



# A Study of New Rural Image Construction in the “Rural Revitalization” Economic News Reports of International Publicity from the Perspective of Discourse-historical Approach

Yi Sun, Xiuwen Li\*

School of Foreign Languages, Changchun University of Technology, Changchun 130000, Jilin, China.

**How to cite this paper:** Yi Sun, Xiuwen Li. (2025) A Study of New Rural Image Construction in the “Rural Revitalization” Economic News Reports of International Publicity from the Perspective of Discourse-historical Approach. *Journal of Humanities, Arts and Social Science*, 9(3), 598-604. DOI: 10.26855/jhass.2025.03.029

**Received:** February 20, 2025

**Accepted:** March 17, 2025

**Published:** April 14, 2025

\***Corresponding author:** Xiuwen Li, School of Foreign Languages, Changchun University of Technology, Changchun 130000, Jilin, China.

## Abstract

This paper takes *China Daily*'s rural revitalization economic news as the research object, and based on the Discourse-historical approach, uses a combination of quantitative and qualitative research methods to conduct an in-depth investigation into the new rural image construction. From the perspectives of economic development, industrial revitalization, cultural tourism, and digital technology, the economic news builds a new rural image with modernization and innovative development, economic prosperity, profound cultural heritage, and integration of culture and tourism, as well as positive and hopeful. This paper not only enriches the research results in the field of rural image construction and expands the application scope of the Discourse-historical approach, but also provides a discursive strategy reference for China's rural revitalization economic news reports of international publicity, which helps to enhance China's discourse on rural development in the international community, promote the international dissemination of China's rural image, and enhance the international community's knowledge and understanding of China's countryside.

## Keywords

Rural Revitalization; News Reports of International Publicity; Image Construction; Discourse-historical Approach

## 1. Introduction

“Rural revitalization” is a major decision made by the 19th National Congress of the Communist Party of China, a major initiative to address issues in agriculture, rural areas, and rural residents, and a major historical task in the finish building a moderately prosperous society and build China into a great modern socialist country in all respect. In this context, a large number of studies on rural revitalization have emerged from the policy, economic, and social aspects. Relatively few studies on rural revitalization have been conducted from the perspective of news discourse, especially economic news reports of international publicity, and such reports are valuable as a window for foreign readers to understand the image of China's rural areas.

From the perspective of the Discourse-historical approach, analyze the image construction of the new rural in the economic news, which improves the research method in the field of rural image construction to a certain extent, and expands the application scope of the Discourse-historical approach. This paper collects news reports on rural revitalization from *China Daily* and establishes a corpus to analyze what new rural images are constructed and how they

are constructed, which helps to summarize the discursive strategies used by China to publicize its image of the countryside to the outside world, which is of significance for improving the communication strategies to the outside world and enhancing the discourse right of China's countryside development in the international community.

## 2. Literature Review

Discourse-historical approach (DHA) originated in Europe in the 1980s and was mainly founded by German scholars Ruth Wodak and others, it aims to reveal the power relations, ideology, and Socio-historical contexts behind the discourse by analyzing the discourses of a specific historical period (Wodak, 2009). DHA comprehensively explores the causes and consequences of social events and changes in power relations based on the micro-level theme content, discursive strategies, and language realization forms of texts, as well as the macro-level social, political, and historical context, providing a good theoretical framework for the analysis of political discourse. In the field of politics, DHA is widely used in the analysis of political speeches (Nagy, 2023) and political debates (Wodak, 2024). Scholars have used the method to analyze discursive expressions in social phenomena, revealing social inequalities and power struggles (Hu & Li, 2023).

Image, as a broad and complex concept, has been the focus of social science research. It encompasses not only an individual's self-perceived internal experience, but also the various roles and identities assigned in social and cultural contexts. The image includes a collective image, an individual image, a political image, and a national image. The process of image construction is multi-dimensional and three-dimensional, and is the result of the interplay between the two forces of "self-shaping" and "other-shaping". Self-shaping refers to the process of individuals or groups actively constructing and shaping their own image, which is used to introduce the image of cities (Wan, 2014), the image of villages (Zhu et al., 2024), and the image of the country (Zhang, 2018). Other-shaping refers to the process in which the image of an individual or a group is shaped by external factors, and is applied to the study of reporting and political cartooning (Zhao & Feng, 2017), among others.

