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| RESEARCH ARTICLE

## Constructing Cultural Meaning on Memorial Official Websites: A Visual Grammar Analysis of China and New Zealand

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| ABSTRACT

Memorial websites serve as multimodal platforms shaping collective memory and cultural identity. While existing research prioritizes technological or textual aspects, this study employs Kress and van Leeuwen's Visual Grammar (VG) to comparatively analyze visual-cultural encoding on the Memorial of the First National Congress of the Communist Party of China (the Site of the 1st CPC National Congress) and the Auckland War Memorial Museum (AWMM) websites. Through qualitative analysis of 30 images, Findings reveal distinct strategies. In representational meaning, both websites use narrative representation for cognitive engagement. As to interactive meaning, the Site of the 1st CPC National Congress utilizes offer images, elevated shot, and vermilion tones to construct authoritative narratives and revolutionary sanctity. Conversely, the AWMM employs demand interactions, eye-level angle, and cool grays to foster democratic reflection. In terms of compositional meaning, it highlights the Site of the 1st CPC National Congress's vertical axis emphasizing ideological symbolism versus the AWMM's horizontal divisions enabling informational democratization. This study empirically validates the explanatory capacity of VG in non-Western contexts and broadens its cross-cultural relevance. It also offers theoretical frameworks for the internationalization of memorial museum websites, aids in achieving a balance between cultural distinctiveness and global discourse, and underscores the pursuit of a dynamic equilibrium between preserving cultural uniqueness and facilitating the exchange of meaning.

| KEYWORDS

Visual Grammar; the construction of cultural meaning; official websites of memorials

| ARTICLE INFORMATION

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### 1. Introduction

Memorials play a central role in shaping collective memory and cultural identity. With the rapid development of digital technologies, their official websites have evolved from information repositories into key platforms for public historical representation. These websites function as multimodal discourses that integrate images, text, color, and spatial design, thereby serving as important channels for cultural communication in a globalized context.

Existing studies on museum and memorial websites have largely focused on technological design, user interaction, or translation practices. A subset of studies focuses on the information technology dimension: Huang Yue (2018) explores the interactive design of museum websites, Song Xiangguang (2018) proposes the concept of "hyperconnected museums", Zhu Xuefang (2002) et al. examine the application of digital technologies, and Zhou Qiong (2018) identifies the trend of online-offline integration. While these studies possess theoretical or practical value, they all suffer from deficiencies such as inadequate details, insufficient case studies, or limited expansion. Mao Ning (2008) focuses on website visual art, and Li Chunlei (2016) assesses website influence, neither of which addresses modern technology adaptation or multi-dimensional analysis. Additionally, some studies solely concentrate on the translation perspective: Zhang Meifang (2013) and Zhou Nan (2017) discuss translation strategies and principles of external publicity translation, respectively, without touching upon the translation of multimodal texts

or the integration of technology and translation—this also renders research related to multimodal discourse analysis relatively inadequate. From an overall perspective of existing research, it primarily centers on exhibition texts, commentaries, and website contents. Among these, Chen Jianglin (2018) and Qiu Daping (2018) focus on analyzing the linguistic features of texts, while Gan Lu (2022) and other scholars concentrate on research regarding multimodal discourse and communication effectiveness. Within the international academic community, Kavanagh (1991) established the research paradigm for the interaction between museum texts and physical objects. Karp et al. (1991) probed into the cultural representations and political implications of exhibition discourse. Hooper-Greenhill (2000) emphasized that museum texts serve as the key to the reproduction of knowledge, power, and cultural identity. Ravelli (2006) contended that the multifaceted contents of exhibition texts constitute the semantic cues for audiences to comprehend the theme.

Kress and van Leeuwen's (2020) Visual Grammar (VG) offers a comprehensive theoretical framework for the multimodal analysis of memorial webpages, facilitating the interpretation of visual rhetorical methods like color coding and spatial arrangement. During the 1990s, discourse analysis expanded beyond its conventional emphasis on linguistic text to include non-verbal semiotic elements such as images, music, movement, and color, leading to the development of multimodal discourse analysis. This method overcomes the constraints of traditional textual analysis by providing innovative insights for understanding modern media semiotics. Grounded in Halliday's Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL), which asserts that language operates as a social semiotic system serving three metafunctions: ideational, interpersonal, and textual (Halliday, 2004; 2014) – multimodal discourse analysis applies these concepts to visual communication.

