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## City image Construction in the English-version Chinese City Promotion Film

-- A Case Study on Xi'an City Promotional Film

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### Abstract

*In the era of globalization, the better future development of city requires the construction of an international and promising city image for its promotion. English captions as an indispensable part of city promotional film, is crucial in the city image construction. Based on Halliday's transitive system theory, this paper adopted qualitative and quantitative methods to interpret the ideational functions of captions in the latest English-version city promotional films of Xi'an in terms of clauses. ELAN 6.0 was utilized as the research tool. The study found that material process accounted for the highest proportion (62.77%) in English captions of the city promotional film of Xi'an, which was conducive to the promotion of nature and culture—the key element of Xi'an's city image. The frequent use of material processes contributed to create a more vivid and resonant city image. The research also showed that the emphasis on the publicity of the existing advantages and the description of the future development needs were beneficial to the effective construction of city image. Besides, different constituent element required different choice of transitivity process to maximize its effect for a better city image construction. This study aimed to summarize the successful experience of city promotional films and offer reference to the production of city promotional films in the future.*

**Keywords:** Transitivity analysis, City image construction, City promotional film, Xi'an

### Introduction

The sustainable development of cities contributes to the improvement of people's living standards internally, and enhances the comprehensive strength of the country externally. With the development of economic globalization and information technology, internationalization has become an inevitable trend for city development around the world. The international context embarks on a new era of global competition, and the competition among cities has become the new focus in the competition among countries and regions<sup>11</sup>. International cities are the

commanding heights of global economic, social and cultural activities. Today, the construction of international cities is a major theme of common concern in the world. Cities, especially international metropolis, play an increasingly important role in the global economic and cultural development<sup>12</sup>. The successful city promotional film will greatly benefit the construction of the city image, therefore, benefit the city development. As a name card of a city, a city promotional film makes use of images, sounds, animations and other forms of expression, accompanied by the rhythm of music, conveying the thematic spirit, culture and condition of the city development to the audience in a relaxing way<sup>13</sup>. As stated in China City Development Network, “Films and TV works are one of the best carriers to present the image of a country and a city, and have been reckoned as an effective method for countries and cities to launch external image communication and marketing<sup>14</sup>.” Therefore, a successful English version of the city promotional film is beneficial to the construction and promoting of a fine city image in today’s international era, making the city more attractive and competitive. Hence, the significance of English captions is self-evident as an integral part of the English version of the city promotional film.

Xi’an, known as Chang’an in ancient times, is the capital of Shaanxi Province, a sub-provincial city, a megacity, and the core city of Guanzhong Plain City Agglomeration. It is also an important center city in western China and an important national scientific research, education and industrial base approved by the State Council<sup>15</sup>. Dubbed “the starting point of the Silk Road”, Xi’an in the context of the Belt and Road Initiative now aims at constructing itself into an international metropolis with historical and cultural characteristics, a city at the forefront of Eurasian cooperation, and a new focus of inland reform and opening up along the Silk Road Economic Belt<sup>16</sup>.

City promotional film contains speech mode, visual mode and auditory mode, which suggests its accordance with the definition of the multimodal discourse. From the perspective of foreign audience who might watch these city promotional films as potential travelers, investors and residents, captions play a crucial role in their general understanding of the city image. Halliday called any linguistic instance that played a role in situational context a “text”, and believed that a text can be oral or written, or in other expression media<sup>17</sup>. Therefore, the captions in the city promotional film can be regarded as a discourse, and can be analyzed by using the transitivity theory in the Systemic Functional Linguistics. Transitivity as an approach of realizing experiential meaning, contributes to the construction of city image. Since the constituent elements of city image reflected by the happenings, experience and meanings in captions are expressed through the choice of transitivity processes and their participants. The analysis of transitivity of captions in city promotional films enables film producers to evaluate the effectiveness of city image construction and the appeal of the city image. Therefore, a transitivity analysis of captions in city promotional films is of relatively high value for a better city promotion in the future.

At present, there are relatively few studies focusing on city promotional films based on the transitivity theory in the systemic functional linguistics. Most of the preceding studies analyzed city promotional films from the perspective of rhetoric. From the perspective of Halliday’s

transitivity theory in the systemic functional linguistics, this paper studies the latest English-version city promotional film of Xi'an, analyzing how it achieve ideational meaning through English captions, thereby contributing to the construction of city image. This paper is aimed at improving the quality of future city promotional films.

