

A News Media Representation on Disability and Information Accessibility in China from the Perspective of Critical Discourse Analysis

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Abstract

Based on critical discourse analysis, this paper takes thirty news articles related to disability and information accessibility from three Chinese news media as its research object to explore themes that describe how Chinese news media reflects and constitutes its understanding of disability and information accessibility. By doing this, it intends to reveal the themes of those articles and identify potential prejudices, illusions, and stereotypes that may influence the disability. This paper aims to address the following two questions: 1) What content exists in mainstream Chinese news media concerning disability and information accessibility? 2) What themes do these discourses present regarding disability and information accessibility? The results show that 1) The content of thirty news articles includes introductions, evaluations and advice of apps related to information accessibility, activities promoting information accessibility, audiovisual works with information accessibility, and official policies regarding information accessibility; 2) Five key themes are found in these discourses, which are discourses of problem-solving, criticism, awareness as advocacy, self-congratulations or overly optimistic judgments and a tendency of elderly-oriented over disability. Through the analysis of these themes, this paper concludes with implications to advance the development of information accessibility for disability.

Keywords: disability, information accessibility, critical discourse analysis, news media articles

1. Introduction

With the rapid development of technology, more attention has been paid to information accessibility for people with disabilities. While information accessibility needs more focus compared with accessibility in real life. On the other hand, disability is socially constructed. How media portrays disability and discuss issues of accessibility may dictate how people with disabilities may see themselves. Thus, it is possible to conduct a discourse analysis of articles on information accessibility from mainstream Chinese news media to investigate disability further and advocate for people with disabilities in China.

Disability studies examine the social, political, cultural, and economic factors that define disability. The scholars mainly construct debates around two distinctly different models of understanding disability—the social and medical models of disability. In the social model of disability, disability is a socially constructed concept, which means that it is not solely determined by an individual’s physical or mental condition, but also influenced by the social and cultural context in which they live. (Priestley, Finkelstein, & Davis, 1975)

Information Accessibility is a concept advanced by UNESCO in 2000, which encompasses many issues surrounding the availability, accessibility and affordability of information. In China, the Ministry of Industry and Information Technology (MIIT) and the China Disabled Persons’ Federation issued the “Guiding Opinions on Promoting Information Accessibility” in September 2020, which further advanced the development of information accessibility (Liu, 2021).

MIIT also announced that they would launch a one-year “Internet Application Aging and Accessibility Improvement Special Action” starting from January 2021, focusing on solving the difficulties faced by special groups such as the elderly and disabled when using intelligent technologies such as the Internet and applications. The first batch will prioritize promoting aging and accessibility improvement on 115 websites in 8 categories and 43 apps in 6 categories. It can be seen that information accessibility for people with disabilities in China is a relatively new topic and deserves much attention.

This paper intends to do a discourse analysis of 30 articles on information accessibility from three mainstream Chinese news media, which are People.cn, Xinhua net and ifeng. cn, to further investigate how Chinese news media perceive disability and information accessibility. By categorizing the themes of those articles and identifying potential prejudices, illusions and stereotypes, this article aims to advance the development of information accessibility for disability.

Therefore, the guiding research questions for this project are as follows:

- 1) What content concerning disability and information accessibility exists in mainstream Chinese news media?
- 2) What themes do these discourses present regarding disability and information accessibility?

2. Literature Review

2.1 Previous Studies on Critical Discourse Analysis

Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) has been conducted by various scholars, shedding light on its significance and applications. Norman Fairclough (1992), a prominent figure in CDA, emphasizes the pivotal role of discourse in shaping power relations and driving social change. Teun A. van Dijk (1993) explores the intricate connection between discourse and power, examining how language functions as a social control and dominance tool. Ruth Wodak and Michael Meyer (2009) provide an extensive overview of CDA's history, agenda, theory, and methodology, highlighting its interdisciplinary nature and wide-ranging application in media studies and politics. Leeuwen (2008) argues that discourse plays a transformative role in constructing and challenging social realities, focusing on various discursive strategies that can challenge dominant ideologies. Norman Fairclough's book "Analyzing Discourse: Textual Analysis for Social Research" (2003) provides a comprehensive guide to CDA theory and methodology, emphasizing the social and political implications of the approach. Ji and Chen (2007) propose Critical Metaphor Analysis, a new CDA method. It comprehensively applies corpus analysis, pragmatics and cognitive linguistics to analyze metaphor's linguistic, pragmatic and mental characteristics, and reveals discourse groups' beliefs, attitudes and feelings.

