

Research on the design method of dialect in Chongqing city culture brand

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Abstract

The Chongqing dialect is a living fossil of local culture and integral to national culture. It carries the context of urban development and has the dual attributes of language culture and intangible cultural heritage. Currently, the Chongqing dialect faces the impact of the official language and globalization. This paper research the design method of the Chongqing dialect in the city brand image. The objective is to build a visual atlas of the Chongqing dialect and explore its application scope through workshops and case studies to provide methods for spreading the Chongqing dialect and shaping the city's brand image. The mixed research method is used to explore the design practice based on the theoretical results and the existing case studies. The participatory action research method is used in the workshop to try to design characters, voice interaction, materials, and technology intervention to build the dialect visual atlas. It also discusses the application of visual transformation of dialect in public transport, tourist attractions, core business districts, museums, and other places in Chongqing. The results show that the research provides a feasible basis for the promotion of Chongqing's urban brand image, which is conducive to the development of the Chongqing dialect in the urban brand image, and also provides a reference for the design of dialect as the object.

Keywords: Chongqing dialect, Visual transformation, City branding, Visual map, Design presentation

Introduction

Background of the Research

In China, the official language is called the modern standard Chinese, commonly used in the People's Republic of China, also known as Putonghua. Putonghua is based on Northern Mandarin and is pronounced in the Beijing dialect. The Chinese language and Putonghua cannot be wholly equated. The purpose of popularising Putonghua is to eliminate dialect barriers and facilitate people's communication. Chongqing dialect belongs to a category of

Sichuan dialects and belongs to the southwest official dialect. Sichuan dialect was formed during the migration movement of “Huguang (Hunan、Hubei) to Sichuan” in the Kangxi period of the Qing Dynasty by the evolution and integration of local Sichuan dialect and immigrant dialects from Huguang (Hunan、Hubei) , Guangdong, Jiangxi, and other places. Sichuan dialect is different from Putonghua in pronunciation, grammar, and vocabulary. In 2000, the Law of the People’s Republic of China on the National Common Language established the legal status of Putonghua and standardized Chinese characters as the standard national language. The establishment of Putonghua does not contradict the use and inheritance of regional dialects. However, with the popularisation of Putonghua and the promotion of official use, it has become a fact that the use rate of regional dialects has declined.

In the 1920s, the concept of “new aesthetics city building” was born, and the theory of city image began to emerge in Western countries. In the 1940s, some scholars introduced the concepts of corporate image and image into urban studies and integrated them with the urban concept, urban behavior, and urban visual construction in “urban beautification” advocated by American scholars (Rao, 2019). Nowadays, most of the creative methods of urban brands are imitated, lacking the city’s cultural output, and it takes work to arouse people’s empathy. The design method should be more comprehensive, systematic, and multi-angle to find the urban style, temperament, and core image and reconstruct the city’s unique style (Liu, et al., 2020). Presently, foreign visual research on city cultural images mainly focuses on the following aspects. Firstly, the primary visual image is based on the legendary totem of the city and traditional slang, and the visual extraction is used to improve the sense of identity of city residents. Secondly, it takes the city industry as the guide and carries out market segmentation. Thirdly, the city’s architecture is used to design each person's story or memory of what happened in the town. Fourthly, the design is driven by words, such as the initials of the name of a city, such as a city image design of Melbourne and Australia. The enhancement of the city’s cultural brand identity through visual design construction and other means is a common concern of many foreign scholars.

From the perspective of China, the Ministry of Education and the State Language Commission issued the “Thirteenth Five-Year Plan” for developing the national language and writing industry, which explicitly proposes a project for the preservation and protection of China’s excellent language and culture. For the implementation of Chinese language resources protection, the collection and sorting of Chinese dialects and oral folk culture, a large-scale and sustainable digital language database and language display system are being built (Ministry of Education of the People’s Republic of China and State Language Commission of the People’s Republic of China State, 2017). Guidelines and requirements have been provided for developing a Chinese language atlas, among other things. According to the survey data, the national penetration rate of Putonghua reached 80.72%, an increase of 27.66 percentage points from 53.06% in 2000 (Ministry of Education of the People’s Republic of China, 2021) (Figure 1).