## Literature Review

### *City image*

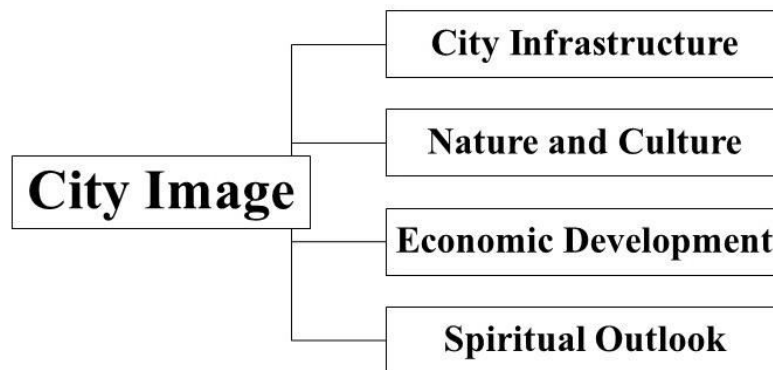
As for the understanding of “city image”, domestic and foreign experts and scholars both experienced a process from purely material level to the combination of material and spirit. The following roundup is going to illustrate from the perspective of studies abroad and at home.

Despite the close relationship between human and city, the theoretical study of city image did not develop until the 1860s under the attention of environmental cognition researchers<sup>18</sup>. From the beginning of the 20th century, the Chicago School of the United States began to interpret cities from the perspective of sociology. A city is not simply a modern space composed of architectural extrinsic objects. On the contrary, it is the presence of human beings that creates its unique characteristics, and human beings and their socialized activities are the intrinsic characteristics of a city<sup>19</sup>. This recognition brings the majority of researchers to the common ground that city image is more than its material outlook. With the rapid development of urbanization globally in the mid twentieth century, researchers have gradually extended the connotation of city image from physical landscape to social culture and spiritual level, forming three approaches of city image research: planning and design, marketing and communication<sup>18</sup>.

The term “city image” was first proposed by the American urbanologist Kevin Lynch<sup>19</sup>. Lynch's theoretical contribution lies in the expansion of the connotation of city image from the material level to the social and cultural level, which adds a new research direction for the subsequent humanities and social sciences research of cities<sup>20</sup>. As the expansion of the connotation of city image, an important turn of city image research is to examine the production, communication and consumption of city image from the macro-scope of social economy and culture, thus starting the research on the marketing and communication of city image<sup>18</sup>. From the perspective of business operation, this approach of city image research mainly concentrates on the marketing of city image by learning from the successful experience of corporate image operation. While its drawback lies in the potential resistance and antipathy of the public once its image is overly exaggerated or against the solid truth.

In China, the research perspective of the planning and design of city image was initiated in the Republic of China period and developed in the Reform And Opening Up, especially after the 1990s<sup>18</sup>. With the deepening of research, scholars gradually agreed that the city image is composed of the city's hard and soft power and public impression, and the key elements included: city architecture, landmarks, transportation, hardware infrastructure, government behavior, cultural inheritance, economic innovation, development advantages and so on. Chen and Jia<sup>21</sup> defined city image from an academic perspective. They believed that city image should be a comprehensive and integrated image of a city, and it should reflect the overall values of the city based on its infrastructure, nature and culture, economic development and spiritual outlook.

Considering that the definition of city image proposed by Chen and Jia<sup>21</sup> is relatively concise and explicit with clear substance in each element, rather than being abstract and general, this paper adopts their framework (see Figure 1) to discuss the city image construction in city promotional films.



**Figure 1 The Framework of Constituent Elements of the City Image**

The research on city image from the perspective of communication studies is mainly reflected in three aspects. On the technical level, it emphasizes the application and influence of media technology in city image communication. At the cultural level, it is believed that the media dissemination of city image is a construction of collective identity, which is beneficial to enhance people's identification with city culture. From the perspective of image strategy optimization, suggestions are put forward on the communication mechanism and communication strategy of city image<sup>20</sup>.

### ***Transitivity System Theory***

The study of transitivity in systemic functional linguistics can be traced back to the 1960s. Halliday, a British linguist and the founder of the Systemic Functional Linguistics School, published a series of papers in the 1960s, extending the research object of transitivity from verbs to clauses for the first time, and making a systematic analysis of the transitivity of clauses<sup>22</sup>. In the past half century, in order to improve the transitivity theory of the systemic functional linguistics, many foreign scholars have made great contributions, including Matthiessen<sup>1</sup>, Painter, Matthiessen and Martin<sup>2</sup>, Fawcett<sup>3</sup>, etc. In application research, Halliday<sup>4</sup> first utilized the transitivity theory to analyze Golding's novel *Inheritor*, providing a new methodology for literature analysis. Since then, scholars in different fields began to analyze literature works, policy texts, answers in the oral test and news reports, etc. However, few researches focus on the captions of the city promotional film based on the transitivity theory.

