

Rhetorical Construction of COVID-19 News in Chinese Context—A Corpus-Based Study

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Abstract

As a language practice, news discourse is rhetorical that responds to a given circumstance and conveys values and ideas to the target audience with specific goals. This study examined how the English official website in China represented COVID-19 news to affect the public under the rhetorical framework. Using Sketch Engine as the tool for data analysis on a self-built corpus, this study carried out a quantitative analysis of the linguistic features of the COVID-19 news on *In Zhejiang*, the official English website of China's Zhejiang Province. Then, based on the data obtained from corpus analysis, this study applied both modern and classical rhetorical theories to conduct a qualitative analysis of the rhetorical mechanism, including rhetorical invention, rhetorical strategies, and style, of the COVID news on the website of *In Zhejiang*. The results showed that the COVID-19 news was a positive response to the COVID situation in Zhejiang province and China with the purposes of mobilizing the citizens and establishing favorable images of the government and the Zhejiang people. Meanwhile, the news was constructed within its cultural context and Chinese journalism conventions, making it more adapted to the home audience and limiting its appeal to a global audience and effectiveness for worldwide communication. By demonstrating that news discourse is a rhetorical construction, this study provides valuable insights for the news media, particularly Chinese official media, on how to approach the audience rhetorically to improve the persuasiveness of their news reports, as well as a new theoretical framework for the research of public health crises.

Keywords: rhetoric, news discourse, COVID-19, corpus, Chinese context

1. Introduction

Ever since the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic, it has attracted a lot of attention from the news media worldwide owing to its widespread impact. How to construct the discourse on the pandemic and how to report on the national strategies to fight the disease have become the focus of the mainstream media in various countries. The news coverage of COVID-19 will have an impact on how people view the disease and the pandemic as well as how they respond to the control measures as news is not only the major source to access information, but also a powerful means to shape people's values, beliefs, and behaviors. Thus, the study of COVID-19 news will disclose the stance and attitude underlying the discourse, the goal of the news coverage, and how the news is constructed to affect people's ideas and responses to it. Local media, which is a significant component of the national mainstream press, directs to a more specific audience and has a greater influence on local residents. The investigation of COVID-19 news in local media is conducive to examining how COVID-19 is presented on a different level and what discursive strategies are employed to mobilize the residents and shape the region's image.

Rhetoric is the study and practice of using language and other symbols effectively to influence others and achieve human goals (Liu, 2004). As a language practice, news has a natural connection with rhetoric. With its intended aims of communication, ideology-bearing nature, and persuasive role, news discourse is rhetorical. A rhetorical approach to news discourse research has an unparalleled advantage for exploring how news is created, organized, and delivered to affect audiences through persuasive means. However, the traditional studies of news discourse mainly follow two approaches: Fairclough's critical discourse analysis and van Dijk's social-cognitive model (Wang et al., 2022). The rhetorical nature of news discourse has been overlooked though the social

dimension of the news discourse has been long recognized. Rhetoric, as a long-standing multidisciplinary theory, will increase our grasp of the persuasive mechanism of news construction and throw light on news discourse study.

This study aims to show that news discourse is a rhetorical construction that is situated in a specific rhetorical situation and works to persuade through rhetorical strategies, providing a new perspective and empirical reference for the study of COVID-19 news discourse as well as a guide for readers to interpret news critically using rhetorical tools. With these objectives in mind, this study applied a corpus-assisted approach to assessing the linguistic features of the COVID-19 news on the website of *In Zhejiang* (<http://www.inzhejiang.com>), the English official website of China's Zhejiang province. Next, through the analysis of lexical keyness, concordances of keywords, and high-frequent wordlists under the rhetorical framework, this study investigated the rhetorical mechanism, i.e., rhetorical invention, strategies, and style of COVID-19 news on *In Zhejiang* (IZ), revealing how COVID-19 news affects the public in the Chinese context and the purposes behind the news discourse.

2. Rhetorical Framework for News Discourse Analysis

2.1 The Rhetoric of News Discourse

Rhetoric is the study and practice of how to influence people's thoughts, feelings, attitudes, and behaviors through language or other symbolic means (Liu, 2004). Persuasion has been regarded as the main function of rhetoric both in classical and modern rhetoric theories. Modern rhetoric further extends the scope of rhetoric and recognizes it as "a way of knowing" that shapes people's ideas, knowledge, and cognition about the world.

As language is never neutral or value-free, we are inevitably engaging in rhetoric, whether consciously or unconsciously, to seek persuasion daily. Discourse is in nature rhetorical, as Foucault pointed out, "discourse didn't merely represent the real but was part of its production" (McHoul & Grace, 1997, p. 35). According to Herrick (2001, p. 7), discourse is rhetorical as being "(a) planned, (b) adapted to an audience, (c) shaped by human motives, (d) responsive to a situation, and (e) persuasion-seeking". As many previous studies have shown (Conboy, 2010; Min, 1998; Fowler, 1991), news is a social construction that is inevitably laden with a set of social values and ideology. Situated in a specific context, news is constructed to impart ideas or values to a specific audience for certain purposes. As a result, the news discourse is essentially persuasive. News reporting is a complex process in which the agent (rhetor), within a specific social and cultural context, performs an act intended for a group or groups of the audience with a particular motive ---whether it is to inform, entertain, or shape ideas. Characterized by these features, news discourse is inherently rhetorical. Rhetorical analysis of news discourse will equip us with better knowledge about how news discourse is meant to deliver the desired message, affect people's opinions, and even elicit action.

2.2 Rhetorical Invention

"Invention" is derived from the Latin term *Inventio*, which means "to find" or "to come upon". As the first in the five canons of rhetoric, invention refers to searching for and developing appropriate and effective arguments. In the procedure of rhetorical invention, the rhetors usually employ two approaches to discover persuasive arguments---*stasis* and *topos* (Herrick, 2001).

2.2.1 Stasis

Stasis means "struggle" or "stopping point". The points of stasis divide a complex case into component parts or questions. Thus, the stasis system guides the rhetors to think about the argument by following the struggle or stopping point at which disagreements may arise (Ibid). In the art of rhetorical invention, a skillful rhetor always knows to divide the argument into component parts where the likely conflict points or disagreements are going to be resolved.

2.2.2 Topos or Topic

In addition to the *stasis* system, there is another system for discovering and organizing arguments, which is known as topic or *topos* in Greek. In rhetoric, topic is defined as "a place or store or thesaurus one can resort to finding something to say on a given subject". Specifically, it refers to a general head or line of argument that provides elements that could be utilized as proofs (Corbett & Connors, 1999, p. 19). Both Aristotle and Cicero distinguished different types of topics, proposing general and special lines of arguments that can be used in the development of any subject (Herrick, 2001). The rhetor employs the topical method to think about topics or prospective arguments that the audience is likely to find relevant. Thus, the topical system suggests ways for rhetors to think through a complex rhetorical problem.