CDA has been applied to reveal and criticize the hidden power relationships in discourses from different areas. Dong (2021) collected gender topics and comments on trending on Weibo in 2020 as text. He uses CDA to analyze the public presentation of female topics online and reveal the unequal gender power relationship behind online gender discourse. Xin (2000) argues that news discourse is a social practice shaped by underlying power relations and ideologies. He also contends that critical analysis of news discourse can reveal how these power relations and ideologies shape news reporting and can help to challenge dominant cultural narratives and power relations. In this aspect, Huang (2021) takes the reports on China during the COVID-19 in 2020 by FOX News and CNN as the sample text and analyzes how US mainstream media distorted the image of China and the discourse bias in it from three levels of text, discourse practice and social practice.

2.2 Previous Studies on Disability

Previous studies on disability have been conducted by various scholars, offering valuable insights and engaging in scholarly conversations. Oliver (1990) pioneered the social model of disability, arguing that disability is not solely an individual medical condition but rather a result of societal barriers and discrimination. However, Thomas (1999) critiques the social model, emphasizing the significance of the personal experience of impairment and the limitations of solely focusing on societal factors. He proposes a relational model that acknowledges both social and individual aspects of disability.

Similarly, Shakespeare (2006) challenges the social model's exclusive focus on societal barriers, suggesting a more inclusive approach that recognizes the complex interplay between social, cultural, and individual factors. Furthermore, Davis (2013) emphasizes the intersectional nature of disability, highlighting how it intersects with other social categories such as gender, race, and class, shaping unique experiences of oppression and marginalization. These scholars contribute to an ongoing conversation within disability studies, offering different perspectives and critiques while expanding our understanding of disability and its social implications.

In disability studies, scholars such as Grue and Jan (2011) highlight the significance of discourse analysis in unraveling the construction of disability within language. They argue that an examination of discourse can shed light on how disability is linguistically constructed and how these constructions contribute to cultural assumptions and attitudes toward disability. Meekosha and Shuttleworth (2009) delve into critical disability studies to explore the significance and distinctiveness of the "critical" approach within this discipline. The authors critically examine the theoretical underpinnings and methodologies employed in critical disability studies, focusing on the role of discourse analysis. They scrutinize how discourses of disability shape power dynamics, social inclusion, and exclusion, ultimately questioning how critical disability studies challenge and

transform these dominant discourses.

2.3 Previous Studies on Information Accessibility

Information Accessibility is a concept advanced by UNESCO in 2000, which encompasses many issues surrounding the availability, accessibility and affordability of information, such as multilingualism, metadata, interoperability, open-source software, open content, creative commons licenses and addressing the unique needs of people with disabilities.

In China, the Ministry of Industry and Information Technology and China Disabled Persons' Federation issued the "Guiding Opinions on Promoting Information Accessibility" in September 2020, which further clarified the concept of information accessibility: information accessibility refers to the use of information technology to compensate for differences in physical function, environment, etc., so that anyone (whether healthy or disabled, whether young or elderly) can have equal, convenient, and safe access to information (Liu, 2021).

Information accessibility has recently been the focus of numerous studies, with scholars offering diverse perspectives. Guo, Li and Zhang (2020) apply Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs Theory to comb the evolution of information accessibility research. They find that the current research frame of information accessibility has been preliminarily constructed, and the related research tends to be diversified. In contrast, Li and Xiong (2019) argue that there is still a gap between China's level of information accessibility and developed countries worldwide.

2.4 Summary

In conclusion, outstanding achievements in CDA studies have been made in the past thirty years. Numerous scholars at home and abroad have contributed significantly to revealing and criticizing the hidden power relationships using CDA. As for the research on disability and information accessibility, scholars have highlighted the significance of discourse analysis in unraveling the construction of disability within the language in society. However, even though a large number of studies on disability from various aspects have been done in recent years, little attention has been paid to information accessibility and disability under the guidance of CDA in China.

