

'Historical' Xi'an: A Corpus Analysis of Adjectives in Online Tourism Promotional Materials

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ABSTRACT

This study examines the significance of highly frequent adjectives in promoting Xi'an, China's online tourism promotional materials. It specifically focuses on the frequency and functional impact of these adjectives. Adopting a corpus-driven approach, a specialised corpus of English-language promotional texts from Xi'an's official tourism website was constructed and analysed using AntConc software. The findings reveal that descriptive adjectives dominate, emphasising Xi'an's geographical, historical, and cultural attributes, while experiential and positive evaluative adjectives enhance the emotional and qualitative aspects of the promotional discourse. These adjectives not only describe Xi'an's historical and cultural significance but also create a sense of appeal and interest among potential tourists. The study further explores collocation patterns to understand how these adjectives function within promotional texts. The results offer insights into how adjectives in Xi'an online tourism promotional materials promote Xi'an and highlight the importance of using high-frequency, positive adjectives in tourism promotional materials.

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Contribution/Originality: This study is one of the very few studies that have investigated the usage of adjectives in tourism promotion, focusing specifically on the adjective 'historical' and its collocates within Xi'an's tourism discourse. It provides novel insights into how adjectives shape visitors' perceptions and contribute to the promotional narrative, offering a fresh perspective on linguistic strategies in tourism marketing.

1. Introduction

Xi'an, a significant cultural and historical city in China, offers unique tourism resources, providing numerous enriching and enlightening experiences. These resources contribute substantially to local and national economies (Zhu, 2017). In the first three quarters of

2023, domestic tourism in China recorded 3.67 billion trips, generating 3.7 trillion yuan in revenue—a year-on-year increase of 75% and 114%, respectively (Song, 2023). This emphasises the vital role of tourism in Xi'an's economy, making it one of the city's pillar industries.

Souhail and Darir (2023) noted that online tourism promotional materials are essential for attracting tourists, serving as cultural bridges, highlighting unique aspects, and fostering an appreciation for local cultures. These materials use authentic and engaging narratives to draw potential travellers (Sulaiman & Wilson, 2019). In the competitive tourism industry, word choice in promotional materials is crucial (Gao et al., 2023; Park & Chang, 2021; Czakon & Czernek-Marszałek, 2020). Descriptive language, particularly adjectives, transforms simple descriptions into appealing narratives that attract travellers. Adjectives convey emotions, qualities, and atmospheres, shaping the perception of destinations (Thu, 2021; Salim & Som, 2018). They help potential tourists visualise their experiences, making destinations more appealing (Thu, 2021; Blazhenkova et al., 2022; Oralkan, 2021).

However, previous research on Xi'an's tourism promotion has focused on various aspects such as cultural tourism image, ecological tourism, urban policies, and tourism supply (Zhang, 2011; Wang & Fang, 2017; Zhu, 2020; Liu & Ma, 2017). Other studies have examined the impact of new media on tourism promotion (Lei & Gao, 2022; Wang & Feng, 2021; Jiao & Hassan, 2022). While these studies have enhanced our understanding of Xi'an's promotional tourism image and new media's effects, there is limited research on the linguistic analysis of promotional materials, particularly adjectives.

Also, few studies have used a corpus linguistic approach to examine promotional materials about Xi'an. For instance, a corpus-based translation study (Bai, 2018) identified specific translation strategies for Xi'an tourism texts at the lexical, syntactical, and textual levels. However, there has been less focus on linguistic markers like adjectives in tourism discourse, especially regarding Xi'an. The importance of adjectives in tourism discourse has been highlighted in various studies (Marzá, 2017; Thu, 2021; Pierini, 2009). For example, Marzá (2017) investigated the use of adjectives describing British hotel websites, in terms of lexical-semantic, grammatical, and pragmatic aspects. Thu (2021) explored the language used in tourism promotion texts from Vietnam's official tourism website and found 'the common adjectives such as *small*, *local*, and *fresh* and adjectives with lower frequencies in the corpus like *warm*, *popular* and *interesting*.' Similarly, an analysis of British 3- and 4-star hotel website texts revealed frequent adjectives that describe accommodation and showed patterns in their usage, for instance, adjectives like *comfortable* and *spacious* are used to convey the quality of hotel accommodations, making them appealing to potential guests (Pierini, 2009).

Given this gap, the present study identifies the most frequent adjectives used in Xi'an online tourism promotional materials and analyses their functions, which aims to answer the following questions:

- i. What are the most frequent adjectives in Xi'an online promotional materials?
- ii. How do these adjectives function to promote Xi'an?

2. Literature Review

Tourism and promotional materials play a significant role in attracting tourists and promoting tourism revenue (Xiao et al., 2020; Chen et al., 2023), thus providing a detailed

explanation of why tourism and promotional materials are important. Researchers like [Chen et al. \(2023\)](#) and [Lei and Gao \(2022\)](#) investigated how promotional materials offer visitors an introduction to their destination and help them make informed decisions while planning their trip. Most related studies stressed that these materials, brochures, posters, social media, websites, and other types of advertisements have a profound effect on promoting the local economy, which can be customised to cater to different audiences while promoting a consistent brand image ([Darmawanto & Wijanarko, 2022](#)).

Furthermore, some studies pointed out the importance of design and quality in tourism and promotional materials, which highlights the importance of consistent branding, engaging visuals, and clear communication ([Song, 2022](#); [Shi, 2021](#); [Law, 2020](#); [Wang & Feng, 2021](#)). Visitors are likelier to be interested in the message if the presentation is attractive and interesting. The recent decades have witnessed that these materials have led to increased tourist traffic and greater revenue streams ([Gilmore, 2007](#); [Shi, 2021](#); [Shin, 2014](#)), which shows how tourism and promotional materials present a vital opportunity for businesses and local communities, with the number of tourists surging from 3.2 million in 2007 to 221 million in 2014. Therefore, it is worthwhile to explore the potential that tourism and promotional materials offer.

Besides, previous linguistic research on tourism advertising materials using corpus linguistics has been rather limited ([D'Egidio, 2015](#); [Kiss, 2018](#); [Franceschi, 2021](#)), and, to the best of the researcher's knowledge, there is no online tourism promotional material research on Xi'an. Thus, through adopting corpus linguistics, it becomes practical for the compilation and analysis of large amounts of Xi'an online tourism promotional materials, specifically in terms of adjective use.

Adjectives are vital in promoting tourism because they shape people's views and feelings about destinations or products. [Elena and Carmen-Liliana \(2017\)](#) explain that adjectives highlight the best features of what is being promoted, helping to persuade and attract potential customers. They are key tools in marketing, influencing how customers perceive and engage with a brand. By describing various aspects of a destination and conveying positive feelings, adjectives help make promotional texts more appealing ([Al-Issawi, 2020](#)). Using high-frequency, positive adjectives (such as *good*, *new*, *vibrant*, *modern* and others) can build empathy and create a genuine connection with the audience ([Simón, 2022](#)).

