses the findings and branding strategies. In the end, this thesis concludes the major findings of this study and provides some suggestions for online tourism promotion. After that the limitations of this research and suggestions for future academic efforts are put forward.

## CHAPTER TWO LITERATURE REVIEW

### 2.1 The Concept of Destination Branding

The increasing rise of destination branding studies can be traced back to ancient times. In 1998, in the Travel and Tourism Research Association's Annual Conference, destination branding started to gain visibility (Blain, Levy, & Ritchie, 2005, p329). Ritchie and Ritchie (1998, p113) have defined a "destination brand" as a name, symbol, logo, word mark or other graphic that both identifies and differentiates the destination, and it conveys the promise of a memorable travel experience which helps to deepen visitors' impressions. In order to brand destinations, different promotional instruments can be used as destination marketing strategies, among which printed magazines and tourism websites are regarded as the significant communication tools for destination branding (Buhalis & Law, 2008, p612; Wu, 2018, p164).

The printed materials, including brochures, magazines, newspapers, are used to be the main approaches to promoting tourism products and services. Even in the first decade of the 21st century, printed material about tourism information still played a significant role in destination promotion. Accordingly, most studies focused on the analysis of printed material (e.g., Ding Jianxin, 2004, p32; Koller, 2008, p431; Thurlow & Jaworski, 2007, p50). Scholars have studied the role of printed materials in tourism marketing, including travel brochures, commercial advertisements, travel agency information, etc. (Yang Min & Ji Aimei, 2003). Some scholars have investigated the role of travel brochures in tourism promotion (Molina & Esteban, 2006), and most of them have investigated the influence of language in tourism promotion and the crucial role of brochures in tourism promotion (Holloway & Plant, 1992; Yamamoto & Gill, 1999). Despite the visual advertisements, the written text performs a key function in the tourists' decision-making process. Also some researchers have investigated tourism discourse of printed magazines and newspaper travelogues (e.g., Ding Jianxin, 2004; Liu Huimei & Yang Shoukang, 1996; Thurlow & Jaworski, 2007; Yang Min & Ji Aimei, 2003). Ding Jianxin (2004) studies the role

of interpersonal expressions in English travel advertisements. Thurlow & Jaworski (2007) mention the role of language in tourism promotion. Yang Min & Ji Aimei (2003) make a comparative analysis between English and Chinese tourism texts, focusing on language forms and sentence structure with samples of three countries, and offering a new perspective for English and Chinese discourse analysis. Liu Huimei & Yang Shoukang (1996) study English tourism texts from a cultural angle.

## 2.2 Studies on Destination Branding through Websites

As we know, brochures can only provide limited information (Chiou, Wan, & Lee, 2008, p146). As advances in media technology have led to the development of new media, most visitors can read travel information and view photos of the attractions through the Internet to experience tourist attractions in advance. Thus, the preferred medium for promoting tourism sites has gradually changed from traditional brochures to the Internet. It is widely believed that the Internet can serve as an effective marketing tool for tourism (Buhalis, 2003; Buhalis & Law, 2008). Bastida & Huan (2014), based on a survey on the tourism websites of Hong Kong, Shanghai, Beijing, and Taipei, conclude that some tourists may have no particular ideas about where to visit, and the websites might help them collect information of tourist destinations so as to make final decisions. Therefore, the author will review the studies on tourism websites from the commercial marketing perspective and linguistic perspective.

### 2.2.1 Studies on Tourism Websites from the Commercial Marketing Perspective

Among the extensive studies on tourism websites, many prior studies have been related to website evaluation, website marketing, brand image, website discourse analysis, translation, web design, etc. (Chik, 2016; Fernández-Cavia, 2015; Horng & Tsai, 2010; Ip, Law, & Lee, 2011; Liang Haowen, 2019, etc.). Among these researches, tourism website evaluation and website marketing form the major part.

Studies on website evaluation mainly focus on the quantity and quality of information on the website. For example, Ip, Law & Lee (2011) review the

methodology of evaluating tourism websites and develop a framework for website evaluation based on the investigation conducted between 1996 and 2009. The framework is based on the stage, characteristics and effectiveness of the tourism website. Li & Wang (2011) conduct a study to measure the effectiveness of the American official tourism website and offer suggestions. The results show that American tourism websites are not able to effectively use information technology to support more marketing operations. Novabos, Matias & Mena (2015) conduct a user-centric assessment of the provincial tourism website in the Philippines and develop a tool called the user-perceived quality scale as a standard tool for evaluating tourism websites. By using this assessment scale, researchers can assess the effectiveness of destination websites based on how well the websites are perceived by target users. The higher the score generated by the tool, the more effective the website is in representing the destination.

Li Junyi (2010) sets up an online tourist destination evaluation system to evaluate official tourism websites of 31 provinces, wherein Chinese provincial official tourism websites are found to show weak marketing and interactive functions. Xie Zeyang (2017) makes a website evaluation in Sichuan tourism attractions, which demonstrates that “the quality of high-level tourism website is rather low and the quality of tourism websites with long-standing reputation is higher than others”. Huang Jie & Wang Liming (2017) do a constructivism content analysis of Xinjiang official tourism website. They explore how such elements on the website as narrative texts, photos, news and videos help to build the image of Xinjiang, and propose strategies for further construction of Xinjiang tourism. Cai Libin & Wu Nan (2017) compare Chinese, American and Spanish tourism websites, and introduce an advertising communication model to tourism to analyze the relation of tourism websites with tourists’ perception and attitude.

As for website tourism marketing, researchers provide valuable theoretical and practical implications for academics and practitioners in the field of destination marketing and management. Nearly half of the articles published in the leading tourism journals cover marketing-related content (Dolnicar & Ring, 2014, p40;

Pollock, 1995, p66; Souiden, Ladhari, & Chiadmi, 2017, p54; Walle, 1996, p72). Chaulagain, Wiitala, & Fu (2019) make market research to assess the image of the tourist destinations to visitors' satisfaction and loyalty.

Chinese studies of website marketing mainly concentrate on the impact of official websites and other web channels on brand images of the destinations (Chen Ye, Li Tianyuan, & Zhao Fan, 2014, p31). For example, Chen Ye (2014) examines the tourism information gained by tourists in a variety of web channels to affect the tourists' perception of destination images. He shows that the interface of a tourism website acts as the direct communication between the website and its users who can access information through text, voice, image, graph, and layout. In this process, the web interface of a tourist destination can make a difference in the tourist experience and brand image. Some studies are mainly concerned with web design and technology (Dou Wenyu, 2007, p31; Lee, Cai, & O'Leary, 2006, p816). For instance, Lee (2006) analyzes brand images of 50 official websites and identified slogan, photo and oral expression as website brand building elements. Dou Wenyu (2007) identifies web interface design as another major component of website brand building. In all, these researches give a technical and platform support to web marketing of tourist destinations.

We can see that most of the above-mentioned studies are related to economic and commercial aspects, whereas small parts of research have been concerned with the study of discourse or language in tourism studies.

### 2.2.2 Studies on Tourism Websites from the Linguistic Perspective

Since the role of discourse on the website has been noticed, studying tourism websites from the perspective of discourse analysis has attracted the attention of scholars at home and abroad, leading to abundant research findings. A large number of evaluation expressions in tourism discourse have drawn many scholars to analyze the tourism discourse with the appraisal theory (Pierini, 2009, p95). Pierini (2009) studies the collocation of adjectives by corpus. It shows the choice of adjectives,

along with their pragmatic meaning and sentence patterns play a fundamental role in the construction of the tourism discourse. Malenkina & Ivanov (2018) analyze the linguistic strategies used on the official tourism websites of the Spanish Autonomous Communities for destination management, marketing and branding. They regard language as a catalyst for tourism promotion. Tactical language on tourism websites helps to persuade potential visitors to use the tourism products and services. Magyar (2015) uses systemic functional linguistics to make a contrastive study for online tourism promotion. It studies the organization of the websites and their webpages, as well as the lexico-grammatical and visual features of their promotional messages, and it mainly focuses on Romania, Spain and Great Britain's institutional and commercial websites. Kaltenbacher (2006) presents a corpus analysis of a tourist text based on the theory of systematic functional linguistics, and it consists of Austrian, American and Scottish websites. Chen Gang (2008) proposes that strategies should be taken into consideration in translating Chinese tourism texts into English. From the diachronic development, such perspectives including critical discourse analysis, appraisal theory, multimodal analysis and cross-cultural comparative study are based on earlier social linguistics and systemic functional linguistics.

As discourse analysis theory becomes a heated topic, Chinese scholars have paid more attention to the tourism discourse. (Chen Gang, 2008; Feng Jieyun & Gong Jie, 2016, p20; Kang Ning, 2012, p2; Tian Hailong, 2012; Zhao Defang, 2019, p126; Zhong Hong, 2007, p82;) Zhong Hong (2007) discusses the function of discourse to construct tourism resources. Kang Ning (2012) studies website tourism texts based on SFL and the appraisal theory. He compares online texts from America, UK and China in terms of sentence structures and lexical grammar. Tian Hailong (2012) sets up a discourse-based tourism study paradigm in his book, where a priority is given to social functions of tourism discourse and how tourism activity participants construct tourism resources and activities through language. Feng Jieyun & Gong Jie (2016) study American tourists' perception of the image of tourism destinations and analyze characteristics of discourse through online travel notes posted on major tourism websites. Zhao Defang (2019) reviews tourism discourse analysis at home and abroad,

especially the discourse analysis on tourism destinations. Others are studies on social functions to the tourism discourse, like the function of the tourism discourse to build the image of a tourist destination. Through a review of tourism discourse analysis at home and abroad, we can see that linguists can use a variety of methods and adopt different perspectives to analyze tourism discourse under the instruction of all kinds of discourse analysis theories.