Since the 1980s, many domestic scholars in China have devoted themselves to introducing, developing and improving the theory of transitivity. So far, Hu and Cheng have systematically introduced the transitivity theory. *Systemic Functional Linguistics* written by Hu et al was the first book to introduce systemic functional linguistics in China, and *An Introduction to Systemic*

*Functional Grammar* written by Cheng made a new attempt to study the transitivity theory. In addition to the above major works, domestic scholars also published a large number of papers on the introduction, discussion, development and improvement of transitivity theory. As for the application of the transitivity theory, many scholars applied it to translation studies. Some scholars applied it to the study of discourse analysis. Some scholars used transitivity the theory to conduct comparative research between English and Chinese and teaching research<sup>22</sup>. Since this study does not involve Chinese, we will not review the relevant researches on the construction of Chinese transitivity system.

### ***Studies on Transitivity Analysis on the City Promotional Film***

Just as mentioned before, few researches are conducted abroad focusing on the captions of the city promotional film based on transitivity theory. So far, there are rarely research using transitivity system theory to study city promotional film in China. According to CNKI, taking the combination of “transitivity system”, “systemic functional linguistics”, “city image” and “city promotional film” as the search theme (due on September 30, 2023), the author identified only six related research. Peng<sup>23</sup> analyzed the transitivity system of Lijiang’s city promotional film and found that it belonged to ecologically beneficial discourse. There are also other scholars who analyzed the city image of one city utilizing transitivity system, such as Lu<sup>24</sup> and Xia<sup>25</sup>. Zhou<sup>26</sup> compared five city promotional films from the perspective of multimodal analysis and discussed the way verbal and visual semiotics are manifested to represent the subjectivity and social behavior of social actors. Zhang and Zhu<sup>27</sup> studied the influence of city construction slogans on city image from the perspective of transitivity analysis, and found that clauses of action and relative clauses contribute to constructing positive city image. It can be concluded that most of the previous studies focused on one city in particular. Research on comparison among several cities is relatively rare.

### ***Theoretical Framework of the Study***

This study only focuses on the English captions in the city promotional film, discussing from the perspective of transitivity system about how it realizes the ideational meaning and constructs the city image. In conclusion, this study adopts the theory of transitivity system in the Systemic Functional Linguistics.

According to Systemic Functional Linguistics, language has three meta-functions for expressing functional meaning: ideational function, interpersonal function and textual function<sup>5,6</sup>. Among them, ideational function is used to express language users’ understanding and reflection of the subjective and objective world, that is, language is used to communicate with people and talk about the external world (such as events, qualities, etc.) and our inner world (such as thoughts, beliefs, feelings, etc.)<sup>28</sup>. Ideational function includes experiential function and logical function, in which experiential function is manifested by language expression of people’s various subjective and objective experiences in the real world, mainly reflected by transitivity system<sup>29</sup>.

Transitivity is a semantic system to express the experiential function. Its essence lies in dividing people’s experience and behavior in the real world into several “processes”, categorizing experience through grammar, and pointing out the “participants” and “circumstantial

components” related to each process<sup>30</sup>. According to the transitivity system, human experience can be divided into six processes: material process, mental process, relational process, behavioral process, verbal process, and existential process. Material process refers to the process of doing something, which is the process with the largest number and varieties in transitivity system. Mental process is the process of psychological activities such as “perception”, “reaction” and “cognition”. Relational process refers to the process of being, that is, the process that reflects the relationship between things, which can be divided into two types: attributive and identifying. The attributive type refers to those demonstrating what properties an entity has or what type it belongs to; the identification type is those demonstrating one entity that is unified with another entity. Behavioral process refers to the process of behaving, for instance, the process of breathing, coughing, dreaming and other physiological activities. Verbal process refers to the process of saying, that is, the process of information exchange through language. Existential process is the process of existing, that is, the process that indicates the existence of something<sup>29</sup>. According to Thompson<sup>7</sup>, the basic unit of Systemic Functional Grammar is the clause. This paper conducts a detailed characterization analysis of the captions in the English city promotional film based on the process types of clauses, the participants and circumstantial components (including factors such as time, place, mode and degree). The transitivity system represents people’s experiential activities in terms of clause process types, participants and circumstantial components. In turn, we interpret people’s experiential activities through such representation<sup>29</sup>. Considering that Halliday’s framework remains the most typical and ubiquitous in the transitivity analysis, this paper adopts his classification.