Previous research has looked into how adjectives function in promotional materials. Studies by [Marzá \(2017\)](#), [Brett et al. \(2021\)](#), [Thu \(2021\)](#), and [Wiliński \(2019\)](#) have shown that adjectives are essential for providing detailed descriptions and enhancing the expressiveness of language. They are particularly important for creating vivid and persuasive messages in tourism, as seen in examples like:

- a) The breathtaking view from the mountaintop left me speechless.
- b) The luxurious beachfront resort offered unparalleled comfort and relaxation.
- c) The bustling city streets were filled with vibrant colours and lively energy.

In English tourism texts, adjectives are mostly positive ([Al-Issawi, 2020](#)). Hotel websites, for example, use positive adjectives to present the destination in an attractive light ([Novozhilova et al., 2019](#)). [Dann \(1999\)](#) notes that tourism language often focuses on positive, glowing terms, avoiding negative adjectives. This preference is supported by [Thu \(2021\)](#) and [Marzá \(2017\)](#), who highlight that negative adjectives are used rarely and have

very low frequency in tourism communication. This trend highlights the importance of choosing adjectives carefully to maintain a positive image.

Different methods for classifying adjectives are discussed in the literature. One approach categorises adjectives based on their core elements and adds semantic details to define their meaning (Heyvaert, 2010). Another approach divides adjectives into objective ones, which describe standardised qualities, and subjective ones that reflect personal evaluations (Marquez, 1998). Furthermore, Huang et al. (2016) explain that adjectives describe attributes such as size, age, colour, and speed, act as modifiers before nouns or as key parts of sentences and do not change for gender, number, or tense, and can be formed from other words. Generally, adjectives can be categorised into three main types: descriptive, experiential, and positive evaluative (Marzá, 2017; Pierini, 2009; Kiss, 2018). Descriptive adjectives provide specific details about nouns, making them clearer and more vivid. They can be used in two ways: attributively, where they come before the noun (e.g., 'red apple'), or predicatively, where they follow a linking verb (e.g., 'The apple is red') (Torto, 2017). Additionally, experiential adjectives capture personal feelings or perceptions, reflecting individual experiences. When used attributively, these adjectives come before the noun and provide a subjective description, as seen in the example '*a refreshing drink*,' where *refreshing* describes the feeling associated with *consuming* the drink. Alternatively, when used predicatively, experiential adjectives follow a linking verb and describe the state or feeling associated with the subject, as illustrated in the sentence '*The drink is refreshing*,' where *refreshing* expresses how the drink makes the speaker feel. Furthermore, positive evaluative adjectives convey approval or praise. They are commonly used in persuasive writing, in the form of an attribute used before a noun (e.g., 'beautiful scenery') or a predicate following a linking verb (e.g., 'The scenery is beautiful'). These three categories of adjectives not only enhance the clarity and expressiveness of written content but also play a crucial role in influencing readers' perceptions and emotions, making them essential tools in crafting engaging and persuasive language, particularly in promotional and descriptive texts (Thu, 2021).

Many studies examine how adjectives are used in promotional materials, including tourism websites and travel journalism. For example, Al-Issawi (2020) focuses on tourism websites from Jordan, Europe, and Asia; Brett et al. (2021) study travel journalism in various languages; and Franceschi (2021) looks at China as a travel destination. These studies as well as Thu's (2021) mainly discover and reveal how adjectives help create compelling narratives and provide a vivid picture of the destinations. However, there is limited research on how adjectives function in Xi'an tourism materials.

In terms of corpus linguistics type studies, there are various approaches to analyse adjectives. Pierini (2009), Marzá (2017), and Thu (2021) adopted a corpus-based approach, while Kiss (2018) and Wiliński (2019) employed a corpus-driven approach. A corpus-based approach, which is a top-down methodology, predefines linguistic categories and hypotheses (McEnery & Wilson, 2001; McEnery & Hardie, 2012), whereas a corpus-driven is a bottom-up approach, allowing linguistic patterns to emerge from the data itself (Sinclair, 1991; Hunston & Francis, 2000). In other words, corpus-based research presumes linguistic categories and hypotheses. When studying adjectives, specific categories such as evaluative and descriptive are established and then validated within the corpus. In this context, researchers like Pierini (2009) and Marzá (2017) conducted corpus-based analyses on the utilisation of adjectives in travel English, particularly on hotel websites. However, in contrast to this corpus-based approach, the corpus-driven approach operates bottom-up. It allows linguistic patterns to emerge

organically from the data rather than being imposed from the outset. Furthermore, this method emphasises the extraction and linguistic analysis of patterns. Consequently, researchers such as [Kiss \(2018\)](#) and [Wiliński \(2019\)](#) employed this approach to explore the patterns of adjective usage and how they mirror language users' attitudes, emotions, or cultural contexts. For the purpose of this study, a corpus-driven approach will be employed to investigate how adjectives are used in Xi'an tourism promotional materials.

3. Research Methods

As mentioned earlier, the methodology employed in this study involves a comprehensive corpus-driven analysis of adjectives in Xi'an online tourism promotional materials. First, a diverse corpus of promotional texts was compiled from one official online source representing Xi'an's tourism landscape, termed 'Corpus Analysis of Adjectives in Xi'an Tourism Promotional Materials' (CAAXT). Subsequently, the data is cleaned by removing irrelevant information, such as advertisements, contact information, and repetitive content. Once the corpus is created, a detailed analysis was conducted to examine the frequency, collocations, and contexts of adjective use, aiming to uncover unique linguistic patterns and features that characterise Xi'an's tourism promotional materials.

To ensure a thorough and systematic examination of the collected data, the study employed a mixed-methods approach combining both quantitative and qualitative analysis. Initially, quantitative techniques were utilised to conduct a frequency analysis of adjectives within the CAAXT corpus. This step involved the use of corpus analysis tools, such as AntConc, to identify the most frequently occurring adjectives and to calculate their normalised frequencies, providing a standardised measure of adjective usage across different text lengths. The quantitative analysis was further enriched by examining the collocational patterns of key adjectives using statistical measures like t-scores and Mutual Information (MI) scores, which helped identify strong lexical associations within the corpus. Following this, a qualitative analysis was carried out through concordance line analysis to explore the contextual usage of adjectives, offering insights into their functional roles in enhancing the persuasive and descriptive quality of the promotional texts. This dual approach allowed for a deeper understanding of how specific adjectives contribute to promote Xi'an.