Based on the Discourse-historical approach perspective, this paper investigates the image construction of new rural areas in rural revitalization economic news reports of international publicity, which enriches the research on image construction. It helps to present a true, three-dimensional, and comprehensive image of China's new rural areas to the international community, and summarize the effective communication mode and enhance the communication effect.

## 3. Methodology

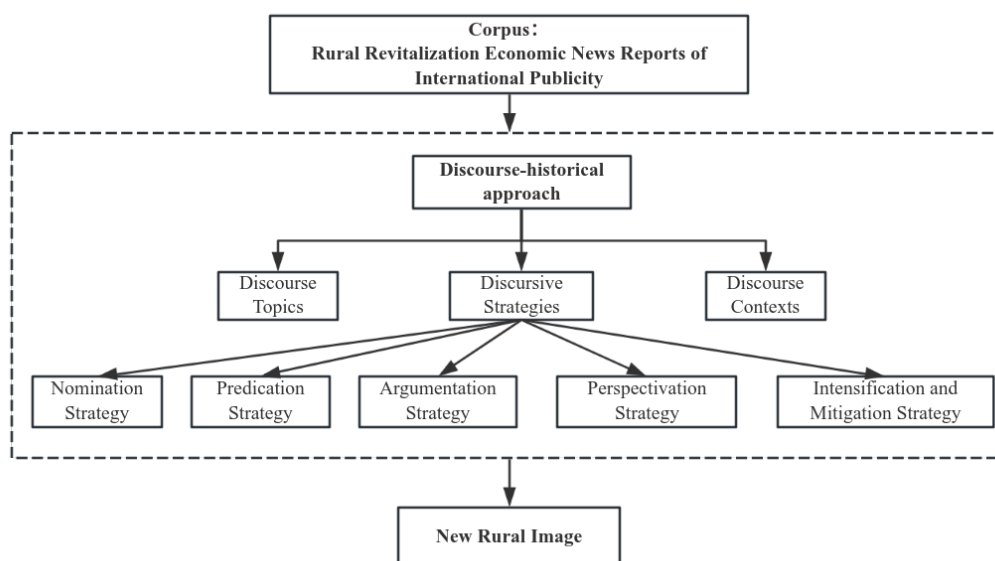


Figure 1. Methodology.

Discourse-historical approach is used to study the construction of new rural areas in rural revitalization, economic news reports of international publicity, using quantitative and qualitative analysis. With the help of Word documents, we used *China Daily*'s rural revitalization economic news reports of international publicity as the corpus and AntConc (Version 4.0.5) to pre-process the corpus data to understand the discourse strategies used in order to further analyze how to construct the image of the new countryside. Through the high-frequency words and discourse strategies summarized in the quantitative analysis, the distribution characteristics of the themes in the rural revitalization economic news reports of international publicity economic news are sorted out, and the discursive strategies in the economic news reports of international publicity are analyzed in-depth, so as to find out how to construct the image of the new countryside (Figure 1).

## 4. Results and Discussion

### 4.1 Discourse Topics

According to the framework of the Discourse-historical approach, determining the thematic content of the text is the first task. The corpus was analyzed using AntConc, and the top 20 high-frequency keywords of the corpus were extracted (Table 1).

**Table 1. Top 20 high-frequency keywords**

	Word	Frequency		Word	Frequency
1	rural	78	11	services	21
2	China	39	12	industrial	18
3	revitalization	38	13	province	18
4	development	37	14	agriculture	17
5	people	35	15	national	16
6	village	35	16	eldercare	15
7	tourism	26	17	technology	15
8	economy	25	18	elder	13
9	new	22	19	data	12
10	government	21	20	promote	12

The keywords reflect the theme of the text, which can help us distinguish the theme characteristics of the text and further understand the construction process of the new rural image in the economic reports of international publicity. The following features can be seen from the features presented in Table 1. The rural revitalization economic news reports of international publicity construct the image of China's new countryside from multiple dimensions, including economic development, local industry revitalization, culture, tourism, and digital technology, which indicates that the rural areas are developing in a comprehensive way. The image of the rural is closely integrated with digitalization and modernization, indicating that China's rural areas in the new era are constantly moving towards modernization. The report also highlights the development of rural culture and tourism industry, emphasizing the traditional culture and historical heritage of the rural, promoting rural revitalization through the inheritance and promotion of traditional culture, and vigorously developing the cultural value of the countryside.