Kress and van Leeuwen (1996, 2006, 2020) expanded upon this foundation by formulating their VG, which posits that visual semiotic resources equally convey three fundamental meanings: representational, interactive, and compositional. These align with SFL's ideational, interpersonal, and textual metafunctions respectively. Representational meaning conveys both objective and subjective realities via illustrated participants and processes; interactive meaning fosters engagement between viewer and participant; compositional meaning regulates the spatial and structural unity of visual elements. This framework surpasses text-focused investigations, emphasizing the significance of non-linguistic semiotic resources in the construction of meaning. Multimodal discourse analysis facilitates a comprehensive and nuanced understanding of sociocultural communication (Zhu, 2007). Cheng Xia (2024) empirically employed Visual Grammar to perform a thorough comparative research of identity building in Chinese and U.S. corporate websites, innovatively incorporating cultural factors to elucidate cross-cultural differences in visual interactions. The study's singular emphasis on the banking industry prompts issues over its generalizability. Zhao Wencai (2025) analyzed the multimodal design of Nanjing's tourism website, pinpointing its strengths and faults in cross-cultural communication. Although providing useful insights, the research did not thoroughly explore the impact of cultural differences on semiotic interpretation. These studies collectively underscore the necessity for more comprehensive cross-cultural comparisons to enhance the theoretical and practical applications of VG across varied sociocultural contexts.

To address this gap, this study applies Visual Grammar to a comparative analysis of the official websites of the Memorial of the First National Congress of the Communist Party of China and the Auckland War Memorial Museum. By examining how visual resources are organized and interpreted, this study aims to explore how cultural meanings are constructed through multimodal design. The research is guided by the following questions: What similarities and differences exist in the visual design of the two memorial websites? How do these visual strategies contribute to the construction of cultural meaning in different cultural contexts?

## **2. Theoretical framework**

In accordance with the theoretical framework of VG established by Kress and van Leeuwen (2020), and aligned with the research objective of this study, which examines the construction of cultural meanings on memorials websites within cross-cultural contexts, the concepts of representative meaning, interactive meaning and compositional meaning are pertinent. A three-dimensional analytical framework has been established. The concept of representation is categorized into narrative representation and conceptual representation for the construction of the empirical world; interactive meaning manifests the visual representation of cultural perspective through engagement, social proximity, disposition, and emotional tone; compositional meaning aligns with the function of discourse and analyzes the spatial organization strategy of image elements, encompassing information value, prominence, and symbolic significance of the framing. This study's theoretical framework is presented below.

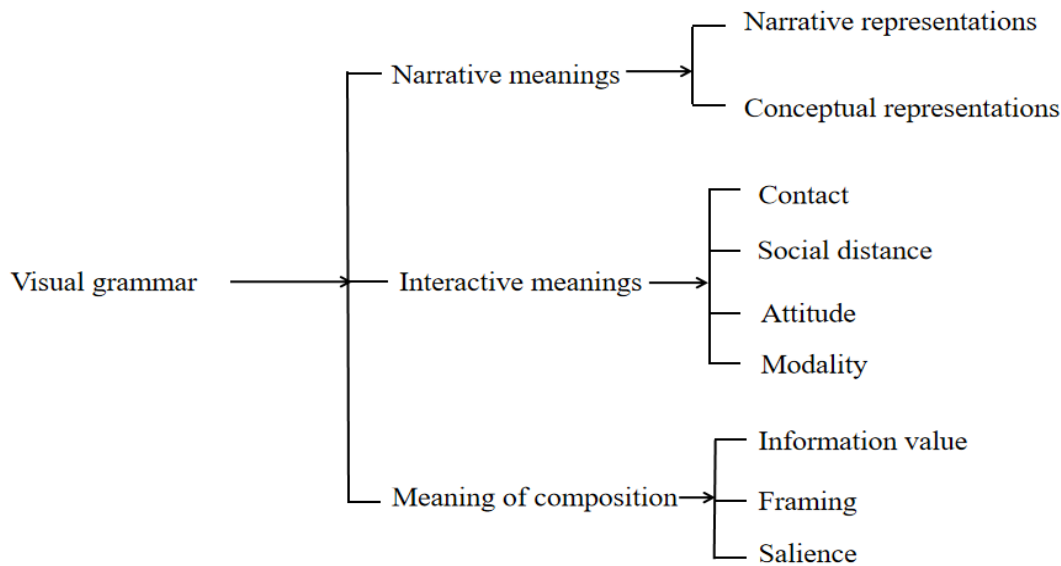


Figure 1 Theoretical framework of the study

### 3. Research design

#### 3.1 Research object

This study selects the official website of the Memorial of the First National Congress of the Communist Party of China (Site of the 1st CPC National Congress, <https://www.zgyd1921.com/index.html>) and the one of the Auckland War Memorial Museum (AWMM, <https://www.aucklandmuseum.com/>) as the research objects. The official websites of both memorials serve as essential online resources that offer visitors extensive information regarding pertinent details. Both institutions serve as national cultural memory repositories, exemplifying distinct paradigms of Chinese and Western historical narratives: the Site of the 1st CPC National Congress centers on the Communist Party of China's (CPC) founding history, crafting a narrative of the red gene through revolutionary artifacts, scene reconstructions, and digital displays; conversely, the AWMM emphasizes New Zealand's military history and indigenous culture, highlighting the dual legacies of colonization and anti-colonization. Both serve the purposes of historical education, maintenance of collective memory, and development of cultural identity, while integrating multimodal symbolic resources such as text, photos, video, and interactive design, rendering them similar.