Therefore, this study can provide a new perspective for the study of disability and information accessibility by applying CDA to reveal how media influence people's understanding of disability and further investigate challenges people with disabilities face regarding information accessibility.

3. Methodology

This paper applies critical discourse analysis to examine how media perceive and understand disability and information accessibility. Critical discourse analysis studies texts and their production, distribution, and consumption, particularly concerning the relationship between social practices, power relations, and societal hegemonic projects (Fairclough, 1992). This method is particularly suitable for investigating the representations and narratives surrounding disability and information accessibility in the selected news media.

Three mainstream Chinese news media sources, namely People.cn, Xinhua Net, and ifeng.cn, were chosen for this analysis. These news media sources are selected based on their reputation, reach, and influence. People.cn, Xinhua Net, and ifeng.cn represent authoritative and widely accessed news platforms that have the potential to shape public perception of disability and information accessibility in China. Analyzing these articles provides valuable insights into the prevailing discourses, potential biases, and the portrayal of challenges and solutions related to disability and information accessibility in China.

A systematic search process was employed to gather relevant articles for analysis. The three news media websites were searched using the key phrase "information accessibility" from 2019 to 2023. This selection period allows for a comprehensive review of recent articles. It is important to note that articles earlier than 2019 were not accessible due to limited availability on the websites.

This paper chooses a grounded theory approach to analyze data. The grounded theory approach is a qualitative research method that generates conceptualizations of emergent social patterns in research data, emphasizing it as a developmental tool for researchers (Glaser, 2002). The reason for applying grounded theory is that it allows for categorizing discourses, discussing themes derived from the discourses, and proposing viewpoints.

Through this approach, the study examines the articles to determine their main category and identify the primary news item being conveyed. Subsequently, the articles were categorized into temporary groups whenever they shared similar or identical primary news items. The temporary groups were consolidated into broader theoretical categories as the categorization process unfolded. In cases where the existing categories no longer adequately captured the specific content of an article, new categories were introduced. This iterative process of refining the

theoretical categories continued until all articles were appropriately classified. Then themes and meanings that emerge within these categories are analyzed. The paper presents the findings and analysis in the subsequent two sections.

4. Categories of the Articles

To answer the first research question, the 30 articles were categorized into six groups encompassing their overall content and main ideas. Table 1 provides a comprehensive description of the six categories and the corresponding number of articles assigned to each category.

Table 1. Categories of the 30 Articles about Information Accessibility

Category	Number
Introductions and promotions of Apps with information accessibility	9
Introductions of Audiovisual works with information accessibility	6
Evaluations of Apps with information accessibility	4
Advice for Apps with information accessibility	4
Activities which promote information accessibility	4
Introductions of official policies about information accessibility	3

Table 1 shows that the largest category is “Introductions and promotions of Apps with information accessibility” with nine articles. The second largest category is “Introductions of Audiovisual works with information accessibility,” with six articles. The remaining categories delve into evaluating apps, providing advice for app development, discussing activities that promote information accessibility, and examining official policies related to information accessibility. Each category will be more specifically analyzed in the following parts.

4.1 Introductions and Promotions of Apps with Information Accessibility

The category “Introductions and Promotions of Apps with Information Accessibility” focuses on articles introducing and promoting various apps designed to enhance information accessibility for individuals with disabilities.

Table 2. Articles in the category “Introductions and Promotions of Apps with information accessibility”

	Title	Date
1	Being a “blind cane” for visually impaired individuals, WeBank App 4.0 has been upgraded to be accessible and heartwarming	2019.12.9
2	Guangzhou Releases Accessible Map APP, Convenient for Blind and Wheelchair People to Travel	2019.12.12
3	The first batch of cloud flash payment apps have passed the aging and accessibility assessment of the Ministry of Industry and Information Technology	2022.1.30
4	The digital Renminbi app improves accessibility services and can also be used by visually impaired users	2022.3.10
5	New developments! Digital Renminbi App barrier-free payment is coming, good news for visually impaired users	2022.3.10
6	“A vibration” means that there is an order. Technology helps hearing impaired Barista “receive orders without obstacles”	2022.11.19
7	44 websites and mobile apps were selected as the first batch of excellent cases of Internet application adaptation and accessibility improvement	2023.4.3
8	The first one in this industry! China Life Insurance APP is the first to pass the Ministry of Industry and Information Technology’s accessibility and aging assessment	2023.4.17
9	Soul App promotes accessible adaptation, and love and warmth are worth seeing by more people	2023.5.26