News discourse covers general subjects, such as scientific discoveries, current affairs, global issues, common concerns of mankind, public health events, and so on, as well as specific subjects to meet the audience in certain rhetorical settings. Different media outlets will focus on different aspects of the same event, depending on the aim and the needs of the audience. The coverage of different topics exposes the purposes of the news discourse, such as how the journalists approach the event, what the journalists want the audience to notice and react to, what sorts of messages the journalists aim to send, and so on.

2.3 Rhetorical Strategies

Aristotle (1991) identified three means of persuasion in his work *On Rhetoric*, known as three textual appeals: *ethos* (appeal to the authority of the rhetor), *logos* (appeal to the systems of reasoning), and *pathos* (appeal to the emotions of the audience). The three appeals correlate and work together toward persuasion in any discourse.

2.3.1 The Appeal of *Ethos*

Ethos is generally defined as the good character, authority, virtues, and consequent credibility the rhetor inscribed in the discourse (Liu, 2008). Although the rhetor's conduct and characters in real life can be reflected in discourse to some extent, the audience is convinced by the *ethos* that the rhetor has constructed or represented in the discourse since in most cases the discourse is frequently consumed and disseminated at a distance from the author (Covino & Jolliffe, 1995). Thus, for rhetorical analysis, it's practical to examine how the rhetor constructs favorable *ethos* in discourse and how the discourse inscribes the *ethos* to achieve persuasion.

Ethos possesses the most powerful persuasive power. Rhetoric usually deals with two possibilities or two opposing points of equal force, and so is the case for most human affairs (Liu, 2004). Since rhetorical arguments are built on probabilities, it is difficult to determine which argument is more convincing based purely on *logos*. If the audience responds poorly to the speaker's character, even the strongest case for reason may fall short (Covino & Jolliffe, 1999). In these cases, *ethos* emerges to be the most controlling factor in persuasion. When all other rhetorical resources are equal, the speaker who appears to be more trustworthy, sincere, and knowledgeable wins. In other words, if people believe that a speaker has good sense, moral integrity, and benevolence, they are more inclined to accept as true what that speaker says. The role of *ethos* in persuasion is prevalent in our daily lives and more acute in news discourse. A piece of news represents only one possible interpretation or point of view of the events. Its argument is founded on commonplace or less-than-definite probability, which does not always have a strong epistemological standing. As a result, the credibility of news institutions, the excellent character of the journalists, a good sense of the news report, and the like play a critical part in the success of news discourse.

News discourse constructs *ethos* from various sources: (1) The news organization's credibility. Since the audience would not accept news delivered by any news agent they do not trust, all news organizations have long asserted objectivity and fairness as news reporting criteria and moral codes for the entire profession. For instance, the Society of Professional Journalists has established truth, accuracy, and impartiality as journalism criteria (Wu, 2005). By doing so, news organizations generate trust or credit between their agents and their audiences, imbuing every news discourse they produce with the *ethos* they have established. (2) Credibility and authority from other agents such as specialists, witnesses, well-known figures, celebrities with good reputations, etc. Journalists frequently quote from several sources to uphold the standards of objectivity and fairness. These sources either offer more precise information or specialized knowledge for the news, or they are asked to speak directly for the news. By doing this, journalists effectively appropriate other agents' authority and credit, boosting the truthfulness of news discourses and establishing the reliability of their reporting. (3) The *ethos* established through the discourse itself. Journalists employ a variety of strategies to show the news' objectivity and truthfulness in their reporting. First, they use statistics or specific data to demonstrate that they are giving precise and accurate information. Second, use specific nouns and active verbs more frequently to avoid personal judgments, thus convincing the audience that they are reporting facts rather than opinions in the news (Ibid). Third, provide details from witnesses and experts to ensure accuracy and fairness. Through all these tactics, journalists apply the values of impartiality and fairness to news discourse, establishing the necessary *ethos* to persuade their audience.

2.3.2 The Appeal of *Pathos*

Pathos, also known as emotional appeal, refers to the feelings, emotions, preferences, and values that influence the audience's decision-making (Liu, 2008). In practice, reasoning is frequently insufficient to compel people to act. They are more often prompted to accept something or do something by their passions or emotions; thus, *pathos* plays a vital role in the persuasive process. Aristotle (1991) emphasizes that when we are in different emotional states, we do not make the same judgment. Things do not seem the same to those who hold opposite

feelings towards them. It is also normal for us to be propelled into action through aroused passions in our daily lives. Every effective discourse should somehow activate or appeal to the sympathies or emotions of the audience in a specific context. The appeal of *pathos*, according to Aristotle (1991, p. 1358a), means “placing the audience in the right frame of mind”. This suggests that *pathos* is not necessarily an illogical and irrelevant component of persuasive discourse, but rather a sensible response to certain circumstances and arguments (Herrick, 2001).

The newspaper often reports news that appeals to *pathos* by presenting facts with attitudinal and emotional dimensions. Some tactics are used in news discourse to elicit emotions. (1) The journalists elicit an emotional response from the audience by vividly describing a scene. In doing so, the journalists often appeal to the imagination through sensory and specific details (Corbett & Connors, 1999). Sometimes, they also use visual images, for example, photos, pictures, or cartoons, to enhance the emotional impact. (2) Another technique journalists use to arouse emotions is the effective use of emotion-laden language. The journalists choose between honorific or pejorative terms or words with favorable or unfavorable connotations. However, they should conceal the artifice of wordplay and act naturally. Otherwise, the news discourse will lose its persuasive force if people feel that they are manipulated by emotional appeal.

2.3.3 The Appeal of *Logos*

Logos refers to patterns, commonplaces, and proofs that the audience finds persuasive (Liu, 2008). In other words, *Logos* refers to the means of persuading with reason, using facts and figures. *Logos* plays an indispensable role in persuasion. As rational human beings, people are more willing to accept a proposition through the logical argument. Thus, a discourse should be established on logical reasoning and sound arguments while also being delivered in a pattern or style that makes sense to the audience; otherwise, the audience will not accept what the discourse conveys. For the appeal of *logos* in a rhetorical situation, the rhetor should first know what the audience holds as common assumptions and invoke them in the discourse, then presents a premise about the situation, and finally draws a conclusion that follows the assumptions and the premises. Since the audience for news discourse is educated enough to think rationally, *logos* is extremely crucial in persuading. Every news discourse should be founded on reasoning toward a persuasive end.

In news discourse, several strategies are commonly used to appeal to *logos*. First, construct news based on facts. Facts are the origins of news and are very compelling because news consumers tend to be persuaded by concrete news facts which are rational and trustworthy. Some tactics are utilized to enhance the veracity of news: (1) a straight account of ongoing events to provide facts. (2) Using evidence from seemingly trustworthy sources, such as eyewitnesses, authorities, experts, and professionals, to support the argument. (3) Using numbers to denote accuracy and precision for persons, times, events, and so on (van Dijk, 1988). Second, create a strong rhetorical context for facts to be presented to make them more acceptable and understandable. This type of strategy includes: (1) mentioning prior occurrences as causes or conditions and projecting the next events as likely consequences. (2) Making arguments familiar and ideologically cohesive by using commonly accepted assumptions or well-known concepts as premises. (3) “Inserting facts into a well-known situation model in order to make them relatively familiar” (Ibid, p. 85).