#### 3.2 Research methodology

Based on Kress and van Leeuwen's VG, this study adopts a qualitative analysis of the research methodology and stratified sampling, taking 15 images each from the main interface, the sub-navigation interface, and the collection display interface of the two websites, for a total of 30, to ensure that the samples cover the meaning of reproduction, the meaning of interaction, and the meaning of composition. The sample covers the three main image types: representative meaning, interactive meaning and compositional meaning. Although a large number of images were comprehensively analyzed in the research process, due to the limitation of space, it is not possible to present the analysis process of all the images in the text. In order to balance the completeness of the study and the validity of the presentation, only images with prominent features and typical meanings were selected as examples for analysis.

### 4. Analysis of Visual Grammar and the construction of cultural meaning

#### 4.1 Representative meaning

The reproduced meaning in VG corresponds with the ideational metafunction in SFL, illustrating diverse events in both objective and subjective realms via participants and processes. Representative meaning can be further classified into narrative representation and conceptual representation based on the presence or absence of vectors (Tian & Pan, 2020). If a vector of diagonal lines exists among participants, it constitutes a narrative representation. Narrative representation encompasses action process, reaction process, and both mental and verbal processes. Conceptual representation lacks vectors and exhibits the more general, stable, and everlasting characteristics of participants. It typically entails the classification process, analytical process, and symbolic processes.

Initially, it comes to the analysis of the narrative representation. Upon sorting and categorizing the images of narrative representation in the two memorials, there are no speech or thinking bubbles are present in the images, indicating the absence of verbal process and mental processes in the two memorials. The image of the Site of the 1st CPC National Congress in Image 1 depicts a guider, as the central figure, in a dynamic forward-leaning stance, with her right hand extended to create a distinct vector. This establishes a visual connection with the exhibits of the "guide-cognitive object" and fulfills the visual

representation of knowledge pointing. The group of youngsters, as secondary participants, creates a reception matrix with an arc-shaped spatial arrangement, where their line of sight vectors cross with the guider's hand gesture vectors, achieving synchronized visual attention in the spatial dimension. This representation structure converts static exhibitions into dynamic cognitive centers using vectors, creating an interactive learning environment of guidance-response format. Teachers acting as authoritative guides and children's role of passive recipients embody a hierarchical knowledge transmission structure that serves the identity construction of the sacredness of revolutionary history, reinforcing the indubitability of the red culture. The arc-shaped reception matrix creates a centripetal visual focus, implicitly embodying core-periphery power dynamics that resonate with the cultural values of collectivism and authority-orientation in Chinese culture.

In Image 2 in the AWMM, the elderly man, as the primary participant, extends his left arm to create a distinct vector, positioning the Zero aircraft exhibits as the cognitive focal point through spatial orientation, thereby establishing the visual correlation of guiding subject-knowledge carrier. The youngster, as a secondary participant and recipient of knowledge, establishes a real-time response mechanism of demonstration-feedback in the visual domain through the exact correlation between sight and gesture. This vectorial synergy enables the displays to transcend static features, transforming them into media for intergenerational knowledge transfer and ultimately achieving a spatial visual representation of the cognitive transmission process. The elderly and the child, acting as knowledge co-creators with no discernible power hierarchy, embody a flattened cognitive interaction structure that serves the decolonized reconstruction of cultural identity. Through intergenerational visual dialogue, this structure dismantles power hierarchies embedded in historical narratives and constructs inclusive public memory spaces.

