| **RESEARCH ARTICLE**

The Chinese National Image in *A bite of China* from the perspective of Appraisal System: A Literature Review

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| **ABSTRACT**

The appraisal system, which was founded by Martin, White and other scholars in the 1990s, completed the interpersonal function of Systemic Functional Linguistics. It includes three major sub-systems, namely the engagement system, attitude system and graduation system. At present, the appraisal system is widely used in the study of various texts. As a business card of foreign exchanges, national image plays an important role in enhancing national competitiveness and promoting international cooperation and development. As a special type of film and television, a documentary takes real life as the material, people and real events as the objects and tries to convey the most authentic information to the audience. The documentary series, *A Bite of China* toke the Chinese diet culture as the core and left a deep impression on the Chinese audience through the relaxed and lively narrative rhythm. What's more, its English version, translated by BBC, shows the daily diet of Chinese to an overseas audience. In this way, Chinese culture got dissemination, and also it shaped the Chinese national image. At present, most of the studies on documentaries are derived from the perspective of translation and communication science, while from the perspective of appraisal systems to study documentaries are few. Therefore, the author intends to study the construction of the Chinese national image of the English version of *A Bite of China (I)* from the perspective of the appraisal system.

1. Introduction

Because of its complexity, plasticity and importance, the construction of a national image has become a subject that modern countries attach great importance to. The construction of the national image is an indispensable dimension to understanding the glorious history of the People's Republic of China since its founding of it because the construction of a stable and positive national image has been an urgent appeal of the Chinese since the founding of the country. The great achievements since the founding of the People's Republic of China have greatly changed the objective image of China in all aspects and constructed the image of a socialist country, a great oriental country and a global power. On the whole, Chinese national image construction has made great achievements, and the study of the national image is very popular both at home and abroad. For instance, there are many studies about national image based on appraisal systems.

The appraisal system, which was founded by Martin, White and other scholars in the 1990s, extended the interpersonal function of Systemic Functional Linguistics. It includes three major sub-systems, namely the engagement system, attitude system and graduation system. The engagement system can be sub-systematized into monogloss and heterogloss. The attitude system can be sub-systematized into affect, judgement and appreciation. The graduation system can be sub-systematized into force and focus. In addition, the force system and focus system can be sub-systematized again. The force subsystem becomes raise and

lower, while the focus subsystem becomes sharpens and soften. Now the appraisal system is mainly used for discourse analysis, such as the analysis of advertising text, business negotiation text, and news text. However, there are few documentaries that were studied from the perspective of the appraisal system.

In China, some documentaries can not only show people's simple life, record the social connotation and practical significance, but also inherit and develop the national culture by recording Chinese unique regional ethnic characteristics. With the development of the Chinese economy and the promotion of its international status, Chinese culture is spreading to the whole world. Many excellent Chinese documentaries have been translated into English and broadcast in other countries. *A Bite of China* is a great food documentary which is broadcasted by CCTV. The content is mainly to show the fine ecological picture of various ethnic groups and regions in China. Through the multiple perspectives of Chinese food, for example, the materials, cooking and enjoyment, to show the Chinese and food related consciousness, ethics, emotion and other aspects of the traditional culture, enable the audience to understand the Chinese characteristics of food ingredients and a series of related elements behind them; and learn about the long history of Chinese food culture. Thus it was also translated into English by BBC to broadcast in western countries.

Therefore, in future research, the author will take the construction of the Chinese national image as the research object and analyze the Chinese national image in the English version of *A Bite of China (I)*from the perspective of the appraisal system.

2. Appraisal system
The appraisal system was founded by Martin, White and other scholars in the 1990s and extended the interpersonal function in Systemic Functional Linguistics, which was founded by M.A.K. Halliday. It includes three major sub-systems, namely the engagement system, attitude system and graduation system.

2.1 Attitude system
The attitude system refers to the judgment and appreciation of human behaviors, texts or processes and phenomena after getting psychological influence. It is the attitude of the language user towards the object, but it stands the reader's perspective to reveal according to the language of the text. It can be divided into three sub-systems, namely, the judgement system, the affect system and the appreciation system.