### 4.2 Discursive Strategies

According to the Discourse-historical approach, discursive strategies are the linguistic methods that people use to achieve specific social, political, and other goals, including nomination strategies, predication strategies, argumentation strategies, perspectivizing strategies, and intensification and mitigation strategies.

#### 4.2.1 Nomination Strategies

The nomination strategy realizes discourse manipulation by dividing "in-group" and "out-group". An "in-group" is

a group of people with whom the speaker has constructed a common identity in the language. An “out-group” is a group that is perceived in discourse as having a different identity from the in-group. By creating a positive “in-group” image, speakers can gain the trust and support of in-group members and promote cooperation among in-group members. For the “out-group”, reading such news allows its members to understand and know the Chinese rural.

**Example 1:** Guwen village is a remote mountain village with scarce land resources. However, since 2015, the village has become a widely known hosting over 200,000 visitors and achieving more than three million yuan (\$431,624) in tourism revenue.

In Example 1, the news uses “remote” and “scarce” to describe a Chinese village that is geographically isolated and has scarce land resources. But this impoverished Chinese village has become famous since 2015, and its economic income has risen dramatically. The two sentences in the example show the potential and possibilities of China’s countryside through the great transformation it has achieved through the development of tourism, and let the “out-group” realize the current state of development of China’s countryside.

**Example 2:** Southwest China’s mountainous province Guizhou has witnessed a burgeoning digital economy. Driven by big data development, the region’s digital economy growth led the rest of the country for four consecutive years, according to the Guizhou government on Wednesday.

In Example 2, the digital economy of Guizhou, driven by the development of big data, has led the country for four consecutive years. In the “Internet +” era, digital technology is deeply integrated into various industries and has become a key driving force for economic development. Many industries in Guizhou have realized digital transformation, and it is expected to continue to tap the potential of the Internet in the future, promote high-quality economic development, and provide a development model for other regions.

#### 4.2.2 Predication Strategy

Predication strategy refers to the linguistic way of assigning features and attributes to social actors, objects, phenomena, events, and processes. It includes positive or negative evaluative language and explicit predicative verbs, nouns, and adjectives. AntConc was used to analyze the peripheral predicates of “Rural revitalization”, “China”, “Economy”, and “Village”. The analysis reveals that rural revitalization economic news reports of international publicity construct an image of China’s countryside with all-around innovation and development through the choice of predicative components (Table 2).

**Table 2. Peripheral predicates**

Concordance on the Left	Key Words	Concordance on the Right
people from around the world visit Wuxi, Jiangsu, exploring its	rural revitalization	efforts through agriculture, entrepreneurship, and high-tech industry.
benefits villagers, helping to lift them out of poverty, as	China	pushes ahead with its rural revitalization strategy, which was
The rural tourism industry promotes the development of the real	economy,	and also boosts consumption, investment, and employment.
Big data has contributed more than 20 percent of Guizhou’s	economic	growth, government data showed.
a local company named Wucui Ecological Agriculture Development Investment, Yangchang	village	has attracted many enterprises to invest.
However, since 2015, the	village	has become a widely known tourist attraction, hosting over 200,000 visitors
Relying on its original ecological environment, the	village	has promoted its planted agricultural products,

According to Table 2, it can be found that economic news uses a large number of positive affective vocabulary to describe China, China’s countryside, and the rural revitalization plan. For example, the positive predicate verbs encourage, promote, become, benefit, attract, push, and so on. In particular, the word promote is used as many as 12 times in the news reports in the corpus.

**Example 3:** The village tourism industry promotes the development of the real economy.

In Example 3, the integration of agriculture, culture, and tourism is mentioned, which mainly describes the development of rural tourism in the background of rural revitalization, emphasizing that rural tourism can promote economic development in a better direction and play a positive role in promoting the development of the real economy. These words construct a positive image of China's rural areas as "thriving and prosperous".