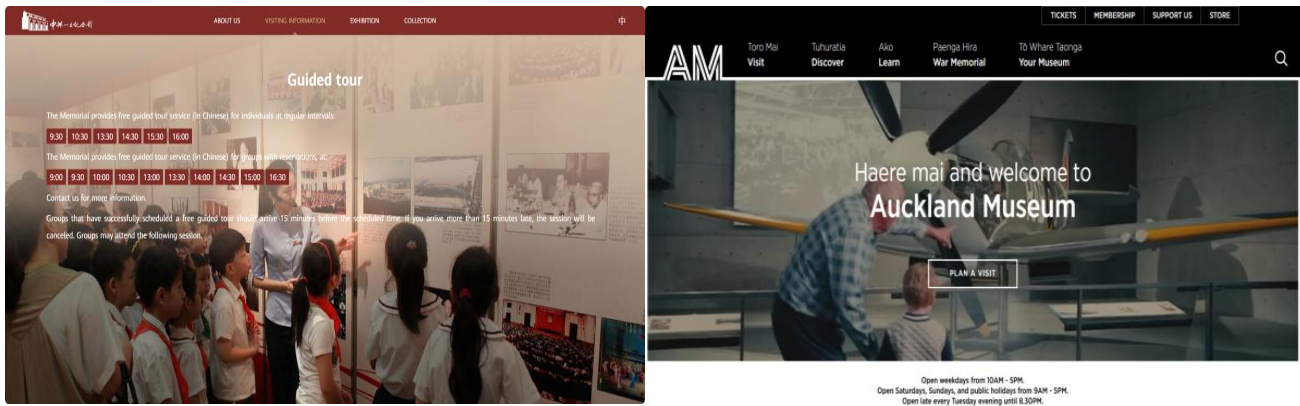


Image 1

Image 2

The analysis indicates that both memorials utilize narrative representation images featuring action process with distinct participants and vectors, directing the viewer's gaze towards the focal points of significance. In memorials, the focus is typically on the exhibits, which serve to engage viewers and facilitate their exploration of the historical narrative and cultural essence underlying the displays, so aiding in the formation of cultural identity.

Visual components are not merely ideational symbols; rather, they serve as material carriers of cultural meaning. The vectorial mechanisms in VG plays a role on the core driving force behind the narrative representations in these two memorials, yet their cultural functions differ according to their identity construction objectives. The Site of the 1st CPC National Congress adopts a guidance-response visual interaction to encode red culture into an authoritative, ritualized intergenerational transition system. In contrast, the AWMM utilizes a demonstration-feedback visual dialogue to reconstruct colonial memories into a democratized, reflexive public knowledge space. Together, they demonstrate that VG is not merely an analytical tool, but rather a coding mechanism of cultural identity at the visual level—through strategic configurations of participant roles, vector orientations, and spatial arrangements, it achieves both the reification of collective memory and the visual construction of cultural identity.

After that, we will discuss the conceptual representation. In the process of narrative representation, the collection interface of the two memorials purposely avoids standard vector in favor of a conceptual representation of the images. Instead, it places an emphasis on the communication of abstract ideas through the use of static visual components like as color and layout. The interface of the two memorial employs the classification process of conceptual representation to establish a distinct hierarchy of ascending and descending relationships: the term Collection at the apex of the interface functions as the principal classification concept, explicitly delineating the theme of the interface; conversely, the section below elaborates on the specific classification presentation based on the attributes of each museum, thereby creating a cognitive trajectory from the abstract to the concrete, see in Image 3 and Image 4.

A further analysis reveals that the two memorials exhibit a slight divergence in classification refinement, however these changes are not substantial. Images of particular collections are presented immediately at the bottom of the Site of the 1st CPC National Congress' interface, creating a two-tier structure of Category-to-Examples. By directly displaying images of cultural

relics, this approach highlights the authenticity and visual impact of historical artifacts. This mediation-free display method treats the exhibits as tangible evidence of revolutionary history, using close-range, high-definition presentation techniques to enhance the fidelity of historical details. Such design aligns with the red cultural philosophy of history told by the relics—cultural relics themselves carry revolutionary memories, requiring no reliance on complex background knowledge or verbal explanations. Instead, they directly convey the solemnity of history to the audience through visual impact, enabling viewers to sense historical gravitas intuitively.

The AWMM employs an unusual four-tier categorization approach, namely the Category-to-Faceted-Classification, with four subcategories under the overarching category of Collection, to create a more precise cognitive mapping. Through a meticulous navigational hierarchy, the design emphasizes systematic academic knowledge systems. This structured categorization strategy transforms historical memory into a retrievable and analyzable knowledge network, echoing the cultural identity's need for defragmentation and reconstruction of colonial history.

By establishing a systematic knowledge framework, it guides the public to reflect on history through rational understanding. The Site of the 1st CPC National Congress prioritizes the visual exhibition of historical artifacts, whereas the AWMM focuses on the methodical construction of knowledge frameworks. This design disparity reflects the diverse information architecture methodologies employed by different cultural entities.