Among them, the affect is the heart, which belongs to the category of reaction in psychology, and it is the reaction to behavior, text or process and phenomenon. Affect means concerned with registering positive and negative feelings. Meaning can be divided into three levels according to different intensity, namely, low, medium and high. The affect meaning expressed in the process can be divided into reactive and desirable. When the process is reactive, it can be realis; when it is desirable, it can be irrealis. Realis affect mainly has three kinds, namely un/happiness, in/security and dis/satisfaction. Irrealis affect is always caused by external things, including fear or desire. That is dis/inclination. (Martin &White,2005)

The judgement deals with attitudes towards behavior, which we admire or criticize, praise or condemn. It can be sub-systematized to social esteem and social sanction. Social esteem is concerned with normality, capacity and tenacity. While social sanction is concerned with veracity and propriety. Also, they can be divided into positive and negative. (Martin &White,2005)

The appreciation system belongs to the aesthetic category, which refers to the evaluation of texts/processes and phenomena, and has both positive and negative connotations. The system is structured around three aspects: response, composition and value. (Martin &White,2005)

2. 2 Engagement system
Language users use engagement to regulate their responsibility and obligation for what is said. Whether language users are "engage" in responsibility is mainly judged by means of projection, hedging and modality. Engagement can be achieved by monogloss and heterogloss.

Monogloss means that there is only one voice or point of view in the text, and no other point of view is involved in the transmission of discourse information. The main purpose of monogloss texts is to make a stand and judgment by using straightforward discourse and ally with readers without controversy. There is only one voice or point of view in an autobiographical discourse, and no other point of view is involved in the transmission of discourse information.

Heterogloss refers to the existence of a variety of voices or viewpoints in a text, which can be divided into dialogic contraction and dialogic expansion. The former refers to the restriction of some speech after the introduction of a variety of speech to narrow the dialogue space. The latter refers to the fact that the discourse introduces some speech and actively arouses others to expand the dialogue space. Dialogue contraction includes disclaim and proclaim. The disclaim strategy directly refutes a certain point of view or argument by negating words or contrastive connectives. The language momentum is enhanced, and the focus is obvious. The function of proclaim is to agree, declare and support other positions, indirectly suppress the space for dialogue, and shrink the dialogue by positive expressions. The dialogic expansion includes entertain and attribution. The entertain strategy is mainly that the author implies that his own point of view is only one and is willing to accept other points of view to expand the dialogue space. Attribution is the introduction of external voices or ideas direct. It is a kind of paraphrase with the attitude of acknowledgement or alienation.

2.3 Graduation system
The graduation system can be regarded as a resource that spreads all over the appraisal system, which plays a role in embellishing other interpersonal meanings. The most value of the entire appraisal system, whether attitude or engagement, can be graded according to intensity. To be precise, the graduation system refers to the increase and decrease of attitude, which works through force and focus. (Martin & White, 2005)

Force is a language resource that is graded according to intensity and quantity. We use words to raise or lower the level of feeling. English is rich in regulatory resources, for example, comparison, quantity, mode and modality words. These expression ways can be graded. The rise and fall of force can be achieved through reinforcement and quantification.

Focus refers to language resources that are classified according to the archetype and delicacy of category boundaries. For example, "woman" could not be graded, but within the scope of focused resources, there could be expressions like "true woman". There are usually two ways to deal with different classification categories: sharpening and softening. The former refers to the use of "true", "real", "genuine", and other words to indicate that the phenomenon described is evaluated as a prototype; The latter put the described phenomenon on the outer edge of the category by using "kind of", "of sorts", "effectively", "bordering on" and the suffix "-ish". (Martin & White, 2005)

3. Research status in China and abroad
Among the three subsystems of the appraisal system, attitude and engagement resources have been paid much attention by scholars, while the research on graduation resources is not thorough enough.