3.1. Corpus Compilation

In this research, Python was employed to gather English-language promotional materials related to Xi'an from the official tourism website ([Shaanxi Provincial People's Government, 2023](#)). More specifically, certain criteria were applied to ensure that materials represent various aspects of Xi'an tourism, including top experiences, sights, attractions, culture, and travel tips. These texts are publicly available on the internet and saved in a txt. format for further analysis, covering multiple sections and articles from 2017 to 2023, as seen in [Figure 1](#).

Following [Hunston \(2022a\)](#), repeated downloads and redundant information, such as introductions to attractions and transportation, are manually removed for reasons of text duplication. AntConc ([Anthony, 2020](#)) is used as the main tool to extract and analyse the data, focusing on frequently occurring adjectives and their usage patterns. [Table 1](#) presents the corpus description that consists of materials taken from the website. More specifically, articles are taken from five different types of section links on the website, namely Top Experiences, More Sights, Attractions in Xi'an, Culture and Travel Tips. Each

link contains various articles, totalling to 187 articles and 113,564 running number of words.

Figure 1: Articles issued on the website from 2017 to 2023 from Shaanxi Provincial People's Government (2023)

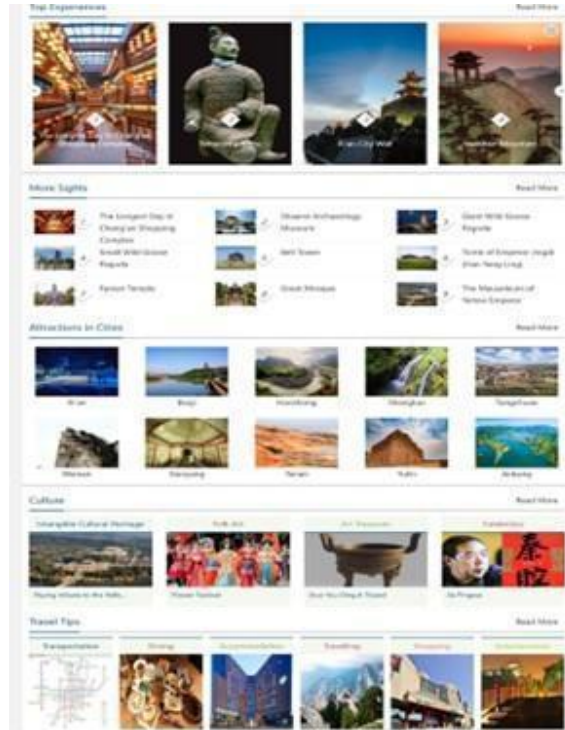


Table 1: Description of Corpus materials

Section Links	Number of Articles	Running Words
Top Experiences	6	3379
More Sights	10	6812
Attractions in Xi'an	62	46594
Culture	23	7977
Travel Tips	86	48802
Total	187	113564

3.1. Data Analysis

First, the new corpus named CAAXT is loaded onto AntConc. Once the corpus is loaded, the 'Wordlist' tab is accessed to generate word lists. By clicking 'Start,' AntConc analyses the corpus and produces a list of all running words along with their frequencies. Adjectives are then sorted from the list and manually checked using the Oxford Advanced Learner's English-Chinese Dictionary (Hornby, 1997) for reference. It is important to note that adjectives in comparative and superlative forms are treated independently of their base forms to allow for a detailed examination of morphological variations.

The ‘Concordance’ tab is used to search for specific words and view them in context. This is how AntConc identifies collocates, which are co-occurring words that frequently appear alongside a target word, forming typical patterns or combinations. According to [McEneaney and Hardie \(2012\)](#), this involves calculating the frequency with which a word appears with

others in a corpus to find its collocates—words that regularly accompany or follow the target word. Key statistical tools for this analysis are the t-score and Mutual Information (MI) value, as discussed by Cheng (2011) and Hunston (2002b). These metrics help determine whether the co-occurrence of two words is likely due to chance or represents a meaningful association.

Hunston (2002b) explains that the t-score, calculated from the standard deviation, indicates the strength of the relationship between words, with scores of 2 or higher generally deemed significant. On the other hand, MI measures the strength of association between a central word and its collocates, with an MI score above 3 usually considered significant. Baker (2006) illustrates MI as the difference between the actual frequency of two words appearing together and their expected frequency based on individual occurrences and corpus size. The greater the difference, the stronger the collocation. To refine the list of potential collocates, the study may increase the default MI score to 6, as suggested by Baker (2006). Arguably, linguists have acknowledged that MI might overemphasise rare word pairs, while the t-score often highlights frequent, basic words (Lindquist, 2009; Cheng, 2011; Hunston, 2022b), and so in turn, I will be using both MI and t-scores for analysing collocates in the present study.

Typically, corpus linguists consider collocates within a span of plus or minus 4 or 5 words (Brezina et al., 2015). In my research, I will examine collocates within a five-word span on either side of the target word, setting a minimum frequency of 3 occurrences, following Joharry (2016). This means that any word appearing at least three times within a 10-word window with the target word and meeting the t-score and MI thresholds will be deemed as a significant collocate.

The study aims to answer two research questions: identifying the most frequent adjectives in Xi'an online promotional materials and understanding their function in promoting Xi'an. In so doing, examining the Wordlist in terms of normalised frequency and range would allow for a more accurate representation of key adjectives that are salient in the corpus while an analysis of collocates without comparing the corpus to a reference corpus. Finally, the analysis includes looking at the context where the most common adjectives are used. This means carefully reading the text around these adjectives to see how they help promote Xi'an. For example, if adjectives like *beautiful* or *exciting* are often used with tourism-related words, it might show that the goal is to highlight specific attractions in Xi'an. By understanding these patterns, researchers can better grasp how the language in the promotional materials aims to attract visitors. This approach combines both the numerical data and the context to give a complete picture of the promotional messages.

4. Results

This part introduces the findings section on the use of adjectives in Xi'an's online promotional tourism materials. The research methods involve frequency lists, collocation analysis, close reading of concordance lines, and summarising the main findings, which are the crucial role adjectives play in shaping Xi'an's image as a tourist destination. By highlighting the importance of adjectives and the methods used to analyse them, the paragraph sets a strong foundation for the detailed information that will be presented in the rest of the findings section.

4.1. Frequency Lists

In this paper, only the top 50 frequent adjectives are extracted from a list of 1,470 frequent words, appearing at least 58 times in at least 36 texts. As previously mentioned, The Oxford Advanced Learner's English Chinese Dictionary was referred to when identifying the adjectives. Table 2 presents the list of the top 50 adjectives appearing in the corpus according to three main criteria as explained earlier.