In any discourse, the three appeals work together as a whole for persuasion. *Ethos* convinces the audience by instilling trust in the rhetor’s credibility. *Pathos* arouses the emotions of the audience to effect change. *Logos* mobilizes the powers of reasoning (Covino & Jolliffe, 1999). In news practice, the three appeals frequently correlate and work together to achieve the desired effect. First, a reliable *ethos* ensures the legitimacy and plausibility of news, as well as the successful appeal of *pathos*. The *ethos* established from various sources, such as statements from authorities and witnesses, enhances the sincerity of the events and the dependability of the information (*logos*). And facts that elicit strong emotions (*pathos*) are more likely to be accepted and remembered. Finally, the presentation of facts and reasonable deduction (*logos*) in news enhance its *ethos* as rational, sensible, and consequently trustworthy.

2.4 The Rhetoric of Style

Throughout the history of rhetoric, there have been numerous discussions about style. In classical rhetoric, style is primarily conceived as the vehicle of thought, or specifically, how thoughts are collected and put into words in delivery (Corbett & Connors, 1999); Style is crucial in rhetoric because it affects how an audience receives a discourse and how the rhetor constructs his or her works to achieve the goals. Style, as defined by Jonathan Swift as “proper words in proper places” (Liu, *A Short History of English Literature*, 2005, p. 170), is a rhetorical decision that is suited to the occasion and audience. Modern rhetoric has commonly recognized that style is more than just an ornament or decoration of discourse; it is another viable tool of persuasion—a means of seeking

identification in the audience and constructing the correct ethical image (Corbett & Connors, 1999). Thompson (1997) suggests in his book *Rhetoric Through Media* that news style should be tailored to the audience because the audience's understanding is influenced by word choice, syntax, and, to some extent, ideology. Butler (2007) defines style in written discourse as the use of rhetorical resources to produce and communicate meaning, which includes text patterns, rhetorical options, and purposeful decisions at the sentence and word level.

As was previously discussed, rhetoric deals with the selection of the most effective forms among a variety of available options in language. Once there is a choice to be made, rhetoric comes into play. Thus, the rhetoric of style means the best choices of diction, syntactic patterns, and figures of speech. The rhetorical analysis of news language style is concerned with determining how language features are fitted to a given style pattern. An examination of style in news discourse offers valuable insight into the micro levels of language use in the news as well as how to utilize them effectively in relation to the subject matter, situation, and audience.

As a special type of public discourse, the style of news discourse is constrained by some general features. First, news discourse strives to communicate and shape ideas to large audiences of varying educational levels; hence, news content should be provided in clear, precise language about its subject, audience, and space. Language, according to Aristotle (1991), cannot effectively persuade people unless it conveys a clear meaning. Thompson (1997) also remarked that the simpler and clearer our language is, the more accessible the concepts are to the readers. Second, news discourse is designed to be impartial and impersonal in style. The news discourse frequently presents a distance from implicit readers. Except in quotations and occasionally editorials, there is no "you" in the news and no reader-addressed speech acts. Individual "I" is also missing from news discourse, unless names are signed as supplementary identification of institutional voice (van Dijk, 1988). Third, because news discourses are built on a set of widely shared knowledge, beliefs, and values, news style retains the imprint of these presuppositions in topic selection and word choice. Fourth, news discourse exhibits characteristics of formal communication styles. Everyday colloquialism and spoken language style are inappropriate except in quotations. Fifth, the syntax and lexical style of news discourse display the features of objectivity and formality. News sentences are usually complex, with embedded clauses and nominalizations. The word choices also reflect the degree of formality, institutional voice, and most importantly, the attitudes and ideologies of the speaker (Ibid).

3. Methods

In this study, the official English website of Zhejiang Province *In Zhejiang* was selected as the corpus source to illustrate how rhetoric works in news discourse. Samples of all COVID-19 news have been collected from December 9th, 2021, the first piece of COVID-19 news on the website, until June 8th, 2022, the most recent item of COVID-19 news, to create a specialized corpus of 27456 words and 32271 tokens. A bigger COVID-19 corpus with 224,061,570 words and 280,762,172 tokens available in Sketch Engine is used as the reference corpus.

Based on the rhetorical framework for news discourse analysis, this study first employed Sketch Engine's "keywords" function to generate a keywords list relative to the reference corpus; functional words in the keywords were removed, leaving 50 keywords for further analysis. Following that, the 50 keywords were ranked from highest to lowest keyness to gain an overall knowledge of the media coverage, or topics, of COVID-19 in the target corpus. Second, different categories of high-frequency words in the target corpus (nouns, verbs, adjectives, and adverbs) were gathered to examine the word choices of COVID-19 news, which reveals the rhetorical strategies of the news discourse. Third, keywords and high-frequency words were chosen to analyze their contextual meanings using the "concordance" function to comprehend the implications of the words in context, revealing attitudes and rhetorical purposes of the news discourse. Finally, the results were evaluated under the rhetorical framework to assess the rhetorical strategies of the news discourse and their effectiveness in communication.

As Egbert (2016) points out, corpus-based research alone rarely provides insight to justify the selection of linguistic items. While the corpus research methods employed in this study can compensate for the lack of quantitative data in traditional rhetorical studies, the rhetorical framework of news discourse contributes a social, or rhetorical lens to explain the variation of linguistic features in the news.

4. Results and Discussion

4.1 Topics and Purpose

A quantitative result of the keywords list of the top 50 keywords was presented in Table 1, which reveals the main topics of COVID-19 news covered on the website of *In Zhejiang*.

Table 1. Top 50 keywords in the COVID-19 news corpus of *In Zhejiang*

Rank	Keyword	Keyness	Frequency	Rank	Keyword	Keyness	Frequency
1	zhejiang	2012.18	132	26	yuhang	214.51	7
2	hangzhou	1767.62	111	27	closed-loop	203.99	10
3	omicron	1532.93	58	28	closed-off	203.51	7
4	nucleic	1401.71	123	29	anyang	200.20	7
5	confirmed	955.27	50	30	henan	192.77	10
6	shaoxing	923.18	32	31	guangxi	190.08	9
7	asymptomatic	831.03	63	32	gongshu	186.24	6
8	hksar	710.83	25	33	xixi	183.57	6
9	ningbo	516.69	23	34	yiwu	182.60	7
10	shaanxi	515.71	24	35	suzhou	180.54	9
11	anti-epidemic	460.60	15	36	lyu	179.88	6
12	tianjin	458.85	29	37	liang	175.62	13
13	baise	422.11	14	38	jinhua	174.95	6
14	zero-COVID	403.55	13	39	wenzhou	161.08	6
15	shangyu	400.56	13	40	guangdong	161.08	12
16	quarantine	343.50	69	41	raturi	155.25	5
17	epidemic	306.05	100	42	yuyao	152.52	5
18	imported	291.93	12	43	huzhou	151.30	5
19	binjiang	277.26	9	44	xianyang	149.30	5
20	sandrine	275.792	10	45	provincial-level	148.15	5
21	fuyang	272.05	9	46	wuchang	146.45	5
22	anti-pandemic	247.93	8	47	taizhou	145.87	5
23	xiaoshan	241.94	8	48	megacity	141.53	5
24	COVID-19	231.93	226	49	COVID	126.30	22
25	beilun	215.65	7	50	citywide	125.28	8