3.1 Research status of appraisal system in China and abroad
3.1.1 Research status of appraisal system in China
Domestic scholars' research on the theoretical level mainly focuses on two aspects. Firstly, it is the essential attribute of the appraisal system. Here are some influential appraisal system studies in China. For instance, Zhang Delu and Liu Shizhu (2006) discussed the categorization of meaning and form in the appraisal system. Then, Wang Ligang (2007) analyzed the recognition and appraisal methods of "comparative, subjective and social values" and the recognition methods of vocabulary, grammar and discourse from the perspective of language. Also, Liu Shizhu (2010) regards evaluation as "the value judgment made by the evaluation subjects to the evaluation objects based on certain evaluation criteria in a certain cultural context". And Hu Zhuanglin, Zhu Yongsheng et al. (2005) made a detailed explanation of the definition and classification of the appraisal system, as well as the specific analysis methods to prove appraisal and identify it through vocabulary, syntax, prosody, metaphor and various modal modes.

Secondly, about the three sub-systems of appraisal, Wang Zhenhua (2003) reconstructed the framework of the engagement system based on psychology, sociology and semantics. He Zhongqing (2011) discussed the development and theoretical origin of the "graduation" category in the appraisal system. Miao Xingwei (2007) and Zhang Keding (2007) respectively explore the function of attitude evaluation of evaluative enhanced thematic construction in English. Chen Guoting and Lan Qiaoling (2004) studied the pragmatic connotation of adjectival evaluation sentences. Fang Hongmei (2009) discussed the textual function of evaluation from the perspective of cognitive linguistics and discourse semantics. Li Ji'an (2008) regarded modality as an important intervention resource and discussed the dialogical nature of modality and the relationship between the graduation of modality and dialogical space. Liu Shizhu and Zhang Zheng (2011) discussed the structural potential and semantic configuration of judgment.

In recent years, the research of appraisal systems in discourse analysis has received extensive attention in China. Many scholars believe that the appraisal system can be used to analyze foreign language teaching, literary works, scientific and technological texts, and even tourism texts. Since White, an Australian scholar, provided a detailed theoretical framework for the appraisal research of news discourse in his doctoral dissertation (1988), the study of appraisal systems in news discourse analysis has attracted much attention.

In domestic, research on appraisal system application has been expanded from discourse analysis, including news discourse, literary discourse, academic book review, and courtroom inquiry discourse, to social identity, translation, foreign language teaching and other fields. Gu Xiaojuan and Li Yi (2007) reviewed the literature on language and identity construction. Hu Quanzhu (2010) studied the identity construction of scavengers and believed that people construct social identity by choice of language. Luo Na (2009) proposed that different translation methods should be adopted for various appraisal resources. Zhang Xiangang (2007) believes that the introduction of an appraisal system into translation studies will promote the development of translation theory and translation teaching. Fang Yan (2008) holds that translation can accurately convey the attitude of the original author only when it meets the equivalence of conceptual meaning, interpersonal meaning and textual meaning. Liu Xiaolin (2010) takes the comparison of two versions of A Dream of Red Mansions as an example to conduct translation research from the perspective of the evaluation system.

In terms of teaching, Chen Shufang's study (2002) showed that the appraisal system was beneficial to vocabulary acquisition. Li Zhanzi (2002, 2005) focuses on cross-cultural appraisal and the application of the appraisal system in foreign language teaching in China. Liao Chuanfeng (2008, 2011) interprets the appraisal significance of the theme of a text in English textbooks and studies the application of the appraisal system in the teaching of foreign language writing. Zhong Lanfeng (2007) applied the appraisal system to English newspaper teaching and demonstrated the intersection between appraisal system research and media literacy research. Ma Weilin (2007) demonstrated the enlightenment of the appraisal system on English reading and oral English teaching. Liu Chengyu (2004) and White jointly carried out research on the appraisal system of modern Chinese teaching.

