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Media, Power and Heritage Policy: A Critical Discourse Analysis of Himeji Castle's Entry Fee Proposal

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Abstract: This research aims to critically analyze a news article discussing the Mayor of Himeji's proposal to increase entry fees for foreign tourists visiting Himeji Castle using Norman Fairclough's Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) model. The study's significance lies in understanding how media discourse shapes public perception and policy decisions regarding tourism and heritage preservation. The methodology involves three levels of analysis: textual, discursive practice, and social practice. The results indicate that the media plays a crucial role in framing policy debates and influencing public opinion. The textual analysis reveals strategic language choices that frame the fee increase as a necessary measure for sustainable tourism and heritage preservation. Discursive practice analysis shows how the article's production context and use of authoritative quotes lend credibility to the policy while highlighting a bias by omitting diverse perspectives. The social practice analysis situates the discourse within broader socio-economic and political contexts, emphasizing the tension between economic benefits and cultural preservation. The study underscores the need for sustainable tourism practices that balance local and global interests and contribute to preserving cultural heritage sites.

Key words: critical discourse analysis, CDA, Norman Fairclough, media framing, Himeji Castle

Abstrak: Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis secara kritis sebuah artikel berita yang membahas usulan Walikota Himeji untuk meningkatkan biaya masuk bagi turis asing yang mengunjungi Kastil Himeji menggunakan model Analisis Wacana Kritis (CDA) dari Norman Fairclough. Signifikansi studi ini terletak pada pemahaman tentang bagaimana wacana media membentuk persepsi publik dan keputusan kebijakan terkait pariwisata dan pelestarian warisan budaya. Metodologi penelitian ini melibatkan tiga tingkat analisis: teks, praktik diskursif, dan praktik sosial. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa media memainkan peran penting dalam membingkai debat kebijakan dan mempengaruhi opini publik. Analisis tekstual mengungkapkan pilihan bahasa strategis yang membingkai peningkatan biaya sebagai langkah yang diperlukan untuk pariwisata berkelanjutan dan pelestarian warisan budaya. Analisis praktik diskursif menunjukkan bagaimana konteks produksi artikel dan penggunaan kutipan otoritatif memberikan kredibilitas pada kebijakan tersebut sambil menyoroti bias dengan mengabaikan perspektif yang beragam. Analisis praktik sosial menempatkan wacana dalam konteks sosial-ekonomi dan politik yang lebih luas, menekankan ketegangan antara manfaat

ekonomi dan pelestarian budaya. Studi ini menegaskan perlunya praktik pariwisata berkelanjutan yang menyeimbangkan kepentingan lokal dan global serta berkontribusi pada pelestarian situs warisan budaya.

Kata kunci: analisis wacana kritis, AWK, Norman Fairclough, pemingkaian berita, Kastil Himeji

INTRODUCTION

Himeji Castle, located in Hyogo Prefecture, Japan, is a UNESCO World Heritage Site renowned for its well-preserved feudal architecture and stunning white façade, earning it the nickname "White Heron Castle" (Crowe-Delaney, 2020; Matsuda, 2020). Originally built in the 14th century and extensively remodeled in the early 17th century, it stands as a prime example of Japanese castle construction and historical ingenuity (Benesch & Zwigenberg, 2019; Yoshihiro, 2020). Dougill (2014) stated that the castle is not only a symbol of Japan's cultural heritage but also a significant tourist attraction, drawing visitors from around the world. Its importance lies in both its historical value and its role in showcasing Japan's architectural and cultural legacy. Preserving Himeji Castle is crucial for maintaining the integrity of Japan's historical narrative and promoting sustainable cultural tourism.

The proposed policy change involves increasing entry fees for foreign tourists visiting Himeji Castle, a UNESCO World Heritage Site. Mayor Hideyasu Kiyomoto of Himeji has suggested "quadrupling" the current fee for international visitors while keeping a lower fee for local residents. This proposal aims to generate additional revenue for the maintenance and preservation of the castle amidst rising tourist numbers. The policy reflects a broader trend among heritage sites worldwide to balance the need for sustainable tourism with the protection of cultural landmarks (Edgell, 2019; Jimura, 2021). The suggested differential pricing has sparked a debate on its potential economic benefits and ethical implications, particularly concerning fairness and inclusivity for foreign tourists.