## **Research Methodology**

### ***Research questions***

This study encompasses three research questions:

- (1) How do the six processes of the transitivity system distribute in the latest English version of the city promotional film of Xi’an?
- (2) How do the six processes contribute to construct the city image in the latest English version of the city promotional film of Xi’an?
- (3) Why are the six transitivity processes distributing in such a way to construct the city image of Xi’an?

### ***Corpus in the Study***

The following video is the latest English version of city promotional film of Xi’an found within author’s power. It gives a relatively comprehensive introduction to the city in English, which has reference value to this study.

The latest English version of the city promotional film of Xi’an selected in this study is “Xi’an is Still Young”. The video, with 843 words of English captions forming 94 clauses, was produced by the People’s Government of Xi’an and directed by Huang Tao. Hence, it is authoritative and credible.

### **Research Instrument**

The method of quantitative statistics and qualitative analysis was adopted.

ELAN 6.0 video analysis software<sup>10</sup> can loop, locate precisely to 0.1 second, define, do layered dimension, sort, transcribe, modify language, symbols and modalities. Also, locating, replacement and partition statistical analysis can be performed<sup>31</sup>.

This study analyzes English discourse in terms of clauses with the help of ELAN 6.0, focusing on information related to the six major processes of Halliday's transitivity system.

### **Operational Definitions**

These are the detailed explanation of operational definitions in this study.

As for the constituent elements of city image in this study, specific operational definitions are as followed.

#### **1. City Infrastructure**

It mainly includes transportation system, urban architecture, city's unique buildings, artificial landscape, and facilities that meet urban residents' essential need.

#### **2. Nature and Culture**

It includes natural landscape, history, humanistic culture, customs, gourmet food, and education. The reasons of categorizing education to this element are as followed. First, people's and government's attitude towards education shape the atmosphere of cultivation of the next generation, which is a crucial part of forming the culture of learning. Second, culture and education are so inextricably involved with each other that the public always consider them as an organic whole.

#### **3. Economic Development**

Descriptions about industries, economy, technology are classified into this element. Owing to the cashability of technology, it greatly contributes to development of industries and economy, especially in the era of information. This makes technology more suitable to be categorized into this element.

#### **4. Spiritual Outlook**

This element is mainly comprised of citizens' spiritual outlook, such as their sense of competition and government's behavior and the spiritual appearance of its officials, concerning about fairness, effectiveness, probity, etc.

#### **5. Others**

This category does not belong to any constituent elements of city image. In this study, it collects the descriptions in captions that are hard to classified to the above four elements, for instance, the wish for better future development of the city, etc.

The operational definition of clause is confirmed as below. Since the transitivity analysis is conducted on the level of clause, a clear definition of clause is necessary. According to *Introducing Functional Grammar* written by Thompson<sup>7</sup>, "a clause is (potentially) any stretch of language centred around a verbal group.....However, in Hallidayan grammar clauses may be either finite or non-finite, depending on whether the verbal group is finite or non-finite." while "A finite verbal group is traditionally defined as one that shows tense, whereas a non-finite group

does not.” By reading the original versions of Geoff Thompson’s *Introducing Functional Grammar* and Halliday’s *An Introduction to Functional Grammar* (third edition) together with the original and Chinese versions of its second version, a more detailed understanding of the definition of clause was obtained. Also, when talking about the difference between non-finite clauses and prepositional phrases, Huang<sup>32</sup> pointed out that they are two completely different grammatical categories, and non-finite clauses mainly refer to structures which take -ing, -en (-ed) or verbs with or without to as the core.

As for the processing way of the V-to-V structure, Wei<sup>33</sup> pointed out that there are different interpretations in the academic field about the concept of complex verbal group and the identification criteria of transitivity process containing V-to-V structure. After comprehensive consideration of the needs of this study and author’s own ability, the final decision was made to segment the text in this study with Egging<sup>8</sup> as the reference standard. Examples are as followed:

- (1) *Simon wanted (mental process) to get (material process) a cognac. (ibid : 232)*
- (2) *I asked (verbal process) them to avoid (material process) the scar tissue. (ibid : 236)*
- (3) *He commanded (verbal process) her to carry (material process) the bags. (ibid : 237)*

As for the handling way of the V-ing structure, studies below are taken as the reference for the identification of transitivity processes and the segmentation of clauses related to V-ing structure in this study.