Since Martin's first work about appraisal systems in 2000, it only has a history of 15 years. It can be seen from the research results in the past 15 years that this system has been widely developed, spread and applied around the world. Chinese scholars have made great achievements both in their studies of systems and their application of them. Some scholars have found the deficiency of the appraisal system and tried to seek support for appraisal system from psychology, sociology and philosophy. For example, The Value Philosophy Path of Perfecting Appraisal System -- Also Discussing with Mr. Martin written by Hu Wenhui (2011). Some scholars find that the classification of the appraisal systems is fuzzy and try to reclassify the sub-systems of engagement and attitude. Scholars have developed and revised this system from different aspects and redefined the status of appraisal in interpersonal meaning. And they probed into the nature of appraisal, the relationship between appraisal meaning and descriptive meaning, the categorization of appraisal meaning and the classification of the appraisal system, etc. It not only puts forward constructive revision opinions on the connotation of appraisal and appraisal system on the systematic level but also greatly expands the application scope of the system.

3.1.2 Research status of appraisal system abroad
In 19855, M.A.K. Halliday published An Introduction to Functional Grammar, which was the first edition of the study of appraisal systems in the sense of systemic functional linguistics, such as the study of emotion, attitude and judgment. However, Halliday's research is the study of interpersonal meaning on the grammatical level and has not yet risen to the level of textual semantics, so it is impossible to form an appraisal system.

Martin inherits Halliday's thought, develops its interpersonal meaning, and raises the study of interpersonal to the level of discourse semantics on the basis of grammatical interpersonal. Martin's work on appraisal systems first appeared in his 1992 monograph, English Tert: System and Structure. The book has a special chapter on "consultation" and the context of "ideology". But the real sign of the appraisal system was the publication Beyond Erchange: Appraisal Systems in English in 2000. Then it was collected in the proceedings of Hunston and Thompson.

Martin's appraisal system was developed by his team of researchers who studied the language proficiency of people in secondary schools and other Settings in New South Wales, Australia, between 1991 and 1994. The main fields were writing, literature, history, news, politics, science and technology, etc. Their goal was to establish a set of appraisal resources for discourse analysis, focusing

on the rhetorical function of evaluative words, as well as the interpersonal meaning and social relations (Wang Zhenhua, 2001). Then Martin followed up on previous research on attitudes in 2000 with a paper called *Beyond Exchange: Appraisal Systems in English*, which launched the Appraisal system. In 2005, Martin and White jointly published a monograph named *The Language of Evaluation Appraisal in English*, which was published by Palgrave Macmillan. And this book further improved and finally formed Martin's Appraisal system.

The main content of linguistic appraisal is the attitude, standpoint and viewpoint conveyed by language (including paralanguage). In the past two decades, there have been many approaches to these contents, including evaluation (Hunston, 1989) and stance (Biber&Finegan, 1989). There are many studies, for example, metadiscourse (Hyland, 2005), evidentiality (Chafe, 1986), appraisal (Martin, 2000) and Cognition (Scherer.1999). However, only Martin's research covers the contents related to attitudes, such as evaluation, stance, metadiscourse and evidentiality. And he provides a systematic network of textual interpersonal semantics, which is a model of the combination of function and system. We call Martin's research focusing on the network of meaning systems as systematic appraisal, while other functional appraisal studies are non-systematic. In addition, different approaches may construct different analysis models, but by far, the most mature discourse value analysis model is the appraisal system constructed by Martin and his team under the framework of systemic functional linguistics.

Among Martin's three dimensions of textual interpersonal meaning, the appraisal system is the most perfect, influential and systematic. This is also the reason why his appraisal system is regarded as "the most mature model of discourse value analysis". The network of evaluation systems he created in 2000 is attitude centered, supplemented by two systems, engagement and graduation. Among them, attitude is the most mature, and the three sub-systems of attitude produce their own systems, respectively, and the instantiation language phenomenon of each system is summarized. It is an important resource for comprehensively investigating the meaning of attitude, but the engagement system and the graduation system are relatively uncompleted. Meanwhile, the boundary between the three systems is not well addressed. These questions were later addressed in his and White's monograph, which not only explained the boundary between systems but also developed previously weak branching systems. More importantly, it also comprehensively explored the relationship between engagement and graduation and provided a method of applying an appraisal system to discourse analysis. Since then, the meaning system of the appraisal system has been comprehensively improved.

