The Digital Construction of City Image: A Language Service Perspective

Yanan Kong[*]

Shandong College of Tourism and Hospitality, Jinan, Shandong, China

*Corresponding author

Keywords: language service, city image, digitalization

Abstract: Focusing on the field of digital industrialization, this paper aims to enhance the core competitiveness of digital economic development. Language is a key tool for achieving effective digital governance. By enhancing language information processing technologies and language intelligent services, this paper aims to increase high-quality and efficient service supply in multiple aspects, such as service mechanism optimization, service system construction, service platform establishment, service field expansion, service function enhancement, service workforce development, and service capacity improvement. On this basis, it promotes the innovation of digital city service efficiency, creates a healthy digital ecological environment, and powerfully advances the shaping and upgrading of city image.

1. Introduction

The core competitiveness of a city lies in its unique city image, which profoundly reflects the city's distinct characteristics and rich cultural connotations. As a key element of soft power, the quality of a city image directly affects economic growth, the enhancement of tourism attractiveness, opportunities for international exchange and cooperation, as well as the ability to attract high-level talent. Under the guidance of digital technology, high-quality language service supply can provide support in language, technology, talent, and standards for city image shaping and city identity construction.

2. Theoretical Foundation of Language Service and City Image

2.1. The Concept of Language Service

"Language service focuses on cross-linguistic capabilities, targeting information transformation, knowledge transfer, cultural communication, and language training. It serves fields such as high-tech, international trade, foreign-related law, international communication, government affairs, and foreign language training by providing professional services including translation, technology R&D, tool application, asset management, marketing and trade, investment and acquisition, research consulting, and training and examination (Wang L., 2020; Wang L., 2021)[1-2]." Language services not only include traditional translation and interpretation but also involve multiple domains such as language education, language technology, language planning, and language policy. Language service providers need solid linguistic knowledge and strong cross-cultural communication skills to accurately understand and convey information across different cultural contexts.

2.2. The Concept and Components of City Image

From the perspective of communication theory, city image can be viewed as a special communication phenomenon and an information carrier. It includes not only the objective entity and characteristics of a city but also the perception, understanding, and evaluation of these entities and characteristics by the public. Such perceptions and evaluations are formed and disseminated through various channels, including mass media, interpersonal communication, and personal experiences, collectively constructing the image of the city in the public's mind.

Key factors that shape the city image include the city's infrastructure, historical culture,

governance level, economic development, and social safety. These factors reflect the city's overall strength and development potential, playing a crucial role in enhancing the city image. The shaping and dissemination of a city image is a dynamic, complex, and systematic process. Various media and channels convey city information while continuously interacting with the public, involving multiple levels and actors, requiring concerted efforts and collaboration. This interaction and feedback further influence public perception and evaluation of the city, thereby continuously refining and perfecting the city image.

2.3. Communication Perspective on City Image Research

Both domestic and international studies on city image have shifted from external features to internal qualities, focusing on urban planning and design, city image marketing, and communication studies (Avraham, E., 2000; Stanciulescu, G., 2008; Jansson, J. and Power, D., 2006; Zhang H., 2004; Dang J., 2018; Xu J. and Wang B., 2019)[3-8]. From a communication perspective, city image is regarded as a compilation of all information received and understood by individuals, incorporating four key elements of communication models: sender, content, channel, and outcome. Technologically, research emphasizes the role of media technology in disseminating city images and the profound effects thereof. Culturally, media dissemination is seen as a key mechanism for reinforcing collective identity, helping to deepen the public's sense of belonging and recognition of their city's culture. In terms of strategy improvement, scholars actively explore the mechanisms of city image dissemination and propose pathways for innovative dissemination strategies.

The focus on city image dissemination in Chinese academia began during the Reform and Opening-up period. After preliminary discussions on urban planning aesthetics in the 1980s, city image construction and dissemination entered a formal research phase in the 1990s, yielding a series of academic achievements. Entering the 21st century, the research in this field has grown rapidly, with current academic attention focused mainly on innovation in dissemination channels and methods, as well as in-depth exploration of content. However, research on senders, effects, and target audiences is relatively scarce (Liu D., Li J., 2016; Wang Y.A., Yang Z.Y., 2019)[9-10].

From the perspective of communication studies, it is evident that most scholars concentrate on the mechanism of media involvement in the dissemination of city images. Although many studies closely follow the latest media development trends and lean towards comprehensive discussions, research into the detailed role of specific media forms in constructing city images is relatively insufficient. Additionally, empirical and quantitative studies are rare.

2.4. Interaction Between Language Service and City Image

Language service is an important component of the city image. The level of language services in a city directly reflects its degree of internationalization and civilization. Good language services can enhance a city's international competitiveness, attracting more international tourists and investors. Simultaneously, language services are crucial carriers of city culture, capable of showcasing the unique charm and cultural connotations of a city through multilingual information and services.