The articles in this category focus on innovations catering to the needs of individuals with hearing or visual impairment. Additionally, the articles shed light on the advancements in payment technology and accessibility features in the article “The first batch of cloud flash payment apps have passed the aging and accessibility assessment of the Ministry of Industry and Information Technology”.

By analyzing the dates of the nine articles in this category, it becomes evident that promoting app functions geared toward information accessibility has consistently remained a focal point. The articles span a period from December 2019 to May 2023. The consistent coverage of introductions and promotions of apps with information accessibility over this period suggests an ongoing commitment to addressing the needs of individuals with disabilities.

4.2 Introductions of Audiovisual Works with Information Accessibility

The category “Introductions of Audiovisual Works with Information Accessibility” presents articles introducing and highlighting audiovisual works created to enhance information accessibility for individuals with disabilities.

Table 3. Articles in the category “Introductions of Audiovisual Works with information accessibility”

	Title	Date
1	Youku Accessible Theater Launches Identity Authentication for Visually Impaired People: 17 million Visually Impaired People Can View Movies for Free Online	2022.12.3
2	Beware of copyright risks in accessible movies	2022.12.27
3	The first batch of “accessible” audio works in Tianjin were launched	2023.4.19
4	“Hear” the Light, “Guangming Cinema” produces over 100 accessible movies every year	2023.5.21
5	The accessible version of the TV drama “Mountain and Sea Love” premiered in Beijing	2023.5.23
6	Report Literature “The Story of Guangming Cinema”: Leaving Vivid Footnotes for China’s Information Accessibility Cause	2023.6.8

For instance, one article introduces an initiative by Youku Accessible Theater that provides identity authentication for visually impaired individuals. This authentication allows an estimated 17 million visually impaired people in China to enjoy movies online free of charge, ensuring inclusivity and access to audiovisual content. However, accessibility in the audiovisual realm also brings forth copyright considerations. One article draws attention to the potential risks and challenges related to copyright when making movies accessible to individuals with disabilities.

By analyzing the dates of the six articles in this category, it becomes evident that audiovisual works with information accessibility began to receive significant attention in the past six months, from December 2022 to June 2023. The fact that all six articles are concentrated within a relatively short period suggests that exploring and promoting audiovisual works with information accessibility is a relatively new and emerging topic.

4.3 Evaluations of Apps with Information Accessibility

The category “Evaluations of Apps with Information Accessibility” focuses on articles that provide assessments and evaluations of various apps regarding their accessibility features for individuals with disabilities.

Table 4. Articles in the category “Introductions of Audiovisual Works with information accessibility”

	Title	Date
1	Seven major brand phones+31 accessible apps rated horizontally “Seeing Action” Phoenix Network Technology year-end grand presentation	2018.12.21
2	Horizontal review of mainstream short video apps’ accessibility features Huangjia review	2019.9.2
3	51 apps have been evaluated for aging and accessibility: large font, large icon, and smoother	2022.1.30
4	China Academy of Information and Communications Technology: The pass rate of random inspection and re-inspection for mobile app aging and barrier-free transformation reaches 87%	2023.3.13

Apart from articles presenting the evaluation of phones and apps for people with disabilities, one article highlights the evaluation efforts of the China Academy of Information and Communications Technology.

Analyzing the dates of the four articles in this category shows that evaluations specifically focused on apps with information accessibility have been relatively limited. Although the articles in this category span from December 2018 to March 2023, indicating a relatively sparse coverage of app evaluations in this context, only four articles within this category suggest that there has been comparatively less emphasis on conducting assessments of apps with information accessibility. This may indicate a gap in research or a lesser focus on assessing the effectiveness and usability of these apps.

4.4 Advice for Apps with Information Accessibility

The category of “Advice for Apps with Information Accessibility” comprises articles that provide valuable suggestions and recommendations for enhancing the accessibility of apps.