3.2 Research status of the national image in China and abroad
At present, the study of national image, as one of the hot topics of academic attention at home and abroad, has rich connotations and a wide range. Based on the existing academic literature, the author found that there are obvious differences between Chinese and Western scholars. Therefore, on the basis of combing the concept of national image, this part will respectively elaborate and analyze the basic path of research on Chinese and Western national images.

3.2.1 Research status of the national image in China
In view of the different research perspectives of domestic and foreign scholars, the definition of the concept of the national image presents diverse characteristics. The definition of the national image by domestic scholars can be roughly divided into three types.

One is about comprehensive national power, which holds that the national image mainly comes from the public's perception of a country's comprehensive power. For example, Guan Wenhu (2003) put forward: "National image is a complex, which is the overall evaluation and recognition of the country itself, its behavior, its activities and its achievements by the external and internal public. National image has great influence, cohesion and reflects the comprehensive power of a country." Duan Peng(2007) pointed out more directly: "National image, as the expression of comprehensive national power, includes hard and soft power. Hard power refers to tangible material power, scientific and educational power and talent power, while soft power refers to a country's political mobilization, cultural penetration, diplomatic influence and national spirit."

Secondly, the national image is built by the media. It holds that media is the main source of constructing a national image in the public mind. Liu Jinan and He Hui(2006) put forward that national image is "people's overall perception of a country with both objectivity and subjectivity through various media on the basis of material origin". Xu Xiaoge(1996) also believes that "national image is the image of a country formed in the flow of international news or the image of a country presented in the news reports of other countries' news media".

Then, in cognitive impression theory, representative scholar Li Zhengguo(2006) put forward that national image can be divided into three categories: "self-image", "external image", and "abhorrent image". Among them, "self-image" is an internal self-image pursued by the image-maker but not recognized by other international behaviors. "external image" is the opposite of "self-image". It is the external image of the country as the other, which is shaped and recognized by other international actors. It is the whole imagination of the international community. "abhorrent image" is a kind of expression form between the "self-image" and the "external image" in the national image, that is, the short-term image of a country whose international image is recognized or subverted by a powerful third party."

The public's cognition of national image mostly comes from the "mirror image" presented by the media, but there are two points to note: first, the media image is not the "mirror reflection" of the real world; Second, the cognitive image and the media image are not exactly corresponding to the relationship. The cognitive image is constructed by the public after receiving, encoding, storing and utilizing the media image. Kuang Wenbo and Ren Tianhao(2013) hold the same point of view. They put forward that national image is the subjective mirror image of the objective reality of a country projected in the domestic and public consciousness after three kinds of deviation, namely cultural values, national interests and mass media. Generally speaking, the national cognitive image is affected by three factors: first, the information about the national appearance presented by the media to the public. The content, form, quantity, perspective, attitude, and value orientation of information affect public cognition; the second is the channel, mode, frequency and strategy of information dissemination; The third is the public's own situation, including the cognitive basis, cultural and identity background, cognitive habits, the context in which media image information is received.

To sum up, national image is a systematic project that needs multiple means to build." Therefore, the research on national image construction needs to break through the existing research perspective and change to a diversified research direction. Fortunately, at present, some domestic scholars have begun to try to explore the path of national image construction from different angles and have achieved preliminary results. Among them, the representative research is based on the marketing perspective from advertising, brand, documentary, consumer psychology and other aspects of how to build the national image.