In addition to the above studies which are related to the meaning and connotation of language, relations between language and culture are also considered by some researchers. Previous studies on this topic were mainly carried out from the perspectives of translation and intertextuality (Li Qian & Luo Tianni, 2012, p112). From the perspective of translation, Lin Fei (2018) shows how texts of tourism websites in Fujian province gratified visitors' needs through the discourse strategy and indicated the crucial role of the translation quality of texts of the tourism websites in tourism development. She further points out proper adjustment to their English translations to make the translations work out. Xing Jie & Zhang Qun (2017) analyze text translations of bilingual tourism websites in Guangdong, Taiwan and Hong Kong to present new ideas for tourism promotion translation. From the perspective of intertextuality, Hu Bin (2015) analyzes the text of Fujian and London official tourism websites based on the long- and short-term culture theory, revealing cultural values of the two countries. Bastida & Huan (2014) use a multi-factor statistical analysis method to study the current situation of Chinese provincial tourism websites, including Beijing, Tianjin, and Shanghai. The findings show that most tourism websites offer multiple languages and different styles in view of different cultures so that attractive and useful tourism websites are more likely to turn a potential tourist into an actual tourist. Advice proposed for the setup of tourism websites is provided. It shows that language and culture play an increasingly crucial role in tourism.

Websites combine mainly verbal and visual codes in sending messages. Regardless of the language's informative or persuasive functions, the image of a destination in tourists' minds is created and influenced particularly by visual modes of communication (Molina & Esteban 2006, p1040). It should not be overlooked that

images play an important role in convincing people to visit a place. As people also use a mass of photos and videos to make better promotion, many scholars have studied the tourism discourse with the multimodal analysis in recent years (Dann, 1996; Hallett & Kaplan-Weinger, 2010; Maci, 2007, p41; Nekic, 2014). A few scholars have studied the tourism text by integrating critical discourse analysis and multimodal analysis. For instance, Dann (1996) divides the tourism discourse into three multimodal categories: speech, vision, and combination of speech and vision. He points out the role of tourism discourse in promotion. Some studies combine speech and symbol and then show multimodal presentation of tourist activities on tourism websites (Maci, 2007; Nekic, 2014). Hallett & Kaplan-Weinger (2010) employ critical discourse analysis, social constructivism and multimodal discourse analysis in the case study on English tourism websites, substantiating that tourism text can function to construct identities of the state, society and tourists. The multimodal analysis of the two codes helps to interpret the information better.

To sum up, previous studies reveal that most of the studies largely concentrate on the economic and technical aspects, and some scholars have begun to pay attention to linguistics aspects such as translation, language structure and culture. In the first decade of the 21st century, researchers gradually emphasize multimodal analysis, but compared with website design and marketing, a lack of research has been noted in regard to multimodal analysis. Besides, there are few comparative analyses on Chinese and Western tourism websites under different cultural contexts. Specifically, most scholars have ignored cultural characteristics of different language editions of websites.

In order to enrich the tourism website studies, the author thinks that more efforts can be paid to multimodal analysis of tourism websites while considering the cultural differences. Such a study can allow us to investigate the functions of promotional strategies adopted by the website and can clarify the role of language resources in tourism. So this thesis is intended to study promotional tourism discourse by comparing the promotional strategies of two websites from different cultural contexts from the perspective of multimodal analysis theory.



## CHAPTER THREE ANALYTICAL FRAMEWORK

On the basis of the belief that tourism websites are designed to promote and market tourism products and destinations, which are rich in interaction with potential tourists and try to maintain appropriate social links with readers, interactional metadiscourse is the major object of tourism website discourse analysis in this thesis. Furthermore, tourism website promotion is multimodal. In other words, the tourism destination on websites gradually presents various symbols like images apart from the text. The process by which visitors are browsing the website is actually a process of decoding multimodal elements. In this thesis, we mainly focus on the interpersonal meaning between the website designers and potential readers, so the interactional meaning of metadiscourse and interactive meaning of images are going to be discussed in this thesis.

### 3.1 Framework for Analyzing Interactional Metadiscourse

#### 3.1.1 Definitions and Classification of Metadiscourse

The term metadiscourse was firstly coined by Harris in 1959, who proposed metadiscourse as a way of understanding the language in use, a kind of communication between the author and the reader. The concept has been further developed by Williams (1981), Vande Kopple (1985) and Crismore (1989), who propose some features in discourse like additions, hedges, engagement markers to show how writers intrude into the text to influence their readers' reception of it. Although scholars have proposed various definitions and classifications based on their own understandings (Hyland, 2005a), one thing is in common; that is, essentially metadiscourse embodies the idea that communication is more than just the exchange of information, goods or services. It involves attitudes, personalities and assumptions of those who are communicating.

This thesis is inclined to adopt Hyland's (2000, p109) definition, which views metadiscourse as discourse about discourse or talk about talk. The definition emphasizes two points: interactive metadiscourse and interactional metadiscourse. On

the one hand, metadiscourse shows the coherent and convincing language strategies adopted by the author. On the other hand, metadiscourse presents communicative functions. The same as other scholars (e.g., Vande Kopple, 1985; Crismore, et al.1993), Hyland (2005a) classifies metadiscourse into textual discourse and interpersonal metadiscourse.

Interactive metadiscourse can help guide readers to pay attention to the ways of organizing discourse, including transition markers, frame markers, endophoric markers, evidentials and code glosses while interactional metadiscourse includes hedges, boosters, attitude markers, self-mentions and engagement markers. In the tourism discourse, authors promote tourism services and products to readers through persuasion. This is a way of interaction between authors and readers, which uses many interactional metadiscourses. Therefore, interactional metadiscourse is the object of analysis in this study.

### 3.1.2 Interactional Metadiscourse

According to Hyland (2005b, p50), “interactional metadiscourse is essentially evaluative and engaging, and responding to an imagined dialogue with others.” When writers use interactional metadiscourse, they are dedicated to making their views explicit and involving readers by allowing them to respond to the text.

Interactional metadiscourse, as an important branch of metadiscourse, so far has been proved to possess a significant force in adding the text’s persuasiveness. Writers typically use interactional metadiscourse to enhance the persuasive effect of text (Fu & Fu, 2014). Studies (e.g., Hyland, 2005b) have shown that interactional metadiscourse occurs commonly in articles of social sciences.

Hyland (2005b) classifies five sub-categories of interactional metadiscourse as hedges, boosters, attitude markers, self-mentions and engagement markers. “Hedges are those markers which indicate the writer’s decision to recognize other viewpoints and so hold back complete commitment to a proposition in a text. These markers stress the subjectivity of a position by allowing information to be presented as an

opinion rather than a fact and therefore open that position to negotiation.” (Hyland, 2005b, p52)

Boosters are words and expressions such as *clearly, indeed, of course, obviously* and *demonstrate* which allow writers to overlook alternatives, head off conflicting views and express their certainty in what they say. “These markers suggest that the writer recognizes potentially diverse positions but has chosen to narrow this diversity rather than enlarge it.” (Hyland, 2005b, p53) By closing down possible alternatives, boosters emphasize certainty.

Different from hedges and boosters that indicate the author’s epistemic attitude, attitude markers indicate the author’s affect and are signaled by attitude verbs like *agree, prefer* and *accept*, adverbs like *luckily, hopefully* and adjectives like *appropriate, remarkable*.

According to Hyland (2005b), self-mentions are used to indicate the degree of explicit author presence in the text measured by the frequency of first-person pronouns and possessive adjectives such as *I, me, we, our* and so on.

Unlike the above markers that are mainly used to indicate the author’s stance, engagement markers are devices that explicitly address readers, either to focus their attention or include them as discourse participants. The engagement is realized through five elements: reader pronouns, personal asides, appeals to shared knowledge, directives and questions.

The analytical framework proposed by Hyland (2005b) is listed in Figure 3-1.

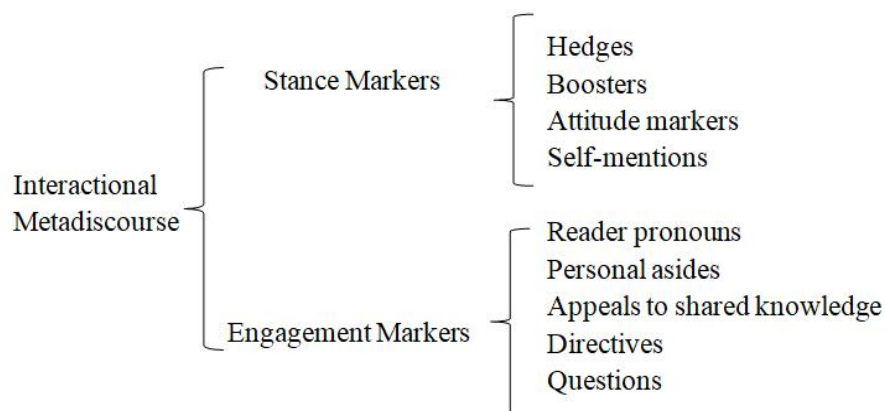


Figure 3-1 The Analytical Framework of Interactional Metadiscourse

(Hyland, 2005b, p52)

### 3.1.3 Analytical Framework of this Study

This study mainly follows Hyland's model, but some modifications are made after referring to other scholars' opinions.

Hedges can be categorized into accuracy-oriented hedges and commitment hedges. Accuracy-oriented hedges are restricted to those hedges that describe quantity, degree, frequency and time, such as *some*, *major*, *more than*. Commitment hedges limit writer's personal commitment by expressing a proposition's probability.