Table 5. Articles in the category “Advice for Apps with information accessibility”

	Title	Date
1	Financial App Accessibility Research Report Released, Proposing 5 Major Development Suggestions	2020.11.27
2	The bank card testing center found two major issues in the accessibility of financial APP information through the evaluation	2020.12.2
3	App’s elderly-oriented is superficial, and Zheng Jie, as one representative, suggests accelerating the construction of information accessibility	2022.3.10
4	Smart Life with Barriers-free and Temperatures (Listening, Focusing on Information, and Barrier-free Construction)	2023.5.20

Except for articles providing suggestions for the advancement of apps’ accessibility, one article emphasizes the need to prioritize the construction of information accessibility within apps targeted at older people, and another article emphasizes the significance of barrier-free construction, illustrating the importance of creating inclusive digital environments through app design and development.

By analyzing the dates of the four articles in this category, it becomes apparent that the provision of advice on improving the accessibility of apps has been relatively limited. Although the articles in this category span from February 17, 2020, to May 20, 2023, indicating a comparatively sparse coverage of advice and recommendations, there are only four articles within this category. The limited number of articles and their distribution across this period indicates a lack of frequent discussions and recommendations.

4.5 Activities which Promote Information Accessibility

The category of “Activities which Promote Information Accessibility” encompasses articles that highlight various initiatives and events aimed at promoting the accessibility of information.

Table 6. Articles in the category “Activities which promote information accessibility”

	Title	Date
1	Global Accessibility Promotion Day, Information Accessibility Product Alliance, Joint Brand Advocacy to Assist Accessibility	2019.5.17
2	Financial Technology for the Good, WeBank Holds App Accessibility Achievement Conference	2020.10.15
3	Everyone shares this day; technology opens up barriers-free. Huawei’s barrier-free smart experience	2020.12.4
4	OPPO’s participation in the Accessibility Forum will promote the construction of accessibility industry standards	2021.7.30

Except for articles on companies highlighting their commitment or effort to promote app accessibility through a dedicated conference, one article discusses the Global Accessibility Promotion Day, which brings together various brands and stakeholders to advocate for accessibility and collaborate in developing products that facilitate information accessibility.

By analyzing the dates of the four articles in this category, it becomes evident that there has been a decreasing focus on introducing such activities in recent years. The articles within this category span from May 17, 2019, to July 30, 2021, with the last article being published in 2021. This period reveals that the discussion surrounding activities promoting information accessibility may have been more prevalent earlier.

4.6 Introductions of Official Policies About Information Accessibility

The category of “Introductions of Official Policies about Information Accessibility” comprises articles that highlight various official policies and initiatives aimed at promoting information accessibility.

Table 7. Articles in the category “Introductions of official policies about information accessibility”

	Title	Date
1	Beijing accelerates the aging and barrier-free transformation of website apps and prohibits the setting of inductive buttons on apps	2021.11.19
2	National Copyright Administration: Providing works to people with reading disabilities in an accessible manner	2022.8.10
3	Guided by the rule of law, making life “accessible”	2022.11.3

One article discusses Beijing’s efforts to enhance the accessibility of website apps by prioritizing aging and barrier-free transformations. The article emphasizes the prohibition of inductive buttons on apps as part of the

policy. Another article highlights the National Copyright Administration's commitment to facilitating access to works for individuals with reading disabilities. The policy aims to promote accessibility by ensuring that people with disabilities have equal opportunities to access and benefit from various forms of literary and artistic works.

By analyzing the dates of the three articles in this category, it becomes evident that the topic of official policies about information accessibility is still emerging and gaining attention. However, only three articles have introduced it. As a relatively new topic, the attention given to official policies in this area reflects a heightened awareness of the significance of information accessibility and its potential impact on the lives of individuals with disabilities.

5. Discussion and Analysis of Themes

To answer the second research question regarding the discourses about disability and information accessibility in mainstream Chinese news media, it is crucial to analyze themes and meanings that emerge within these categories. By examining the articles within each category, it can be identified that there exist five themes: discourses of problem solving, criticism, awareness as advocacy, self-congratulations or overly optimistic judgments and a tendency of elderly-oriented over disability respectively.