**Table 1 Operational Methods for “Be + V-ing” Structure**

Type	Contribute to ...	Operational method	Examples
“Be + V-ing” as a predicative	Identification of transitivity processes	Ye <sup>34</sup> ’s research demonstrates that when the V-ing structure as a predicative is a gerund, it belongs to the identifying relational process; when the V-ing structure as a predicative is a present particle, it belongs to the attributive relational process.	(1) <i>His favorite sport is <b>running</b>.</i> “Running” in this sentence is a gerund functioning as a predicative, which belongs to the identifying relational process. (2) <i>The film is very <b>moving</b>.</i> “Moving” here is a present particle that belongs to the attributive relational process.

**Table 2 Operational Methods for “V-ing + noun” Structure**

Type	Contribute to ...	Operational method	Examples
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“V-ing + noun” structure	Segmentation of clauses	<p>According to Ye<sup>35</sup>, the easiest way to interpret “V-ing+ noun” is to see whether the “V-ing + noun” can be “expanded” into a sentence. If so, it can be a relatively “dynamic” sentence structure—a clause, that reflects the “relationship between subjects, predicates, complements and other components”. On the contrary, if the “V-ing + noun” structure is only a “modifier+ head” structure, then it is a relatively “static” noun group structure.</p>	<p>(3) <i>We can use the rock <b>enclosing these fossils</b> (clause) as clues to what they were up to, Lyson told LiveScience.</i></p>
		<p>(4) <i>But even a small shift in <b>driving habits</b> (noun group) can have a big impact on transit.</i></p>	

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Type	Contribute to ...	Operational method	Examples
“Preposition + V-ing” structure	Segmentation of clauses	Through comparative analysis, Huang <sup>32</sup> found that when based on the theory of Systemic Functional Grammar and the principle of Functional Syntactic Analysis, this structure is considered as a “non-finite clause”, which is different from the traditional viewpoint.	<p>(5) <i>After having the meal, they left immediately.</i></p> <p>(6) <i>After they had the meal, they left immediately.</i></p> <p>(7) <i>Having had the meal, they left immediately.</i></p> <p>(8) <i>Finishing the meal, they left immediately.</i></p> <p>From the perspective of Systemic Functional Grammar, the italics in the above four examples are all clauses.</p>

**Table 3 Operational Methods for “Preposition + V-ing” Structure**

Type	Contribute to ...	Operational method	Examples
“Keep + V-ing” structure	Segmentation of clauses	According to Zhao and He <sup>36</sup> , in the structure of the expansion type of verbal group complex, in which the first verbs could be “start”, “begin”, “keep on”, “finish”, “happen”,	(9) <i>He kept walking (material process) for hours.</i>

**Table 4 Operational Methods for “Keep + V-ing” Structure**

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“used to”, “ask”, “have to”, “try”,  
“help”, etc., the first verb functions  
as auxiliaries and the second verb  
indicates its transitivity process.

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**Table 5 Operational Methods for V-ing as an Adjective**

To sum up, in this study, a linguistic unit containing a verb is defined as a clause, which could be either finite or non-finite. As for the V-to-V structure, this study processes it in accordance with

Type	Contribute to ...	Operational method	Examples
V-ing as an adjective	Segmentation of clauses	According to Zhao and Liu <sup>37</sup> , some V-ing forms of transitive verbs containing potential objective experiencers, verbs representing permanent characteristics, and feeling verbs such as “amaze”, “amuse”, “fascinate”, “please”, etc. belong to the pure adjectives.	(10) <i>The story is <b>amusing</b> (to me).</i> In this sentence, “amusing” is a pure adjective and “to me” is the potential objective experiencer. Therefore, example (10) is one clause with “is” as its main verb.
		In Zhao and Liu <sup>37</sup> ’s study, the V-ing structures derived from the most intransitive verbs (especially notional verbs), and verbs that indicate physical process are gerundive adjectives.	(11) <i>The cow is <b>jumping</b>.</i> In this sentence, “jumping” is a gerundive adjective indicating example (11) is one clause with “is jumping” as its main verb. (12) <i>I saw the boy <b>walking</b>.</i> In this sentence, “walking” is a gerundive adjective. Therefore, example (12) contains two clauses in total.
		As for the Middle Verb, when it emphasizes the physical process, no matter transitive or intransitive, it belongs to the gerundive adjective <sup>37</sup> .	(13) <i>the <b>sinking</b> boat</i>
		As for the Dual Physical/ Emotive Verbs with two potential denotations (psychological denotation and physical denotation), the V-ing structures derived from them need to be analyzed on a case-by-case basis <sup>37</sup> .	(14) <i>The French are <b>revolting</b>.</i> (psychological/ physical) (15) <i>The French are very <b>revolting</b>.</i> (psychological)
		Sometimes, when the same Dual Physical/ Emotive Verb is used with different nouns, emphasis differs, either as a verb or as a pure adjective <sup>37</sup> .	(16) <i>a very <b>arresting</b> thought/ *police officer</i> (17) <i>His story/ *leg is very <b>moving</b>.</i> The difference between the former and the latter of the slash is that “the former collocation indicates “the speaker’s subjective recognition”; while the latter collocation indicates “the objective fact described by the verb”. Only the former collocation belongs to the V-ing pure adjective <sup>40</sup> .