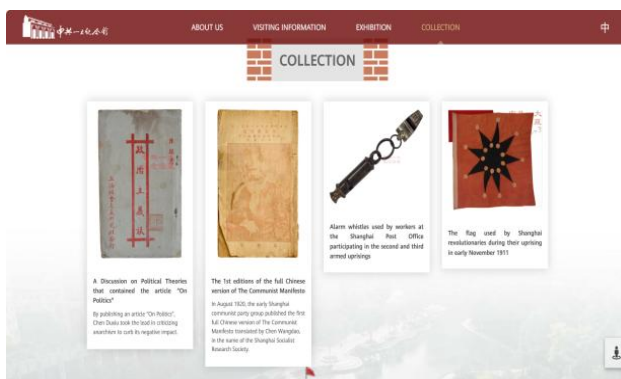


Image 3

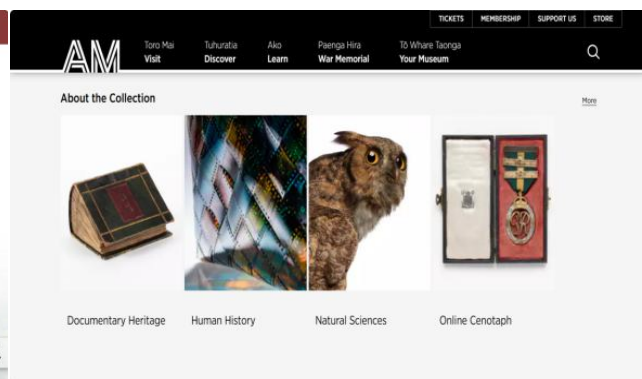


Image 4

In summary, while the interface between the two collections is primarily characterized by conceptual representation, the Category to Examples framework of the Site of the 1st CPC National Congress reinforces the visual narrative of civilization's origins, whereas the Category-to-Faceted-Classification structure of the AWMM elucidates the democratic contract of the intellectual community and finalizes the development of their distinct cultural identities.

#### 4.2 Interactive representation

Interactive meaning in VG emphasizes the interrelationship between image participants and viewers, and the realization of interactive meaning relies on four elements: contact, social distance, attitude, and modality.

Contact denotes a conceptual engagement between the image participant and the spectator, manifested through eye contact between both. Contact can be classified as demand or offer based on the presence of direct eye contact between the individuals involved. If the participant in the image gazes at the viewer, and the viewer establishes direct eye contact, the image is categorized as a request; conversely, it represents the provision of images. The Site of the 1st CPC National Congress predominantly use images to provide visitors with a comprehensive overview of the memorial. The AWMM employs more demand images that establishes direct eye contact with visitors, so urging them to explore the museum and conveying an open and welcoming demeanor, as illustrated in the Image 5.

Social distance denotes the relationship between image participants and viewers, and image creators can convey varying social distances through their use of lenses during photography. The close shot signifies the intimate social connection between the image participants and the viewers, emphasizing one of the elements within the image; the medium shot represents the neutral social distance between the two; the long shot denotes a public distance, facilitating an objective portrayal of the panorama and illustrating the alienated social distance. The Site of the 1st CPC National Congress employs long shot to showcase the main structure, allowing visitors to comprehend the overall layout of the Hall. The two memorials prefer to utilize close shot of the exhibitions to offer a nuanced observational perspective. The transition from long shot to close shot entails not only a visual shift from macro to micro but also a corresponding alteration in affinity. Memorial shots are favored in images featuring individuals. The Image 5 depicts the personnel at the AWMM energetically attending to visitors. The distance between the two figures in the image is around an arm's length, representing a medium shot and classified as social distance in public

interactions. This distance preserves professionalism while preventing extreme detachment, aligning with the memorial’s formal yet amiable service ethos.

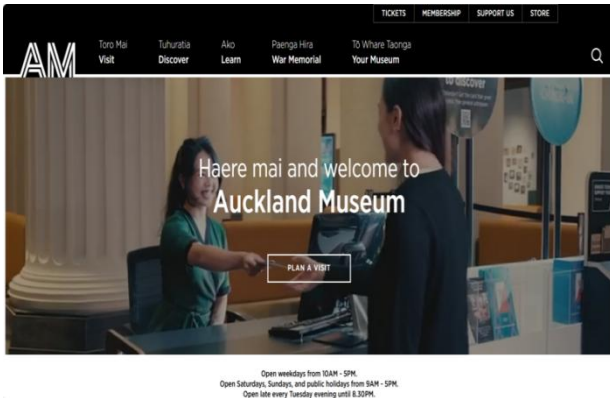


Image 5

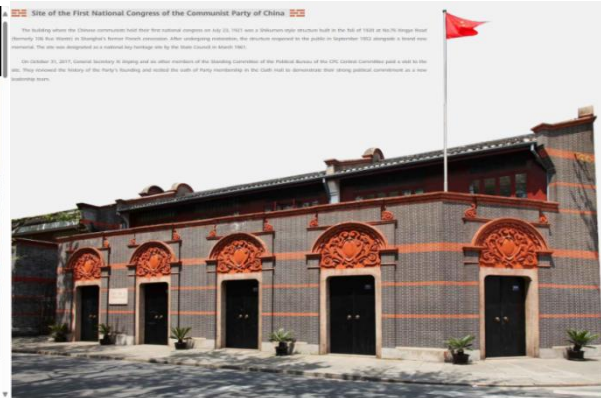


Image 6

Attitude is contingent upon the perspective from which the image is captured. The eye-level angle signifies an equal status between the observer and the subject; the elevated angle suggests that the observer has a somewhat inferior or modest position; and the top-down angle implies that the observer possesses a certain level of authority. The implementation of an eye-level angle in the Image 5 fosters an equitable and amicable social dynamic between visitors and staff, while also symbolically embodying the memorial’s value-neutrality as a public cultural institution. It neither asserts itself as a knowledge authority nor intentionally accommodates audience interests, but instead establishes a democratic and open environment for knowledge exchange. Conversely, there exists an elevated angle of the Site of the 1st CPC National Congress in Image 6. The elevated perspective is employed to render the building’s structure lofty and grand, symbolizing power and evoking admiration for the CPC by directing the viewer’s gaze from the base to the apex of the image. The flagpole, as a vertical emblem, links heaven and earth in an upward perspective, reinforcing the concept of eternal revolutionary spirit.