5.1 Discourses of Problem Solving

The theme of problem-solving discourses is prevalent within the categories of "Evaluations of apps with information Accessibility" and "Advice for apps with information Accessibility." These articles aim to address the challenges and barriers related to information accessibility and offer potential solutions to improve the accessibility of apps for individuals with disabilities.

In the category of "Evaluations of apps with information Accessibility", these evaluations critically examine the strengths and weaknesses of the apps in terms of their accessibility features, user-friendliness, and overall performance. For instance, one article evaluates the functions and accessibility features of seven major brand phones. The evaluation focuses on specific criteria to determine the level of accessibility the phones offer. By examining these aspects, the article aims to assess the overall accessibility and user-friendliness of phones for individuals with disabilities. The evaluation is valuable for individuals seeking phones with enhanced accessibility features and can help guide their decision-making process.

On the other hand, the category of "Advice for Apps with Information Accessibility" focuses on providing guidance and recommendations for developers and designers in creating and improving apps with better information accessibility features. For instance, one article finds two significant issues of a financial app regarding information accessibility and proposes five suggestions. The suggestions proposed in these articles serve as a roadmap for developers and designers, providing them with practical recommendations to enhance the information accessibility of their apps. By following these suggestions, stakeholders can ensure that their apps are inclusive and provide equal access to individuals with disabilities.

The problem-solving discourses within these categories play a crucial role in addressing the gaps and challenges in information accessibility. By evaluating and providing advice on apps, these articles contribute to the ongoing efforts to make technology more inclusive and accessible for individuals with disabilities. They provide valuable insights and recommendations for app developers to create and improve apps that cater to the diverse needs of people with disabilities. Additionally, these discourses help raise awareness about the importance of information accessibility and encourage a proactive approach towards solving accessibility issues.

5.2 Discourses of Criticism

The discourses of criticism emerge within the categories of "Introductions of audiovisual works with information Accessibility" and "Advice for apps with information Accessibility." These articles present contrasting opinions and perspectives on audiovisual works and apps with information accessibility. Through critical analysis and evaluation, these discourses aim to shed light on the field's limitations, risks, and areas for improvement.

In the category of "Introductions of audiovisual works with information Accessibility," one article highlights the potential copyright risks associated with making audiovisual works accessible. It raises concerns about the unauthorized use of copyrighted materials and the need to ensure legal compliance when providing accessibility features for movies. By examining these risks, the article calls for caution and emphasizes the importance of balancing accessibility and copyright protection.

On the other hand, in the category of "Advice for apps with information Accessibility," one article presents a different perspective. This article criticizes the superficial approach taken by some apps to cater to the elderly population. It argues that the current efforts to create apps with information accessibility for older people lack

depth and fail to address their specific needs adequately.

These two articles exemplify the discourses of criticism within their respective categories. They offer contrasting opinions on the effectiveness, legal compliance, and depth of accessibility measures. By critically analyzing the existing practices, these discourses provide valuable insights into the shortcomings and areas for improvement in information accessibility.

The benefits of the discourse of criticism are manifold. Firstly, it helps identify and highlight the limitations and challenges in providing information accessibility in audiovisual works and apps. By acknowledging these shortcomings, stakeholders can work towards addressing the identified issues and finding innovative solutions. Secondly, this discourse fosters a culture of continuous improvement by encouraging constructive criticism and evaluation. It prompts app developers, content creators, and policymakers to re-evaluate their approaches and make necessary changes to enhance accessibility. Thirdly, these critical discourses create awareness among the broader community about the importance of information accessibility and the need for more comprehensive and inclusive practices.

5.3 Discourses of Awareness as Advocacy

The discourses of awareness as advocacy are evident within the categories of “Activities which promote information Accessibility” and “Introductions of official policies about information Accessibility.” These articles aim to raise awareness about information accessibility, advocate for its importance, and encourage adopting inclusive practices.

In the category of “Activities which promote information Accessibility,” one article highlights the advocacy efforts undertaken by OPPO in promoting accessibility industry standards. This article emphasizes the role of OPPO’s participation in the Accessibility Forum in driving the development and implementation of accessibility standards. By engaging in such activities, OPPO contributes to creating a more inclusive digital environment and advocates for adopting accessibility measures across the industry.