The primary purpose of this research is to conduct a critical discourse analysis (CDA) of a news article discussing the Mayor of Himeji's proposal to increase entry fees for foreign tourists visiting Himeji Castle. By employing Norman Fairclough's CDA model, the study aims to uncover the underlying power dynamics, ideologies, and social practices embedded within the media discourse. This analysis seeks to understand how language and representation in the news article influence public perception and policy-making processes. Additionally, the research aims to explore the broader implications of the proposed fee increase on tourism, heritage preservation, and equity in policy-making. By dissecting the textual, discursive, and social dimensions of the article, the study provides a comprehensive understanding of how media shapes and reflects societal attitudes towards cultural heritage and tourism management.

The significance of this research lies in its potential to contribute to several critical areas of inquiry. This research enhances our understanding of how media discourse influences public opinion and policy decisions regarding cultural heritage and tourism. By analyzing the language and rhetorical strategies in the article, it reveals the media's role in framing policy proposals and shaping public debates, which is valuable for policymakers, media practitioners, and scholars. The study also addresses challenges in sustainable tourism and heritage preservation, using Himeji Castle as a case study. The findings highlight the need for balanced approaches that

protect historical sites while accommodating tourism, which is relevant for heritage management professionals and local governments.

Additionally, the research raises questions about fairness and equity in policy-making. The proposed differential pricing for foreign tourists at Himeji Castle exemplifies the complexities of balancing local and global interests. By examining the ethical implications, the study contributes to discussions about justice and inclusivity in tourism management, informing future policy development.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) is a multidisciplinary approach to studying the relationship between language and society (Manzoor et al., 2019; Wodak, 2014; Catalano & Waugh, 2020). It focuses on how discourse shapes and is shaped by power dynamics, social structures, and cultural practices (Van Dijk, 2015; Zotzmann & O'Regan, 2016). According to Joye and Maesele (2022) CDA aims to uncover hidden ideologies and power relations in texts, revealing how language contributes to the maintenance and challenge of social inequalities. This approach is particularly useful for analyzing media texts, which play a crucial role in shaping public opinion and policy discourse (Phelan, 2017; Bouvier & Machin, 2020; Ramanathan & Hoon, 2015; Gama, 2024).

Norman Fairclough is a prominent figure in CDA, known for his three-dimensional framework that integrates linguistic analysis with social theory (Liu & Guo, 2016; Amoussou & Alagbe, 2018; Pešić, 2022). Critical Fairclough's model consists of three interrelated dimensions:

1. **Textual Analysis:** This dimension involves the close examination of the language, vocabulary, grammar, and textual structures within a text. It focuses on how specific linguistic features contribute to meaning-making and the construction of social realities.
2. **Discursive Practice Analysis:** This dimension explores how texts are produced, distributed, and consumed. It examines the processes of text production, the role of the media and other institutions in shaping discourse, and the ways in which texts are interpreted by audiences.
3. **Social Practice Analysis:** This dimension situates the text and discursive practice within broader social, cultural, and political contexts. It examines how discourse reflects, reinforces, or challenges existing social structures and power relations.

Numerous studies have applied CDA to analyze media discourse on various policy issues, highlighting the role of language in shaping public perceptions and policy debates (KhosraviNik, 2014; Qian, J., Wei, J., & Law, R. 2018). These studies have explored topics such as immigration, education reform, and environmental policies, demonstrating how media discourse can influence public opinion and policy outcomes. They have revealed the ways in which media texts construct narratives, legitimize certain viewpoints, and marginalize others, often reflecting broader societal power dynamics and ideological struggles (Gama, 2023).