#### 4.2.3 Argumentation Strategy

Argumentation strategy refers to defending or questioning facts, such as using Usefulness/advantage, Uselessness/disadvantage, Law and right, Number and Justice. Topoi can be seen as persuasive arguments in a particular cultural context. Numbers are a very important part of journalistic discourse. The coverage of numbers in economic news reports of international publicity will provide readers with data to support and understand the specifics of economic development.

**Example 4:** Sun Zhigang, Guizhou provincial Party chief, said, "Rural revitalization reform will benefit 2.8 million poor people and 20 million farmers in Guizhou."

**Example 5:** Chen Yan, mayor of Guiyang, capital of Guizhou province, said that 93,333 hectares of land in villages will be optimized to have greater industrial value over the next three years, with more profitable crops planted to account for more than 80 percent of the total farming industry.

In Example 4, the figures of 2.8 million and 20 million are used to accurately explain the number of poor people and farmers benefiting from the rural revitalization reform, which makes it more convincing. The use of the figures 93,333 hectares, three years, and 80 percent in Example 5 introduces specific information about the land area, time span, and percentage of crops in Guiyang City, making the content more detailed and accurate.

#### 4.2.4 Perspectivization Strategy

The perspective strategy is to determine the speaker's point of view by analyzing the paraphrased speech. Therefore, this paper focuses on its use in direct and indirect speech with specific example sentences. Through the search of the corpus tool AntConc, it was found that direct speech appeared 14 times, accounting for 33.3%, and indirect speech 28 times, accounting for 66.7%. The use of different reporting modes helps the news achieve diverse communication effects and ensures the authenticity of the news. The larger proportion of indirect speech indicates that the news tends to convert the official position into popular language, which is easier for readers to accept.

**Example 6:** Sun Zhigang, Guizhou provincial Party chief, said, "Rural revitalization reform will benefit 2.8 million poor people and 20 million farmers in Guizhou." Sun added, "The government will take revolutionary action to solve a series of poverty problems in villages."

**Example 7:** Chen said, "Through rural revitalization reform, agriculture will become a more promising industry and farming will become a more attractive job."

Examples 6 and 7 directly quote a passage by Sun Zhigang, deputy to the Guizhou Provincial People's Congress, and the Mayor of Guiyang City. The quotes of government officials enhance the authority and credibility of the article, and also express the government's plans and goals for rural revitalization.

**Example 8:** Infrastructure such as roads will have a high priority on the agenda, and the province will help villagers move to better areas with more resources and facilities, as well as help to alleviate poverty and guarantee education, healthcare, and housing, said the Party chief.

Example 8 paraphrase Xi's statement, which points out that specific measures to carry out rural revitalization by relocating villagers to areas with better infrastructure. These two examples paraphrase Xi's words to convert official discourse into popular language, which is easy for readers to understand. The use of direct speech can enhance the depth of thought and add valuable information to the news report. The use of indirect speech can provide detailed and varied information for news reports.

#### 4.2.5 Intensification and Mitigation Strategy

Intensification and Mitigation strategy refers to strengthening or weakening the "illocutionary force" of words through various language means. Adverbs of degree usually express the strength or degree of action, nature, situation, or quantity, which is an important lexical means to express strength in discourse. According to Table 3, it can be seen that the use of adverbs of degree in rural revitalization discourse in rural revitalization economic news reports of international publicity is 8 kinds, with a total frequency of 15.

**Table 3. The application of degree adverbs in discourse**

Rank	Amplifiers	Frequency
1	Most	4
2	Particularly	4
3	Very	2
4	Fully	1
5	Really	1
6	Significant	1
7	Extremely	1
8	Totally	1
	Total	15

**Example 9:** The local young people were very energetic and entrepreneurial. It was fascinating to see them engaged in these ventures, showing a strong commitment to their hometown and its development.

**Example 10:** Most of the 125 projects covered by the contracts are in emerging sectors such as the digital economy, biotechnology, the ice and snow industry, new energy, high-end equipment, aerospace, and new materials.

In Example 9, the adverb of degree “very” is used to describe young people from the village who are very energetic and entrepreneurial. Young people’s fresh thinking and innovative ideas will bring new ways to revitalize the countryside and bring new opportunities and hopes for rural revitalization. The “most” in Example 10 refers to the cooperation projects signed by Heilongjiang Province in rural revitalization, including the digital economy, ice and snow industry, and other aspects. It presents an image of a fully developed Chinese countryside.