The demand and positioning of language services are significantly influenced by the city image. A city with a unique and well-regarded image is likely to attract more international attention and exchange activities, thereby increasing the demand for multilingual services. Furthermore, the city image also determines the positioning and style of language services; for instance, a city known for its historical culture may emphasize the use of classical language, while a modern metropolis focuses more on practicality and efficiency.

Improving language service levels helps shape a good city image, and the enhancement of the city image, in turn, promotes the development of language services. Thus, in the process of urban construction and development, full attention should be given to the interaction between language services and city image to achieve their positive synergy and joint progress.

3. The Role of Language Service in Digital City Construction

3.1. Facilitating Digital Economic Development

As an essential component of modern services, high-quality language services can help enterprises expand into international markets and promote trade. The language service industry can provide specialized, personalized, and high-quality services, reducing corporate burdens and improving service quality. For example, translation and localization services can help companies push their products and services to broader overseas markets, while multilingual customer support can improve service quality and competitiveness in international markets. Through professional and accurate language services, companies can overcome language barriers and better connect with international markets, thereby achieving broader business expansion and deeper trade cooperation.

3.2. Enhancing Public Service Quality

Digital city public service construction includes building public service platforms, online service processing, and smart city construction. In digital city public service construction, enhancing language service capabilities is particularly significant. Language is the bridge of communication between people and the key link for achieving precise public service delivery. By enhancing language service capabilities, digital city public services can better meet the diverse needs of citizens, improve specificity and effectiveness, and provide more convenient, efficient, and inclusive public services. This not only helps to enhance the sense of gain and happiness among citizens but also promotes the sustainable development and prosperity of the city.

3.3. Enhancing Emergency Response Capabilities

The digital construction of public safety is an important part of digital city construction. Enhancing language service capabilities helps improve the administrative ability of city authorities in responding to and handling sudden public events, which is a practical need for building a service-oriented society and a significant measure for promoting social harmony. Strengthening language service capabilities can notably enhance the response speed and handling efficiency of city authorities during emergencies.

Emergency language service capability refers to the ability to deal with and solve problems through rapid, accurate, and effective language communication during emergencies or crisis situations. It helps quickly communicate and convey information, coordinate responses from multiple parties, eliminate misunderstandings to avoid conflicts, efficiently solve challenges, enhance international communication, safeguard national security and stability, and demonstrate national image and strength.

Good language service capability ensures accurate information delivery and effective communication, preventing misunderstandings and delays caused by language barriers, thus improving the efficiency and quality of handling affairs. Emergency language services can coordinate multiple parties to establish effective communication channels, create synergy, and collectively respond to crises. They can eliminate misunderstandings and avoid unnecessary conflicts and disputes through accurate translation and interpretation. Moreover, they help relevant personnel quickly understand the essence and key points of problems, provide precise information and advice, and thereby find effective solutions that improve the efficiency and quality of response work.

3.4. Enhancing International Competitiveness

City image shaping and identity construction are inseparable from a good language environment. Enhancing public language service capabilities can improve a city's competence in international exchange and cooperation, expand its international influence, and enhance its international competitiveness.

City image shaping and identity construction are characterized by complexity and multidimensionality, in which the language environment plays a pivotal role. A city striving to establish a positive image both domestically and internationally and demonstrate its unique identity and cultural charm must foster a quality, diverse language environment. Such an environment can not

only enhance the sense of belonging and pride among citizens but also attract more investment and tourists, injecting new vitality into the city's economic development. By continuously optimizing the language environment and enhancing public language service capabilities, a city can provide a strong guarantee for its image shaping and identity construction, promoting its sustainable and healthy development. This approach not only enhances the city's discourse power in international cooperation but also strengthens its competitiveness in the international market, injecting strong momentum into its sustainable development.

3.5. Promoting Cultural Exchange

Language carries social culture. With the acceleration of globalization, regional cooperation and cultural exchanges have become more frequent. Digital cities, led by intelligence, achieve data sharing and resource integration. High-quality language services can eliminate communication barriers, promote effective information transmission, and provide solid support for telling regional, ethnic, and national stories well. Through precise and vivid language translation and expression, diverse contents such as history, culture, and customs from various places can be presented to the world, allowing more people to understand and appreciate the charm of different cultures, leading to better understanding and respect for cultural differences. By continuously improving the quality of language services, powerful support can be provided for regional cooperation and cultural exchange, promoting the better dissemination of excellent Chinese culture worldwide, enhancing interethnic friendship and mutual trust, and jointly building a community with a shared future for humanity.

4. Digital Language Service Paths for City Image Construction

4.1. Policy Guidance and Institutional Guarantee

Language is a strategic resource for the country and a catalyst in the process of Chinese-style modernization. Against the backdrop of building a community with a shared future for humanity, language plays an irreplaceable role. The government should engage in language planning, promote and use the national common language, and protect ethnic and local dialect resources. It should also provide foreign language education, maintain the balance and diversity of the language ecosystem at the policy level, and improve the quality of language services. Regarding the language service industry itself, relevant policies should be implemented to increase support and investment, enhance the development level and competitiveness of the industry, and ensure the construction of a regional language environment.