The boosters are divided into two groups: fact-asserting boosters and certainty-indicating boosters. Fact-asserting markers refer to those expressions that confidently state facts or beliefs, including fact-asserting nouns like *fact*, *evidence*, *demonstrate*, etc. Certainty-indicating markers are expressions that show firm conviction like modal verbs, including *can*, *must*, etc. (Wu Geqi, 2010, p50-52).

Attitude markers are categorized into emotive markers and judgmental markers. Emotive markers are words or phrases which describe writers' emotional states, such as *hope*, *preference*, *surprise*, etc. Judgmental markers show writers' personal judgments, such as the importance and effectiveness of a certain point, like *important*, *useful* and *successful*.

Self-mentions are divided into first person and third person. First person is realized by the first person pronoun, including singular pronouns *I* and plural pronouns *we* and *our*. Third person is realized by personal pronouns and nouns, like *the city*, *the visitors*.

Engagement markers are divided into reader pronouns, directives and questions in this thesis. Since there is no shared knowledge or personal asides on two websites, so we only focus on the other three engagement markers. Reader pronouns indicate the reader's presence in a discourse. To some extent, as the symbol of achieving virtual dialogue with the reader, reader pronouns are the most effective ways to realize interaction. The typical reader pronouns like *you*, *your* bind writers and readers together and increase the intimacy. Both the writer and the reader are participants of virtual communication within tourism discourse. Directives aim to guide readers to

perform an action. Imperative sentences appear the most frequently in directives. It aims to tell potential tourists what should do and what needs to be noticed. Questions are used to arouse readers' interest. It is easy for readers to get involved in the whole discourse as participants by sharing their curiosity on the writer's arguments. Questions contribute to the intimate interaction between writers and readers.

Based on the explanation of five elements for interactional metadiscourse, the modified analytical framework for it in the thesis is established (see Figure 3-2).

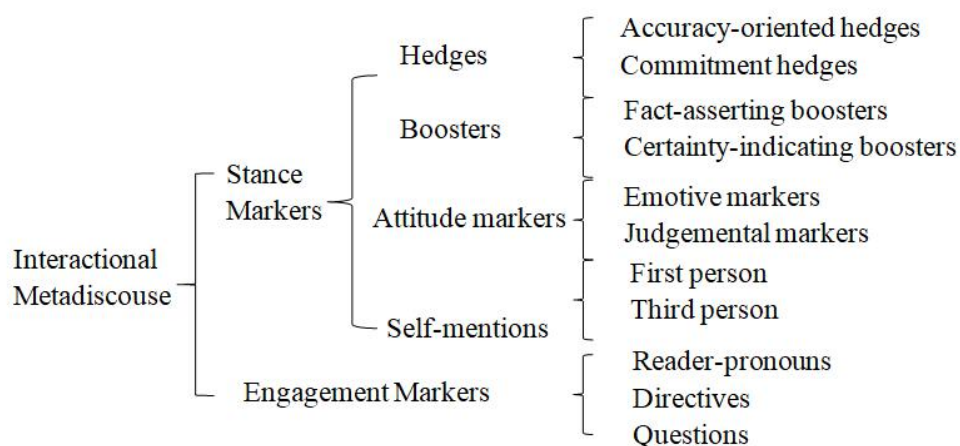


Figure 3-2 The Modified Analytical Framework of Interactional Metadiscourse

### 3.2 Framework for Analyzing Visual Image

Every image plays an important part in some interaction and constitutes a recognizable kind of text (Jewitt and Oyama, 2001, p140; Pinar Sanz, 2006, p136). Kress & van Leeuwen (2006) use Halliday's metafunctions to study visual communication by holding the view that "visuals simultaneously fulfill the same three main metafunctions: ideational, interpersonal and textual as discourse, which are called representational, interactive and compositional meanings in the case of image". Based on the grammar of visual design, they propose a number of analytical tools for interpreting visual language. In other words, the tools are used to describe how things in an image are combined into meanings, and how images encode social behavior and interaction. The purpose of image analysis is to explain what people do with images.

This study borrows Kress & van Leeuwen's (2006) opinion, yet in order to analyze the interactions between readers and images, only the interactive meaning is focused on. The interactive meaning in images refers to "the interactive relations between the viewer and visual images which it entails" (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2006, p119). This thesis regards the reader who sees the images as the viewer and the character or content in the images as the participant. The interactive meaning is accomplished by four elements, that is, image act, social distance, perspective and modality.

The image act is identified according to whether the participant gazes towards the viewer or not. "The contact establishes an imaginary relation between the viewer and the participant. Therefore, the choice of contact suggests different relations between the viewer and the participant." (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2006, p116).

Social distance is related to the size of frame, which shows the distance between the viewer and participant. It can be classified into the close shot, the medium shot and the long shot (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2006, p124). The close shot refers to the part above the neck so as to show intimate distance. The medium shot is a relatively intimate distance, referring to the part above the waist. The long shot embeds the whole body and surroundings which shows social far distance.

Perspective refers to different types of angles, like horizontal angle or vertical angle. Different angles can reflect the social relationship between the viewer and the participant. The horizontal angle embeds the frontal angle and the oblique angle. The former can draw the distance close, bringing a sense of intimation and interest to the viewer whereas the latter seems more indifferent to the viewer, leaving a sense of distance. The vertical angle includes the high angle, the low angle and the equal-eye angle. The high angle means that participants are placed in the image to look up to the viewer. This shows that the participant holds weaker power and lower status. The low angle means the participant overlooks the viewer, presenting his power and higher status. The equal-eye angle can present equal power and social status between the viewer and the participant, demonstrating a kind of equal relationship (Li Zhanzi, 2003, p5).

Modality refers to the colors and saturation in the image. In visual grammar, modality can be classified into high modality, middle modality and low modality. High modality refers to the high saturation color used in the image. Middle modality refers that the color used in the image is not so saturated while low modality refers to the black and white image only.

The framework used to analyze interactive meaning from the perspective of visual image can be summarized in Figure 3-3.

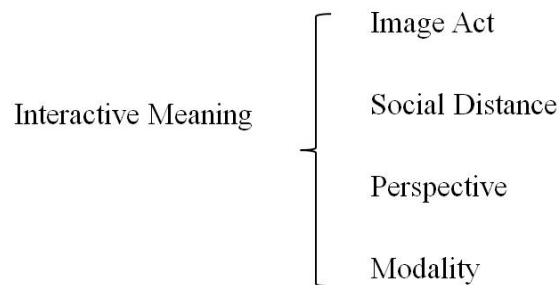


Figure 3-3 Analytical Framework of Interactive Meaning  
(Kress & van Leeuwen, 2006, p114)

## CHAPTER FOUR FREQUENCY AND DISTRIBUTION OF INTERACTIONAL METADISCOURSE AND IMAGES ON THE TWO TOURISM WEBSITES

This chapter begins with a collection of the frequency of stances and engagement markers on these websites. Then each stance and engagement marker is analyzed in detail with examples.

### 4.1 General Frequency of Interactional Metadiscourse on the Two Websites

This thesis selects the discourses from the sections on London and Beijing tourism websites as the data, with the number of 4,651 on London website and 4,696 on Beijing website. It manually calculates the frequency and ratio of every stances and engagement. And then, it intends to find out some significant deviations with the help of Chi-square test.

The analysis finds out that there exist a large number of metadiscourse markers for interaction between the writer and reader on the two websites (see Table 4-1).

Table 4-1 Frequency of Interactional Metadiscourse on London and Beijing  
Tourism Websites (per 1,000 words)

	Glance at London/ About Beijing		Things to Do		Traveler Information/ Routes and Strategy		Accommodation		Total	
	London	Beijing	London	Beijing	London	Beijing	London	Beijing	London	Beijing
<b>Hedges</b>	20(34.2)	27(19.8)	22(28.2)	44(24.4)	77(32.6)	33(35.6)	14(15.1)	23(42.2)**	133(28.6)	129(27.5)
<b>Boosters</b>	10(17.1)	10(7.3)	13(16.7)	18(10.0)	18(7.6)	7(7.1)	3(3.2)	5(9.2)	44(9.5)	40(8.5)
<b>Attitude markers</b>	30(51.3)	28(20.5)**	35(44.9)	60(33.3)	42(17.8)	28(28.5)	33(35.6)	15(27.5)	140(30.1)	131(27.9)
<b>Self- mentions</b>	0(0.0)	0(0.0)	1(1.3)	0(0.0)	14(5.9)	0(0.0) *	1(1.1)	2(3.7)	18(3.9)	2(0.4)
<b>Reader pronouns</b>	11(18.8)	0(0.0) **	7(9.0)	5(2.8)	89(37.7)	6(6.1) **	16(17.3)	2(3.7) **	123(26.5)	13(2.8) **
<b>Directives</b>	2(3.4)	0(0.0)	12(15.4)	0(0.0) **	32(13.6)	1(1.0) **	30(32.4)	0(0.0) **	76(16.3)	1(0.2) **
<b>Questions</b>	0(0.0)	0(0.0)	0(0.0)	0(0.0)	19(8.1)	0(0.0) **	0(0.0)	0(0.0)	19(4.1)	0(0.0)

Note: \*\* means significant at  $p < 0.01$ , and \* means significant at  $p < 0.05$ .



As the statistics shown in Table 4-1, it is remarkable that stance markers and engagement markers are substantially employed on both websites. But the statistics reflect that the frequency of stance markers is three times that of engagement markers (see Figure 4-1). The higher frequency of stance markers than engagement markers indicates that London and Beijing websites tend to show their stance more explicitly.