Table 2: The 50 top raw frequency adjectives extracted from CAAXT

No.	Adjective	Freq	Range	NFreq	No.	Adjective	Freq	Range	NFreq
1	south	286	102	2518.404	26	hot	95	50	836.533
2	Chinese	259	125	2280.652	27	old	95	50	836.533
3	west	250	101	2201.402	28	called	93	50	818.921
4	north	231	95	2034.095	29	special	87	49	766.088
5	ancient	218	95	1919.622	30	foreign	86	49	757.282
6	most	176	95	1549.787	31	traditional	86	48	757.282
7	east	174	92	1532.176	32	historical	81	47	713.254
8	famous	173	91	1523.37	33	good	80	47	704.449
9	first	166	91	1461.731	34	used	80	46	704.449
10	cultural	156	90	1373.675	35	western	80	46	704.449
11	located	148	82	1303.23	36	scenic	78	46	686.837
12	wild	146	81	1285.619	37	open	76	45	669.226
13	more	145	79	1276.813	38	public	76	44	669.226
14	free	144	77	1268.007	39	high	74	43	651.615
15	national	140	73	1232.785	40	medical	73	42	642.809
16	only	136	69	1197.563	41	new	68	41	598.781
17	great	131	65	1153.535	42	operating	67	41	589.976
18	long	112	59	986.228	43	known	66	41	581.17
19	big	109	59	959.811	44	northwest	66	40	581.17
20	built	109	59	959.811	45	available	65	40	572.364
21	main	107	54	942.2	46	different	65	40	572.364
22	local	105	52	924.589	47	Muslim	60	37	528.336
23	small	105	51	924.589	48	major	59	37	519.531
24	international	97	51	854.144	49	folk	58	37	510.725
25	opening	96	51	845.338	50	front	57	36	501.92

Table 2 presents a detailed analysis of the top 50 adjectives extracted from the CAAXT corpus, organised into columns that reveal different aspects of their usage. The first column ranks these adjectives according to normalised frequency, providing insights into how often these adjectives appear and how widely they are utilised across the entire dataset. This ranking helps identify the most prominent adjectives used in Xi'an's tourism promotional texts, thereby highlighting which terms are most influential in shaping the reader's perception of the destination. The highest-ranked adjective, *south*, appears 286 times, with a range of 102 texts (54.54% of the total 187 texts) and an NFreq of 2518.404, emphasising its significance in describing geographic location, a dominant theme in Xi'an

tourism promotion. In contrast, the 50th ranked adjective, *front*, occurs 57 times, with a range of 36 texts (19.25%) and an NFreq of 501.92, suggesting a more specialised and less widespread use.

The second column lists the identified adjectives which were extracted manually according to the theory on the Oxford Advanced Learner's English-Chinese Dictionary (Hornby, 1997). Notably, some words may serve polysemous roles (i.e., acting as different parts of speech in various contexts), in this analysis, they are examined strictly within their adjectival capacity. This approach ensures precision in understanding the specific impact of adjectives in enhancing the descriptive quality of tourism texts, aligning with methodologies highlighted in previous linguistic studies (e.g., Durán-Muñoz, 2019; Thu, 2021; Pierini, 2009).

Moving on, the third column presents the raw frequency counts for each adjective. While raw frequency offers valuable insight into sheer volume, it can be misleading if considered in isolation, particularly in a varied corpus. Thus, to account for differences in text length and overall corpus size, the analysis also incorporates normalised frequency. This adjustment reduces the risk of skewed results caused by disproportionately long documents or sections, thereby providing a more accurate representation of adjective use across the entire corpus (Miller, 2020). The fourth column - Range, indicates how widely each adjective is distributed across different text segments within the corpus. This measure is critical because adjectives that appear consistently across diverse sections suggest broader applicability and relevance, rather than being confined to specific contexts. A high range value highlights an adjective's significance in promoting consistency and coherence in tourism content, suggesting its universal appeal and functionality within the texts (Thu, 2021). Range values also reveal these words to be widely distributed in more texts and thus, more significant in terms of use: *south* appears in 102 texts, covering 54.45%; *Chinese* (66.84%), *west* (54.01%), and *north* (50.80%).

Finally, the fifth column displays the normalised frequency (NFreq), which standardises the raw counts to a common baseline, such as occurrences per million words. This standardised metric is particularly valuable for enabling comparisons across different corpora or datasets. It ensures the robustness of the findings by accounting for variability in document length, thereby maintaining consistency in linguistic analysis—a practice recommended in corpus-based research (McEnery & Hardie, 2012). The percentage range coverage for the top 50 adjectives extracted from the CAAXT corpus highlights the distribution of these words across 187 texts. Normalised frequency adjusts the raw frequency count to account for differences in the total number of observations or the size of different subsets of data, allowing for comparison on a common scale (McMurdie, 2018).

In Table 2, the adjectives with the highest normalised frequencies are *south* (2518.404), *Chinese* (2280.652), and *west* (2201.402), indicating they are proportionally more common than others and the adjectives with the lowest normalised frequencies, towards the bottom of the list, are *folk* (510.725), *major* (519.531), and *Muslim* (528.336), indicating they are proportionally less common.

A closer examination reveals notable patterns in the selection of adjectives. Proper nouns like *Chinese* (rank 2) and *Muslim* (rank 47) used as adjectives to reflect cultural identity and heritage, while adjectives describing size or extent, such as *big* (rank 19) and *small* (rank 23), highlight spatial or qualitative attributes. Temporal adjectives like *ancient* (rank 5) emphasise the city's historic significance. Additionally, adjectives such as *cultural* (rank

10) and *traditional* (rank 31) focus on intangible heritage, conveying authenticity and historical depth. From this initial observation, the adjectives collectively create a vivid and diverse description of Xi'an. They range from broad descriptors that position the city geographically and culturally to more niche terms targeting specific aspects of its identity. This linguistic selection values the strategic crafting of promotional materials to appeal to diverse audiences while maintaining coherence in the portrayal of the city's tourism assets. In the subsequent sections, these adjectives are further categorised based on their functional roles through examining collocations and types of adjectives as discussed in the literature. As a reminder, adjectives can be categorised into three main types in general: descriptive, experiential, and positive evaluative (Marzá, 2017; Pierini, 2009; Kiss, 2018).

Table 3 shows the details of the classification of all the top 50 adjectives appearing in CAAXT according to the three main types: descriptive, experiential, and positive evaluative.