Eggins<sup>8</sup>'s and Wei<sup>33</sup>'s approach. As for the processing of the V-ing structure, references include research of Ye<sup>34</sup>, Ye<sup>35</sup>, Huang<sup>32</sup>, Zhao and He<sup>36</sup> together with Zhao and Liu<sup>37</sup>. Their contributions offer reliable instructions to the segmentation of clause in the captions of this study.

Detailed and complete definitions of the six transitivity processes are mentioned in the theoretical framework of this study. Here presents the operational definitions of them. As for specific representation of verbs in the six transitivity processes, examples are as listed below.

**Table 6 Examples of Verbs in Six Transitivity Processes**

Type of process	Verbs
1. Material process	It usually uses dynamic verbs and is often in progressive tense. Examples: build, break, run, cancel, etc.
2. Mental process	Represent perception, reaction and cognition, and often in simple present tense or simple past tense. Examples are as followed: see, look, like, please, know, believe, convince, etc.
3. Relational process	It is classified into two types: attributive and identifying. And each of these two types can be further classified into three sub-types: intensive, circumstantial and possessive. In this study, such detailed categorization is not needed, but the three formulas that summarize these three types contribute to the identification of the types of transitivity process of the captions. The three formulas are: "X is a." for the intensive kind; "X is at a." for the circumstantial kind; and "X has a." for the possessive kind. Verbs that indicate the attributive type of relational process include: be, last, have, etc. The commonly-used expressions for the intensive type of identifying relational process are: be, become, add up to, play, act as, call, mean, represent, stand for, resemble, symbolize, signify, etc. The commonly-used expressions for the possessive type of identifying relational process are: own, contain, include, involve, comprise, etc.
4. Behavioral process	Examples: breathe, cough, sign, dream, laugh, cry, watch, listen, etc.
5. Verbal process	Examples: say, tell, praise, boast, describe, etc.
6. Existential process	Examples: be, exist, arise, etc.

**Research Procedures**

There are three major steps in this research.

1. Analyze the distribution of the six processes of transitivity system in the English captions of the English-version Xi'an city promotional film.

(1) To determine the distribution of the six transitivity processes, data are calculated in regards of the percentage of the number of clauses of each transitivity process in the total number of clauses

of captions with non-clause captions excluded.

(2) To determine the frequency of the six types of transitivity process objectively, occurrence in every 100 words<sup>9</sup> of the English captions which exclude the non-clause captions was used as criterion given the size of the texts of the two city promotional films. The total number of words of captions in the city promotional film of Xi’an is 822 words.

2. Analyze how do the processes of transitivity system in the English captions of the city promotional film construct the city image. Summarize the process types used and the ideational meaning realized in each part of the captions that describing the elements of the city image, so as to explore the ways in which the relevant ideational meaning contributes to the construct the city image, presenting them in tables.

3. Analyze the reasons of the distribution of six transitivity processes from the perspective of city image construction, summarize experience and propose suggestions.

## Results and Discussion

### *Transitivity Processes Distribution*

To determine the distribution of the six transitivity processes, data are calculated in regards of the percentage of the number of clauses of each transitivity process in the total number of clauses with non-clause ones excluded.

**Table 7 Transitivity Processes Distribution in Xi’an City Promotional Film**

There are altogether 94 clauses in the captions of this film with non-clause captions deleted, and behavioral process and verbal process fail to be found among them. Notably, the material process dominates in the whole discourse, with the proportion of 62.77%. The relational process ranks second with a total occurrence of 25.53%, followed by the mental process (10.63%) and the existential process (1.06%).