4.2. Talent Cultivation and Intellectual Support

Cultivating high-quality language service professionals, establishing a complete talent training system, and improving the quality and ability of personnel are key to building language service capabilities for regional openness and the Belt and Road Initiative. Strengthening the training of language proficiency for staff involved in digital city public services, establishing a regular training mechanism, and enhancing communication skills and emergency response capabilities are essential for providing better language services to the public and improving the quality and satisfaction of public services. Meeting the demand from the public, industries, and sectors for skills in various languages and dialects requires cultivating compound and innovative international talents with national sentiments, international perspectives, understanding of international rules, cross-cultural communication skills, and competencies in public affairs, foreign-related legal affairs, and trade.

4.3. Digital Empowerment and Technological Innovation

The development of new technologies such as artificial intelligence, big data, machine learning, natural language processing, and blockchain has greatly promoted the digitalization and intelligence of language services. Machine translation, speech recognition, speech synthesis, and intelligent translation services cater to various fields such as economy, finance, e-commerce, business, and government affairs. Technological empowerment has improved the efficiency and quality of language services. Continuously advancing the R&D and application of digital city language service

technologies, through digital language service assets, intelligent language service information processing, and network-based language service management processes, can improve digital city service efficiency, enhance public service capabilities, optimize the foreign-related service environment, and promote the development of city culture, tourism, and economy.

4.4. Standard Construction and Quality Improvement

Making full use of national language resource service platforms, key concept foreign translation release platforms, Chinese cultural terminology databases, and standardized terminology databases for foreign translation of Chinese-specific expressions can provide standardized and high-quality language services, optimize multilingual environments in cities, and enhance the soft power of a city's international competitiveness. Based on regional language resource conditions, expert teams should be formed for language planning, unified language service standards and norms should be formulated, and supervision and management should be strengthened to ensure the timeliness, accuracy, and scientific nature of language services.

5. Conclusion

Language service, as a bridge for cultural exchange and dissemination, can effectively connect people from different regions and cultural backgrounds. In the digital construction of city image, providing multilingual information services and communication platforms allows language service to promote the integration of local culture with global culture, enhancing the city's international influence and attractiveness. Localization and adaptation of translations also make the city image more accessible to audiences from different regions and cultural backgrounds, enhancing its recognizability. By offering personalized language services, such as customized translation and multilingual customer support, the city demonstrates respect and inclusiveness towards different cultural backgrounds, strengthening emotional connections with the audience.

In the digital age, city image construction is no longer static but requires constant updating and improvement. Language service, as a long-term, ongoing effort, can evolve alongside the development of the city, providing timely and accurate translation and information services. This helps maintain the vibrancy and relevance of the city image and promotes its sustainable development.

In conclusion, language service plays an indispensable role in the digital construction of city image. Through promoting cultural exchange and dissemination, enhancing the recognizability and affinity of city image, and fostering sustainable development, language service can provide strong support for the digital construction of city image, helping cities achieve better development and prosperity in a globalized context.

References

[1] Wang, L. On Language Service Industry[M]. Beijing: Foreign Language Teaching and Research Press, 2020.

[2] Wang, L. From a Large Country of Language Service to a Strong Country of Language Service—Further Discussion on Language Service, Language Service Discipline, and Language Service Talent[J]. Journal of Beijing International Studies University, 2021, 43(01): 3-11.

[3] Avraham, E. Cities and Their News Media Images[J]. Cities, 2000, 17(5): 363-370.

[4] Jansson, J. and Power, D. Image of the City: Urban Branding as Constructed Capabilities in Nordic City Regions Research Report, Oslo: Nordic Innovation Centre, 2006.

[5] Stanciulescu, G. Cecilia: City Image – As Tourism Destination [J]. Annals of the University of Oradea: Economic Science, 2008: 1218-1222.

[6] Dang, J. Constructing City Image through Event Marketing—Taking Xi'an as an Example[J]. Youth Journalist, 2018(30): 94-95.

[7] Zhang, H. City Image and Urban Cultural Capital: A Sociological Study on the Comparison of City Images between China and Foreign Countries[M]. Nanjing: Southeast University Press, 2004.

[8] Xu, J., Wang, B. Rhetoric and Brand Marketing of City Image Slogans[J]. Modern Communication (Journal of Communication University of China), 2019, 41(01): 137-141.

[9] Liu, D., Li, J. Cultural Symbols and Spatial Value: City Image Dissemination and Construction under the Internet Thinking[J]. Journal of Southwest Minzu University(Humanities and Social Sciences Edition), 2016, 37(06): 154-158.

[10] Wang, Y.A., Yang, Z.Y. The Relationship Between Mobile Short Videos and City Image Construction—Taking TikTok's Promotion of Xi'an as an Example[J]. Journal of Chang'an University (Social Science Edition), 2019, 21(01): 42-50.