Table 3: Classification of 50 top-frequency adjectives extracted from CAAXT

Descriptive Adjectives	Physical Attributes	<i>hot, old, built, big, small, long, medical</i>
	Quantitative Adjectives	<i>more, most</i>
	Temporal Adjectives	<i>ancient, historical</i>
	Spatial Adjectives	<i>south, west, north, east, opening, located, northwest, front</i>
	Cultural and historical Adjectives	<i>Chinese, cultural, traditional, Muslim, folk, international</i>
	Other Detailed-oriented Adjectives	<i>called, used, scenic, open, public, medical, western, built, operating, known, available, foreign, open, different</i>
Experiential Adjectives	Emotional Adjectives	<i>special, good, hot, foreign, traditional, famous, great, new, different</i>
	Sensory Experience Adjectives	<i>scenic, wild, open, high, hot, old</i>
	Judgmental Adjectives	<i>famous, great, special, traditional, historical, good</i>
	Affective Adjectives	<i>hot, special, good, traditional, famous, free, great, new, major</i>
Positive Evaluative Adjectives	Praise and Approval Adjectives	<i>famous, great, special, traditional, good, scenic, free, major, high</i>
	Quality and Excellence Adjectives	<i>famous, great, special, good, scenic, high, major,</i>
	Beauty and Aesthetics	<i>scenic, good, wild, great</i>

Descriptive adjectives play a vital role in creating a vivid and detailed picture of Xi'an as a tourist destination, offering essential information to help travellers visualize and understand its unique identity. Within this category, physical attribute adjectives such as *hot, old, built, big, small, long,* and *medical* describe the tangible and measurable characteristics of Xi'an's landmarks and environment. These adjectives highlight the physical size, age, or purpose of certain attractions, enabling tourists to grasp their scale and distinctiveness. Similarly, temporal adjectives like *ancient* and *historical* emphasise Xi'an's deep-rooted history, showing its legacy as a significant cultural and historical centre.

Spatial adjectives such as *south*, *west*, *north*, *east*, *northwest*, and *located* define Xi'an's geographical orientation, helping visitors situate landmarks within the city's spatial layout. These adjectives enhance travellers' understanding of Xi'an's location within China and its regional significance. Cultural and historical adjectives like *Chinese*, *cultural*, *traditional*, *Muslim*, *folk*, and *international* emphasise the city's cultural diversity and heritage. They highlight Xi'an as a place where history, religion, and tradition converge, adding depth to its appeal. Additionally, adjectives like *called*, *used*, *scenic*, *open*, *public*, *medical*, and *western* provide further details about the usage, accessibility, and characteristics of Xi'an's attractions, enhancing visitors' knowledge of what to expect during their trip.

Experiential adjectives focus on the sensory and emotional responses that Xi'an's attractions evoke, making promotional materials more engaging and immersive. Emotional adjectives such as *special*, *good*, *hot*, *foreign*, *traditional*, *famous*, *great*, *new*, and *different* highlight how visitors might perceive the city and its attractions. Words like *special* and *different* emphasise Xi'an's unique aspects, sparking curiosity among potential travellers. Meanwhile, adjectives like *good* and *great* convey satisfaction and emotional fulfilment, suggesting that a visit to Xi'an will be both enjoyable and rewarding.

Sensory experience adjectives such as *scenic*, *wild*, *open*, *high*, *hot*, and *old* enhance the visual and physical imagery of Xi'an. For instance, *scenic* emphasises the beauty of Xi'an's landscapes and landmarks, while *wild* evokes images of untamed natural attractions or adventurous experiences. Adjectives like *open* and *high* describe physical space and scale, adding to the immersive qualities of the promotional language.

Positive evaluative adjectives are particularly influential in shaping tourists' perceptions of Xi'an's quality, excellence, and uniqueness. These adjectives aim to position Xi'an as an outstanding and desirable travel destination. In the category of praise and approval adjectives, words like *famous*, *great*, *special*, *traditional*, *good*, *scenic*, and *free* offer positive assessments of the city's attractions, affirming their high value and significance. For instance, *famous* highlights Xi'an's global recognition, while *great* and *good* communicate its quality and appeal to travellers seeking enriching experiences.

Quality and excellence adjectives such as *famous*, *great*, *special*, *good*, *scenic*, *high*, and *major* highlight the superiority and exceptional nature of Xi'an's landmarks. Words like *high* and *major* convey a sense of importance and scale, suggesting that Xi'an holds a prominent place among other tourist destinations. Finally, beauty and aesthetics adjectives such as *scenic*, *good*, *wild*, and *great* emphasise the visual allure and natural beauty of Xi'an, further enhancing its appeal to tourists.

Interestingly, several adjectives in [Table 3](#) serve dual functions, blending experiential and evaluative purposes so they are listed twice. For example, adjectives like *special*, *great*, and *good* not only describe visitors' personal experiences but also positively evaluate the city's attractions. Words like *famous* and *scenic* convey both the experiential beauty of a location and its evaluative prominence, creating a strong emotional connection with travellers. It could be argued that the overlap between experiential and evaluative functions in certain adjectives further enhances the impact of promotional materials, making them persuasive and emotionally appealing. By using these adjectives effectively, Xi'an is presented as a historically significant, culturally rich, and unforgettable travel destination that appeals to a wide range of tourists.

4.2. Collocation Analysis

In this section, we only focus on analysing the adjective *historical* (81) for the interest in space. The chosen adjective was identified as important in the corpus due to their frequent occurrence (e.g. adjectives like *historical* and *cultural* may frequently co-occur with nouns like *relics*, *sites*, or *heritage* in tourism discourse) and contextual relevance (e.g. high frequency of *historical* and its co-occurrence with *sites* and *relics* suggests its importance in promoting Xi'an's cultural heritage).

To reiterate, collocates reveal the words that frequently appear alongside the target word, providing valuable insights into common patterns and relationships. By examining these collocates, we can observe how the word *historical* interacts with other terms and contributes to meaning-making in tourism materials. This would allow us to form a clearer picture of how the word fits into different contexts and the types of associations it creates.

Following this, we analyse concordance lines to gain a deeper understanding of how these collocates function in real-world usage. Concordance lines present the target word, along with its collocates, within their actual textual surroundings. By doing so, they illustrate the precise ways in which *historical* is employed in context. This step helps uncover the exact role of the word and its contribution to the overall meaning of the text, such as its ability to invoke a sense of cultural value, historical richness, and authenticity in tourism discourse.

Table 4 presents the collocates for the adjective *historical* in the CAAXT corpus, analysed using two statistical measures: the t-score and MI-score.

