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The Fusion of Ancient and Contemporary: A Visual Rhetoric Analysis of the Visual Representation of Shaanxi in the Opening and Closing Ceremonies of the National Games

Peijie Li

Northwestern Polytechnical University, Xian, 710000, China

Abstract: In recent years, the improvement of city image has become an important topic of concern, at the same time, the hosting of mega-events has become an indispensable part of building city image. Therefore, the impact of mega-events on city image has attracted widespread attention in the academic community. However, the current analysis of the impact of mega-events on city image improvement from the perspective of visual rhetoric has not received much attention. Thus, against this background, this study focuses on the visual turn of shaping city image in the Internet era, using the opening and closing ceremonies of the Xi'an National Games as an example. The author has coded the Shaanxi elements in the opening and closing ceremonies of the National Games and created a chart using the visual grammar framework. The study shows that Shaanxi elements can be classified into four types: signs, buildings, natural landscape and distinctive cultures. Based on the interactive meaning in visual grammar analysis, the author analyzes the presentation, function, and meaning of Shaanxi elements from two aspects: the "social distance" represented by lens language and the "attitude" represented by viewing angle. These Shaanxi elements ultimately built an image of Shaanxi with strong economic and cultural strength, distinctive characteristics, inheritance, and innovation. The image of Shaanxi spread by the National Games has become a vivid memory of a generation, and the construction of the image has also become a manifestation of the enhancement of Shaanxi's international communication ability.

Keywords: Visual Rhetoric; City Image; Shaanxi; Mega-Events.

1. Introduction

City image is "a public image composed of many people's images", and is also an important part of city communication. The shaping of city image is of great significance to the positioning of city functions, the establishment of city brands, and the attraction of consumers. Mega-events events are one of the powerful means of shaping the city's image. Cities have long used mega events such as World Fairs, Expos and sporting events as a means of revitalizing their economies, creating infrastructure and improving their image. Mega sporting events are being used by host cities with increasing frequency to build, enhance or even change their brand image. An event may generate potential economic benefits (e.g., job creation and attracting tourists visiting the host city) and social benefits (e.g., building social networks and social capital in the community). In addition, hosting the event can increase city visibility.

This paper bridges this gap by analyzing the live video footage of the opening and closing ceremonies of the Xi'an National Games, with the goal of identifying how the image of Shaanxi is shaped through the use of various visual elements.

2. Literature Review

The development and propagation of city image are receiving more attention as a result of the ongoing advancement of modern urban construction. The positioning of city operations, the creation of city brands, and consumer appeal all depend heavily on how a city is seen. Many communities continue to "repackage" their resources and identities in an effort to present an appealing front. With the increasing attention to the city image, the research on the construction and communication strategy of the city image has attracted the interest of many scholars at present, and has produced many academic achievements in this field. There is urban communication analysis based on audience perspective. There is also a study of urban image communication strategies from the perspective of memetics. In addition, the discussion of city image communication based on ISMAS marketing model has also been put forward.

According to visual rhetoric, the meaning of image can be analyzed from two dimensions, namely, visual grammar dimension and visual discourse dimension. Visual grammar analysis focuses on form, while visual discourse analysis focuses on content. So far, most of the studies on the construction of urban image focus on the text level, and lack of attention to the visual communication behavior. The research methods and theories of urban image are also relatively simple. Self-attention is less involved in image construction.

3. Method

3.1. Data

We identified Shaanxi elements in the live TV broadcast of the opening and closing ceremonies of the 14th Shaanxi National Games. The National Games is the largest, highest competitive level and most influential national comprehensive sports meeting independently established by China. It has become an important platform for displaying China's competitive sports level, cultivating sports reserve talents, disseminating sports culture, and promoting sports industry. It is a powerful regulatory lever for China's sports development, and has made an important contribution to

China's sports development. The hosting of the Shaanxi Provincial National Games is conducive to improving the core competitiveness of its cities, highlighting regional characteristics, cultivating urban highlights, building momentum with sports, forming the integration of sports, culture and economy, and finally forming a healthy and sustainable local sports environment. Since the beginning of the Shaanxi National Games, it has received widespread attention from domestic and foreign media, and the hosting of national events has become a powerful means of promoting the image of Shaanxi cities.