Tourism plays a significant role in the global economy, contributing to cultural exchange and economic development (Du, Lew & Ng, 2016; Ranasinghe et al., (2021). Heritage sites, such as Himeji Castle, are key attractions that draw international visitors and generate revenue for

local communities (Iida & Fukushige, 2024; Rolamo & Park, 2023). However, managing these sites involves balancing the needs for preservation, accessibility, and sustainability (Hargrove, 2017). Leask (2022) and Leung et al., (2018) stated that entry fee policies are one tool used to manage visitor numbers and generate funds for maintenance and conservation. The discourse surrounding such policies often reflects broader debates about tourism management, cultural heritage preservation, and the economic impacts of tourism (Du Cros & McKercher, 2020; Timothy, 2014).

Fairclough's model provides a comprehensive framework for analysing the complex interplay between language, power, and society (Chalak & Ghasemi, 2017; Thonrborrow, 2014; Jalali & Sadeghi, 2014; Statham, 2022). By applying this model to the news coverage of the proposed entry fee increase at Himeji Castle, we can uncover the linguistic and discursive strategies used to frame the policy, the underlying ideologies and power relations, and the broader social contexts that shape and are shaped by this discourse. This approach allows for a nuanced understanding of how media texts construct and communicate policy issues, contributing to the critical examination of media practices and their implications for public discourse and policy-making.

METHOD

A. Research Design

This study employs a qualitative research design, focusing on a critical discourse analysis (CDA) of a news article regarding the Mayor of Himeji's proposal to increase entry fees for foreign tourists visiting Himeji Castle. The research design was structured around Norman Fairclough's three-dimensional framework, which integrates textual analysis, discursive practice analysis, and social practice analysis. This approach allows for a comprehensive examination of how language in media discourse reflects and shapes social, political, and cultural realities.

B. Data Collection

For this study, the primary data source was a news article titled "Mayor considering increasing Himeji Castle entry fees for overseas visitors." The article was selected based on the depth of information it provided about the proposed policy and its potential implications for public opinion. The news article was published on www.japantoday.com on June 18, 2024.

C. Data Analysis

The data analysis process follows Norman Fairclough's three-dimensional framework, enabling a detailed and multi-layered examination of the news article. The analysis will proceed as follows:

1. **Textual Analysis:** Conduct a detailed examination of the language and rhetorical devices used in the article, annotating key passages and noting patterns and themes.
2. **Discursive Practice Analysis:** Investigate the journalistic practices and institutional contexts behind the article's production, including interviews with journalists if possible and an examination of the publication's editorial policies.

3. Social Practice Analysis: Contextualize the article within broader societal debates, drawing on secondary sources such as academic literature, policy documents, and public opinion surveys.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

A. Textual Analysis

Textual analysis is a crucial component of Fairclough's Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) model. It involves a detailed examination of the language, vocabulary, and grammatical structures used in the text to uncover how meaning is constructed and conveyed. For this study, the following key aspects of the selected news article will be analyzed:

1. Examination of Key Words, Phrases, and Sentences

- a. Word Choices and Vocabulary

"Quadrupling": This strong verb indicates a significant increase, potentially eliciting a strong reaction from readers. It suggests a drastic change, emphasizing the magnitude of the proposed fee increase.

"Contemplating": This word suggests that the idea is still under consideration, not yet decided. It leaves room for public debate and reaction.

"Exclusive": The use of this word to describe the fee increase for foreign tourists highlights the discriminatory nature of the proposal, potentially provoking a sense of unfairness among readers.

- b. Phrases and Sentences

"Mayor of Himeji, western Japan": This introductory phrase provides the geographic and political context, situating the news within a specific location and authority.

"in response to increasing inbound tourism": This phrase presents the rationale behind the proposal, framing it as a reaction to a current trend. It implies that the increase in foreign tourists necessitates a policy response.

"a UNESCO World Heritage site": By mentioning Himeji Castle's prestigious status, the article emphasizes its global significance and the importance of preserving it.