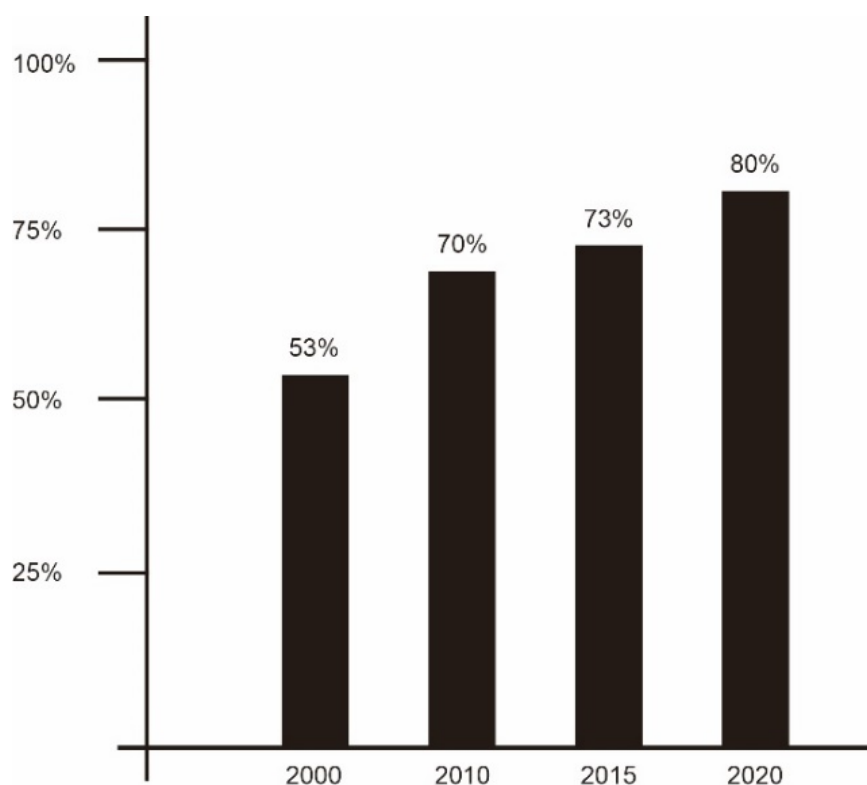


Figure 1 Popularizing rate of Mandarin in China (2000-2020)

Source: Self-drawn by the author

The Nandu Poll Center launched the Survey Report on Public Language Habits (2021) from February 22 to March 12, 2021. Six hundred fifty-six valid questionnaires were collected through online questionnaires and offline intercepted visits. Among them, 61.43% were male respondents, and 38.57% were female. They were mainly born after the 1980s and 1990s, accounting for 30.95% and 54.42%, respectively. Regarding the distribution of residential cities, the urban population accounts for most respondents. China's first-tier cities account for 21.19%, new first-tier cities account for 16.62%, and second-tier cities account for 29.88%. 44.82% and 30.18% of the respondents have bachelor's degrees and college degrees, respectively. According to the data analysis of the survey, about 40% of the respondents are native speakers of Mandarin, and about 70% of the respondents often use Mandarin. Most of the respondents after the 1980s and 1990s used Mandarin more frequently, and they believed that school teaching was the primary way. The use of language by interviewees and different objects can be seen in the following table (Table 1).

Table 1 Language use by interviewees and different objects

| Language/Object | Language use by interviewees and different objects | | | | | | |
|-----------------------------|--|---------------|---------------|---------------|---|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| | With grandpa rents | With parents | With children | With friends | With colleague s/teacher s and students | With fellow villagers | With others in public |
| Standard Mandarin/Putonghua | 25.91% | 26.68% | 48.48% | 56.40% | 76.52% | 49.85% | 80.49% |
| Chinese dialects | 62.80% | 62.20% | 30.64% | 30.79% | 17.38% | 40.24% | 12.35% |
| Multi dialect communication | 8.38% | 7.77% | 5.03% | 10.98% | 5.79% | 7.77% | 5.64% |
| Minority language | 1.22% | 1.68% | 2.13% | 1.37% | 0.30% | 1.37% | 1.22% |
| Others | 1.68% | 1.68% | 0.46% | 0.00% | 0.00% | 0.76% | 0.30% |