Each media has its perspective and choice in selecting the events and forming the topics to report (Zhang et al., 2022). The study of news topics reveals the true purposes of rhetorical invention, as was noted in Section 2. According to the analysis of the keywords, the topics of COVID-19 news on IZ are generally classified into three categories:

(1) the COVID-19 epidemic itself, including information about cases, virus, time and places of the outbreak, the origin, and progress of the epidemic, as indicated in keywords such as *Hangzhou*, *confirmed*, *omicron*, *asymptomatic*, *imported*, *epidemic*, *citywide*. As is shown in Table 1, geographical names were used frequently. Most of them are Zhejiang province cities or districts that were once affected by the epidemic, such as Hangzhou, Shaoxing, Ningbo, Shangyu (a district in Shaoxing city), Binjiang (a district in Hangzhou), Yiwu, Jinhua, Wenzhou, Huzhou, Taizhou, etc. Other areas outside Zhejiang province were also included in the coverage of COVID-19 news, such as HKSAR, Tianjin, Henan, Guangxi, Suzhou, Guangdong, and Xianyang. These areas had all experienced relatively serious outbreaks of the epidemic at some point. All these keywords indicate that IZ mainly delivered information about the epidemic situation of COVID-19 in the country, particularly the occasional outbreaks in the cities within Zhejiang province to raise the public's awareness of the epidemic situation.

(2) epidemic prevention and control, as is shown by the usage of keywords such as *anti-epidemic*, *zero-COVID*, *quarantine*, *anti-pandemic*, *closed-loop*, and *closed-off*. A closer look at the keyword concordances, taking *Hangzhou* as an example in Figure 1, reveals that the contents were concerned with not only control and prevention measures but also the restoration of living orders. This is evidenced by phrases from the context such as *launched a platform*, *gradually resume*, *no longer required to*, etc., which shows the effort and sense of responsibility of the Zhejiang government.

	Details	Left context	KWIC	Right context
1	<input type="checkbox"/> doc#0 reported in 11 cities in Zhejiang province, including 11 cases in Hangzhou and 1 case in Zhoushan. A total of 31 asymptomatic do			
2	<input type="checkbox"/> doc#0 mptomatic domestic cases were reported, including 24 cases in Hangzhou , 1 case in Jiaxing and 6 cases in Jinhua. 3. Pets well pro			
3	<input type="checkbox"/> doc#0 March 14, residents of the Shengyuan Residential Community in Hangzhou were lining up for nucleic acid tests. Huzhou distributes			
4	<input type="checkbox"/> doc#0 authorities revealed on Monday. 18. The whole area of Hangzhou is adjusted to low risk On February 12, it was learned from Hang			
5	<input type="checkbox"/> doc#0 zhou is adjusted to low risk On February 12, it was learned from Hangzhou epidemic prevention and control headquarters that the whole ar			
6	<input type="checkbox"/> doc#0 mic prevention and control headquarters that the whole area of Hangzhou has been at low risk. Passengers departing from Hangz			
7	<input type="checkbox"/> doc#0 igzhou has been at low risk. Passengers departing from Hangzhou Airport are no longer required to provide a negative nucleic acid			
8	<input type="checkbox"/> doc#0 demic prevention policy of the destination. Flights from Hangzhou to Beijing will gradually resume. Local epidemic prevent			
9	<input type="checkbox"/> doc#0 ot. 24. Youth League members jointly guard the city of Hangzhou The persistence under the epidemic moved countless people.			
10	<input type="checkbox"/> doc#0 idemic, the Provincial Youth League Committee has guided the Hangzhou Municipal Youth League Committee to widely recruit volunteers			
11	<input type="checkbox"/> doc#0 fight the epidemic in the New Year The Lu in Fuyang district in Hangzhou are quite busy during the Spring Festival. Lu Jianrong, c			
12	<input type="checkbox"/> doc#0 > First cured patient of this round of epidemic discharged in Hangzhou The first cured patient of this round of epidemic was discharged			
13	<input type="checkbox"/> doc#0 st cured patient of this round of epidemic was discharged from Hangzhou Xixi Hospital on the afternoon of Feb 4. The 29-year-old			
14	<input type="checkbox"/> doc#0 is Spring Festival, a sudden epidemic has become an ordeal for Hangzhou . The cold weather can't stop their firm steps. N			
15	<input type="checkbox"/> doc#0 ew confirmed cases (found in a centralized quarantined point in Hangzhou), 2 new asymptomatic cases (including 1 imported from Iraq an			
16	<input type="checkbox"/> doc#0) had been reported in total. 34. Music video shows the Hangzhou speed and love amid the COVID-19 pandemic During the Spring			
17	<input type="checkbox"/> doc#0 such as doctors, police, volunteers and so on. Believe in Hangzhou speed, believe in love in Zhejiang! 35. Hangzhou report			
18	<input type="checkbox"/> doc#0 medical staffs During the Spring Festival holiday, the weather in Hangzhou is predicted to be low in temperature, humid and gloomy, which			
19	<input type="checkbox"/> doc#0 ater bottle at your convenience. 37. Binjiang District of Hangzhou launches a platform to help residents to fight against COVID-19			
20	<input type="checkbox"/> doc#0 VID-19 Assistance Platform was launched on January 26th when Hangzhou reported a new confirmed case of COVID-19 in order that reside			

Figure 1. Concordances of the keyword *Hangzhou*

(3) comments on the epidemic's prevention measures and the spirit of citizenship shared by all. From the concordances of *Hangzhou* (No. 8, 9, 16, and 17), it can be seen that the news reports conveyed a positive attitude towards the epidemic, applauding the efficiency of the measures, the resolute determination of the citizens, and the compassion shared by Zhejiang residents throughout the epidemic.

Through these topics, it can be seen that the COVID-19 news on IZ is a timely response to the outbreak of the epidemic at various times. The COVID-19 news on IZ provided timely and transparent information about the epidemic situation, mostly in the province and in certain other parts of the country. By covering this topic, Zhejiang's official media aimed to show the effort and sense of responsibility of the Zhejiang government while informing its citizens—both locals and foreigners—about the epidemic in an open and transparent manner. Additionally, the media intended to inspire the citizens of the outbreak cities to adhere to the prevention policies and fight the epidemic collectively by publicizing the prevention and control measures, ensuring the efficient implementation of these measures. On the last topic, IZ has conveyed a positive attitude towards epidemic prevention, complimenting the effort and achievements in fighting the epidemic as well as the dedication of ordinary citizens and boosting people's morale to overcome the difficulties.