Modality refers to the extent of utilization of a specific visual expression, with visual modality primarily determined by the saturation, brightness, and purity of color, categorized into high, medium, and low modalities. Upon examining the two memorials, it is evident that both predominantly utilize low and medium saturation colors, shown as Image 7 and Image 8; nevertheless, distinctions can be noted in the specifics. The color saturation establishes an isomorphic connection with the materiality of the exhibited artifacts, while the medium-to-low saturated vermillion hue signifies both revolutionary fervor and metaphorical historical residue. This visual metaphor finalizes the dual encoding of communal memory at the cognitive level. The medium to low saturation color serves as a foundation for CPC’s history teaching, preserving the seriousness of the political environment while improving the legibility of the display information. In the AWMM, muted colors obscure the intricate depiction of particular historical moments, convert harsh historical events into abstract symbols, and provoke philosophical contemplation among the audience. The muted color creates a ritualistic environment of shared remembrance. Within this visual domain, the audience instinctively engages in silent contemplation, transitioning from individual to group identity.



Image 7



Image 8

Examined through the dual lenses of VG and cultural construction, the four concepts of interactive meaning constitute the profound grammatical principles underlying cross-cultural visual rhetoric. The visual dialogue mode of offer and demand

establishes a cultural dynamic of authoritative narrative and equal dialogue between the Site of the 1st CPC National Congress and the AWMM. The lens strategy of social distance formulates an institutionalized ethic of interaction across both physical and psychological dimensions. As to the attitude, it reinforces the sanctity of the revolutionary Hall and the neutrality of public space through elevated angle and eye-level shot. Additionally, the color rhetoric of mood affirms the sanctity of public space within the middle and low saturation spectrums. The disposition affirms the sanctity of the revolutionary temple and the neutrality of the public space through the perspectives of elevation and descent, respectively; the chromatic rhetoric of the ambiance reveals the cultural encoding within the spectrum of high and low saturation—the former solidifies the revolutionary memory with tangible color, while the latter directs philosophical contemplation through abstract representation.

The distinct application of VG represents a selection of technical approaches for the reproduction of collective memory: the Site of the 1st CPC National Congress embodies the ritualistic transmission of the revolutionary spirit through visual amplification, whereas the AWMM facilitates the symbolic transformation of traumatic memories via visual democratization. The two memorials collectively affirm the significant interpretive capacity of VG as a theoretical framework for cultural construction, whereby the integration of its components not only influences the cognitive schema of the viewers but also shapes their cultural subjectivity and value identity through visual symbols.

### **4.3 Compositional meaning**

Compositional meaning corresponds to discourse function in SFL inside VG. It analyzes how various components in an image constitute a coherent entirety. The comprehension of compositional meaning depends on three fundamental components: information value, salience, and framing. The informational value is indicated by the spatial arrangement of individuals or objects inside a picture, categorized as top and bottom, left and right, and center-margin distributions. Framing pertains to the matter of separation or connection among the basic elements of an image. Salience highlights the extent to which the components of a picture captivate the viewer's attention, which can be accomplished through their positioning in the foreground or background, relative size, contrasting tonal values, varying degrees of sharpness, among other factors.

From the perspective of information value, the exhibition interface of the Site of the 1st CPC National Congress in Image 9 employs a vertical structural layout. The photographs of four historical figures in the visual field occupy the primary visual space, serving as the core information zone to convey the central theme of “representatives of enlightened gentry.” The intuitive presentation of these figures directs the audience's initial attention to their appearances and arrangements, fostering an immediate cognitive grasp of the historical group. The explanatory text below functions as supplementary information, providing contextual background. Although its information value is secondary, it is crucial for interpreting the significance of the figures, serving as interpretive auxiliary content.

In contrast, the AWMM in Image 10 utilizes a horizontal structure to clearly demarcate known and new information: the left-hand text meticulously lists attributes of the mirror, including its description, provenance, and other supplementary information. While visually flatter in presentation, this textual content carries high information value by supplementing background details inaccessible through imagery alone. The physical photograph of the mirror on the right, occupying a larger visual expanse and directly showcasing the artifact's form, stands out with prominent information value. It rapidly captures the viewer's attention, becoming the visual focal point and conveying the exhibit's appearance characteristics. Through these distinct structural designs, both interfaces achieve an organic complementarity between core and supplementary information.