Source Self-drawn by the author

From the survey, the use rate of Putonghua is relatively high, while the dialect is used only in communication with elders. People began to worry that with the decrease in dialects, people born in the 1980s and 1990s did not often use idioms. With the death of the older generation, even the next generation did not speak local dialects at all. Various regions have launched dialect preservation programs after the emergence of these fundamental problems (Xu, 2016). With the rise of dialect culture, Chongqing is also taking active action. In October 2021, the Cultural Federation of Shapingba District and the Cultural and Tourism Commission of Chongqing held a public welfare performance of the art of dialects at the Blue Sky Opera House in Three Gorges Square. With tens of millions of speakers, the Chongqing dialect is widespread and influential and plays a vital role in southwest mandarin. The study of the Chongqing dialect is generally carried out through semiotics, linguistics, and sociology. Scholars mainly study it from the perspectives of vocabulary, etymology, reduplication, rhotic accent, and ordinary characters. With the advent of the “picture-reading era,” visual storytelling, illustrations of dialect stories, passages, allusions, fables, visualization, and digitization of language in media convergence have also become significant research objects. City culture branding is based on strategic planning, positioning, and core values, and different city culture cards are formed through visual identity. Zhang Hongyan of Nanjing University proposed the strategy of “introduction of CI for Nanjing city as a whole” and believed that the focus of city image design is to position the city according to its cultural style and attributes, and to highlight the individual characteristics of the city. For example, Shenzhen is called the city of science and technology, Shanghai is called the city of fashion, and Chengdu is called the city of leisure. Chongqing is more often called the city of fog from the climate perspective.

Significance of the problem

Since 2000, Chongqing has focused on urban cultural brand design and launched various activities to create “honest Chongqing, knowledge Chongqing, and beautiful Chongqing;” At the same time, it also launched city brand publicity, which has achieved specific results. Including the selection of “Top Ten Cities in Chongqing” held in 2005 and the initiatives to build Chongqing into a “City of Fashion” in 2006. (Chongqing Municipal People’s Government, 2021). However, from a brief review of practical work and the questionnaire survey on the design of urban cultural brands in Chongqing, it can be seen that the main problems in the creation of urban cultural brands in Chongqing are the late start, insufficient understanding, blind imitation, copying, lack of integration and systematicness, Etc. The impression left to everyone is that the image of Shancheng (A mountainous city), Wudu (A foggy city), Peidu (Refers to the vice capital set up outside the capital), Diaoguolou (A sloping building built on a hillside), hotpot, BangBang Jun-the Stick Stick Army, and the city needs to be unified.

Research objectives

The research collected data in the form of workshops, combined with the analysis of relevant design cases, and with the help of Chongqing dialect cases, aimed to explore the visual transformation and design application of dialect vocabulary. The first is to discuss the visual transformation of the Chongqing dialect in the way of visual atlas construction; The second is to discuss the place of visual transformation design and application of the Chongqing dialect. Such discussion will help the inheritance and dissemination of the Chongqing dialect and improve the city’s brand image of Chongqing through dialect visual transformation design.

Research method

This research was completed using a mixed approach, mainly through the design case analysis and the establishment of workshops and other methods. The purpose is to try to implant the unique characteristics of the Chongqing dialect, such as transmissibility, emotionality, and mobility, into the design of improving the city brand, form a particular regional culture gene, organize and build a visual dialect vocabulary map, increase the sense of city identity, and improve the city brand image.

The first phase of this study is a qualitative study, which extends the supporting evidence through a preliminary literature review, case studies, and in-depth interviews. The comparative diagrams were also created through field visits to some exhibition events to record photos and diaries.

In the second stage, a workshop was established to determine the representative population, collect data and conduct statistical analysis to confirm the subsequent practical application. Data collection is divided into two stages; the first is basic information, such as text and pictures. The second time was the “Chongqing Dialect” visual transformation design

for the 19-22-year-old third-year students majoring in graphic design at Chongqing University of Science and Technology. A total of 28 people participated in the workshop, including 23 women and five men. The second data collection process includes dialect vocabulary analysis, regional cognition, symposium, Etc.