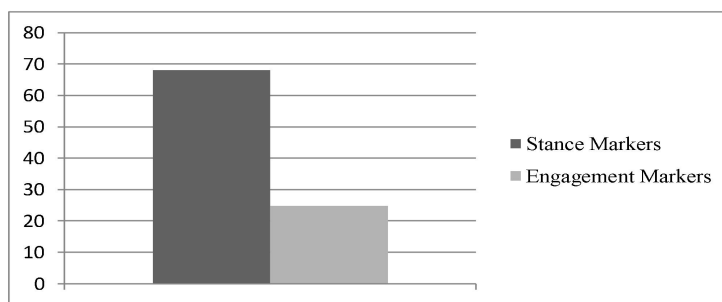


Figure 4-1 Distribution of the Stance Markers and Engagement Markers on London and Beijing Tourism Websites (per 1,000 words)

However, not all sub-categories are used with the same frequency on either of the two websites. The frequency of hedges, boosters, attitude markers and self-mentions on London websites is higher than that in Beijing. In the London data, the frequency of the stance markers follows a descending order from attitude markers, hedges, boosters to self-mentions. Hedges are adopted with the occurrences of 133 times, accounting for nearly 28.6% and ranking the second. Boosters and self-mentions rank the third and the fourth with the occurrence of 44 and 18 times respectively. It is obvious to see that attitude markers are used as the most frequently-used device, accounting for nearly one-third of all the stance markers, which implies that London website writers prefer to express their attitudes and judgments explicitly. Beijing follows the same descending order with attitude markers accounting for 27.9% in the first rank. Hedges are adopted with occurrences of 129 times, accounting for nearly 27.5% and ranking the second. Boosters and self-mentions rank the third and the fourth accounting for 8.5% and 0.4% respectively. This indicates that stance markers are employed by both two websites, but London website uses more stance markers than Beijing and is more willing to show stance in discourse.

As for the engagement markers, the frequency on the two websites follows the

same descending order from reader pronouns, directives to questions. In particular, the frequency of reader pronouns on London website is 13 times that of Beijing, and the frequency of directives is 16 times that of Beijing. And there is no question on Beijing website. This suggests that Beijing uses engagement markers in a more controlled way.

We aim to make a detailed contrastive analysis on these linguistic devices with examples and explain how interactions are realized between the writer and the potential visitor.

## 4.2 Stance Markers

Stance markers refer to the fact that writers present themselves in the text (Hyland, 2005a). With the help of them, writers can express their views and judgments towards the texts. It is a way to make an intimate interaction between writers and readers.

### 4.2.1 Hedges on London and Beijing Websites

Hedges indicate the writer's uncertainty towards what they write, which are used to make writer's views and statements more acceptable. By using hedges, the writer presents the information as an opinion rather than a definite fact. Since tourism discourse is introductory and persuasive, writers are likely to use some hedges to express their opinions and avoid direct conflicts or disagreements. In this way, hedges leave room for readers to think and negotiate instead of being imposed on.

Table 4-2 Frequency of Hedges on London and Beijing Tourism Websites (per 1,000 words)

	Glance at London/ About Beijing		Things to Do		Traveler Information/ Routes and Strategy		Accommodation		Total	
	London	Beijing	London	Beijing	London	Beijing	London	Beijing	London	Beijing
<b>Accuracy-oriented hedges</b>	20(34.1)	26(18.9) *	20(25.6)	39(21.6)	51(21.6)	24(24.4)	12(13.0)	17(32.4) **	103(22.2)	106(22.6)
<b>Commitment hedges</b>	1(1.7)	0(0.0)	2(2.6)	6(3.3)	23(9.8)	11(11.2)	5(5.4)	3(5.7)	31(6.7)	20(4.3)

Hedges account for a high proportion of all stance markers. London and Beijing websites both have a large number of hedges, suggesting that both the two websites devote particular attention to using hedges. Among the hedges, accuracy-oriented hedges are the most utilized on both websites. The statistics suggest that the frequency of accuracy-oriented hedges on the two websites is four times that of commitment ones (see Table 4-2).

To be specific, the imprecise number is preferred. By utilizing *more than*, *upwards*, *many* and *plenty of*, the writer expresses his uncertainty about the exact numbers. The frequency of hedges on London website is twice that of Beijing website. For example,

(1) *More than 50* countries are within a three-hour flight time and *upwards of 300* international destinations have direct links to London. (Glance at London)

In Example (1), the writer does not show us the precise number of the countries which are within a short flight time or the precise number of international destinations which have direct links to London. Instead, *upwards of* and *more than* are used to indicate that London provides a good transportation service, so it is convenient to arrive in London by air. This is actually indicating to readers that they need not worry about the flight time.

(2) *More than 100,000* color-leafed trees totaling eight species turn red and spread from the foot to the top, drawing a colorful painting interspersed with green pines and cypress and bright-yellow ginkgo leaves. (Things to do in Beijing)

In Example (2), the writer on Beijing website also uses *more than 100,000* to replace the precise number because trees are too many to count accurately. Besides, readers usually have no interest in the exact number but care about whether the scenery is beautiful or not. Therefore, it does not make sense to mention specific numbers. The colorful and charming scenery mentioned here is supposed to attract more visitors. But as a whole, Beijing website does not use such hedges so frequently as London website.

As can be seen from Table 4-2, the difference in the frequency of accuracy-oriented hedges between the two websites mainly lies in the sections of

“Glance at London”/ “About Beijing” ( $P < 0.05$  and “Accommodation” ( $P < 0.01$ ).

In “Glance at London”, a section for introducing the overview of London, the writer uses accuracy-oriented hedges to describe every aspect like attractions, history, transport and shopping. By using hedges like *plenty of options*, *a huge range of places* and *many of the attractions*, a comprehensive introduction can be made to attract more visitors. However, Beijing projects itself as a historical and cultural city, so fewer hedges are used in this section.

What arouses our attention is that Beijing website uses a lot of accurate data to describe things specifically.

(3) By the end of 2007, there were 751 organizations in Beijing generating revenue of 128.6 billion RMB, 11.6% of the industry revenue. That also accounts for 13.8% of Beijing’s GDP, the highest percentage of any Chinese city. (About Beijing)

(4) Beijing Railway Station had 173 trains arriving daily, Beijing West had 232 trains and Beijing South had 163. (About Beijing)

In Example (3), Beijing counts the precise number of revenue as objectively and explicitly as possible. This accurate data have borne out claims that Beijing is among the most developed cities in China. And in Example (4), the writer also deploys the accurate number to prove that Beijing is well developed in traffic. These data are about Beijing economic strength. All the accurate numbers represent the reliability and validity of the data, avoiding ambiguity.

The use of accuracy-oriented hedges in London shows that London does not want to divert tourists’ attention to the numbers, but to focus on what the writer wants to express. In contrast, Beijing tends to use the exact number to enhance persuasion. As precise numbers represent objectivity, Beijing hopes to use accuracy to show carefulness and rigorousness, and to enhance the credibility of its description.

Different from the above section, the frequency of accuracy-oriented hedges in the “Accommodation” on Beijing website outnumbers that on London website very significantly. The writer uses *more than*, *a growing number of* to describe the great number of tourists coming to Beijing. This suggests that Beijing website tries to show that good accommodation and facilities are capable of absorbing a high population

density.

As for commitment hedges, although used with low frequency, they still play some functions in promotion, indicating that they try to avoid their certainty when interacting with the reader. Despite the non-significant differences between the two websites, the particular words used by the two websites are different from each other. We have found that London prefers to use *can, may, could, would and might*, while Beijing likes to use *can, may, might*. This is probably because as native speakers, London writers can use modal auxiliaries better. For example,

(5) A trip to the capital *wouldn't be* complete without seeing the top 10 attractions in London. (Things to do in London)

(6) What worth mentioning is that the Plank Roads that link cliffs at the scenic area are held up by steel cables, which means walking on them *would be* a thrill. (Routes and strategy)

Hyland (2005a) mentions that hedges allow writers to open a discursive space where readers can dispute their interpretations. As in Examples (5) and (6), the modal auxiliaries *would, wouldn't* usually represent the subjunctive mood and emphasize the subjective position. By using such expressions in the discourse, writers tend to recommend the spectacular scenery to potential visitors. Here the writer of London website tends to warmly recommend the top 10 attractions and the writer of Beijing thinks it is worthwhile to walk on Plank Roads. Such modal auxiliaries leave the room for potential visitors to decide and negotiate themselves.

To conclude, London and Beijing websites both actively use hedges to express their views. Writers hope to establish dialogues with their readers and influence their readers' interest by sharing their own judgment. But Beijing emphasizes more on the correctness and accuracy of data, paying more attention to the objectivity and veracity of their statements.

#### 4.2.2 Boosters on London and Beijing Websites

Boosters and hedges are the two opposite sides to express writer's certainty. While hedges offer alternatives and room for readers and listen to reader's voice and view, boosters enhance the certainty of a statement. To reinforce is an effective way to increase credibility, leaving an affirmative impression on potential visitors to avoid disputes.

The frequency of boosters on both websites is not very high. As shown by statistics in Table 4-3, the two forms of boosters, i.e., fact-asserting boosters and certainty-indicating boosters, are adopted with the raw occurrences of 4.7‰ and 4.4‰ respectively on London and Beijing websites, occupying nearly 9.5‰ and 8.5‰ among all the stance markers. The total occurrences of boosters are only one-third of hedges or attitude markers (see Table 4-1). This strongly suggests that writers are cautious to declare an opinion. The obvious reason is that boosters are subjective and absolute, so too many such markers may probably make the statements too rigid.