The origins of such disparities can be traced to the distinct cultural genes of China and New Zealand. The visual habits of Chinese audiences are deeply influenced by vertical dimensional culture: the traditional top-down writing of Chinese characters, in ancient societies dominated by Confucian culture, where hierarchical order was highly valued, mirrored the social hierarchy visually through its vertical arrangement, embodying respect for authority and order.

In comparison, New Zealand's visual cognition is rooted in horizontal dimensional culture. Unlike the vertical writing of Chinese characters, Western alphabetic scripts adopt a left-to-right linear arrangement, with each letter maintaining equal width and continuity along the horizontal axis. Words are formed by horizontally concatenating letters into meaning units, and punctuation marks further reinforce the rhythmic flow of horizontal reading. This writing tradition embodies the Western cultural pursuit of rational order: linear arrangement symbolizes the continuity of logical deduction and carries the cultural metaphor of equal dialogue.



Image 9

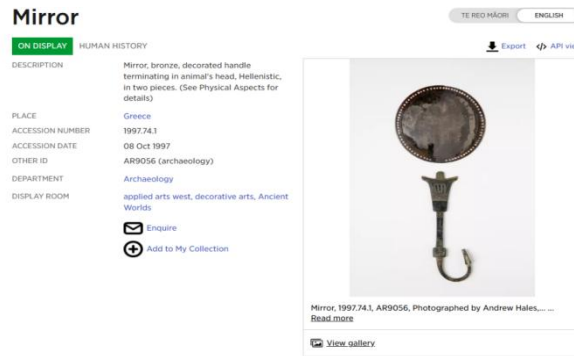


Image 10

The vertical layout of the Site of the 1st CPC National Congress carries profound symbolic historical depth. The core figures, positioned with visual dominance, metaphorically embody historical figures' enlightening influence on modern society. By extending vertically, this design transforms historical narratives into a chronological journey from past to future, harmonizing with the site's spiraling upward spatial design philosophy. Conversely, the AWMM adopts a horizontal structure that embodies the egalitarian spirit of cultural dialogue. Here, the left-side text's objective descriptions engage in visual-textual conversation with the right-side imagery's intuitive presentations, collectively conveying a philosophical commitment to balanced coexistence.

In addition to the About Us interface, the Site of the 1st CPC National Congress' interface is as follow in Image 11. From the perspective of information value, the national flag, as the visual central axis, runs vertically through the screen, placing the main building of the Memorial Hall in the center of symmetry, forming the Vertical Axis of Power. this layout implies that the Memorial Hall and its symbol, the CPC, are the ideological leadership core, while the symmetrical distribution strengthens the sense of order and stability, and metaphorically refers to the unity of the Party and its historical continuity.

In Chinese culture, red symbolizes revolution, sacrifice and passion. From the salience analysis, the high saturation red color of the Chinese flag in the picture contrasts strongly with the gray and white tone of the building and the cold tone of the river, through the color conflict, the flag and the building are strongly foregrounded, and the audience's visual gravity focuses on the flag and the main building of the Memorial Hall, which gives the audience a sense of solemnity and solemnity. The river as the background suggests the flow of the long river of history, while the main building of the Memorial Hall at the bottom symbolizes the historical foundation, and the fluttering red flag at the top symbolizes the spiritual leadership, from which it can be seen that: in the long river of history, the Communist Party of China has always been leading the Chinese people in the right direction towards a new journey.

The interface of the AWMM is as in Image 12. From the perspective of information value, About and the background image occupy the visual center, directly conveying the theme of the current page, and have the highest information priority. The auxiliary links in the bottom navigation, such as Home and Your Museum, provide secondary information support, and their information value is slightly lower than that of the top navigation, which is auxiliary information. Analyzed from the framing perspective, the horizontal divider separates the navigation bar from the title area, forming a clear functional division. And the dividing line between the navigation bar and the content area constitutes a physical boundary, realizing the information hierarchy distinction. From a salience perspective, the Site of the 1st CPC National Congress in Image 11 occupies significant layout space with vivid color contrasts, creating maximum visual prominence that emphasizes the memorial's solemnity and historical significance. This draws viewer attention while conveying its importance. The AWMM's orange background, meanwhile, generates visual impact, creating hierarchical contrast against the black navigation bar and white text to attract attention. Radial lines extending outward from the center provide visual guidance, directing viewers' gaze toward the core area. The dynamic quality of these lines enhances salience, making About the visual focal point.