3.2.2 Research status of national image abroad

There are few studies on the national image in western, which are mostly spread in politics, international relations, advertising, public relations, brand and other fields. Therefore, scholars often interpret the concept of the national image from the perspective of their own disciplines. Kenneth E. Bolding, the founder of national image research, defined national image from three dimensions, namely national geographic space, "hostility" or "friendship" of a country, and "strong" or "weak" of a country, and further proposed that a good national image can strengthen the cohesion of all parties internally. Externally, a country can improve its public opinion leadership in international affairs. The constructivism school that emerged after the Cold War believes that the national image is a relational concept, and the national image is endowed with meaning in the communication and identification with other countries. At the same time, some scholars tend to view the image as a concept of cognitive psychology from the perspective of cognitive theory defines the national image, and the national image is essentially a kind of cognitive construction of the discourse; the national image does not simply reflect a country's objective existence, but the domestic and foreign public impression of the target countries, attitude and evaluation of the overall reflection.

Under the background of the concept of soft power being put forward and widely accepted, shaping national image is regarded as an ability to govern the country, and the importance of communication mechanisms in the construction of national image cannot be ignored. Western scholars began to discuss national image from the perspective of communication, which is mainly reflected in two aspects: on the one hand, they pay attention to the different cognitive backgrounds and ideological differences of transnational communication of national image. For example, Giffard and Rivenburgh(2000) pointed out that when China and Egypt hosted the same UN Heads of Government conference as western developed countries, developed countries received more positive evaluations, while China and Egypt received more negative evaluations. Kang and Ramaprasad(2005) believed that there was a Matthew effect in the communication of national image. By analyzing the news reports of the 1998 and 2002 World Cups, they found that the national image of France received the highest evaluation, followed by Japan and, finally, South Korea. Therefore, national strength was positively correlated with the national image; that is, the stronger the powerful country was, the weaker the weak country was.

In summary, western scholars have conducted an extensive and in-depth analysis of the formation, dissemination and development of the national image from different disciplinary perspectives, which is of important reference value to the research on the national

image in domestic academics. However, western scholars attach more importance to the applied research of national image, and systematic research on the theoretical level needs to be strengthened.

4. A Bite of China

Since May 14, 2012, *A Bite of China (I)* was jointly launched on CCTV general channel (CCTV1), *Charm Record* column and documentary channel (CCTV9). The film has presented a "visual feast" for the audience with the long and profound Chinese food culture history and simple local customs. As of June 15, 2012, the number of entries for *A Bite of China (I)* on Baidu had soared to more than 12,327,000. May 14, 2012. Up to July 14, 2012, there were more than 5,190 news reports with the title *A Bite of China (I)* on the Internet in the past two months, and the majority of audiences were amazed by the delicious food. All these data fully support the huge impact of this documentary.

At the early stage of the internationalization of Chinese documentaries, *A Bite of China (I)* gives up mediocre documentary aesthetics and adds a new aesthetic taste to the film by taking the stories between ordinary people and food as the starting point. This aesthetic taste not only increases the cultural taste and aesthetic taste of the documentary itself but also enables the audience to enjoy the audio-visual pleasure brought by food. By giving proper humanistic care to the relationship between food and characters, it not only spreads traditional Chinese culture but also shows the national image, which arouses the emotional resonance of the audience and is full of beauty.

5. Conclusion

To sum up, scholars in China have done a lot of research on social and humanistic documentaries, mainly focusing on cultural communication, narrative strategy and aesthetic characteristics. It can be seen that artistic expression techniques and aesthetic characteristics play a crucial role in the creation of humanistic documentaries.

However, there are few dissertations that systematically analyze a successful humanistic documentary about food with a specific case. In particular, less analysis of documentaries is carried out with the appraisal system. Most papers mainly discussed a documentary from a subsystem of the appraisal system in journals and magazines. In the author's opinion, it has great significance to analyze the English Version of the documentary, *A Bite of China (I)*, from the perspective of an appraisal system to discuss the value and significance of humanistic documentaries about the construction and publicity of national image.

At present, the development of humanistic documentaries in China needs to be improved, as there are still few excellent humanistic documentaries. Therefore, an in-depth interpretation of the English Version of the documentary, *A Bite of China (I),* and an analysis of the national image it builds can also play a certain reference role in the development of such documentaries in China in the future.

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