3.2. Identification

Symbols are perceivable and can represent things other than their own. Symbol is a simplified way for people to understand things, a bridge between culture and nature, and an intermediary to load and transmit information. From the perspective of semiotics, the Shaanxi elements contained in the video of the opening and closing ceremonies are symbols that symbolize the city. These elements, as city symbols, have distinct symbolic significance in building the city image. Kevin Lynch's "City Impression" analyzes the psychological map. He believes that the city is unified by five image elements: path, boundary, region, node and landmark. He emphasized the identifiability and imageability of urban structure and environment, which is the category of urban symbols. According to the above definition, Shaanxi elements in the opening and closing ceremonies can be distinguished and counted.

4. Results

4.1. Analysis of Shaanxi Elements from the Perspective of Visual Grammar

In this part, we analyze how Shaanxi elements are presented from the lens language and viewing angle, that is, the expression form and structure of Shaanxi elements.

4.1.1. Lens Language

Table 2 shows that the presentation of different types of Shaanxi elements in lens language has distinct different lens tendencies. This chart is based on the number of occurrences of Shaanxi elements, reflecting the number of times that different Shaanxi elements are photographed at different distances when they appear. Overall, panoramic lenses are the most used, accounting for 73.48% of the total, followed by long shot lenses, accounting for 23.76% of the total, while close-ups are the least used, accounting for 2.76% of the total.

The data is consistent with the general lens usage rules during the shooting of celebrations or grand events. Therefore, the reliability of coding statistics and corpus can also be confirmed.

Different lenses can be used to capture signs in a variety of ways, with the long shot being one such option. Within this category, two distinct subtypes include the extreme long shot and the aerial shot. The extreme long shot, which is captured using a long lens, creates a sense of distance between the viewer and the subject matter. This type of scene is ideal for showcasing the overall view of the scene hall and providing the audience with an objective and realistic perspective of the event. It also helps to highlight the theme of the event through its presentation of the surrounding environment. On the other hand, aerial photography captures the panoramic view of the Xi'an Olympic Sports Center from above. This technique provides the audience with a complete picture of the location where the event took place, offering a unique perspective that cannot be achieved through other types of shots. Regardless of the scene in which the signs appear, shooting from a long distance can effectively capture the logo. This is true whether the shot is taken from an extreme perspective inside the venue or an aerial shot outside the venue. This versatility makes it an ideal choice for capturing signs in a variety of settings.

Panoramic scenes are particularly useful when capturing signs, and can be broken down into three categories: panorama, large panorama, and small panorama. The large panorama captures the entire stage and all performers, placing a strong emphasis on the emblem elements on the stage. This type of shot clearly displays the actions of the performers and the stage, while also enhancing the emblem elements to emphasize their significance. Additionally, the social distance between the performers and the audience is reduced, which helps to increase the interaction between the two. The panorama shot is ideal for capturing the overall scene, and is particularly useful for showcasing the surrounding environment or the location of the event. This type of shot can help to establish the context of the event and create a sense of immersion for the audience. Finally, the small panorama places a greater emphasis on the emblem and characters in the shot, increasing their significance and importance. This type of shot draws the audience closer to the characters and emblem, enhancing their connection and engagement with the scene. Overall, the use of panoramic scenes in capturing signs can greatly enhance the significance and impact of the emblem and characters, while also establishing context and creating a sense of immersion for the audience.

When it comes to capturing signs, close-up shots are particularly effective in emphasizing the importance of the National Games flag and the 14th National Games flag. By using a close-up lens, these flags are magnified and their significance is greatly enhanced. This type of shot also allows the photographer to convey a strong emotional connection to the flag, which can resonate with the audience. The use of a dark environment further emphasizes the bright colors of the flag, creating a visually striking contrast that adds to the impact of the shot. This approach is especially effective when it comes to highlighting the colors and symbols of the flag, making them stand out against the darker background. Overall, close-up shots of the National Games flags are a powerful way to convey the importance and significance of the event. By using this technique, photographers can create a strong emotional connection with the audience while emphasizing the symbolic elements of the flags themselves.