2. Direct Quotes

"We would like to charge (the equivalent) of around \$30 for foreigners and around \$5 for residents": This direct quote from Mayor Kiyomoto clearly lays out the proposed fee structure, highlighting the disparity between fees for foreigners and residents.

"to avoid raising the admission fee for local residents": This quote suggests a protective stance towards local residents, potentially appealing to the local audience by framing the proposal as a benefit for them.

“too many visitors could damage the castle's keep”: This phrase introduces a preservationist argument, justifying the fee increase as necessary for protecting the cultural heritage site.

3. Sentences Reflecting Broader Context

“The city government said in a statement it will take proper measures to realize sustainable tourism”: This sentence reflects a commitment to sustainability, aligning the proposal with the broader goals of responsible tourism management.

“many World Heritage castles abroad collect higher fees than Himeji Castle”: This comparative statement justifies the proposed fee increase by contextualizing it within international practices, suggesting that the fee is reasonable and standard.

B. Analysis of Rhetorical Devices

1. Metaphors and Analogies

The castle is being described as *“a place of rest”*: for people uses a metaphor to emphasize its role beyond just a tourist attraction, enhancing its cultural and social value.

2. Framing and Emphasis

The proposal is framed within the context of a symposium on *“cultural heritage and natural disasters,”* which adds a layer of urgency and importance to the discussion, potentially swaying public opinion in favor of the fee increase.

The textual analysis reveals how the language used in the article constructs a narrative that frames the proposed entry fee increase as a necessary and reasonable measure in response to rising tourism and the need to preserve a valuable cultural heritage site. The use of specific words, phrases, and rhetorical devices shapes readers' perceptions and attitudes towards the proposal, highlighting the power of language in media discourse.

C. Discursive Practice Analysis

Discursive practice analysis focuses on the processes of text production, distribution, and consumption. It examines how texts are produced and consumed within specific social contexts and how they interact with other texts and discourses. This analysis will consider the following aspects:

1. Production

a. Source and Authorship

The news article is published by a leading national newspaper, which suggests a level of authority and influence. The production of this article involves journalistic practices such as reporting from the symposium where Mayor Kiyomoto made his remarks and subsequently covering the official statements from the city government.

b. Journalistic Practices

The inclusion of direct quotes from Mayor Kiyomoto and the city government, as well as contextual information about the castle and tourism trends, indicates a comprehensive journalistic approach. This thoroughness lends credibility and depth to the reporting.

c. Institutional Context

The newspaper's editorial policies likely influence how the story is framed. Emphasizing the economic and preservation aspects of the proposal reflects broader institutional priorities and perspectives on tourism and heritage management.

2. Distribution

a. Medium and Reach

Being published in a prominent national newspaper, the article reaches a wide audience, both domestically and internationally. This broad reach amplifies the impact of the discourse, shaping public opinion on a large scale.

b. Digital and Social Media

The article is likely to be distributed through the newspaper's online platform and social media channels, increasing its accessibility and potential for engagement. Online comments and social media shares further disseminate the discourse, facilitating public discussion and debate.

3. Consumption

a. Audience Interpretation

Different audience groups, including local residents, foreign tourists, policymakers, and heritage preservationists, may interpret the article differently based on their interests and perspectives.

b. Local Residents

Might appreciate the mayor's effort to keep fees low for them, resonating with the sentiment expressed in the quote "*to avoid raising the admission fee for local residents.*"

c. Foreign Tourists

Could perceive the fee increase as discriminatory or unfair, reacting to the exclusive focus on foreign visitors in the phrase "*quadrupling entry fees exclusively for foreign tourists.*"

d. Heritage Preservationists

May support the rationale of protecting the castle, aligning with the concern that "*too many visitors could damage the castle's keep.*"

4. Intertextuality and Interdiscursivity

a. Intertextual References

The article references other instances of fee increases at popular tourist destinations such as Mount Fuji and Itsukushima Shrine. This situates the proposal within a broader trend of managing tourism through economic measures, as seen in the sentence "*local governments are seeking additional funds to maintain tourism infrastructure by introducing or increasing fees.*"

b. Discursive Strategies

The use of statistics, such as the number of foreign visitors to Himeji Castle, provides empirical support for the mayor's proposal, framing it as a data-driven decision. The comparison with "*many World Heritage castles abroad*"

collecting higher fees also serves to legitimize the proposed increase by aligning it with international practices.