Table 4: Collocates for *historical* in CAAXT both using t-score and MI score

t-score (above 2)	MI-score (above 3)
<i>the</i> (6.73), <i>and</i> (6.17), <i>of</i> (5.28), <i>in</i> (3.96), <i>a</i> (3.91), <i>relics</i> (3.86), <i>cultural</i> (3.71), <i>to</i> (3.49), <i>site</i> (3.28), <i>sites</i> (3.15), <i>with</i> (3.14), <i>is</i> (3.09), <i>records</i> (2.64), <i>it</i> (2.59), <i>as</i> (2.46), <i>great</i> (2.41), <i>an</i> (2.25), <i>at</i> (2.23), <i>according</i> (2.22), <i>some</i> (2.18), <i>xi</i> (2.15), <i>museum</i> (2.14), <i>city</i> (2.07)	<i>values</i> (10.03), <i>action</i> (10.03), <i>records</i> (9.17), <i>events</i> (9.04), <i>sites</i> (8.38), <i>everlasting</i> (8.34), <i>live</i> (8.28), <i>model</i> (8.23), <i>value</i> (8.13), <i>drama</i> (8.04), <i>relics</i> (7.88), <i>calligraphy</i> (7.81), <i>according</i> (7.49), <i>jade</i> (7.39), <i>feast</i> (7.28), <i>clay</i> (7.08), <i>figures</i> (7.04), <i>cultural</i> (6.98), <i>paintings</i> (6.79), <i>modern</i> (6.75), <i>site</i> (6.65), <i>important</i> (6.62), <i>steles</i> (6.21), <i>major</i> (6.16), <i>since</i> (6.08), <i>dance</i> (6.06), <i>great</i> (6.00), <i>where</i> (5.83), <i>these</i> (5.51), <i>culture</i> (5.45), <i>some</i> (5.41), <i>around</i> (5.18), <i>many</i> (5.16), <i>including</i> (5.13), <i>been</i> (5.07), <i>famous</i> (5.02), <i>other</i> (4.82), <i>its</i> (4.64), <i>have</i> (4.56), <i>museum</i> (4.47), <i>with</i> (4.26), <i>and</i> (4.07), <i>temple</i> (3.93), <i>as</i> (3.82), <i>city</i> (3.78), <i>has</i> (3.73), <i>gate</i> (3.69), <i>a</i> (3.69), <i>tang</i> (3.63), <i>of</i> (3.62), <i>it</i> (3.54), <i>there</i> (3.53), <i>at</i> (3.49), <i>in</i> (3.44), <i>dynasty</i> (3.38), <i>to</i> (3.33), <i>the</i> (3.32), <i>is</i> (3.22), <i>on</i> (3.16), <i>by</i> (3.12), <i>are</i> (3.07), <i>Xi</i> (3.05)

As mentioned before, the dual application of these measures offers a more comprehensive understanding of collocational patterns. Specifically, the t-score is effective in identifying frequently occurring collocates, emphasising statistical reliability and consistency across texts (Evert, 2005). Conversely, the MI-score focuses on uncovering less frequent but more

strongly associated collocates, thereby highlighting unique, content-specific connections (Evert, 2005). By employing both statistical tools, this study balances between identifying general associations with *historical* and highlighting more nuanced lexical relationships. Thus, it provides deeper insights into how *historical* is deployed in tourism discourse.

A total of 23 collocates were identified with a t-score above 2, while 62 collocates achieved an MI-score above 3. This distinction underlines the different patterns in the language surrounding *historical* within the corpus. Generally, high t-score collocates include more grammatical or functional words, such as *the*, *and*, *in*, and *with*. This observation is consistent with previous findings in collocational studies, which show that t-scores often capture frequent grammatical associations, thereby offering insights into the syntactical context in which *historical* is embedded. Consequently, these high-frequency collocates demonstrate how *historical* integrates within the sentence structure, supporting the rationale for using both t-score and MI-score analyses. The combination of these methods aligns with established research that suggests high t-scores emphasise common syntactical patterns, whereas high MI-scores highlight more content-specific and semantically rich collocates.

Specifically, the most significant high t-score collocates for *historical*, in descending order of strength include: *the*, *and*, *of*, *in*, *a*, *relics*, *cultural*, *site*, *sites*, *with*, *is*, *records*, *it*, *as*, *great*, *an*, *at*, *according*, *some*, *xi*, *museum*, and *city*. These collocates primarily consist of articles, conjunctions, and prepositions, which collectively frame *historical* within a functional and grammatical context. Understanding these functional collocates is crucial for analysing sentence structures and identifying common patterns in tourism texts, where *historical* often serves to anchor descriptive phrases.

In contrast, the MI-score collocates, which are more content-oriented, feature words like *values*, *action*, *records*, *events*, *everlasting*, *live*, *model*, *drama*, *relics*, *calligraphy*, *feast*, *jade*, *cultural*, *modern*, *important*, and *major*. These lexical collocates are indicative of the rich cultural and artistic context that *historical* is associated with in the corpus. Therefore, the presence of such specific content words suggests that *historical* is often used to invoke cultural depth and authenticity in the tourism promotional materials. Due to their semantic richness, these lexical collocates are particularly suitable for concordancing analysis, which allows for a deeper exploration of the narrative strategies employed in promoting Xi'an's cultural heritage. By focusing on these lexical associations, the analysis can uncover how *historical* is used to craft vivid, engaging, and culturally resonant descriptions in tourism texts. In particular, the collocates *relics* and *cultural*, were chosen to be examined more closely next since they are two lexical words that have a strong association with *historical* based on both t-score and MI-score.

4.3. Close reading of Concordance lines (Qualitative analysis)

Sinclair (1991) noted that concordance lines allow researchers to examine how a word is used in various contexts, so they are particularly useful for qualitative analysis. While frequency lists provide a broader overview of word usage based on how often words occur in the corpus they do not provide context for how words are used, except for when it is viewed in terms of concordance lines. As Huston (2002) emphasised, concordance analysis combines qualitative and quantitative analysis by allowing researchers to look closely into a word in context. As a reminder, this section focuses only on the collocates *relics* and *cultural*.

Figure 2 presents concordance lines for the word *relics* co-occurring with the adjective *historical* in the CAAXT corpus, offering insights into how the collocation ‘historical relics’ is employed in Xi’an tourism promotional materials. This analysis highlights the patterns and contexts in which this collocation is used to portray Xi’an as a destination rich in culture and heritage.

Figure 2: Concordance Lines for *relics* co-occurring with *historical* in CAAXT

N	Concordance		
1	dynasty fallen soon, a great number of	historical	<i>relics</i> were left, for example, the so
2	display of Buddhist statues and other precious	historical	<i>relics</i> of municipal counties and distri
3	Local Products While marveling at the numerous	historical	sites and cultural <i>relics</i> in and around
4	g, jewels, jade articles, calligraphy, paintings,	historical	<i>relics</i> , antiques, model clay figures of
5	g, jewels, jade articles, calligraphy, paintings,	historical	<i>relics</i> , antiques, model clay figures of
6	s, such as jewelry, jade, calligraphy, paintings,	historical	<i>relics</i> , model clay figures of warriors
7	historical heritage. Travelers marvel at the numerous	historical	sites and cultural <i>relics</i> in the city.
8	of the hot tourist destinations abundant with	historical	<i>relics</i> , Xian is favorable for traveling
9	title of a reign. Nowadays, only some	historical	<i>relics</i> of the building remain. Seeing
10	to establish a museum to preserve the	historical	<i>relics</i> and the temple, hence Xianyou
11	Sarira Pagoda, the temple and some important	historical	<i>relics</i> under special preservation. The
12	quare meters), the museum preserves 302 pieces of	historical	<i>relics</i> and four permanent exhibitions a
13	of the museum. There are 102 pieces of	historical	<i>relics</i> in total, including Sarira Pagod
14	Road On June 22nd, 2014. Since then, many	historical	<i>relics</i> have been excavated from the sit
15	during succeeding dynasties. A great number of	historical	<i>relics</i> have been found, including

As shown in Figure 2, the term *historical relics* appears repeatedly in descriptions that highlight Xi’an’s cultural and historical significance. For example, it is often paired with phrases emphasising preservation efforts, such as *to establish a museum to preserve the historical relics* or the significance of tourist attractions, as in *hot tourist destinations abundant with historical relics*. These references establish the city as a must-visit destination for those interested in history and culture.