### 4.3 Discourse Contexts

The text revolves around rural revitalization, and its discursive context involves a number of important dimensions, such as policy, economy, and social culture. These contextual factors are intertwined, providing rich contextual information for understanding the discourse on rural revitalization and profoundly influencing the direction and practice of rural development.

China has made the revitalization of the countryside a major strategic decision, which is a key task in solving the “agriculture, rural areas, and rural residents” and building China into a great modern socialist country in all respects. Under the general environment of national economic transformation and development, the rural economy is facing new opportunities and challenges. On the one hand, the traditional mode of agricultural development is gradually changing to modernization and diversification, and various places are actively exploring new economic growth points; on the other hand, the rise of the digital economy and big data technology has empowered the development of the village. With the progress of society, people’s perception and demand for the countryside have changed. The countryside is no longer just an area for agricultural production, but also carries functions such as leisure tourism and cultural heritage. Various regions have fully explored the natural and cultural resources of the countryside, created special rural tourist attractions, and organized cultural activities, which not only satisfy the desire of urban residents for rural life but also promote the inheritance and development of rural culture.

## 5. New Rural Image Construction

In this paper, the Discourse-historical approach is used to analyze the rural revitalization economic news reports of international publicity and successfully outline a modern, prosperous, cultural and tourism integration and aggressive new rural image in China. Through the analysis of high-frequency keywords, it can be seen that the reports focus on economic development, digital technology, and other areas, showing that China’s new rural areas are actively integrating with modern science and technology, constantly moving towards modernization, and actively innovating in industrial development and other aspects. The article points out that news reports use a large number of positive predicate verbs to describe rural development, which reflects the prosperity of rural industry and the continuous

development of the real economy. The report highlights the development of rural culture and tourism industry, emphasizing the traditional culture and historical heritage of villages, which utilizes local resources and ethnic customs to develop tourism, combining rural culture with tourism and showing the rich cultural connotation of the countryside. The use of adverbs of degree such as “very energetic” to describe young people in the countryside shows that the new rural areas have a positive outlook. This conveys the positive spirit of the countryside and shows the image of the new rural as full of hope and continuous progress.

## 6. Conclusion

Taking rural revitalization economic news reports of international publicity as the corpus, this paper uses the Discourse-historical approach and quantitative and qualitative analysis to analyze the construction of the image of the new countryside deeply.

In terms of thematic content, discursive strategies constructed an image of a modernized, economically prosperous, culturally integrated, and positively enterprising new countryside is constructed. Brings a lot of inspiration for rural revitalization international publicity work and academic research, injects new vitality into the study of rural revitalization discourse, and promotes the continuous deepening of research in this field.

## References

- Hu, Y., & Li, Y. (2023). A study of legitimizing media discourse from the perspective of the discourse-historical approach: A comparative study of trade friction reporting in Sino-American mainstream media. *Foreign Languages and Literature*, 39(04), 92-101.
- Nagy, K. (2023). The discourse-historical approach and ideologies in the speeches of Turkish presidents. *Linguistic Forum—A Journal of Linguistics*, 5(02), 57-84.
- Wan, X. (2014). Media image construction in Xinjiang under the framework theory—A case study of People’s Daily report in the recent 10 years. *Contemporary Communication*, 30(06), 107-108.
- Wodak, R. (2024). Appeals to “Normality” and “Common Sense” in the face of global uncertainty: An interdisciplinary discourse-historical approach. *Informal Logic*, 44(03), 361-397.
- Wodak, R., & Michael, M. (2009). *Methods of critical discourse analysis*. Australia: SAGE Publications.
- Zhao, X., & Feng, D. (2017). Multimodal metaphonymy and the construction of China Image: A case of China-related political cartoon discourses in The Economist. *Journal of Xi’an International Studies University*, 25(02), 31-36.
- Zhao, Y. (2018). Research on the construction of China’s national image under “People’s Daily Overseas Edition” from the perspective of frame theory—A case study of reports on “the Belt and Road” from 2013-2017. *Social Sciences in Yunnan*, 38(05), 160-165+188.
- Zhu, H., Liu, X., & Xu, J. (2024). A corpus-assisted discourse study of the construction of Chinese rural image in international news discourse. *Foreign Languages in China*, 21(04), 50-57.