4.2 Rhetorical Strategies

To study the rhetorical strategies of the COVID-19 news on IZ, this study ran a textual analysis through high-frequency words (lemma) of various parts of speech, such as nouns, verbs, adjectives, and adverbs, from the corpus of *In Zhejiang*. They were then divided into three categories that correspond to the three rhetorical appeals, *ethos*, *logos*, and *pathos*, as shown in Table 2. The context was also examined through the concordances to reveal how these three appeals were used in COVID-19 news respectively. Functional words were removed.

Table 2. Three categories of high-frequency words related to *ethos*, *logos*, *pathos*

Rhetorical appeal	Part of speech	Lemma and Frequency
<i>Ethos</i>	noun	Zhejiang (132); government (54); people (119); commission (45); policy (40); authority (34); university (33); expert (28); official (27); committee (12); research (11)
	verb	say (233); report (136); accord (42)
	adjective	provincial (29); municipal (14)
<i>Logos</i>	noun	case (382); [number] (76); Hangzhou (111); Xi'an (68); Shaoxing (32); time (53);
	verb	show (25); find (21); accord (42)
<i>Pathos</i>	noun	control (150); measure (80); prevention (112); treatment (21); volunteer (28);
	verb	ensure (27); help (20); prevent (15); control (15); contain (14); strengthen (14);
	adjective	medical (53); good (18) effective (17) anti-epidemic (15); low (14);
	adverb	quickly (11); fully (9); completely (7);

(1) For the appeal of *ethos*, the lexicon comprises words associated with trust, authorities, and sources of credibility and trustworthiness. First, as the official website of Zhejiang province, IZ represents the Zhejiang government and many Zhejiang citizens, and thus it is naturally endowed with the authorities of the Zhejiang government and people. With words such as *Zhejiang*, *government*, *people*, *authority*, *policy*, *provincial*, *municipal*, and *report*, the news media IZ has invoked its *ethos* as the authorized channel for Zhejiang residents to obtain creditable information regarding the COVID-19 situation in Zhejiang. Second, the news has also constructed the *ethos* by appropriating the authority of other agents such as experts and professionals to convince the audience, as is displayed in words such as *experts*, *official*, *committee*, *university*, and *research*. A further investigation of the concordances of the lemma *say* in Figure 2 also shows that the *ethos* was constructed from a variety of sources, including a foreign science journalist, health experts, senior officials, epidemiologists, a foreign spokesman, and ordinary people who have first-hand experience. By doing this, the news outlet IZ not only established the credibility and truthfulness of its reporting but also a closer psychological distance from the audience.

	Details	Left context	KWIC	Right context
1	<input type="checkbox"/> doc#0 nment became stressed and were reluctant to eat.	</s><s>Kong	said	that among the 140 cats, more than 60 showed such symptoms.<
2	<input type="checkbox"/> doc#0 red with cats and ferrets, and dogs also have a low viral load," he		said	.</s><s>Bu added that pet dogs have been found to be infected
3	<input type="checkbox"/> doc#0 nic in the way it fits, veteran science journalist Debora MacKenzie		says	"Nothing is ending, neither the COVID-19 nor the pandemic," said
4	<input type="checkbox"/> doc#0 ld stick to its dynamic zero-COVID policy, a leading health expert		said	on Tuesday.</s><s>Liang Wannian, head of the National Health
5	<input type="checkbox"/> doc#0 ination rate and effective epidemic containment measures, Liang		said	.</s><s>China is capable of implementing its dynamic zero-COV
6	<input type="checkbox"/> doc#0 atic ones-in 28 provincial-level regions between March 1 and 21,		said	Lei Zhenglong, a senior official with the commission.</s><s>Abo
7	<input type="checkbox"/> doc#0 n and complicated epidemic prevention and control situation, Lei		said	.</s><s>Liang said the recent outbreaks have reminded people c
8	<input type="checkbox"/> doc#0 ii, director of the commission's bureau of medical administration,		said	China has revised guidelines on COVID-19 nucleic acid testing fro
9	<input type="checkbox"/> doc#0 an the 48 or 72 hours previously stipulated, she said.</s><s>Jiao		said	the revisions are based on successful practices in places like Zhen
10	<input type="checkbox"/> doc#0 r COVID-19 through medical insurance funds, the administration		said	in a notice issued on Monday. 10.</s><s>Zhejiang reports 18 ne
11	<input type="checkbox"/> doc#0 e reported 18 locally transmitted COVID-19 cases as of March 20,		said	the provincial government.</s><s>The new confirmed cases con
12	<input type="checkbox"/> doc#0 eb. 17, 2022.</s><s>China's National Health Commission (NHC)		said	in a statement on the website that it has been paying close attent
13	<input type="checkbox"/> doc#0 ffectiveness and flexibility of China's overall zero-COVID policies,		said	epidemiologists.</s><s>They believed that the COVID-19 prever
14	<input type="checkbox"/> doc#0 nness of the COVID-19 measures adopted within the closed loop,		said	Huang Chun, deputy director-general of the Office of Pandemic F
15	<input type="checkbox"/> doc#0 ernational competitions or events in the world very successfully,"		said	IOC spokesperson Mark Adams at a Wednesday conference.</s>
16	<input type="checkbox"/> doc#0 f the countermeasures means the success of the Games," Huang		said	on Wednesday.</s><s>Dutch speedskating silver medalist Thom
17	<input type="checkbox"/> doc#0 an unfair competition if like half of the participants are positive,"		said	Krol.</s><s>In an interview with the Global Times, William Frede
18	<input type="checkbox"/> doc#0 on-sporting events" as the pandemic continues, the IOC member		said	.</s><s>Representatives from future Olympic Games hosts, such
19	<input type="checkbox"/> doc#0 ng on and we are optimistic, but we still need to be very careful,"		said	Huang.</s><s>It is estimated that the number of departures of C
20	<input type="checkbox"/> doc#0 e virus and guaranteeing athletes' participation in competitions,"		said	Zeng.</s><s>According to the COVID-19 playbook of the Beijin

Figure 2. Concordances of the lemma *say*

(2) For the appeal of *logos*, the lexicon includes informative and factual content, such as words related to numbers, places, time, and quotations. First, as is shown in Table 2, numbers, words of places, and time were frequently used when the news described the COVID-19 cases in the current situation, making the news reports more precise and objective. Second, quotations were also used to support the arguments in the news, as is indicated in the words *say*, *report*, and *accord*. Third, the news texts on IZ reveal that logical reasoning, including enthymeme and examples, was commonly used when the news intended to establish or refute an idea. In general, the news presented an assumption or a counter-argument, then conducted reasoning through data, examples, and quotations to support its opinion. For instance, in the news article titled "Every country will have the right to manage the pandemic in the way that fits, veteran scientist journalist Debora, Mackenzie says," a counter-argument was first presented, which assumed that "omicron is not serious and can be treated like flu, thus we can lift restrictions on the virus." This argument is composed of two premises and a conclusion, presented in Figure 3. The first premise is that "omicron is not that serious, which can be treated like flu" and the other implied premise is that "strict regulations on the pandemic will hinder the economic recovery and further affect people's happiness, leading to the conclusion that "we should lift restrictions on the virus to make people happy." The news on IZ refuted the argument by first disproving the first premise, demonstrating that COVID is far worse than flu and causes more harm to human health, as supported by evidence quoted from Mackenzie, a science journalist with expertise in disease reporting, and a study published by the United States Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Next, the article also refuted the second premise, stating that "China regards people's lives to be the top priority, and we are working on a balance between economic recovery and pandemic management." The news then discredited the assumption's conclusion and established its own conclusion that China has the right to choose her own way to curb the pandemic in our country and that our measures towards COVID-19 have been proven effective based on our national circumstances, which is the true purpose of this piece of news.