Moreover, the collocation is adaptable to a variety of contexts. It is used to describe specific artifacts like ‘jewels, jade articles, calligraphy, [and] paintings,’ as well as broader references to ‘municipal counties and cities’ and their associated sites. Additionally, phrases like *important historical relics under special preservation* highlight large efforts to protect Xi’an’s cultural heritage. This diversity in usage illustrates how *historical relics* serves to represent not only physical objects but also the cultural values associated with them.

The collocation also carries a positive tone, frequently described as ‘precious’ or ‘important,’ which conveys a sense of pride in Xi’an’s historical richness. Furthermore, temporal markers such as *a great number of historical relics were left* or ‘have been excavated from the site’ connect the relics to significant historical events or discoveries. These references not only highlight the city’s past but also make it relevant to contemporary audiences by describing ongoing archaeological efforts.

Figure 3 presents concordance lines for the adjective *historical* co-occurring with the word *cultural* in the CAAXT corpus, providing insights into how the collocation *historical* and

cultural is used to promote Xi'an as a city with deep historical significance and cultural richness. This analysis highlights the patterns and contexts in which the term *historical* is employed to enhance the city's image as a premier cultural and heritage destination.

Figure 3: Concordance Lines for *cultural* co-occurring with *historical* in CAAXT

N	Concordance		
1	the center of the ancient city of	historical	and <u>cultural</u> city of Xi'an hotel,
2	out the other side of the famous	historical	and <u>cultural</u> city of Xi'an. Lao
3	and sour. Qishan Minced Noodles contains rich	historical	connotation and <u>cultural</u> heritage. It
4	Local Products While marveling at the numerous	historical	sites and <u>cultural</u> relics in and around
5	. Well, you can find many typical Chinese	historical	and <u>cultural</u> items, including silk rugs
6	heritage. Travelers marvel at the numerous	historical	sites and <u>cultural</u> relics in the city.
7	its beautiful scenery and profound <u>cultural</u> and	historical	background. If it is sunny, we suggest
8	announced it to be a major national	historical	and <u>cultural</u> site. TIPS Basic info
9	it has been listed as a key	historical	and <u>cultural</u> site under state protection
10	Park (Xingqing Palace Park) is a famous	historical	and <u>cultural</u> relic in Xi'an. Built
11	summer, autumn. Local Highlights The <u>cultural</u> and	historical	significance of the area, as well as
12	is decorated with bright lanterns displaying the	historical	and <u>cultural</u> features by hi-tech facilities
13	early time, has a certain amount of	historical,	<u>cultural</u> , scientific, artistic, and so
14	one of the first batches of major	historical	and <u>cultural</u> sites protected at the national

As shown in Figure 3, the adjective *historical* frequently appears in descriptions emphasising Xi'an's profound connection to its past. For example, phrases such as *the center of the ancient city of historical and cultural city of Xi'an* and *out the other side of the famous historical and cultural city of Xi'an* value the city's reputation as a place where history and culture coexist harmoniously. These descriptions establish Xi'an as an ideal destination for tourists seeking to experience its historical as well as cultural offerings.

Moreover, the term *historical* is often paired with references to specific sites and relics, such as *historical sites and cultural relics in and around the city* or *numerous historical sites and cultural relics in the city background*. These examples emphasise the abundance of historical landmarks and artifacts, positioning Xi'an as a city that values the preservation and presentation of its heritage. Such references not only highlight the city's historical treasures but also stress the significance of these sites as key tourist attractions.

The collocation *historical* and *cultural* also conveys a sense of national importance and authenticity. For instance, phrases like 'it has been listed as a key historical and cultural site under state protection' and 'one of the first batches of major historical and cultural sites protected at the national' highlight Xi'an's status as a city with protected and recognized cultural heritage. This aligns the city with national pride and emphasises the importance of preserving its historical significance. Additionally, descriptions such as 'historical significance of the area' and 'historical, cultural, scientific, artistic' broaden the appeal of Xi'an's history by connecting it to cultural achievements in science and art.

Furthermore, the usage of *historical* conveys a positive tone that enhances the appeal of Xi'an's attractions. By appearing in contexts such as '*historical connotation and cultural heritage*' and '*one of the first batches of major historical and cultural sites*,' the adjective *historical* enhances Xi'an's image as a city of historical prestige and cultural value. These descriptions also connect the city's historical relevance to modern tourism by showing its persistent efforts to preserve and promote its heritage.

5. Conclusion

5.1. Frequency analysis of adjectives

The present study begins with a typical corpus-driven approach analysis that involves examining frequent adjectives found in the corpus of 187 online articles from Xi'an government tourism website. The top 50 most frequently occurring adjectives were classified into three main categories, which were descriptive adjectives (76%), experiential adjectives (36%) and positive evaluative adjectives (20%).

Researchers have found that descriptive adjectives are the most frequent in tourism promotional materials because they provide foundational information that helps potential visitors visualise and understand a destination (Franceschi, 2021; Brett et al., 2021). These adjectives in CAAXT, such as *Chinese*, *ancient*, *cultural*, and *national* among others, serve to clarify essential characteristics of the tourist destination Xi'an, like geography, history, and culture. In tourism contexts, establishing a clear picture of what travellers can expect is crucial, and descriptive adjectives fulfil this by offering specifics that make the destination tangible and relatable (Pierini, 2009). They play a significant role in shaping the reader's initial impression and provide the necessary context, helping to establish the destination's identity before the more subjective qualities of experiential or evaluative adjectives come into play (Reilly, 1990).

The high frequency of descriptive adjectives underlines the importance of basing promotional content in concrete details, as they set the stage for more persuasive elements (Zafar et al., 2024). These adjectives define the place in terms of cultural, geographic, and historical features, thus creating a framework that makes subsequent experiential or evaluative language more influential (Kiss, 2018). For example, describing a place as *ancient* or *traditional* gives context to why it might be *fascinating* or *unique* (Sujatna et al., 2024). In other words, the foundation laid by descriptive language enhances the experiential and evaluative effect of the promotional material, as it allows the reader to understand not only what the destination is, but also why it is important to them.