Table 4-3 Frequency of Boosters on London and Beijing Tourism Websites (per 1,000 words)

	Glance at London/ About Beijing		Things to Do		Traveler Information/ Routes and Strategy		Accommodation		Total	
	London	Beijing	London	Beijing	London	Beijing	London	Beijing	London	Beijing
<b>Fact-asserting boosters</b>	4(6.8)	8(5.9)	9(11.5)	4(2.2) *	11(4.7)	5(5.1)	2(2.2)	1(1.9)	26(5.6)	18(3.8)
<b>Certainty- indicating boosters</b>	4(6.8)	2(1.5)	4(5.1)	4(2.2)	12(5.1)	5(5.1)	5(5.4)	5(9.2)	25(5.4)	16(3.4)

Despite the low frequency, boosters do help the writer to promote the destinations. According to the statistics presented in Table 4-3, fact-asserting boosters and certainty-indicating boosters are both used on the websites. For example,

(7) This park is embellished with red leaves everywhere. Therefore, *all* three routes are the *best* choice to climb mountain and enjoy sightseeing in the fall. (Things to do in Beijing)

(8) If you are visiting London for a week or more, and plan to use only the central London area to make four or more journeys, then a 7 Day Travelcard may be *the most cost-effective* option. (Traveler information in London)

In Example (7), the booster *all* shows the writer's absolute certainty, functioning to arouse the reader's attention to the three routes available to the national park. This makes potential visitors sure that all three routes are good choices. The superlative degree is also a kind of booster. The *best* in Example (7) foregrounds the good quality of the three routes, and *the most cost-effective* in Example (8) emphasizes the efficiency and convenience of the journey which leaves a much deeper impression on the potential visitors. Similar boosters can be found on the two websites, such as *the most developed, the largest, the most important*, all of which indicate that London and Beijing are rapidly developed cities with booming industries.

(9) Buy a 24-hour ticket and explore some of London's *most famous* places, such as Tower of London, Buckingham Palace and Westminster Abbey.

Table 4-3 shows that the frequency of fact-asserting boosters in "Things to do" on both websites differs significantly. London writer prefers to use *most famous, best* to show the certainty about the attractiveness of the city and thus attract potential visitors to visit the city. In Example (9), the writer uses *most famous* and lists some good places, which help promote tourism attractions.

#### 4.2.3 Attitude Markers on London and Beijing Websites

In order to promote tourism products, writers are inclined to use positive words to describe and advertise them. Attitude markers are the devices that express the writer's attitudes, affections and judgments explicitly and directly. By frequently deploying attitude markers, the tourism websites reveal the high quality of the product

to be promoted, which greatly enhances the persuasiveness of commercial marketing.

According to the data, judgmental markers are widely used on both websites, but no emotive markers are used, which indicates that the writer prefers to show their personal judgments and evaluations towards the tourism products instead of expressing their emotions or moods. Tourism introduction as a guide, should avoid being too subjective to impose his will on others. Too many emotive markers would impair the writer's authoritativeness to convince the reader.

The frequency of judgmental markers in the text of London website is much higher than that on the Beijing website. For instance, such expressions as *useful*, *important*, *the most famous*, *the most creative* are used in the text. The differences in the frequency indicate that London writers are comparatively direct in expressing their attitude, while Chinese writers are more conservative and cautious to express their emotions.

Among the four sections on London website, "Glance at London" is the section in which attitude markers are used most frequently, with the occurrences of 51.3%. As for Beijing website, the four sections use nearly the same percent of attitude markers, with the occurrences around 30%. So the frequency of attitude markers in "Glance at London" differs very significantly ( $p < 0.01$ ) from the similar section "About Beijing" on Beijing website. The London writer uses attitude markers like *world-class*, *international* and *incredibly well-connected* to fully describe every aspect like attractions, history, transport and shopping in London. For example,

(10) Here are some other *useful* tips that will make your journey more *enjoyable* and *efficient*. (Glance at London)

The use of judgmental attitude marks conveys the writer's own attitude towards traveling which often influences readers' views and choices. In this way, the attitude markers greatly promote tourism products and services. In Example (10), positive attitude adjectives like *useful*, *enjoyable* and *efficient* are used to describe the beautiful landscapes. Such remarks help to build a positive image of a scenic spot, for no one would like to travel to an unattractive place. If potential visitors read these



attitude markers, they would be impressed and look forward to the excellent experience.

In addition to the difference in frequency, the two websites differ from each other in using the categories of attitude markers. Apart from the scenery, London website uses attitude marks to describe people's feelings and experiences, as shown in Example (10) while Beijing website focuses on describing the scenery rather than people's experience. The reason may be that the introduction of Beijing website focuses more on the history and culture of Beijing, so attitude markers in this section will focus on describing history.

For example,

(11) There, mountain spring hums a tune, lotus leaves enrich the *charm* of the red sun, common reeds dance *elegantly* in the air and leaves are *brightly* colored. (Things to do in Beijing)

In Example (11), positive adjectives like *elegantly* and *brightly* are used to depict the experience which visitors may enjoy in Beijing mountain. By giving this beautiful vision before traveling, the writer conveys that the tourism products and attractions will never let visitors down. It is an ideal place for them to climb the mountain and appreciate red leaves in the fall.

To sum up, according to the statistics, both London and Beijing tourism websites are in favor of adopting attitude markers to express the advantages of the destinations. These attitude markers emphasize that it will be a really exciting experience if visitors come and have fun. Specifically, "Glance at London" is the section in which attitude markers are used most frequently. This suggests that London writer makes strategic use of attitude markers while Beijing uses them in a relatively strictly-controlled way. What is remarkable is that judgmental markers are widely used on both websites, but no emotive markers are used, suggesting that writers are more cautious about conveying their personal emotions to avoid subjectivity.

#### 4.2.4 Self-mentions on London and Beijing Websites

Self-mentions refer to the use of first person pronouns and third person to present interpersonal information, including the singular form *I, me, mine* and the plural form *we, our, ours*, which are considered as the most powerful means of self-representation.

Table 4-4 Frequency of Self-mentions on London and Beijing Tourism Websites (per 1,000 words)

	Glance at London/ About Beijing		Things to Do		Traveler Information/ Routes and Strategy		Accommodation		Total	
	London	Beijing	London	Beijing	London	Beijing	London	Beijing	London	Beijing
<b>Self-mentions</b>	2(3.4)	0(0.0)	1(1.3)	0(0.0)	14(6.0)	0(0.0) *	1(1.1)	2(3.7)	18(3.9)	2(0.4)

Self-mentions on the two websites are much less frequent than the other three stance markers. In general, evident differences exist between the two websites (see Table 4-4). Self-mentions on the London website heavily outnumber those on the Beijing website, especially in the section of “Traveler information” / “Routes and strategy”, in which self-mentions differ significantly. The London writer uses *how do I use* and *can I buy* to tell his own experience as if he had the same questions as visitors. This indicates that writers on London website make strategic use of self-mentions while Beijing writers use self-mentions in a more strictly-controlled way. The number of the singular form is twice as many as the plural form of self-mentions. When writers regard themselves as visitors and plan trips like real visitors, they prefer to use some singular self-mentions. For example,

(12) How do *I* use Oyster, Visitor Oyster, contactless and travel cards? Why should *I* buy a Visitor Oyster card? (Traveler information)

Self-mentions reflect the writer’s identity in the discourse through first-person pronouns and possessive forms, which is the writer’s unconscious choice to take a certain position or in the discourse. From the essence of tourism website marketing, to build a good destination image in the tourism discourse is important to the success of

the marketing. In Example (12), the writer uses *I* to tell his own experience and expresses his own view as if he had the same questions as visitors. In this sense, the use of first person singular shows that the writer has the same feelings and thoughts as the visitor. In other cases, when writers regard themselves as advisors to provide some suggestions for traveling, they are inclined to use plural self-mentions as follows.

(13) You can choose how much credit to add to your card. If you are visiting London for two days, *we* recommend you start with £20 credits. (Traveler information)

Example (13) uses the plural form to tell us there is more than one participant, which to some extent makes the text more credible and persuasive because all feelings and affection may not only be from one person. Here, the plural form *we* refers to the writers who recommend the destination. This kind of self-mentions is effective in persuasion.

Although Beijing website only has a few usages of self-mentions, it is noticed that Beijing writer prefers to use plural form *our*, like in Example (14).

(14) *Our* hotel is a perfect mixture of Chinese and Western cultures. (Accommodation in Beijing)

*Our hotel* is used to replace *the hotel* to show hospitality and make people feel at home. The plural pronoun *our* narrows the distance between the writer and the potential reader, creating a relaxing and pleasant atmosphere. In addition, the use of the plural form instead of the singular indicates the collectivism in Chinese traditional culture.

What is worth noticing is that the third person is used on Beijing website, like *guests*, *visitors*, etc., but no third person is found on London website. For example,

(15) But after being greeted by one of the butlers, *guests* will be able to take in the hotel's unique ambience, its traditional Chinese architectural style and its exquisite attention to detail. (Accommodation in Beijing)

By using the third person, the writer is often alienated from the reader to avoid his direct presence. To a certain degree, such usage can make the information

objective, but at the same time the purpose of persuasion or touching readers is affected.

Cultural diversity influences the way of using self-mentions. London website makes use of more self-mentions to frequently show their identity than Beijing website, especially the singular form. This is probably because western people emphasize more on their individuality and release their emotional subjective feeling relating to travel experience. So London website tends to use self-mentions to reflect their attitude of communication and negotiation with readers. By contrast, Beijing writers, with a high value of collectiveness, tend to pay more attention to plural self-mentions.