The shooting of architectures mainly focuses on the use of long lens (58.54%) and panoramic lens (41.46%). Aerial long shots are particularly effective in capturing the panorama of the Olympic Sports Center, which is a key landmark of the Shaanxi National Games. The use of aerial photography in this context helps to emphasize the significance of the building and its role in the event. Similarly, aerial photography is also used to capture the historical landmark of the city wall, which is an important cultural site in Shaanxi. By using this technique, the photographer is able to showcase the wall in all its grandeur and historical significance, while also providing a sense of context for the audience. In addition to aerial shots, the use of panoramic lenses is also effective in capturing the essence of the architecture. This approach is particularly useful when it comes to highlighting the key buildings in the Shaanxi National Games, emphasizing their importance and significance to the event. Overall, the

combination of aerial and panoramic shots in architectural photography is highly effective in showcasing the key landmarks and buildings in Shaanxi. By using these techniques, photographers are able to provide the audience with a sense of context and history while emphasizing the importance of these buildings to the Shaanxi National Games.

According to Table 2, all shots of natural landscapes elements are panoramic shots (100%). Photographs of natural landscapes appear as the background of the program to show the audience the unique scenery of Shaanxi Province. Similarly, the shooting of characteristic cultural elements is all panoramic shots (100%). In this case, the social distance is shortened to social, and the connection between the audience and the actors who display the characteristic culture is strengthened.

4.1.2. Viewing Angle

In general, the most commonly used viewing angle in the Xi'an National Games opening and closing ceremonies was the vertical angle, which accounted for 50.45% of the total. This is because front-facing views, whether up or down, are often used in formal occasions and can provide the audience with a sense of participation and engagement. Horizontal viewing angles were also used to some extent, accounting for 34.23% of the total. These viewing angles often utilized wide-angle lenses, which can help to add variety and interest to the composition of the shots. Other viewing angles, such as long shots and aerial shots, were also used but did not significantly impact the overall grammatical framework of the footage. The use of different viewing angles helped to add variety and interest to the footage, while also meeting the needs of shooting and recording in formal occasions.

In terms of signs, like the general trend, vertical views is the most used. The vertical views can be subdivided into three perspectives, namely, top view, flat view and upward view.

In the vertical view of the signs, the top view and the flat view are equally important. According to the "attitude" in the visual grammar framework, different vertical views reflect different power relations. The top view reflects the power of the viewing subject and the audience's participation and examination of the celebration. The flat view reflects the equal status of the audience and the people in the celebration, thus making the relationship between the audience and the athletes and volunteers on the spot closer.

In the horizontal view of the signs, the horizontal view can be subdivided into front view and squint view. The front view angle is mainly used in flag shooting. The front view mainly refers to the participation of the viewing subject. Moreover, the squint angle of view mainly summarizes the shooting of various scenes, reflecting the separation between the viewing subject and the scene.

The vertical angle of view is widely used in the shooting of architectures, accounting for 41.46%. In contrast, the horizontal angle of view is not used at all (0%). Like the signs, the vertical perspective of the architectures can also be subdivided into top view, flat view and upward view. The flat angle of view in the building is the same as the flat angle of view in the signs, both of which reflect the equal relationship between the people on the stage and the viewing subject. The use of the upward view in architectures reflects the power of buildings and emphasizes the role and status of buildings.

All-natural landscape are top views in the vertical views. Top views reflect the audience's power to view landscape pictures. It directly introduced the unique natural landscape of Shaanxi to the audience.

In the characteristic culture, all perspectives are also vertical. However, the vertical perspective in the characteristic culture can be divided into the flat view and the top view. Top view reflects the audience's power to watch the program. The flat view reflects the equal relationship between the audience and the performer, and the audience appreciates the characteristic culture displayed by the performer with an equal attitude.

4.2. Analysis of Shaanxi Elements from the Perspective of Visual Discourse

In this part, the author will further analysis Shaanxi elements in the celebrations according to the previous visual grammar analysis. At the same time, Shaanxi elements will be divided into presentation elements and symbolic elements. Finally, the function and significance of the visual discourse analysis dimension of Shaanxi elements under the visual analysis framework were shown.

4.2.1. Functions and Meanings in Signs

From the previous analysis, we can conclude that the main expression forms of the signs are: the long shot, panorama and close-up in the lens language; Top view, flat view, front and squint in the viewing angle.