Ultimately, the prominence of descriptive adjectives supports the primary goal of tourism promotion: to inform and attract (Franceschi, 2021). By clearly establishing the distinctive characteristics of a destination, descriptive adjectives enable tourists to make more informed choices (Zafar et al., 2024), which is why they are repeated in promotional materials so as to become key indicators in search engines like Google. Also, this approach not only enhances transparency and trustworthiness in promotional materials but also increases the likelihood of attracting visitors who resonate with what the destination genuinely has to offer, setting realistic expectations and appealing to those who seek a specific type of travel experience (Brett et al., 2021).

5.2. Functional Analysis of Adjectives

The collocation and concordance analyses of the adjective *historical* within Xi'an tourism promotional materials provide important insights into its functional role in shaping the discourse. Specifically, adjectives like *historical* play a critical role in enhancing the descriptive, persuasive, and narrative qualities of the texts, serving both linguistic and communicative functions.

Firstly, the adjective *historical* primarily fulfils a descriptive function by providing detailed and vivid representations of Xi'an as a place of history. As demonstrated in the concordance lines, *historical* is frequently paired with lexical words like *relics* (e.g., *historical relics*), *sites* (e.g., *historical sites*), and *events* (e.g., *historical events*) that repeatedly highlight specific aspects of Xi'an as being a historic city. Additionally, the frequent collocation with *cultural*, as seen in 'historical and cultural city of Xi'an' or 'historical and cultural site under state protection', broadens the referential scope of *historical*. It emphasises not just the city's antiquity but also its cultural depth, creating an image of Xi'an as a city where history and culture are intertwined. This dual descriptive role allows *historical* to anchor the narrative in tangible and intangible heritage, which enhances the city's appeal as a tourism destination -both in terms of history and culture.

The adjective *historical* also plays a persuasive role in promoting Xi'an as a desirable tourism destination. By frequently collocating with evaluative and positive terms such as *precious*, *important*, and *great*, *historical* helps construct an idealised and prestigious image of the city. For example:

- i. '*important historical relics under special preservation*' emphasises the value and care devoted to Xi'an's cultural assets.
- ii. '*hot tourist destinations abundant with historical relics*' suggests abundance and uniqueness, enticing potential visitors to explore the city's historical offerings.

Such phrases emphasises the city's heritage significance and present it as an irreplaceable experience for tourists. This usage coincides with the promotional goals of tourism discourse, where adjectives such as *historical* serve to positively frame the destination and attract interest.

Beyond its descriptive and persuasive roles, *historical* also contributes to an emotional and experiential function by invoking a sense of authenticity, nostalgia, and wonder. The collocation with terms like *relics*, *calligraphy*, and *drama* suggests an immersive and rich cultural experience that connects visitors to Xi'an's historical legacy. For instance:

- i. Phrases such as '*jewels, jade articles, calligraphy, paintings, historical relics*' produce an emotional connection to artistic and cultural achievements from the past.
- ii. References to '*historical events*' and '*records*' provide a sense of continuity and connection to significant moments in history.

The consistent use of *historical* to highlight artifacts and events allows the promotional materials to craft an emotional narrative where visitors are encouraged to marvel at Xi'an's historical richness and experience its cultural depth firsthand.

The findings also reveal how *historical* performs a contextual function by framing Xi'an within larger temporal and spatial relationships. For example, phrases like 'historical relics have been excavated from the site' or 'a great number of historical relics were left' tie Xi'an's present to its historical past. Such expressions situate the city within a historical timeline, emphasising continuity and the enduring value of its cultural heritage. Moreover, the relational aspect of *historical* is evident in its frequent co-occurrence with the collocate *cultural*. The collocation 'historical and cultural' constructs a cohesive image of Xi'an as a city that harmonises tangible artifacts (e.g., *historical relics*) with intangible cultural experiences (e.g., *cultural heritage*). This interplay between history and culture positions

Xi'an as both an educational and aesthetic destination, further enhancing its promotional appeal.

The functional analysis of *historical* in Xi'an's online tourism promotional materials thus, demonstrates its multifaceted role in the discourse. It serves as a descriptive tool to provide vivid imagery, a persuasive device to attract visitors, an emotional connector to arouse cultural appreciation, and a contextual marker to position Xi'an within historical narratives. By frequently collocating with nouns such as *relics* and *cultural*, *historical* effectively constructs an image of Xi'an as a city of unparalleled historical significance and cultural richness. This strategic use of adjectives contributes to the overall goal of engaging potential tourists, shaping perceptions, and promoting Xi'an as a must-visit destination for those seeking historical and cultural experiences.

In conclusion, the adjective *historical* in Xi'an tourism promotional materials functions to highlight the city's rich cultural heritage, emphasise the preservation of significant sites, and convey a sense of authenticity and pride. Through its frequent pairing with cultural terms, *historical* establishes Xi'an as a destination that harmonises its historical legacy with modern cultural appeal, making it an attractive location for tourists seeking meaningful connections to history and culture.

5.3. Future Studies

While this study has provided valuable insights into the use of adjectives, particularly *historical*, in Xi'an's online tourism promotional materials, there are still several aspects that deserve to be further explored in order to deepen our understanding of tourism discourse and its linguistic features. This research primarily focused on the adjective *historical* and its collocations 'relics' and 'cultural' within Xi'an's online tourism materials. Future studies could analyse a broader range of frequently occurring adjectives, such as *ancient*, *famous*, and *cultural*, to uncover how these descriptors collectively contribute to constructing Xi'an's promotional narrative. Such an analysis would allow for a more comprehensive understanding of the lexical patterns and persuasive strategies employed in tourism discourse.

A comparison of adjectives used in tourism promotional materials for other culturally significant Chinese cities, such as Beijing, Hangzhou, or Chengdu, could reveal regional differences or similarities in linguistic strategies. This cross-regional comparison would provide insights into how historical and cultural identities are framed in different contexts and whether Xi'an's promotional materials have unique linguistic features that differentiate it from other destinations. Additionally, comparative studies between Chinese cities and international heritage cities (e.g., Rome, Athens, or Cairo) could offer a global perspective on how adjectives are used to promote destinations with rich historical backgrounds. Such studies would highlight cultural nuances and global patterns in tourism promotion. By expanding the scope of analysis to include additional adjectives and comparative studies, future research can build on the findings of this study to gain a more nuanced understanding of tourism discourse. Such studies would not only deepen linguistic insights but also provide practical recommendations for enhancing tourism marketing strategies.

Ethics Approval and Consent to Participate

The researcher utilised publicly available data extracted from official online sources, and no direct human participants were involved. Therefore, ethics approval and consent to participate were not required. All data were anonymised and used in accordance with ethical guidelines for research involving publicly accessible materials.

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