To sum up, both London and Beijing tourism websites are in favor of adopting stance markers. The frequency of the stance markers on the two websites follows the same descending order from attitude markers, hedges, boosters to self-mentions. Since tourism discourse is introductory and persuasive, writers are likely to use hedges and attitude markers instead of boosters to advertise tourism attractions. In this way, writers leave room for readers to think instead of imposing wills on them. However, London seems more likely to show stance than Beijing does. This indicates that London is more willing to release people's feelings and experiences.

#### 4.3 Engagement Markers

The use of engagement markers in the text can encourage readers to connect with writers (Hyland, 1998). Engagement markers aim to address readers explicitly by pulling them into the discourse as participants and allow writers to communicate directly with their readers. Compared with stance, engagement markers are a kind of way by which writers make interaction with readers by paying more attention to the reader's presence and recognizing their views and positions.

In general, the frequency of engagement markers is lower than that of stance markers on both London and Beijing websites. No personal aside and appeals to shared knowledge is found on London and Beijing websites. A similar trend in the

frequency of three engagement markers is displayed as a descending order from reader pronouns, directives to questions. The frequency of each engagement marker on the London website is higher than that in Beijing. This suggests London writers are inclined to project themselves into the texts to make interactions. Detailed analysis is going to be done of the three markers found on the two websites, namely reader pronouns, directives, and questions.

#### 4.3.1 Reader Pronouns on London and Beijing Websites

Reader pronouns are used to address the reader directly and explicitly by which readers are overtly brought into the discourse. Reader pronouns are second-person pronouns like *you*, *your*, which refers to the potential readers. These seem to construct a mutual dialogue with the reader and intrude the reader into the discourse explicitly and directly.

Among the engagement markers, reader pronouns are the most abundant on both websites. However, there exists a big disparity between London and Beijing websites. Reader pronouns are adopted on London websites with nearly 123 occurrences (26.5%). Contrastively, Beijing website only contains 13 occurrences (2.8%). This suggests that London website prefers to highlight the interaction with the reader whereas Beijing website does not. On London website, reader pronouns are mainly used in the section of “Traveler Information”. By making a dialogue-like interaction, traveling suggestions are more acceptable and available.

(16) This will ensure *you* pay the correct fare. If *you* don't, *you* may get charged a penalty fare. If *you* need help, ask a member of station staff. (Traveler information)

In Example (16), the writer refers to the reader as *you* directly, which shows a strong sense of communication and interaction. The writer regards himself as a guide who is offering service and explaining routines. It is a suggestion about how to buy tickets efficiently. Here use *you* to replace the visitor to shorten the distance between

each other. The writer acts as a helpful and knowledgeable guide who can give some advice.

(17) If *you* live in the UK, *you* can buy an Oyster card and have this delivered to *your* home address before *you* travel to London. (Traveler information)

The pronoun *your* must be used with a noun to indicate belonging. The expression *your home address* in Example (17) helps to clarify a sense of belonging. In this way, it makes readers feel that they are having a conversation with the writer and get some helpful information about traveling in London.

Writer does not use many reader pronouns on Beijing website, but the section of “Routes and strategy” which also provides traveling information is where reader pronouns are mainly used. For example,

(18) *You* can try rafting or bumper boats if *you* have enough time. (Routes and strategy)

The writer provides suggestions about trying rafting or boating. The second pronoun *you* suggests that visitors can make their own choices according to the time. It shows the writer’s consideration and shortens the distance with potential visitors.

As the writer and the reader are involved as participants, reader pronouns function to convey a membership and intimacy. Most reader pronouns on the two websites are used to provide choices in the section of “Traveler information”. But the number of reader pronouns on London website is 10 times that of Beijing which shows individuality in western culture. Traveler information provides convenient traffic information for visitors, so choosing what kinds of ways depends on visitors themselves. Using many reader pronouns in this section gives the potential visitor choices and initiatives and respects their individuality.

### 4.3.2 Directives on London and Beijing Websites

In general, directives are also used to stimulate the reader's anticipation in the text. As a discourse strategy, the major function that directives perform is to instruct readers to do something in a way arranged by the writer (Hyland, 2005a). Because of the marketing characteristics of tourism websites, directives are used to advise potential readers to perform travel experience. They are signaled mainly by the imperatives. Most occurred directives are about the traveling advice, such as which places to visit, when to visit, how to get to the places, how visitors can solve the traveling problems and what should be noticed. Expressions like *don't miss*, *make sure*, *check* are typically used in directives to make the statement suggestive. By offering a large number of suggestions, tourism websites gain solidarity with the reader.

The data shows that London website prefers to adopt directives while Beijing does not. The examples below show the detailed functions of directives.

(19) *Make sure* to tick these top things to see in London off your list. *Take a tour* with one of the Yeoman Warders around the Tower of London. *Discover* its 900-year history as a royal palace, prison and place of execution! *Gaze up* at the White Tower. (Things to do in London)

(20) *Don't miss out* on some of London's best attractions during busy times. (Things to do in London)

Example (19) use *make sure*, *take a tour*, *discover* and *gaze up* to direct potential visitors to find the top things in London. These directives involve acts. Following the directives, visitors can find the attractions and routes such as Yeoman Warders, Tower of London and White Tower. Through imperatives, the writer attracts readers' attention and asks them to follow the way he recommends. Acting as what the writer has said, visitors are supposed to find more fantastic scenery and useful information about the tourism destination. In Example (20), it proposes some suggestions for London's best attractions which visitors cannot miss. The imperative sentence structure in the negative form *don't miss out...* strengthens the tone and puts more

emphasis on the attractions which can catch readers' attention. Thus, several attractions listed in the following passage arouse readers' interests.

These directives not only allow writer to give some descriptions of activities but also guide readers' actions. Potential visitors are likely to believe that it is a good choice to take these activities and have fun there so that the trip sounds more valuable and memorable. But not a single directive is found on Beijing website, which means the discourses on Beijing website provide little guidance to potential visitors. No does the website have the consciousness to guide potential visitors.

#### 4.3.3 Questions on London and Beijing Websites

Questions play an important part in arousing readers' curiosity so that the interaction between the writer and reader is carried out. Many questions are inclined to highlight and strengthen the reader's effective consonance towards the websites' statements. These questions are used to attract the reader's attention to what the writer is writing about. Here are some examples.

(21) *Why not* buy an Oyster Card in advance and download a free Tube map to help you plan your days out? (Glance at London)

(22) *How* do I choose which ticket to buy? (Traveler information)

In Example (21), by proposing a question, the writer is imagining a face-to-face conversation with readers. Readers are prompted to think about the convenient and relaxing traveling, as if the writer is asking and persuading the reader to come and travel. In Example (22), the question sounds more powerful and vivid than the statement. The writer proposes a question to strengthen the tone and arouse readers to think about the way of purchasing tickets. It successfully incorporates the reader into the discourse which establishes an interactive relationship between the writer and the reader.

In contrast, there is no question on Beijing website, indicating that Beijing does



not invite readers to take part in conversations or attract their attention.

To sum up, the use of engagement markers on tourism websites shows that London pays more attention to the interaction and communication between writers and readers than Beijing does. The engagement markers are dedicated to getting the reader involved in the discourse and focus more on the interactions. Rather than view the tourism discourse as a communication, Beijing is more likely to take it as a statement of general truth or information for readers to learn.

#### 4.4 Interactive Meaning on London and Beijing Websites

In order to impress potential visitors, tourism websites use various images and colors to display historical traditions, folk culture, landmarks, and city images. These images highlight the charm and beauty of the city and leave a good impression on visitors. This chapter analyzes the images on London and Beijing tourism websites to explore how the images on the two websites construct interactive meanings so as to shorten the distance and attract potential tourists. In the analysis, we regard the reader who sees the images as the viewer and the characters or contents in the images as the participant.

The numbers of images on two websites are displayed (see Table 4-5). The number of images on London website greatly outnumbers Beijing because the former prefers to use more images. As introduced in chapter three, the interactive meaning is accomplished by image act, social distance, perspective and modality. The analysis finds out that the two websites have similarities in perspective, but there are some significant differences in image act, social distance and modality.

Table 4-5 Number of Images on London and Beijing Tourism Websites (per 1,000 words)

	Glance at London/ About Beijing		Things to Do		Traveler Information/ Routes and Strategy		Accommodation		Total	
	London	Beijing	London	Beijing	London	Beijing	London	Beijing	London	Beijing
<b>Number of images</b>	7	2	42	4	15	4	21	4	85	14

#### 4.4.1 Image Act on London and Beijing Websites

The image act is identified according to the eyesight contact between the viewer and the participant in the image. The most important sign is whether there is eye contact with the viewer. Kress & Van Leeuwen (2006) have defined two different kinds of acts, namely the demand act and the offer act. “The demand act is that the participant in the image has direct eye contact with the viewer, as if they are demanding something or inviting the viewer’s involvement in the interaction”. So there is some information that could be explored from the participant’s facial expressions and gestures. The offer act is that the participant’s head or eyes turning from one side to the viewer, which does not have eye contact with the viewer. So the participant in the images seems to provide information rather than demand something.

The two websites have differences in contact. On London tourism website, most of the viewer and participant in the images have relatively close distance while half of the images on Beijing tourism website lack direct eye contact, indicating that London website designers are willing to show themselves and interact with readers whereas Beijing website designers neglect interactions.

For example, in Figure 4-2, an image from the “Things to do” section on London website, three children face the viewer directly which implies a direct interaction between the participant and the viewer. But it remains unknown to the viewer what they are looking at. It seems as if they are hinting the viewer to come closer as they have a lot of fascinating experiences to tell them, or that they are inviting the viewer to London to experience the local cultural activities.