On the other hand, in the category of “Introductions of official policies about information Accessibility,” one article highlights the initiatives taken by the National Copyright Administration to ensure that works are provided in an accessible manner for individuals with reading disabilities. This government appeal emphasizes the importance of accessibility and advocates for equal access to information and cultural resources for all individuals, regardless of their disabilities.

These two articles represent the discourses of awareness as advocacy within their respective categories. They aim to raise awareness about information accessibility, promote the adoption of inclusive practices, and advocate for equal access to information and cultural resources.

The discourse of awareness as advocacy brings several benefits. Firstly, it helps in raising public awareness about the importance of information accessibility. By highlighting the efforts of organizations like OPPO and government entities like the National Copyright Administration, these discourses educate the public about the significance of inclusive practices and their impact on individuals with disabilities. Secondly, they encourage collaboration and cooperation among stakeholders, such as companies, government bodies, and advocacy groups, to work towards creating inclusive digital environments and implementing accessibility standards. Thirdly, these discourses promote the development of policies and regulations that prioritize accessibility, leading to the establishment of inclusive practices as a standard across various industries.

5.4 Discourses of Self-Congratulations or Overly Optimistic Judgements

The discourses of self-congratulations or overly optimistic judgments refer to a phenomenon where individuals or organizations excessively praise their achievements or exhibit an unwarranted level of optimism regarding the progress made in information accessibility. These discourses highlight successes and positive developments while downplaying or overlooking existing challenges and limitations.

These themes are mainly observed within the “Introduction and Promotions of Apps with Information Accessibility”. In this category, articles primarily focus on introducing and promoting apps that purportedly offer information accessibility features. While these articles aim to raise awareness about the availability of such apps and their potential benefits for individuals with disabilities, they can sometimes tend to self-congratulatory or overly optimistic judgments.

Some articles may exaggerate the functions and capabilities of apps regarding information accessibility. They may use language that portrays the apps as revolutionary or groundbreaking, claiming they provide a comprehensive solution to all accessibility challenges. These exaggerated claims can create false expectations

and mislead users, leading to disappointment when the actual performance of the app falls short. Moreover, over-optimistic judgments may exist in these articles, suggesting that information accessibility has been fully achieved and all barriers have been overcome. Such judgments fail to acknowledge the ongoing work required to address the diverse and evolving needs of individuals with disabilities. They can give a false sense of satisfaction and prevent further efforts towards innovation and improvement in information accessibility.

Expressions of self-congratulation in this context may include phrases like “outstanding cases of adaptation and accessibility improvement,” “remarkable achievements,” or “leading the way in information accessibility.” Overly optimistic judgments can be observed through statements such as “significant progress has been made,” “all challenges have been overcome,” or “universal accessibility has been achieved.”

The discourses of self-congratulations or overly optimistic judgments can also be identified in the relatively limited number of articles on advice and evaluations of apps with information accessibility and fewer articles on activities that promote information accessibility in recent years.

The negative impact of these discourses lies in their tendency to create a false sense of accomplishment or progress. By overly emphasizing achievements and downplaying challenges, these discourses can hinder further improvement and mask the existing gaps in information accessibility. They may divert attention and resources from addressing crucial issues and implementing necessary changes. This can lead to complacency and a lack of urgency in making genuine advancements.

Moreover, self-congratulatory or overly optimistic judgments can undermine the experiences and voices of individuals with disabilities. It is essential to acknowledge that the accessibility needs of individuals vary, and there is always room for improvement. By perpetuating a narrative of unwarranted success, these discourses may neglect the diverse challenges faced by individuals with disabilities in accessing information and using digital platforms effectively.

5.5 Discourses of a Tendency of Elderly-Oriented over Disability

The discourses on the tendency of elderly-oriented people to be over disability exist in the “Introduction and Promotions of Apps with Information Accessibility.” Some of the articles often prioritize catering to the needs of older adults, primarily focusing on information accessibility for the elderly population while giving less attention to the specific requirements of individuals with disabilities. This orientation can be problematic as it overlooks the diverse needs and experiences of people with disabilities, resulting in a lack of comprehensive accessibility solutions.