The third stage is the visual transformation design stage, which uses the method of action research to research through planning, action, observation, and reflection. Find problems, explore solutions and make plans in the planning process. The action phase is designed and implemented purposefully. In the observation stage, record and observe the design process. The reflection stage is a summary of the rationality of the research process, as well as correcting problems in the design and research process (Figure 2).



Figure 2 Conducting the design study

Source: The Photo is taken by the author's design team

The last stage of this study is about the application of the research results, in which the visual conversion design of the Chongqing dialect is made into a visual map by graphic design method for design presentation, including an identity survey of the map, questionnaires for experts, and questionnaires on the satisfaction of sampling.

Results and discussion

The first step of this research is to select dialect vocabulary suitable for Chongqing regional design display to do art creation design diffusion, use dialect and residents' details as the connection point between the city and the people, and use the social phenomena and physical symbols displayed in the dialect as the way of visual transformation. Choosing dialect vocabulary is one of the conditions for research. The second step is to explain the construction of graphic transformation design using local replacement of dialect vocabulary design, the interaction of voice and intonation, a combination of materials, and scientific and technological intervention. Finally, the application scope of Chongqing dialect visual transformation is discussed.

The Choice of Chongqing Dialect Vocabulary

Through the establishment of those aspects and the research of the target group, some of the words with the visual display conversion of Chongqing representative dialect words were selected (Yang, 2006).

Table 2 Vocabulary in Chongqing dialect

| Vocabulary in Chongqing dialect | | |
|---------------------------------|--|---|
| Vocabulary in Chongqing dialect | Interpretation | Allusion |
| 爬坡上坎 (pa po shang ker) | The original meaning is to climb up the hill. The extended meaning is that completing a difficult task takes much effort and takes a great deal of effort. | |
| 撇脱 (pie tuo) | Easy | According to Volume 94 of <i>Zhu Zi Yu Lei</i> , having no selfish desires is better than having the desire to get something, which is painstaking. |
| 摆龙门阵 (bai long men zhen) | Storytelling and chatting | The twelfth chapter of <i>Shuo Tang Hou Zhuan</i> , Xue Rengui's Dragon Tongue. |
| 棒棒军 (bang bang jun) | People use wooden or bamboo sticks as picking and carrying tools to work as temporary porters in the city, and | |

| Vocabulary in Chongqing dialect | | |
|--|--|---|
| Vocabulary in Chongqing dialect | Interpretation | Allusion |
| | they are farmers who go to the city for work. | |
| 碳圆儿 (tan yuan er) | There are several vertical ventilation round holes in the middle of the cross-section, which are used for heating by fire in winter. The honeycomb-shaped briquette is called honeycomb briquette for short. The metaphor refers to something complex. | |
| 吊脚楼——落不到实处 (diao guo lou – luo bu dao shi chu) | As tilted building is built against a hillside, with the low side supported by a few long pillars. It means that the building is supported by pillars and not built on a stone foundation, but things need to be implemented. | |
| 方脑壳 (fang nao ko) | A person with a rigid mind and no understanding of the world. Square skull, square head. | In the Tang and Song Dynasties, there was a theory of the “square head.” Volume 17 of the Record of Stopping Farming in South Village: "It is popularly said that those who are out of time are square heads" |

The selection of Chongqing dialect vocabulary can also be filtered according to specific design requirements. However, because each language is unique, using representative ones in the selection process is essential. Depending on the medium, the display space is different, and the design set is different. The dialect vocabulary may also be extended to regional stories, yanzi'er, cross-talking, Etc.

The design strategy of the visual atlas of Chongqing dialect research establishing

Build a cultural image design strategy with the Chongqing dialect as the clue, guide the design practice through the workshop, and form a set of visual design strategies of Chongqing dialect culture with design cases. The research on the visual transformation of the Chongqing

dialect from the perspective of visual communication, and the establishment of an important channel for information exchange with graphic language, is undoubtedly a beneficial attempt to transcend language and text barriers, promote cultural exchanges, and reshape the positioning of the city's brand image.