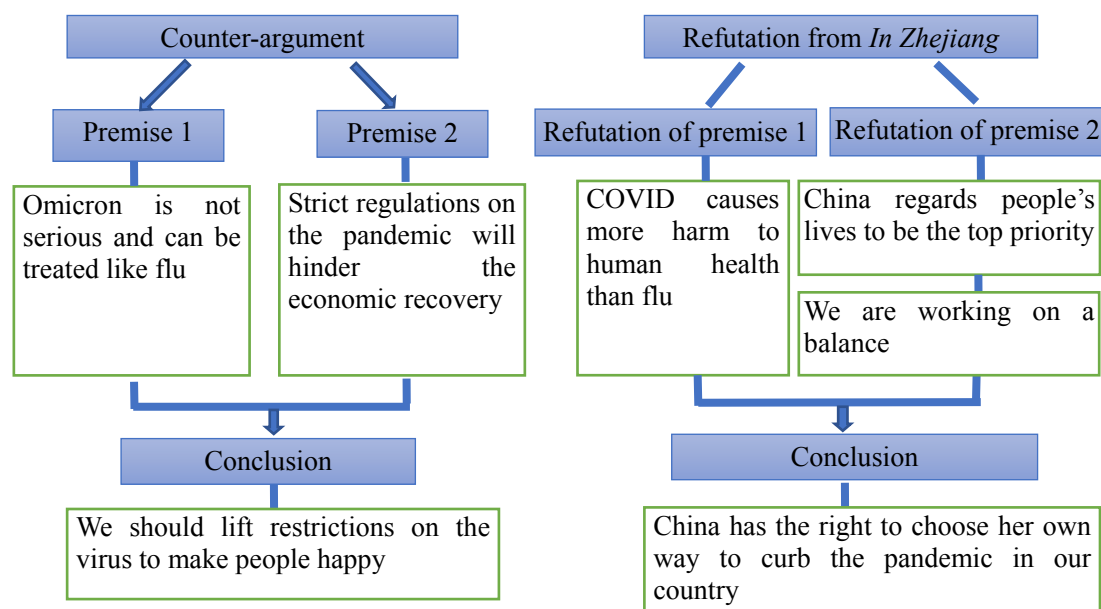


Figure 3. The example of *logos* from the news of *In Zhejiang*

(3) For *pathos*, the COVID-19 news on IZ generally appeals to the positive emotions of the audience. The lexicon of *pathos* includes: a) words relieving people's anxiety. For instance, the use of words such as *prevention*, *prevent*, *control*, *contain*, and *low* indicated that the news was intended to reassure the citizens that the epidemic was basically under control. The words *measure*, *treatment*, *medical*, and *help* showed that positive measures were taken to control the infection and cure the patients. And as can be seen from the concordances of the lemma *ensure* in Figure 4, the news was delivering the message that the people and pets involved were well taken care of and that living orders were being restored. News of this kind reassured people that the government and society were doing everything to safeguard people's lives and restore the living order, thus reducing public panic and stabilizing people's minds.

	Details	Left context	KWIC	Right context
1	<input type="checkbox"/> ① doc#0 day and sent the footage to owners.</s><s>The volunteers also		ensured	that the pets were disinfected and dewormed before they arrived
2	<input type="checkbox"/> ① doc#0 fect animals, standardize their transfer, operate pet care centers,		ensure	supplies and personnel protection, and coordinate communicac
3	<input type="checkbox"/> ① doc#0 : first does not mean 'no infection' as currently, we are unable to		ensure	that not a single local case occurs, but having the capacity to mo
4	<input type="checkbox"/> ① doc#0 ildren on campu.</s><s>Staff conduct disinfection measures to		ensure	food safety for local residents.</s><s>Kegiao District reports a c
5	<input type="checkbox"/> ① doc#0 : for.</s><s>We knew that there would be protocols in place to		ensure	the safety of everyone taking part at Beijing 2022 - athletes, staff
6	<input type="checkbox"/> ① doc#0 taken strong measures to guarantee residents' normal lives and		ensure	economic activities amid a rapid response to a COVID-19 outbre
7	<input type="checkbox"/> ① doc#0 ets and food markets had been urged by the city government to		ensure	basic supplies for residents, and that various daily necessities hac
8	<input type="checkbox"/> ① doc#0 bal pandemic.</s><s>A range of strict protocols are in place to		ensure	the safety of competitors, officials, international media staff and :
9	<input type="checkbox"/> ① doc#0 refits whole world -- China's regular prevention measures aim to		ensure	early detection, a swift response, targeted containment and effec
10	<input type="checkbox"/> ① doc#0 : not only avoided a formidable caseload and death toll, but also		ensured	a swift recovery and remained a powerhouse for the global econ
11	<input type="checkbox"/> ① doc#0 ving zero infections, China's regular prevention measures aim to		ensure	early detection, a swift response, targeted containment and effec
12	<input type="checkbox"/> ① doc#0 measures have prevented a huge number of deaths at home and		ensured	that everything from iPhones and Teslas to fertilizer and car part
13	<input type="checkbox"/> ① doc#0 mpse into China's mode of combatting the pandemic, which has		ensured	both the athletes' safety and the smooth running of the competi
14	<input type="checkbox"/> ① doc#0 closed-loop food security management It's a challenging task of		ensuring	food safety in centralized isolation sites, containment areas and c
15	<input type="checkbox"/> ① doc#0 :ests In order to effectively block the spread of the epidemic and		ensure	the life safety and health of residents in the region, Hangzhou Bir
16	<input type="checkbox"/> ① doc#0 ie city will also strengthen management of travelers to Beijing to		ensure	they are healthy.</s><s>Li Hongzhong, Party secretary of Tianjir
17	<input type="checkbox"/> ① doc#0 w outbreaks can protect most regions of China against the virus,		ensure	people live normal lives and that production can continue.</s><
18	<input type="checkbox"/> ① doc#0) infections.</s><s>Liang said, "Currently, we are not capable of		ensuring	there will be no more new domestically transmitted infections, bu
19	<input type="checkbox"/> ① doc#0 ose contacts, deliver treatment, mobilize local communities, and		ensure	normal transportation and livelihoods.</s><s>"It is not a single
20	<input type="checkbox"/> ① doc#0 re stranded in the area.</s><s>To help them return home while		ensuring	their health and safety, the authorities drew up plans for rail pass