Figure 4-2 An Image in “Things to Do” on London Tourism Website (1)

As for images on Beijing tourism website, most of them have no direct eye contact between the viewer and the participant. For example, in Figure 4-3, a craftsman is concentrating on painting. Viewers can just see the exquisite pictures with unique folk customs. In Figure 4-4, a native woman and three foreigners are discussing the couplets of the Spring Festival. They are smiling, but their eyes are not pointing at the viewer. We can see that the picture presents an offer act, which suggests that the participant seems to provide information. Viewers can feel the New Year atmosphere from the image, but the participant in these images has no interaction with the viewer.



Figure 4-3 An Image in “Things to Do” on Beijing Tourism Website (1)



Figure 4-4 An Image in “Things to Do” on Beijing Tourism Website (2)

#### 4.4.2 Social Distance on London and Beijing Websites

The second dimension to the interactive meanings of images is the social distance between the viewer and the participant. Social distance is the distance from which people, places and things are shown. It can reflect the relationship between the viewer and participant. If the social relationship is intimate, the social distance is close. In contrast, the social distance is far. This can be revealed from the frame size in the shooting of photos, including the close shot, the medium shot and the long shot.

The two websites have differences in social distance. Many close shots are employed by London websites while Beijing inclines to use long shots.

On London tourism website, most of the viewer and participant in the images are relatively within close distance. The viewer can detect the characters' expressions and

emotions so as to be involved. Some landmarks such as the Tower Bridge, the Buckingham Palace, the London Eye, the British Royal Guards and the London subway are magnified and highlighted under the close shot. A strong impression would be left on the viewer to attract him to visit London. For example, Figure 4-5 is a close shot that shows the scene that a man and a woman are talking and laughing. The viewer can clearly see the two people's facial expressions. Since viewers are potential tourists from all over the world, especially foreigners who know little about London. When images use such close shots, they can't help immersing themselves in the atmosphere, and then unwittingly entering the world depicted in the picture and getting involved in the feelings of the participant. Furthermore, these images shorten the distance between the participant and the viewer.

Different from the London website, many long shots are employed by the Beijing website to introduce the folk culture to viewers. For instance, Figure 4-6 mainly depicts that performers are dressing up and joining in the festival activity with a fantastic festival atmosphere, indicating the harmony of Beijing. Through the reflection of images, the viewer can see the whole body of these performers and surroundings. Compared with the close shot on London tourism website, the long shot on Beijing tourism website shows further distance between the viewer and the participant. What's more, compared with the frequently displayed images of landmarks in London, Beijing does not show sufficient remarkable landmarks.

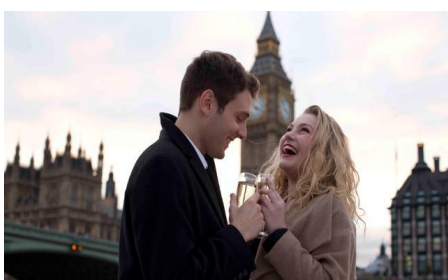


Figure 4-5 An Image in “Things to Do” on London Tourism Website (2)



Figure 4-6 An Image in “Things to Do” on Beijing Tourism Website (3)

#### 4.4.3 Perspective on London and Beijing Websites

In perspective, both London and Beijing adopt horizontal angles. To better present and promote tourism attractions and attract more visitors, London tourism website adopts the horizontal angle to show intimacy. For example, in Figure 4-7, a tall building like the London Tower Bridge is taken from low angles, leaving a sense of grandeur and reverence. In Figure 4-8, the Temple of Heaven shown on Beijing website is also taken from low angles. Equal-eye angles are also adopted on Beijing website to represent characters, reflecting equal power, which helps to create an equal and harmonious interaction with the viewer.



Figure 4-7 An Image in “Accommodation”  
on London Tourism Website



Figure 4-8 An Image in “About Beijing”  
on Beijing Tourism Website

#### 4.4.4 Modality on London and Beijing Websites

Modality differs on two websites. London uses high saturation while Beijing uses less high saturation. In Figure 4-9, the whole website page on the London website adopts high modality. Bright colors with high saturation, selecting blue, red, and white as its main colors are used. Such colors are associated with the national flag and culture, which can arouse the potential visitors’ association and aspiration for London. The combination of these colors not only comprehensively shows the culture and charm of London, but also stimulates the viewer’s emotions and achieves a good interaction. Compared with London, Beijing uses less high saturation. Orange dominates Beijing tourism websites, as shown in Figure 4-10. The website also uses red as a symbol of custom, bringing people a sense of warmth and enthusiasm. The

main image is about a landscape, and the white snow scene in the Summer Palace gives people a sense of purity and clarity, making viewers feel peaceful and comfortable. Other images take the Spring Festival as the background, and the red couplets show the unique charm of the festival, highlighting the happiness. Such scenery and colors give viewers a sense of contentment and pleasure.



Figure 4-9 Homepage on London Tourism Website



Figure 4-10 Homepage on Beijing Tourism Website

From the perspective of the interactive meaning, London and Beijing tourism websites use images to present the natural landscapes, history and culture. Through the introduction of the images, the viewer can interact with the scenery and the participant in the images. Thereby the interactions help to achieve the purpose of website promotion.

By analyzing the interactive meanings of the website, we can find that horizontal angles are used in images on both the two websites to display the view of landscapes or to construct equal power with the viewer to attract more attention to city tourism. There are some differences between the two websites. Firstly, on London tourism website, most of the viewer and the participant in the image have relatively close distance while some images on Beijing tourism website lack direct eye contact between the viewer and the participant. Secondly, close shots are employed by London website while Beijing prefers long shots. Lastly, compared with London, Beijing uses less high saturation.

The analysis of the interactive meaning of these tourism websites images has certain practical significance for designing website images which help to increase the popularity of destination tourism.

## CHAPTER FIVE DISCUSSION

### 5.1 Similarities and Differences in Metadiscourse Markers and Images between the Two Websites

The analysis of the two tourism websites produces the following similarities and differences in the use of metadiscourse markers and images.

In terms of the interactional metadiscourse, it is remarkable that stance markers and engagement markers are substantially employed on the two websites. Both websites use more stance markers than engagement markers. The frequency of stance markers on London website is higher than in Beijing, suggesting London writers are more inclined to project themselves into the texts to make interactions with readers. London and Beijing websites both actively use hedges to express their views, especially the accuracy-oriented hedges. It is worth noting that Beijing emphasizes more on the accuracy of data which shows its carefulness and rigorousness. The frequency of boosters on both websites is not very high, which suggests that writers are cautious to declare an opinion with certainty because too many boosters may probably make the statements rigid. Among the attitude markers, judgmental markers are widely used on both websites with no emotive markers used. Since tourism introduction is a guide, too many emotive markers seem too subjective. The frequency of judgmental markers on the text of London website is much higher than that on the Beijing website. London writers are comparatively a little more direct in expressing their affective attitude while Chinese writers are more conservative and cautious to expose their emotions to readers. Self-mentions on London website heavily outnumber those on Beijing website. Specifically, Beijing writers have a high value of collectiveness, so they prefer to use plural self-mentions than singular self-mentions.

In terms of engagement markers, London website prefers to adopt more reader pronouns, directives and questions than Beijing does. Few directives and no question are found on Beijing website. London has strong consciousness of interaction and communication than Beijing does.

As for the interactive meaning, both websites adopt image act, social distance, perspective and modality. Horizontal angles are used on both websites to display the view of landscape and construct equal power. Yet there are some differences between the two websites. Images in London tourism website have relatively closer distance as well as high saturation. In contrast, images in Beijing website lack direct eye contact and prefer long shots, and the color is not so saturated. What's more, Beijing does not give sufficient descriptions of the remarkable landmarks.

The use of interactional metadiscourse and images on London and Beijing websites is determined by the persuasive characteristics of tourism websites. The possible reasons for similarities in using interactional metadiscourse are as follows. Firstly, these two websites' discourses are of the same genre, that is, tourism discourse. As the main function of tourism discourse is to offer traveling information and promote tourism products, writers tend to adopt similar marketing strategies and use similar interactional metadiscourse devices to interact with potential visitors. As interaction is important to tourism discourse, both websites frequently employ interactional metadiscourse. Secondly, most of the sections on the two websites are about similar topics, such as introduction, traveler information, things to do and accommodation. Therefore, the discourses share the same features of expression.

However, the different usages of the interactional metadiscourse on these two websites are probably caused by the following reasons. Firstly, although the two websites have the same topic and genre, each writer has his own writing styles. That is to say, writers' personal writing and expressing style may affect the choices and use of linguistic devices. Secondly, cultural differences between the East and West are bound to greatly influence the way of expressing and how writers subtly use interactional metadiscourse. Influenced by traditional culture, Chinese people are modest and reserved while Western people are comparatively more direct in expressing themselves. Thirdly, western culture values individualism most, so they tend to use singular self-mentions than plural self-mentions. But Chinese people attach great importance to collectiveness, so writers of Beijing use many plural self-mentions than singular self-mentions. Last but not least, western culture has



strong self-consciousness while Chinese writers are influenced by traditional culture and are relatively implicit and restrained in expression.

## 5.2 Different Branding Strategies Employed by the Two Websites

Tourism is an important aspect to show the potential and attractiveness of the destination. Usually, the destination would dig various local natural and cultural resources, and then stimulate international visitors and create the brand effect. As it becomes an increasingly popular information source, the tourism website can play a critical role in destination branding.