Visual character design of Chongqing dialect

In the visual transformation design of the Chongqing dialect, there are many forms of expression of the transformation design of characters, such as adding patterns to decorate characters, the style of graphics to form characters, the combination of graphics and characters, and the sharing of strokes of characters. The replacement and combination of graphics and characters are to add graphic elements related to vocabulary into the vocabulary of integrated form. The root is to replace some parts of the font with similar graphic images according to the meaning of the words, which are realistic or exaggerated. The partial replacement of characters exposes the connotation of characters. This design method is often seen in visual communication design (Li, 2016) and is also an important design method in the visual transformation design of dialects. The designed dialect vocabulary can be called a "symbol". The Swiss linguist Saussure once proposed that the symbol has a "symbol signifier" and "symbol signified". The signifier of a symbol can be a graphic character, and the signifier of a symbol also expresses meaning and concept (Ferdinand, 2017). The design process of dialect visual transformation is different from the replacement design of pure graphics. In addition to considering the structure of Chinese characters and the replacement of graphics, many people often do not consider the deep meaning of dialect words in the design process, which is prone to appear stiff and "words fail to convey meaning". Therefore, it also puts forward higher requirements for the design. However, if this design method is well used, the viewer can see part of the text and images and have a sense of bringing in. Get twice the result with half the effort. In the visual design of the Chongqing dialect vocabulary "Fang naoko (square skull)", the appearance is designed as a square in the process of adding patterns to replace words, and the dull eyes are added at the top. In the use of design techniques, anthropomorphic design is used. The combination of graphics and words can better explain the meaning of dialect vocabulary (Figure 3). The Chongqing dialect vocabulary "Tan yuaner" design is adapted to the specific shape of the "honeycomb briquette" based on maximizing the recognition of characters. Through the design, people can better understand Chongqing's local life context and market culture (Figure 4).



Figure 3 Visual transformation design of Chongqing Dialect-Fang naoko (square skull)

Source: workshop: Chen Xiaoying Design, Feng Zhizhi Design Guidance

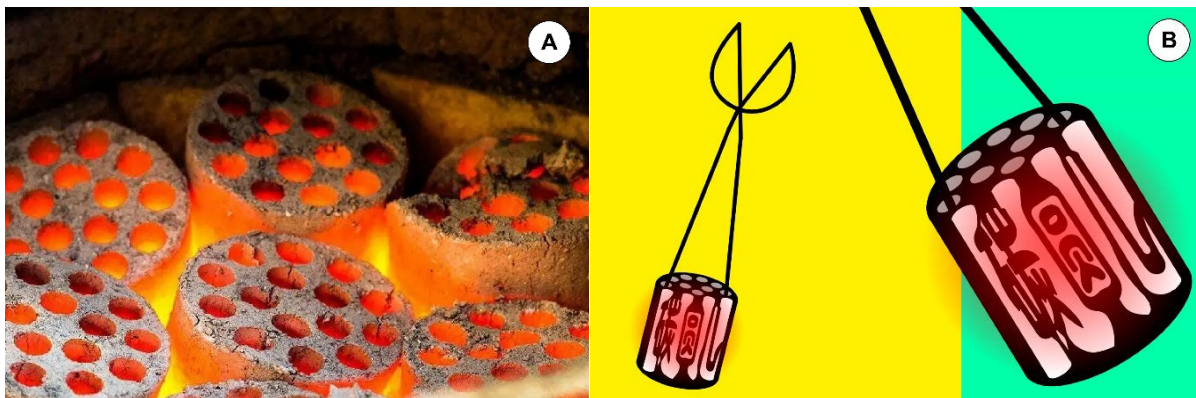


Figure 4 (A) Picture of honeycomb briquette (B) Visual Conversion Design of Chongqing Dialect – Tan yuaner (Carbon Balls)

Source: Figure 4A Pictures from the network. <http://t.lrgarden.com/statuses/1000257229.html>

Figure 4B workshop: Fei Xun、Ye Yingxin Design, Feng Zhizhi Design Guidance

Visual voice transformation and interaction of Chongqing dialect

The pronunciation and intonation of the Chongqing dialect are essential factors in distinguishing it from other dialects. In transformation design, we can consider designing and creating from the pronunciation and intonation of idioms and using dialect words different from the combination of words in Putonghua. These dialect words are other than Putonghua in writing and reading, but the meaning expressed may be the same, allowing people to speak

dialects. Integrating symbolic elements such as tone into the design is challenging, but it will help to give full play to the design experience.