An example of this discourse is in the article “The first one in this industry! China Life Insurance APP is the first to pass the Ministry of Industry and Information Technology’s accessibility and aging assessment.” In such articles, the emphasis is placed on the achievement of passing accessibility assessments that cater to the aging population, rather than explicitly addressing the accessibility needs of individuals with disabilities. This can be reflected in sentences like “Designed with the elderly in mind,” “Catering to the needs of senior citizens,” or “Creating a user-friendly experience for the elderly.” These phrases highlight the elderly-oriented nature of the app and imply that its accessibility features are primarily tailored to the needs of older adults.

The negative impact of this discourse is the potential marginalization and oversight of individuals with disabilities. By predominantly focusing on the elderly population, these articles may inadvertently perpetuate the misconception that accessibility is primarily for older adults, disregarding the unique requirements of individuals with disabilities across different age groups. This can lead to a lack of comprehensive accessibility solutions that adequately address the diverse needs of all users.

Moreover, by overlooking the needs of individuals with disabilities, these articles may reinforce a narrow perspective on accessibility, limiting innovation and progress in creating inclusive digital experiences. It is essential to recognize that accessibility is a multifaceted concept encompassing a wide range of disabilities, including sensory, cognitive, and mobility impairments. Neglecting the specific needs of individuals with disabilities perpetuates the existing barriers and hinders the goal of equal access for all.

6. Conclusion

In conclusion, this paper has examined the social context of disability and information accessibility in China through a discourse analysis of thirty news articles. The study aimed to explore the prevailing discourses surrounding this topic and shed light on the strengths and limitations of current discussions. After categorizing the thirty articles, several themes have been concluded from these articles: problem-solving, criticism, awareness as advocacy, self-congratulations or overly optimistic judgments, and a tendency to be elderly-oriented over disability.

It is worth noting that the themes of self-congratulations or overly optimistic judgments and a tendency to be elderly-oriented over disability carry a negative connotation. They reveal the potential limitations within the current discourse surrounding disability and information accessibility in China. Themes of self-congratulations or overly optimistic judgments tend to exaggerate achievements and overlook ongoing challenges in information accessibility. They may hinder progress by creating a false sense of satisfaction and preventing further efforts towards improvement. Themes of the tendency of elderly-oriented over disability predominantly focus on information accessibility for the elderly population while neglecting the specific needs of individuals with disabilities. This theme highlights the importance of adopting a more inclusive approach that considers the diverse requirements of all users, regardless of age.

In light of these findings, several implications can be put forward to advance the development of disability and information accessibility. First, avoiding self-congratulatory or overly optimistic discourses. This fosters an environment where genuine progress is recognized and celebrated, while persistent challenges are acknowledged and addressed. As a result, efforts towards improving information accessibility become more focused and effective, leading to tangible advancements.

Second, prioritizing inclusivity across diverse demographics ensures that equity and fairness are maintained when allocating resources and attention. By avoiding disproportionate prioritization of the elderly population over individuals with disabilities, equity is upheld in addressing the needs of all segments of society. This balanced perspective fosters a sense of belonging and empowerment among all users, regardless of age or ability.

Third, enhancing the objectivity and criticality of app accessibility evaluations promotes the development of more user-friendly and inclusive digital platforms. By actively engaging with individuals with disabilities in substantive dialogue, developers gain valuable insights into the real-world challenges users face. This collaborative approach not only improves the usability of apps but also fosters a deeper understanding of accessibility issues, driving continuous innovation and improvement.

A limitation of this paper lies in its narrow scope of investigation, focusing solely on the discourse analysis of thirty news articles. As a result, the findings and recommendations presented herein should be viewed as preliminary and exploratory rather than definitive solutions. Furthermore, the suggestions put forth in this paper serve primarily as a call to action, highlighting the importance of further interdisciplinary research and collaboration. It's important to acknowledge that this study mainly adopts a linguistic perspective, which may overlook other relevant factors contributing to the discourse surrounding disability and information accessibility. Therefore, future studies should adopt a more comprehensive approach, integrating insights from various disciplines to offer a more nuanced understanding of the issues at hand.

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