Type of processes	Number of this process	Percentage of this process
Material (MA)	59	62.77%
Relational (RE)	24	25.53%
Mental (ME)	10	10.63%
Behavioral (BE)	0	0.00%
Verbal (VE)	0	0.00%
Existential (EX)	1	1.06%
Total	94	

Table 7 presented that percentage of material process is the highest of

all the process types. This distribution conforms to the general distribution of the transitivity analysis of a text. Since the material process is often reflected by dynamic verbs, the dominant number of material process indicates that the expression of captions in the city promotional film of Xi’an is more vivid and appealing. Its producer adopts the strategy of “describing, instead of presenting” to achieve a more intriguing and emotionally resonant way of telling Chang’an Dream.

**Analysis of City Image and Transitivity Process**

In this section, statistical analysis of English captions of the city promotional film of Xi'an is conducted.

**Table 8 Transitivity Processes Distribution in Constituent Elements in Xi'an City**

	Promotional Film						
	Number of clauses	Number of MA	Number of RE	Number of ME	Number of BE	Number of VE	Number of EX
<b>City infrastructure</b>	5	4	1	0	0	0	0
<b>Nature and culture</b>	42	25	12	4	0	0	1
<b>Economic development</b>	13	8	4	1	0	0	0
<b>Spiritual outlook</b>	27	15	7	5	0	0	0
<b>Others</b>	7	7	0	0	0	0	0

\*Total number of clauses in this film: 94

Table 8 shows the distribution of the six transitivity processes in the city promotional film of Xi'an based on the framework of constituent elements of city image. There are 94 clauses in total. As for city infrastructure, there are five clauses in all, consisting of four material process and one relational process. As for the element of nature and culture, 42 clauses exist in total, including 27 material process, ten relational process, four mental process and one existential process. For economic development, there are 13 clauses in all, encompassing eight material process, four relational process and one mental process. As for spiritual outlook, there are 27 clauses in total, containing 15 material process, seven relational process and five mental process. As for captions expressing other type of content, such as wishes, there exist seven clauses in total, all of which belongs to material process. According to Halliday, material clauses mainly describe "the process of doing" in the physical world. In Table 8, the dominant number of material process in every constituent element indicates that the government of Xi'an encourages and has done a lot of work for the development of the city, acting as capable and diligent.

Special attention should be given to the construction of the constituent element — nature and culture. Among 94 clauses in all, it takes up 42 clauses, with the proportion of 44.68%. This indicates that the government of Xi'an not only offers fine protection of cultural relics so that they can promote them in reality and in the promotional films, but also makes full use of the rich and various historical and cultural resources in Xi'an to publicize its city image. When illustrating nature and culture, multiple approaches are used including material process (59.52%), relational process (28.57%), mental process (9.52%) and existential process (2.38%). Multiple approaches of demonstration contribute to the construction of a vivid and inviting city image. Apart from actions and happenings demonstrated by material process as a major method, "a process of being" demonstrated by relational process provides a straightforward explanation of



Xi'an's attributes and cultural identities. Feelings, emotions, and thoughts expressed by mental process psychologically implies that residents and the government of Xi'an attach great importance to their culture and have a great sense of cultural pride.

Besides, effort for the conveyance of spiritual outlook shown by a relatively large number of the material process implies that the government of Xi'an also attaches great importance to the atmosphere of the city, including the psychological outlook of its residents and the atmosphere among government officials. This type of description contributes to the construction of confidence towards individual and companies' future development, which is beneficial for recruiting new citizens.

To determine the frequency of the six types of transitivity process objectively, occurrence in every 100 words of the English captions which exclude the non-clause captions was used as criterion given the size of the texts of the city promotional films.

**Table 9 Frequency of Six Processes in the City Promotional Film of Xi'an**

	Number of total clauses/ 100 words	Number of MA/ 100 words	Number of RE/ 100 words	Number of ME/ 100 words	Number of BE/ 100 words	Number of VE/ 100 words	Number of EX/ 100 words
<b>City infrastructure</b>	0.61	0.49	0.12	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
<b>Nature and culture</b>	5.11	3.04	1.46	0.49	0.00	0.00	0.12
<b>Economic development</b>	1.58	0.97	0.49	0.12	0.00	0.00	0.00
<b>Spiritual outlook</b>	3.28	1.82	0.85	0.61	0.00	0.00	0.00
<b>Others</b>	0.85	0.85	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00

\*Total number of words in this film: 843

\*Total number of words (with non-clause captions excluded) in this film: 822

Table 9 shows the frequency of the six transitivity processes in the city promotional film of Xi'an. From the table above, we can see that nature and culture has the highest frequency of occurrence in the captions, with 5.11 clauses in every 100 words. This indicates that the city promotional film of Xi'an primarily focuses on the broadcasting of its natural landscape, historical culture, and education.