The way of voice interaction is displayed in combination with the visual presentation because the dialect vocabulary has a unique charm. It makes people want to know the pronunciation and word meanings. In recent years, voice and vision are often used in both exhibition and installation art in art. In addition to displaying dialect vocabulary, Chongqing nursery rhymes, jokes, and words can also be designed in the phonetic interaction. The visual transformation of dialect designed with story, knowledge, and region should pay more attention to continuity and integrity. The forms of voice presentation can be varied, such as dialect researchers, dialect communities, professional dubbers, talk show actors, Etc. Different members will bring different audio-visual feelings. In recent years, dialect performances have been presented one after another. The performance artist Guo Da and the National Grand Theater Symphony Orchestra jointly performed to read Li Bai's poem "Going to Wine" in the Shaanxi dialect. The Shanghai Rainbow Chamber Choir performed the impromptu dialect chorus of "Journey to Baima Village", which made people feel the charm and more possibilities of the dialect. The following figure shows the design of the workshop. The designer uses the "Chongqing Traffic Teahouse" as the design area. Most people in the teahouse communicate in the local dialect of Chongqing. Chongqing dialect can be identified and listened to by scanning WeChat to make the interaction of dialects more interesting (Figure 5).



Figure 5: Interactive Phonetic Design of Chongqing Dialect - Shu Language

Source Workshop: Yang Xiangyu、Tan Haoyue Design, Feng Zhizhi Design Guidance

Visual transformation materials and media application of Chongqing dialect

In media integration, the boundary of materials is gradually melted, and visual design is not stuck in the single output of paper media. The cross-border integration of public art, installation art, and new media art also provide a different combination direction for the visual transformation display of dialects. Considering the visual display and presentation in combination with the breeding soil, regional culture, remarkable value, and other aspects of the regional dialect, the designer can focus on the visual design of the Chongqing dialect to consider what others think is "useless". Such as Chongqing's unique wharf culture vocabulary,

Paoge culture vocabulary, mountain city landform vocabulary, Etc. Every ingenious fusion design will produce different sparks. Artist Song Kang cooperates with Chongqing Westin Hotel to complete the installation art display by combining the writing method of traditional Chinese calligraphy with Chongqing dialect vocabulary. The plastic and iron materials used in the installation create a sense of penetration. The media is no longer a single form, which not only plays the role of visual display and communication, but also highlights the brand tonality of the hotel in Chongqing (Figure 6).



Figure 6 Chongqing dialect installation in Chongqing Westin Hotel

Source: Works of artist Song Kang

In the process of designing dialect vocabulary, we should consider the combination of technology products and other means. The technology mentioned here covers a wide range, and the software used in the design process can include planar or three-dimensional—the transformation of more dimensions in 2D and 3D. In the process of design and display, consider the static presentation of various forms of dialect vocabulary, or image through mobile phone applications or VR (Virtual Reality) glasses and other new media, so that static graphics can form a dynamic feeling. You can also use AI (Adobe Illustrator), AE (Adobe After Effects), and other software to create dynamic vocabulary presentations. A paper media and digital media integration platform will be built synchronously through EP, and big data VR will make a cross-domain immersive sensory interactive experience (Zhou, 2020).

Application scope of dialect visual atlas in Chongqing

Taking the public transport in Chongqing urban area as the network, the “inner circle” of urban dialect brand culture is shaped. Chongqing has a large metropolitan area, complex terrain, and a dense traffic network. Urban transportation, in the form of public transport, rail transit, urban water transport, taxis, and river crossing cableways, is the “mobile commentator” of Chongqing’s urban brand culture promotion. The subway has gradually become an indispensable means of transportation for people’s daily lives. It is a unique symbol to express people’s life, bearing rich cultural connotations and reflecting the background of the whole city (Dai, 2018). Ciqikou Subway Station is a must-pass station for most Chongqing tourists. Ciqikou is a famous old street in Chongqing and a water wharf in early cities. It is highly effective to carry out visual communication brand design in and around the subway station so that people can understand the culture of Chongqing in the mountain city. Pick up slang and slang from the Chongqing dialect and carry out visual communication design so that tourists arriving at the subway station can be attracted at a glance. It is more meaningful to follow, translate and find meaningful explanations completely different from words (Figure 7).