Figure 4. Concordances of the lemma *ensure*

b) words boosting people's morale to defeat the epidemic together, such as *strengthen*, *effective*, *anti-epidemic*, *quickly*, *fully*, and *completely*. This type of news suggested that strong efforts had been taken to contain the outbreak and that we had achieved some progress, strengthening people's confidence in our ability to combat the disease.

c) words arousing people's compassion, kindness, and sense of community, such as *help* and *volunteer*. The concordances of *volunteer* in Figure 5 show that the COVID-19 news on IZ has honored the contributions made by people from all walks of life such as doctors, police, community staff, volunteers, etc., demonstrating how people were united together to overcome the difficulties and the compassion and kindness people shared during the epidemic and thereby awakening the citizens' sense of the united community, which was articulately expressed in the following extract:

"An MV called 'This is Love in Zhejiang' expressing love paid tribute to all the frontline workers, such as doctors, police, volunteers, and so on. Believe in Hangzhou speed, believe in love in Zhejiang!" ("Music video shows the Hangzhou speed and love amid the COVID-19 Pandemic", *In Zhejiang*, 4 February 2022)

	Details	Left context	KWIC	Right context
1	<input type="checkbox"/>	doc#0 trying to create good conditions," he said.	</s><s>For the cats, volunteers used aromatherapy in each container that secreted a hormone t	
2	<input type="checkbox"/>	doc#0 dication was added to their food to stimulate appetite, and the volunteers also gave the pets snacks, took them to the lawn and used toys		
3	<input type="checkbox"/>	doc#0 them to the lawn and used toys to interact with them.	</s><s> Volunteers registered the name, age, breed, living and eating habits of each	
4	<input type="checkbox"/>	doc#0 each pet every day and sent the footage to owners.	</s><s>The volunteers also ensured that the pets were disinfected and dewormed bef	
5	<input type="checkbox"/>	doc#0 their quarantine, and the experience was also rewarding for the volunteers .	</s><s>Kong summarized his team's work in a document and	
6	<input type="checkbox"/>	doc#0 fety of everyone taking part at Beijing 2022 - athletes, staff and volunteers ,	" Georgina Harland, an Olympic medalist and Chef de Mission 1	
7	<input type="checkbox"/>	doc#0 ided with a deep bow.	</s><s>"I felt a warm welcome from the volunteers and my Chinese fans.	</s><s>Performing in that atmosphere m
8	<input type="checkbox"/>	doc#0 pression -- everything is so organized.	</s><s>"All the Chinese volunteers are so considerate, so helpful and so willing to go out of their w	
9	<input type="checkbox"/>	doc#0 tary service organizations had organized and mobilized 353300 volunteers ,	participated in 76800 post services, and volunteered for 2.212 i	
10	<input type="checkbox"/>	doc#0 Hangzhou Municipal Youth League Committee to widely recruit volunteers for the first time, and formulated the "six warm-hearted" measu		
11	<input type="checkbox"/>	doc#0 es to care and encourage front-line epidemic prevention young volunteers during the Spring Festival holiday. 25.	</s><s>Baise implement:	
12	<input type="checkbox"/>	doc#0 rvices as much as possible.	</s><s>Essential workers, including volunteers , medical workers, and delivery workers, are allowed to travel cit	
13	<input type="checkbox"/>	doc#0 aic acid testing campaign on Feb 7. 26.	</s><s>College student volunteers help epidemic prevention consulting services in Longyou county	
14	<input type="checkbox"/>	doc#0 ed 30 returned college students in the whole county to join the volunteer team of epidemic prevention and control.	</s><s>These college	
15	<input type="checkbox"/>	doc#0 am of epidemic prevention and control.	</s><s>These college volunteers were divided into two groups every day.	</s><s>They mainly pr
16	<input type="checkbox"/>	doc#0 paid tribute to all the Frontline workers, such as doctors, police, volunteers and so on.	</s><s>Believe in Hangzhou speed, believe in love ir	
17	<input type="checkbox"/>	doc#0 lacks," said Ma, 40, in a video.	</s><s>Community workers and volunteers have devoted themselves to sending free groceries to residents	
18	<input type="checkbox"/>	doc#0 uted and delivered to each household by community staff and volunteers .	</s><s>A volunteer arranges packed vegetables in Yanta Distr	
19	<input type="checkbox"/>	doc#0 each household by community staff and volunteers.	</s><s>A volunteer arranges packed vegetables in Yanta District of Xi'an, capital of i	
20	<input type="checkbox"/>	doc#0 across the city, with over 100,000 medics, community staff and volunteers relaying on the sites to safeguard the city.	</s><s>"We have to	

Figure 5. Concordances of the lemma *volunteer*

4.3 Style

From a rhetorical perspective, the style of news discourse is shaped based on its purpose, audience, and shared beliefs and values in a culture, as was stated in Section 2. First, in accordance with the above-mentioned rhetorical purposes for news reporting, the COVID-19 news on IZ adopted a positive discourse mode when reporting the epidemic, creating positive, cooperative, and harmonious images of society and people in all aspects. The positive aspects of epidemic prevention were highlighted, such as the coverage of the effective measures taken to curb the virus, the contributions from different social groups, and the kindness shared during difficult times. At the same time, positive words were employed to describe epidemic prevention, such as *effective*, *quickly*, *completely*, *fully*, etc.

Second, as the official media, the style of news on IZ primarily conforms to the conventions of Chinese journalism, in which news stories are reported in an objective and neutral manner, focusing on the groups and reflecting social responsibilities (Zhang et al., 2022). All these elements can be found in the COVID-19 news on IZ. According to the analysis of rhetorical strategies, *logos* and *ethos* played a more dominant place in the news, whereas emotion-laden words were used less frequently. The government and social groups were primarily covered while reporting on the measures and efforts are taken to combat the disease. Individual narratives were not emphasized. When reporting on the outbreak of the epidemic, the news focused on describing the epidemic itself, using more impartial and objective words such as *cases*, *COVID-19*, *epidemic*, *omicron*, and *disease*. This was particularly evident when the news reported the current status of the epidemic. Only factual information

such as the number of cases, time, and cities involved was included, as in the following extract:

“From 0:00 to 24:00 on May 5, 24 new local positive cases were reported in 11 cities in Zhejiang province, among which 23 cases were detected in centralized isolation sites and 1 case was detected in home isolation. Control measures have been implemented for all cases. Eleven cities reported 24 new asymptomatic cases (6 in Ningbo, 13 in Jiaxing, 1 in Jinhua, 3 in Taizhou, and 1 in Lishui)” (“Zhejiang reports 24 new local positive cases on May 5”, *In Zhejiang*, 6 May 2022).