In the lens language, the long shot is mostly used to show the overall view of the venue and link up the celebration. By showing the overall view of the venue, it presents a calm and news-like perspective, with the function of recording and reporting. This shooting method is in line with the seriousness and formality of the National Games as a national sports event. At the same time, it links all parts of the celebration with long shot, and the combination of sound and picture explains the progress of the celebration to the audience, showing the communication and narrative path of Shaanxi from a national perspective. Then, the signs appearing in the process of panoramic photography include the emblem, slogan and mascot. The emblem and slogan appear as presentation elements for many times, reminding the audience of the theme of the celebration and building the audience's collective memory. The social distance in the panoramic lens is mostly social, which makes the audience feel friendly when seeing all the scenes. However, when shooting mascots, the social distance is close. The close social distance creates a close emotional connection between the viewer and the charmingly naive anthropomorphic mascots, and enhances the love and intimacy of mascots. The four mascots are symbolic elements which have different meanings. They are symbols of hope and the future, and condense into a living collective memory carrier that combines symbolism and entity. Finally, all close-ups were used to shoot flags. The flag itself is a presentation element, but the flag lowering ceremony has strong symbolic significance, representing the closing of the National Games. The close-up lens conveys a solemn farewell to the National Games and symbolizes the successful holding of the closing ceremony in Shaanxi. The significance of the closing ceremony, which symbolizes the spirit of sports, has also been constantly strengthened in the minds of the viewers.

Among the viewing angles, the top view and squint view angles are mostly used for shooting programs and main scenes, while the front view and flat view angles are used for shooting athletes and participants. The top view reflects the audience's examination of the closing ceremony and the main position of watching. The squint reflects a detached subjective attitude and provides a calm and true perspective of live news. In addition, the combination of squint and other

views makes the picture flexible and vivid. When looking forward and facing up to shoot characters, the relationship between the audience and the subject will be closer and more equal, and the audience's sense of participation will be strengthened. The mascot who extinguished the sacred fire was shot by the front view. At this time, the observer participated in the extinguishment of the sacred fire from the front view, directly felt the atmosphere of farewell, and built a collective memory.

4.2.2. Functions and Meanings in Architectures

The analysis of visual grammar shows that the main expression of architecture is aerial photography and panorama in lens language, and the main way of viewing angle is upward.

The aerial photographs are magnificent and can improve the visual perception and shape a grand style. The Olympic Sports Center is a presentation element. It has appeared many times as a landmark building, and its sports implication has been constantly strengthened to enhance the pride of the viewers of the Shaanxi National Games. The city wall is also a presentation element. As a classic historical representative of Xi'an, it has appeared many times. The historical and cultural implication it represents has been constantly strengthened, and the identification of the viewer with Shaanxi has been enhanced. In the panoramic lens, the characteristic buildings and gymnasiums in Shaanxi Province as the presentation elements have appeared many times. Shaanxi's characteristic historical buildings reflect Shaanxi's rich cultural heritage. The gymnasium also conforms to the sports spirit of the National Games, implying the National Games and displaying colorful Shaanxi for the audience. What's more, the buildings in Shaanxi represent the efforts made by people everywhere, implying that the National Games cannot be held without the efforts and struggles of Shaanxi Province.

The viewing angle of upward mainly highlights the grandeur of the building, and constructs the appreciation emotion of the viewing subject to the building and the appreciation and love of Shaanxi.

4.2.3. Functions and Meanings in Natural Landscapes

According to the previous text, the lens in the natural landscape is mainly panoramic, and the viewing angle is vertical.

In the panoramic view, the natural landscape belongs to the presentation element, and mainly appears with the concrete photographic pictures as the background of the program. The concrete pictures give the audience a clear visual feeling, symbolizing that the natural landscape of Shaanxi reflects the richness and diversity of Shaanxi's tourism resources, the unique natural conditions, and the good ecological environment, showing the audience a green Shaanxi. In the picture, there are also cities written in splash-ink characters, which are symbolic elements, showing the strong local characteristics and unique spiritual features of Shaanxi, giving the audience a sense of beauty that combines tradition and modernity.

In the vertical viewing angle, all angles are overhead viewing angles. The perspective of top view reflects the audience's power to watch, introduces the audience to all parts of Shaanxi, enhances the audience's love and appreciation of Shaanxi, and builds a collective memory.

4.2.4. Functions and Meanings in Characteristic Culture

According to the analysis of visual grammar, the lens language of characteristic culture is panoramic, and the viewing angle is mainly flat view and top view.

There are many typical representatives of Shaanxi culture in the panoramic display program. These representatives belong to the presentation elements, implying the rich and colorful folk customs of Shaanxi. Their direct presentation creates a visual impact and brings extraordinary artistic effects. Through these distinctive cultures, the audience will expand their understanding of Shaanxi. In addition, the panorama contains a lot of red elements, which is a symbolic element. The overall red scenery presents an exciting, warm and cheerful atmosphere.