Figure 7 Image design of Chongqing dialect in Ciqikou subway station

Source: The photo is taken by the author’s design team

With Chongqing tourist attractions as the core, the “outer circle” of urban image culture is broadened. Chongqing is rich in cultural and tourism resources, including world cultural heritage, the cultural landscape of the mountain city, classic tourism, Etc. In addition to the

tourist attractions generally recognized by the public, there is also the unique dock culture, Paoge culture, BangBang Jun-the Stick Stick Army, and other popular cultures in Chongqing. The optical transmission of the Chongqing dialect makes tourism more memorable. Spread language, culture, and images to all parts of the world. Chongqing's unique two river cruise at night, urban CBD area (Jiangbeizui, Monument to the people's Liberation) based on lighting and other media means to implant dialect as the design subject. "Chongqing is famous for its night scenes," which has become a shining city card, attracting countless tourists. The economic scale and means at night are constantly expanding. 60% of urban consumption in Chongqing occurs at night. The data shows that the people's consumption and the activity of urban lights in Chongqing at night also provide a way and scope for science and technology to intervene in the design of visual transformation of dialects to shape the city brand (Figure 8).

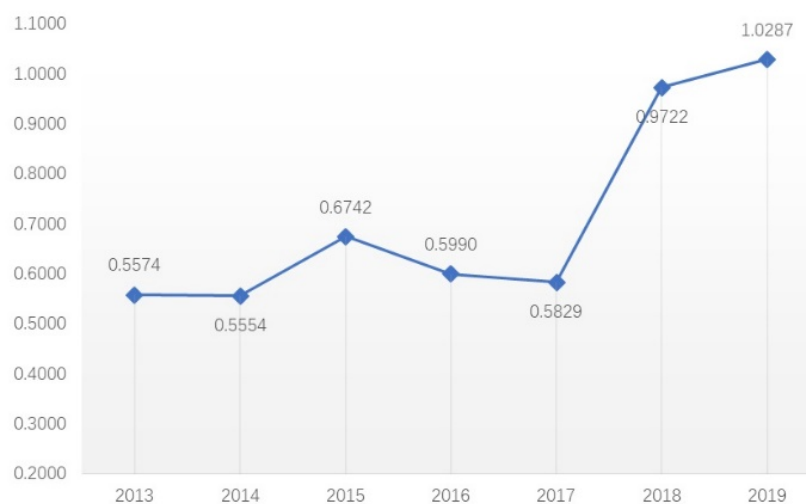


Figure 8 Chongqing nighttime lighting index from 2013 to 2019

Note: The data source is Chongqing Western Big Data Frontier Application Research Institute

Take museums, schools, communities, and cultural innovation parks in Chongqing as windows. The dialect culture will be transmitted to the younger generation through education, promotion, and communication. Chongqing's characteristic businesses will serve as branches to build street signs and distinct small stores of urban cultural brands with dialects as the starting point. Carry out visual implantation and sublimation in business circle activities, local characteristic commodity sales, real estate sales, Etc. In the creative market held at the living square in Yubei District, Chongqing, the dialect vocabulary device made with Chongqing dialect as the design carrier has pinyin notes and word meaning explanations on the device. People have read and explored the dialect content, attracting many young people to stop and take photos (Figure 9).



Figure 9 Chongqing Dialect Vocabulary Design Exhibition at Creative Market

Source: The Photo is taken by the author

Conclusion

Culture is a unique phenomenon of human society and the product of human creative activities. This creation is due to the ability of language. Culture is accumulated using language transmission (Shen, 2010). As an essential communication tool for people in Chongqing, the Chongqing dialect plays a vital role in reflecting the successful development of regional culture and also serves as a link and bridge for the spread of Chongqing culture. Therefore, studying the Chongqing dialect's visual transformation is necessary. Through the establishment of workshops and case analysis, and design summary strategies, this paper proposes ways to build a pictorial atlas through text design, voice interaction, and material media intervention. These design methods can be used in specific urban projects to enhance the awareness of urban brand design, improve cultural communication, and improve the aesthetic ability of urban residents. At the same time, it provides a reference for the creation of dialects. It also discusses the application of visual transformation of dialects in public transport, tourist attractions, core business districts, museums, and other places in Chongqing, providing a feasible basis for promoting Chongqing's urban brand image.

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