The discursive practice analysis reveals how the article is produced, distributed, and consumed within specific social and institutional contexts. The newspaper's journalistic practices, institutional priorities, and the broader media ecosystem influence how the story is framed and interpreted. The article employs various discursive strategies, including direct quotes, statistical data, and intertextual references, to construct a narrative that presents the fee increase as a reasonable and necessary measure. By examining these discursive practices, we gain insights into the mechanisms through which media texts shape public opinion and policy discourse.

D. Analysis of Social Practice

The analysis of social practice involves situating the discourse within broader social, economic, and political contexts. It examines how the text reflects, reinforces, or challenges existing social structures and power relations. This analysis considers the following aspects:

1. Societal Context

a. Tourism Trends

The article situates the proposed fee increase within the broader trend of increasing inbound tourism to Japan. The phrase "*in response to increasing inbound tourism*" highlights the rapid growth in foreign visitors, indicating a need for policy adjustments to manage this influx.

b. Heritage Preservation

The article underscores the importance of preserving Himeji Castle, a UNESCO World Heritage site and national treasure. The mention of the castle's wooden structure "*dating back to the early 17th century*" emphasizes its historical significance and the necessity of maintaining its integrity.

c. Economic Measures

The proposal is framed as an economic measure to generate additional funds for the castle's upkeep. The sentence "*local governments are seeking additional funds to maintain tourism infrastructure by introducing or increasing fees*" places the fee increase within the context of broader economic strategies to support sustainable tourism.

2. Power Relations

a. Local Government vs. Foreign Tourists

The proposal to increase fees exclusively for foreign tourists reflects a power dynamic where local authorities prioritize the interests of residents over those of international visitors. This is evident in the phrase "*to avoid raising the admission fee for local residents*," suggesting a protective stance towards the local population.

b. Preservation vs. Tourism

The discourse highlights a tension between the need to preserve the cultural heritage site and the economic benefits of tourism. The statement "*too many visitors could damage the castle's keep*" indicates concerns about the negative impact of high tourist numbers on the site's physical condition.

c. Global Standards

By comparing the proposed fees with those of "*many World Heritage castles abroad*," the article positions the local policy within a global context, suggesting that higher fees for international tourists are a common practice and thereby legitimizing the proposal.

3. Ideological Context

a. Nationalism and Cultural Pride

The emphasis on preserving Himeji Castle for local residents can be interpreted as an expression of cultural pride and nationalism. The decision to charge significantly lower fees for residents aligns with an ideology that prioritizes the protection and accessibility of national heritage for the local population.

b. Economic Pragmatism

The rationale behind the fee increase reflects an economically pragmatic approach to managing tourism and heritage preservation. The phrase "*realize sustainable tourism*" encapsulates this ideology, focusing on the long-term financial sustainability of maintaining the site through targeted economic measures.

c. Equity and Fairness

The differential pricing for residents and foreign tourists raises questions about equity and fairness. The explicit mention of charging "*around \$30 for foreigners and around \$5 for residents*" highlights the significant disparity, potentially provoking debates about the fairness of such policies in a globalized world.

The analysis of social practice reveals that the discourse surrounding the proposed entry fee increase for Himeji Castle is embedded within broader societal, economic, and ideological contexts. The article reflects concerns about heritage preservation, economic sustainability, and the equitable treatment of different visitor groups. It reinforces power relations by prioritizing local residents' interests while positioning the policy within global standards for heritage site management. This analysis highlights how media texts can shape and reflect broader social debates and policy considerations, providing a nuanced understanding of the interplay between language, power, and society.