The above analysis suggests that there are some common branding strategies adopted by London and Beijing websites. For visitors, there are many things to consider during a trip. They not only consider tourism attractions, but also transportation, time and the budget for accommodation. For these reasons, both London and Beijing tourism websites provide comprehensive and rich information, like tourist attractions, accommodation, transportation, food, routes and activities. Visitors can find a variety of tourism projects according to their own needs.

Through discourse, London and Beijing websites establish their images and project the images into the perception of visitors. It is found that London website mainly introduces its current status, such as restaurants, hotels, shopping malls and entertainment. London taps the potential and strength of the city and establishes itself as an international metropolis. The best benefit that such a unique international city image brings to London is that it can attract more international tourists and succeed in the competitive tourism market. Due to its long history, Beijing website takes history as an important marketing point. It builds itself as a historical and cultural city and an international business center. This city image can attract visitors who are interested in Beijing's history and culture. However, due to the complexity of Beijing's history and culture, not many international visitors are interested in its history. Thus, the presentation of its history might not be effective to attract potential visitors.

The analysis also suggests that London and Beijing websites adopt different

branding strategies. London website is aware of the presence of readers, so it attaches great importance to information exchange with readers. Playing the role of guide and travel consultant, the website designer tries to guide the reader to visit various places and draws the distance closer with the reader. This enables the potential tourist to know all aspects of the city. Therefore, London website not only introduces tourism activities, but also guides visitors' behaviors. Potential visitors will consider choosing these tourism activities as a good choice because these sound interesting and memorable. In this sense, London website employs a good strategy to brand the destination.

Besides, the analysis also shows that London website tries to promote itself by creating an emotional resonance with readers. London website designers imagine themselves as participants and experience sharers. The rich attitude markers used on the website suggest that they evaluate tourism products and share experiences with potential visitors apart from simple descriptions and introductions. Moreover, they tend to guide visitors to solve the problems that are likely to encounter during their journey. This strategy of showing empathy with potential visitors makes the website more persuasive. It allows visitors to feel that these concerns are not only their problems but also other people's, and they are inclined to think that the website is so thoughtful by providing with them so many helpful tips. In addition, the website uses vivid descriptions to show the attractiveness of London, highlighting the characteristics of tourist destinations and products, thereby attracting potential tourists and promoting the destination.

In contrast, Beijing website focuses on introducing the city with a calm and objective tone, just like stating the facts. Influenced by traditional culture, which is comparatively more conservative and implicit, Chinese people are restrained in expression. So Beijing website conveys information like a monologue and is less conscious of interacting with readers. It is obvious that this kind of communication has kept a certain distance from the reader, and the reader is not invited into the discourse like on London website. Instead, the reader of Beijing website is like a passive receiver of information. Also, the images on Beijing website do not show

close contact with each other, and the website pays less attention to the portrayal of ordinary city residents. Communicating with readers is a good way to attract potential customers. Since potential tourists make their choices while browsing the website, they may stay in hesitation when the website lacks interaction and attraction. It is likely that they do not desire to learn more about these tourism products but to look at other city websites if their interest is not aroused.

What's more, Beijing website uses objective data and facts to describe the economic strength and industry of the city, establishing an authoritative image. Since ancient times, traditional agriculture and feudalism have shaped respect for authority. The tradition has been passed down to the present. Respect for authority is also reflected in website design. As an authoritative image is a good way of convincing visitors and marketing tourism destinations, there is no wonder that Beijing website cites official and authoritative data and facts to introduce the city.

To sum up, London and Beijing websites both provide rich information and establish their images. But different branding strategies are adopted in different cultures. London website is aware of the presence of readers and warmly interacts with them. It also shares experiences with readers to create an emotional resonance with them. These strategies show empathy with potential visitors and make the website more persuasive. In contrast, Beijing website conveys information with a calm and objective tone as Chinese people are restrained in expression. What's more, Beijing website uses objective data to establish an authoritative image because of the respect for authority. Since tourism websites are designed for international visitors. To attract more international visitors, Beijing website is supposed to appropriately adjust its branding strategies. It may consider the needs of visitors and interact with them to draw the distance closer.

## CHAPTER SIX CONCLUSION

This chapter concludes the study of multimodal analysis of London and Beijing tourism websites, and presents a summary of the findings. It also proposes some practical implications for online tourism promotion as well as limitations and suggestions for further study.

Based on multimodal discourse analysis, this thesis compares and contrasts the linguistic devices and images on London and Beijing tourism websites, and gives some suggestions for tourism destinations.

### 6.1 Major Findings

The comparison and contrast of linguistic devices and images between the two websites yield the following major findings.

Firstly, both stance markers and engagement markers are applied to London and Beijing tourism websites. To be more specific, the subcategories are used in different situations and forms. Stance markers are used far more frequently than engagement markers on both London and Beijing websites. As the function of tourism discourse is to offer traveling information and promote tourism products, writers tend to adopt similar interactional metadiscourse.

Secondly, Beijing writers use fewer stance and engagement markers than London writers, indicating that London writers are more willing to be involved in discourse, while Beijing writers tend to convey statements rather than project themselves into the texts to make interactions. Cultural differences influence the way of expressing. Western culture is comparatively more direct in expressing themselves whereas Chinese people are reserved and less conscious of interacting with readers. Lastly, since western culture advocates personality, they are willing to show themselves on the website. So images on London tourism website have relatively closer distance. Chinese people prefer to be conservative and implicit. Thus, the images on Beijing website lack close shots and have less contact with the viewer.

Thirdly, the analysis suggests different branding strategies adopted by London

and Beijing websites. Both two websites provide rich information. London website realizes the presence of readers and is good at creating an emotional resonance with them. In contrast, Beijing website conveys information with an objective tone and uses objective data to establish an authoritative image.

## 6.2 Implications for Tourism Branding

This study does a comparative analysis between London and Beijing websites. Research findings can give some implications for online tourism branding.

In terms of discourse, the tourism website should focus on interaction with the potential visitor. Firstly, the website could use more positive words to identify the destination so as to present a wonderful travel experience that helps to deepen potential visitors' impressions. Secondly, to better promote the destination, there needs to be a shift from just stating information to creating more interactions with the reader. In other words, instead of transmitting information like a monologue, the website could create an atmosphere of dialogue-like interaction with the reader. Thus, London website can make readers feel as if they were talking face to face with the writer.

As for images, the tourism website should consider what kind of images to show to potential visitors. Firstly, the tourism website could choose the images with close eye contact which brings the viewer close. In this way, the website invites the viewer's involvement in the interaction. Secondly, the tourism website could use high saturation to attract potential visitors. These vivid colors would greatly impress people and attract more prospective visitors. Lastly, the website could show some images about major events in the city to promote tourism attractions, which are memorable and entertaining, and are regarded as an important way to show local culture. By presenting these forms of images, the website could fascinate the visitor and arouse their curiosity. For example, Beijing uses the Spring Festival as a breakthrough point that attaches great importance to China. It connects the city development with tradition. And a big sports event is also one of the major events in the city. By

showing some international sports competition, the website can improve the popularity of the city and leave a positive impression on people.

### 6.3 Limitations of the Present Study and Suggestions for Future Study

Although distinct characteristics have been found in the present study, there are still some limitations.

Firstly, since lots of data are manually calculated and collected by the researcher, some subjectivity caused by manually collecting should be considered, which will inevitably lead to a bias. So more professional calculating will help to reduce the subjectivity and to further improved research findings.

Secondly, classifying words is complicated and subjective because the definition and categorization of some words cannot be absolutely definite. There is an overlap between some boosters and attitude markers like the superlative degrees. Actually, it is hard to decide in which category some markers fall. To identify every ambiguous marker, we need to set a detailed criterion and read the context more carefully.

Further research can be made to check whether the differences are specific to London and Beijing or could be applied to other websites.

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## APPENDIX

### Sections selected from London tourism website

1. Glance at London  
<https://www.visitlondon.com/things-to-do/visiting-london-for-the-first-time/london-at-a-glance#M8z7OehBpJd8xcc4.97>
2. Things to Do  
<https://www.visitlondon.com/things-to-do/sightseeing/london-attraction/top-ten-attractions>
3. Traveler Information  
<https://www.visitlondon.com/traveller-information/getting-around-london/oyster>  
<https://www.visitlondon.com/traveller-information/getting-around-london/london-tube>
4. Accommodation  
<https://www.visitlondon.com/where-to-stay/where-to-stay-in-london>

### Sections selected from Beijing tourism website

1. About Beijing  
<http://english.visitbeijing.com.cn/a1/a-XAJI6O84EA4AD3F83C28BF>  
<http://english.visitbeijing.com.cn/a1/a-XAJXM84CB33E75720D2467>  
<http://english.visitbeijing.com.cn/a1/a-XAJI6O5F16341791170760>
2. Things to Do  
<http://english.visitbeijing.com.cn/a1/a-XE4DJPD481E39C6F5BF927>
3. Routes and Strategy  
<http://english.visitbeijing.com.cn/f/search.html?key=A%20one-day%20tour%20of%20Pinggu%20District%20in%20Beijing>  
<http://english.visitbeijing.com.cn/a1/a-XE4DBB1835ED72E3086267>
4. Accommodation  
<http://english.visitbeijing.com.cn/a1/a-XE4525F622D22A4E11FF08>

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## PUBLICATIONS

序号	题目	期刊名	署名	发表时间
1	A Study on the Strategies and Influencing Factors of the Subtitle Translation of the film Mulan from the Perspective of the Rewriting Theory	海外英语	独立	2019-02
2	概念隐喻与转喻视角下的汉字“云”词义分析	文教资料	独立	2019-05
3	新时代中国特色社会主义生态文明建设——生态环境中面临的问题及对策	文教资料	独立	2019-09