Third, as the official website of Zhejiang, the content and style of the COVID-19 news on IZ were characteristic of Chinese customs and local dimensions. However, as an important channel of international communication in Zhejiang, the audience of the website is not only limited to local residents but also includes foreign friends and potential partners. Since most of the news on IZ was translated from Chinese versions, which was noted in its original source, it is noticeable that the layout, language, and reporting style of the news cater more to the needs and tastes of domestic readers. For the foreign audience, especially the Western audience, who are accustomed to stimulating language, powerful scenes, and individual narratives (Ibid), the lengthy titles, unfamiliar syntactic structures, and a seemingly more authoritative tone derived from the translation sound less attractive to them. Even though photos were inserted in the news, they served more to illustrate than to engage the audience. These are the limitations of the English news on IZ.

5. Conclusion

The results reveal that since its establishment, IZ has provided timely and transparent news to inform the public about COVID-19. The analysis of the corpus shows that IZ focused on the delivery of information about the pandemic itself and prevention measures, conveying the determination and the spirit of the Zhejiang people to overcome the difficulties together, which reflected the media's social responsibility and functions to the public. The news employed rhetorical strategies, either consciously or unconsciously, to appeal to its audience while yet following the conventional pattern of Chinese journalism. Thus, the style of COVID-19 news on IZ was more adapted to the taste of Chinese readers. However, as an English official website, IZ also takes on a role in international communication. In this regard, more adaptations in reporting style and patterns should be made to appeal to a broader range of foreign audiences. In fact, since the outbreak of the epidemic, both the government and the civilian groups in Zhejiang Province have been disseminating knowledge and information about the epidemic through various channels and formats, with positive outcomes (Zhu & Liang, 2021). All of these can be used as rhetorical resources to appeal to a wider variety of international audiences and boost the effectiveness of international communication for future works.

The COVID-19 news on IZ was a rhetorical construction that responded to the COVID situation in Zhejiang province and China with its intended aims. As the study shows, rhetoric is essential to the construction of discourse at every stage, from the invention of the topic to the use of discursive strategies and the development of style. The rhetorical analysis of the COVID-19 news sheds light on how rhetoric works together with motivations in news discourse to affect the audience's reception of the complicated messages of public health events, raising the readers' awareness to interpret news discourse critically from a rhetorical perspective. Meanwhile, by demonstrating that news discourse is a rhetorical construction, this study strengthens the disciplinary link between rhetoric and news communication, providing implications for new media, especially Chinese media, to approach the audience rhetorically to enhance the persuasiveness of the new reports and a new framework for the study of the news of public health crises. On the other hand, the collection of COVID-19 news discourse on IZ is currently limited due to the recent establishment of the IZ website in 2021 and the fact that COVID-19 is still ongoing. Future studies are therefore recommended to use a longer timeline and a larger corpus to conduct more thorough and in-depth research.

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Appendix A

Lists of High-Frequency Words from Corpus of In Zhejiang

No. 1 Top 50 Frequent Nouns

Rank	Item	Frequency	Rank	Item	Frequency
1	case	382	26	infection	52
2	COVID-19	218	27	outbreak	51
3	control	150	28	quarantine	50
4	china	141	29	number	48
5	city	136	30	beijing	48
6	zhejiang	132	31	commission	45
7	people	119	32	pandemic	45
8	prevention	112	33	disease	45
9	hangzhou	111	34	day	45
10	health	106	35	year	41
11	province	91	36	spread	41
12	district	82	37	contact	40
13	testing	82	38	policy	40
14	measure	80	39	community	40

15	[number]	76	40	kong	39
16	test	70	41	hong	37
17	xi'an	68	42	center	37
18	epidemic	66	43	resident	37
19	virus	63	44	country	36
20	acid	60	45	authority	34
21	area	60	46	university	33
22	omicron	58	47	result	33
23	hospital	57	48	monday	33
24	government	54	49	shaoxing	32
25	time	53	50	national	31

No. 2 Top 50 Frequent Verbs

Rank	Item	Frequency	Rank	Item	Frequency
1	say	233	26	hold	18
2	report	136	27	spread	18
3	confirm	90	28	implement	17
4	import	72	29	carry	17
5	take	50	30	bring	17
6	accord	42	31	check	17
7	include	36	32	leave	16
8	record	32	33	receive	16
9	test	30	34	launch	16
10	provide	29	35	require	16
11	close	29	36	believe	16
12	make	29	37	prevent	15
13	add	27	38	know	15
14	ensure	27	39	give	15
15	show	25	40	transfer	15
16	start	24	41	control	15
17	work	22	42	contain	14
18	transmit	21	43	send	14
19	find	21	44	strengthen	14
20	help	20	45	detect	14
21	put	19	46	follow	14
22	quarantine	19	47	lead	14
23	live	19	48	use	14
24	need	18	49	curb	14
25	hold	18	50	keep	14

No. 3 Top 50 Frequent Adjectives

Rank	Item	Frequency	Rank	Item	Frequency
1	new	126	26	global	18
2	nucleic	123	27	high	18
3	local	73	28	strict	17
4	asymptomatic	63	29	effective	17
5	acid	62	30	further	17
6	more	62	31	national	16
7	medical	53	32	daily	16
8	chinese	52	33	anti-epidemic	15
9	confirmed	50	34	economic	15
10	positive	48	35	closed	15
11	close	40	36	many	15
12	first	38	37	safe	15
13	negative	34	38	recent	15
14	epidemic	34	39	municipal	14
15	pandemic	30	40	current	14
16	last	29	41	low	14
17	provincial	29	42	special	14

18	social	26	43	central	14
19	such	25	44	public	13
20	early	23	45	dynamic	13
21	late	23	46	infectious	12
22	other	21	47	mild	12
23	mass	19	48	international	12
24	overseas	19	49	northwest	12
25	good	18	50	imported	12

No. 4 Top 50 Frequent Adverbs

Rank	Item	Frequency	Rank	Item	Frequency
1	now	32	26	further	6
2	more	29	27	basically	6
3	well	21	28	here	5
4	temporarily	20	29	recently	5
5	still	18	30	south	5
6	highly	17	31	frequently	5
7	locally	17	32	meanwhile	5
8	only	16	33	first	4
9	very	15	34	abroad	4
10	far	12	35	northwest	4
11	really	12	36	rapidly	4
12	however	11	37	respectively	4
13	quickly	11	38	smoothly	4
14	strictly	11	39	moreover	4
15	gradually	10	40	actually	4
16	back	9	41	mutually	4
17	centrally	9	42	instead	4
18	fully	9	43	already	4
19	currently	8	44	globally	3
20	overseas	7	45	safely	3
21	completely	7	46	earlier	3
22	most	7	47	immediately	3
23	especially	7	48	right	3
24	soon	7	49	always	3
25	together	6	50	sometimes	3

Appendix B

Details of the News References

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