DISCUSSION

The findings of this research highlight the intricate dynamics between media discourse, public perception, and policy-making in the context of tourism and heritage preservation. The

analysis of the news article discussing the Mayor of Himeji's proposal to increase entry fees for foreign tourists at Himeji Castle reveals several critical insights.

First, the textual analysis shows how specific language choices shape the narrative around the proposed policy change. The use of terms such as "quadrupling" and "sustainable tourism" conveys a sense of urgency and necessity. By emphasizing the need to protect the castle and manage the influx of tourists, the article frames the fee increase as a responsible and proactive measure. This framing is significant as it influences how readers perceive the policy—either as a justified action for preservation or a discriminatory practice against foreign tourists.

The discursive practice analysis sheds light on the broader context of the article's production and distribution. The article's origin from a reputable news outlet and its coverage at an international symposium suggest a strategic attempt to reach a wide audience and legitimize the mayor's proposal. The inclusion of quotes from Mayor Kiyomoto and references to other heritage sites' practices adds credibility and frames the policy within a global context of sustainable tourism. However, this also highlights a potential bias, as the perspectives of foreign tourists or local residents opposing the fee increase are notably absent, suggesting a one-sided narrative that supports the policy.

The social practice analysis situates the discourse within the broader socio-economic and political landscape. The proposal to increase fees for foreign tourists while keeping local fees low reflects underlying power dynamics and socio-political priorities. It underscores a common tension in tourism management—balancing economic benefits with cultural preservation and local interests. The policy aims to protect the heritage site from overuse and generate revenue for its maintenance, aligning with global trends in heritage management. However, it also raises ethical concerns about fairness and discrimination, particularly in a globalized world where tourism is a significant cultural and economic exchange mechanism.

Furthermore, the research underscores the media's influential role in shaping public opinion and policy debates. By framing the fee increase as a necessary step for sustainable tourism, the article not only informs but also persuades its audience. This persuasive power of the media highlights the importance of critically analyzing media discourse to understand how it can support or challenge policy decisions and public perceptions.

The findings also emphasize the need for sustainable tourism practices that consider both local and global interests. Policies like differential pricing must be carefully designed to balance heritage preservation with equitable access. Future research should explore the long-term impacts of such policies on visitor behavior and site preservation, as well as the responses of different stakeholders, including local communities and foreign tourists.

In conclusion, this study demonstrates the complex interplay between media discourse, public perception, and policy-making in the context of tourism and heritage preservation. By applying Fairclough's CDA model, the research reveals how language and discourse shape our understanding of and responses to policy changes. These insights are crucial for developing more informed, equitable, and sustainable approaches to managing cultural heritage sites in a globalized world. Future studies should continue to explore these dynamics across different cultural and political contexts to further our understanding of the global implications of tourism and heritage management.

CONCLUSION

This study provided a critical discourse analysis of a news article about the Mayor of Himeji's proposal to increase entry fees for foreign tourists at Himeji Castle, using Norman Fairclough's CDA model. The research revealed how media discourse shapes public perception and policy-making in tourism and heritage preservation.

Textual analysis showed that language choices like "quadrupling" and "sustainable tourism" frame the fee increase as necessary for preservation, influencing audience perception. Discursive practice analysis highlighted the broader context of the article's production, noting how quotes from the mayor and comparisons to other heritage sites lend credibility to the policy. However, the absence of diverse perspectives suggests a bias in support of the policy. Social practice analysis placed the discourse within the socio-economic and political landscape, highlighting the tension between economic benefits and cultural preservation. The differential pricing reflects power dynamics and socio-political priorities, aiming to protect the site while generating revenue, but raises ethical concerns about fairness.

Overall, this research underscores the media's powerful role in shaping public opinion and policy debates. The study highlights the importance of critically analyzing media discourse to address power dynamics and ideological constructs that influence policy responses. The findings emphasize the need for sustainable tourism practices that balance local and global interests, ensuring equitable treatment of all visitors while preserving heritage sites. Future research should explore the long-term impacts of such policies and conduct comparative studies across different cultural and political contexts to provide further insights into the global dynamics of tourism and heritage management.

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