In the perspective of flat viewing, the relationship between the subject and the actor is more intimate and equal, and the audience's familiarity with Shaanxi culture and people is strengthened. This view shows the audience the enthusiasm of Shaanxi people, their passion for a better life and their love for Shaanxi culture. The top views reflect the audience's power to watch. The program introduces Shaanxi color culture and folk customs to the audience, strengthens the audience's love and praise for Shaanxi, and builds a collective memory.

5. Discussion and Conclusion

Through the visual grammar dimension and the visual discourse dimension in visual rhetoric, the author analyzes how the Shaanxi elements in the opening and closing ceremonies construct the image of Shaanxi, providing empirical evidence for the methods and results of urban image construction. Shaanxi elements are divided into four categories: signs, architecture, natural landscape and characteristic culture, and convey the farewell to the end of the National Games, the pursuit of sports spirit, the promotion of Shaanxi's characteristic culture, Shaanxi's rich historical background, natural resources, strong economic strength, and Shaanxi people's enthusiasm for the people of the whole country through different expressions in lens language and viewing angle.

First, we selected the live TV broadcast of the opening and closing ceremonies of the Shaanxi National Games as the research data source. After extracting and encoding Shaanxi elements in the video, a corpus is established. Through sorting and classifying the data in the corpus, the author classifies Shaanxi elements into four categories: signs, architecture, natural landscape and characteristic culture. Shaanxi elements in the signs include the emblem, slogan, mascot, etc. Shaanxi elements in the architectures include the Olympic Sports Center, city walls, historical sites, gymnasiums, etc. Shaanxi elements in the natural landscape include various natural tourism resources in Shaanxi cities. Shaanxi elements in the characteristic culture include various cultural heritages that can be performed and displayed. This answers the first research question raised in this paper: What are the Shaanxi elements in the opening and closing ceremonies of the National Games?

Secondly, with the help of visual grammar analysis and visual discourse analysis in visual rhetoric, the author establishes a visual analysis framework. In this visual analysis framework, the expression form and structure of Shaanxi elements are analyzed from the perspective of lens language and viewing angle. The lens language represents the "social distance" in visual grammar, while the viewing angle represents the "attitude" in visual grammar. It can be seen from the analysis that, on the whole, the lens language of

signs, natural landscapes and characteristic cultures is mostly panoramic, and the lens language of architectures is mostly long shot. The viewing angle of signs, natural landscapes and characteristic culture is mostly vertical, while the viewing angle of architecture is horizontal and other.

Finally, this paper summarizes the function and significance of Shaanxi elements in visual discourse by combining presentation elements and symbolic elements, as well as the expression and structure of Shaanxi elements under visual grammar. This paper concludes that the Shaanxi element of the National Games conveys the farewell to the end of the National Games, the pursuit of sports spirit, the promotion of Shaanxi characteristic culture, Shaanxi's rich historical background, natural resources, strong economic strength, and the enthusiasm of Shaanxi people for the whole country. This answers the second research question raised in this paper: From the perspective of visual rhetoric, how does Shaanxi element shape the image of Shaanxi? It can be concluded that the Shaanxi element in the opening and closing ceremonies of the National Games has built an image of Shaanxi that loves sports, inherits and develops heritage, has rich cultural and tourism resources, has strong economic strength, and is passionate and hospitable. This answers the third research question of this article: What kind of Shaanxi image has Shaanxi elements created?

In short, this study focuses on the visual turn of urban image construction in the Internet era, takes the opening and closing ceremonies of the Xi'an National Games as an example, and takes the visual communication behavior reflected in the opening and closing ceremonies of the National Games as the research object, and studies the self-construction of Shaanxi's external image from the perspective of visual rhetoric. The study found that these Shaanxi elements eventually created a Shaanxi with strong economic and cultural strength, distinctive characteristics, and inheritance and innovation. The image of Shaanxi spread by the National Games is a successful example of self-constructing the image of the city, which has reference significance to the image construction of other cities, and has become a vivid memory of a generation. In this National Games, the construction of the image of Shaanxi has also become a manifestation of the improvement of Shaanxi's international communication ability, which has a positive impact on the future development of Shaanxi.

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