Subsequently, the frequency of spiritual outlook ranks second with 3.28 clauses in every 100 words, implies the attention is also given to the broadcasting of Xi'an citizens' common spirits and government's behavior and mindset, intending to attract the public from the mental perspective.

#### ***Reasons of the Transitivity Process Distribution***

Due to the rich and various historical and cultural resources in Xi'an, there is no doubt that the government of Xi'an regards the construction of nature and culture as the core of city image promotion, which explains the dominating number of clauses for describing the constituent element nature and culture and the multiple types of clauses used to illustrate it. As a result, a

vivid and inviting city image constructed by story-telling, a straightforward explanation of Xi'an's attributes and cultural identities, together with feelings, emotions, and thoughts function as a whole to present that residents and the government of Xi'an attach great importance to their culture and have a great sense of cultural pride.

For a better development in the future, the ancient Xi'an intends to transform the industrial structure and city characteristics in a way that conforms to the trend of the time. Therefore, the construction of spiritual outlook and economic development has great significance, since both of them contribute to the construction of the atmosphere of the city, including the psychological outlook of its residents and the atmosphere among government officials, as well as the confidence in having a promising future for individuals and companies. As a result, the number of clauses for constructing these two constituent elements ranks second and third.

The dominant number of material process indicates that the expression of the city promotional film of Xi'an is more vivid and inviting. By adopting the strategy of "describing, instead of presenting", this film manages to tell Chang'an Dream in a more intriguing and emotionally resonant way. The dominant number of material process in every constituent element indicates that the government of Xi'an encourages and has done a lot of work for the development of the city, acting as capable and diligent.

## **Conclusion**

### ***Findings of the Study***

In the previous chapter, distribution of six transitivity processes have been calculated and analyzed from the perspective of the constituent elements of city image. Reasons for city's distribution features have been explained. To recapitulate briefly, the three main findings of this study are as followed.

Firstly, the distribution of six processes of the transitivity system in the latest English version of the city promotional films of Xi'an is: material process (62.77%), relational process (25.53%), mental process (10.63%), existential process (1.06%), behavioral process (0.00%) and verbal process (0.00%).

Secondly, in the latest English version of the city promotional film of Xi'an, by frequently using material process and the strategy "describing, instead of presenting", the expression about nature and culture is vivid and the Chang'an Dream is illustrated in an intriguing and emotionally resonant way. And spiritual outlook of Xi'an citizens and its government has been shaped as capable and diligent.

Thirdly, as for the reasons, this paper finds that, for the city promotional film of Xi'an, the main reasons for its transitivity process distribution lie in its existing advantages and future development needs. Its rich and various historical and cultural resources and its sense of cultural pride contribute to the depiction of nature and culture. The construction of spiritual outlook and economic development has also been given great importance, in order to attract more talents and companies for further development.

### **Implications of the Study**

The implication of this study lies in the potential instructive role the findings may play for future production of city promotional films. Through this study, we can infer that:

Firstly, this study manifests that it is meaningful and significant to analyze captions in the city promotional films based on Halliday's transitivity theory in order to evaluate the effectiveness of city image construction and produce more complete introduction of a city in its captions of the city promotional film.

Secondly, the most suitable promotion strategy of choosing transitivity process for an effective city image construction depends on the existing advantages and future development needs of the city. For cities with abundant cultural resources, the strategy "describing, instead of presenting" with frequent utilization of the material process is more appropriate for its promotion.

Thirdly, different constituent element requires different choice of transitivity process to maximize its effect for a better city image construction. For instance, for elements nature and culture and spiritual outlook, vivid description and skillful story-telling are required. So, these elements are illustrated better by the material process and mental process. As for economic development, accurate and objective presentation through relational process is better.

Finally, this study functions as the first stage of a bigger picture. Further studies could be conducted from the perspective of image analysis, sound analysis, and ultimately, multimodal analysis, in order to provide comprehensive and up to date suggestions for future production of city promotional film to meet the demand of city image promotion in the era of globalization.

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