Image 11

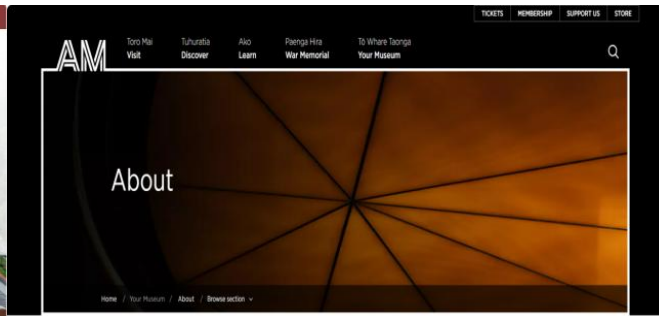


Image 12

Examined through the lenses of VG and cultural expression, the three-dimensional structure of compositional meaning elucidates the inherent logic of visual text creation. In terms of information value, the Site of the 1st CPC National Congress' exhibition interface employs a vertical structure where the core information comprises four historical figures' photographs, with supplementary text provided below. The AWMM adopts a horizontal layout, where high-value information is presented through both the left-side text and right-side artifact images, which complement each other. This disparity stems from the distinct cultural genes of China and New Zealand. China is influenced by a vertical cultural dimension, as evidenced by the top-down writing tradition reflecting respect for hierarchical order. In contrast, New Zealand is rooted in a horizontal cultural dimension, with the linear arrangement of alphabetic characters implying a pursuit of rational order. The Site of the 1st CPC National Congress' vertical structure symbolizes historical depth, while the AWMM's horizontal layout manifests equality in cultural dialogue. In cross-cultural interface design, the spatial distribution of information value exhibits distinct characteristics: the Chinese interface establishes a hierarchical order of center-edge along a vertical axis, enhancing visual centrality, while the synergistic arrangement of architecture and symbols emphasizes the aggregation effect of cultural symbols; conversely, the new interface organizes information through horizontal division, achieving a hierarchical progression of interface elements via functional partitioning, reflecting a pragmatism-oriented concept of information democratization.

The salience delineates the visual emphasis via color relationships; the juxtaposition of intensely saturated warm colors against a cool background generates visual impact and directs attention to the visual core. The red flag symbolizes the spiritual leadership of the CPC, while the Auckland War Memorial Museum interface establishes visual depth through the interplay of light and darkness, thereby creating an information hierarchy through the modulation of light and shadow. The AWMM's interface creates visual depth by juxtaposing light and dark, so automatically disclosing the information hierarchy through the interplay of light and shadow.

The distinction in framing reflects the cultural perspective: Chinese symmetrical composition highlights spatial equilibrium, while the conventional frame structure communicates an aesthetic of order; the contemporary dynamic separation prioritizes interface fluidity, and the open layout resonates with the adaptability of interaction design. The distinction in compositional paradigms represents a selection of technological approaches for cultural expression: the former enhances narrative continuity by visual stability, whereas the latter facilitates information access through interface dynamism. Collectively, they illustrate the pragmatic efficacy of visual grammar as a cultural coding mechanism—where the harmonious configuration of space and color results in an organic unity of aesthetic form and cognitive logic.

## 5. Conclusion

This study set out to examine how visual resources contribute to the construction of cultural meaning on memorial websites in different cultural contexts. The findings demonstrate that while both websites draw on similar semiotic resources, their configurations reflect distinct cultural logics and communicative priorities.

Regarding the representative meaning, The Chinese site emphasizes the materiality of historical artifacts through a Category-to-Example hierarchical structure, reinforcing the authority of revolutionary history. In contrast, the AWMM adopts a Category-to-Faceted Classification system, promoting a de-authoritative and interactive knowledge structure that emphasizes systematic knowledge construction and inclusivity.

In terms of interactive meaning, the Site of the 1st CPC National Congress predominantly uses offer images, characterized by long shot and elevated angle, to construct authoritative narratives and sacredness of revolution. The AWMM, however, employs more demand images, encouraging audience to explore through direct eye contact and medium-distance shots, conveying openness and inclusivity. The color saturation also differs: the Site of the 1st CPC National Congress applies low-to-medium saturation red to symbolize revolutionary passion, while the AWMM adopts desaturated gray tones to evoke philosophical reflections on war trauma.

As far as compositional meaning, the Site of the 1st CPC National Congress emphasizes the hierarchical order of center-margin through vertical axis and symmetrical layout, symbolizing the leadership of the Communist Party of China. While the AWMM constructs a flat information architecture with horizontal dividers and dynamic partitions, reflecting the concept of pragmatism and democratization of information. In terms of salience, the Site of the 1st CPC National Congress relies on high saturated color contrast to focus on cultural symbols, while the AWMM prefers light-dark contrasts and radial visual guides direct attention democratically, reflecting pragmatic information accessibility. This aligns with Western horizontal cultural dimensions, prioritizing equal dialogue over hierarchical order.

This study empirically validates VG as a universal framework for analyzing cultural identity in visual design, demonstrating its applicability in non-Western contexts. The findings highlight how VG's elements serve as coding mechanisms for collective memory: the Site of the 1st CPC National Congress stresses ritualistic transmission of red culture through symbolic amplification, while the AWMM facilitates democratic reconstruction of traumatic memory through visual decentralization.

However, the research sample is limited to the two countries' cases and can be extended to more cultural contexts in the future. Dynamic interaction design such as VR exhibitions is not sufficiently included in the analysis, and needs to be deepened in conjunction with technological dimensions.

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