

# 英汉社会话语中的 隐喻比较研究

——以政治演说为例

A Comparative Study of Metaphors in  
English and Chinese Social Discourse:  
The Case of Political Speech

柳超健◎著

中国社会科学出版社

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**To Ferry Liu**

## Preface

Through a comparative analysis of the conceptual metaphors identified in the political speeches by former US President Barack Obama and former Chinese President Hu Jintao, this book explores the similarities and differences between the conceptual metaphors in English and Chinese data, distills the deep causes underlying different metaphor choices on the basis of bodily and cultural experiences and proves that abstract concepts in Chinese political discourse are fundamentally metaphorical in nature. Moreover, the book considers some issues with respect to interdisciplinary research on metaphor.

Methodologically, the book divides the formal speeches from two leaders into five major categories, i. e. Address on National Independence, Address in University, Address on Earthquake Resistance and Disaster Relief, New Year Greetings and Inaugural Address. Based on the Conceptual Metaphor Theory (CMT) and a combination of quantitative and qualitative analysis, I adopt the Critical Metaphor Analysis (CMA), i. e. contextual analysis, metaphor identification, metaphor interpretation and metaphor explanation to carry out a comparative analysis of the conceptual metaphors in English and Chinese data.

In the course of the book, I strive to test the pervasiveness of con-

ceptual metaphors in Chinese political discourse; more specifically, I clarify whether abstract concepts are partially constructed and realized in terms of conceptual metaphors in Chinese data; I then identify and analyze the typical conceptual metaphors that occur in English and Chinese data, explore the similarities and differences between the conceptual metaphors in the two languages and distill the underlying factors behind the metaphor use from the perspective of culture and embodiment. The comparative study finally shows that:

- Conceptual metaphors are pervasive in the construction of abstract concepts in Chinese political discourse.

- Abstract concepts are partially constructed and realized in terms of conceptual metaphors in Chinese political discourse. There is, however, no employment of the abstract to metaphorize the abstract or the abstract to metaphorize the concrete.

- There are HUMAN metaphor, BUILDING metaphor, JOURNEY metaphor and FAMILY metaphor both in English and Chinese data; DRAMA metaphor and RELIGIOUS metaphor are specific to English data while WAR metaphor and CIRCLE metaphor are unique in Chinese data.

- The similarities between conceptual metaphors in English and Chinese political discourse originate from human experiential bases in the physical world rather than a thin air. Since Americans and Chinese share a large part of same or similar bodily and cultural experiences which human cognition is rooted in, it comes as no surprise that we can find the shared conceptual structures both in English and Chinese data.

- Human language patterns, cultural background and linguistic worldviews strongly influence the use of conceptual metaphors such that different characteristics and features can be reflected in the metaphori-

cal cognition of English and Chinese political languages respectively. Therefore, people from different cultural communities tend to use different metaphorical concepts in the conceptualization and categorization of the physical world.

## Acknowledgements

Nick C. Lau

Yunbinwan, Powerlong

January 2018

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The original title of this book is *A Comparative Study of Metaphors in English and Chinese Political Discourse*, but I need to make a compromise and get the title changed due to some unspeakable and you-know-what-I-mean reasons. Fortunately, there are still the people in my life that encourage me to move forward and persevere till the destination.

First and foremost, I would like to dedicate this book to my supervisor Liu Fagong, without whose patient guidance, insightful suggestions, fatherly encouragement and exceptional support, a study in this discipline would not have been completed in reasonable time.

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Special thanks are given to Liu Yuhong at Nanjing Normal University, Lai Yan and Qian Yufang at Communication University of Zhe-

## **List of Abbreviations**

- CMT Conceptual Metaphor Theory
- CMA Critical Metaphor Analysis
- MIP Metaphor Identification Procedure

# Contents

<b>Preface</b>	1
<b>Acknowledgements</b>	1
<b>List of Abbreviations</b>	1
<b>Chapter 1 Introduction</b>	1
1.1 Some preliminaries	1
1.2 Rationale and hypotheses	3
1.3 Research questions	6
1.4 Research significance	7
1.4.1 <i>Theoretical significance</i>	7
1.4.2 <i>Practical implications</i>	7
1.5 The structure of this book	8
<b>Chapter 2 Literature Review</b>	9
2.1 The historical background of different approaches to metaphor	9
2.1.1 <i>The linguistic approach</i>	10
2.1.2 <i>The pragmatic approach</i>	12
2.1.3 <i>The interactionist approach</i>	13

2.1.4	<i>The cognitive approach</i>	15
2.2	Metaphor and politics	16
2.3	Metaphor and ideology	18
2.4	Metaphor and political persuasion	20
2.5	Prior research on political metaphors at home and abroad	22
<b>Chapter 3 Methodology</b>		33
3.1	Research methodology and data collection	33
3.2	Research procedure	36
3.2.1	<i>Contextual analysis</i>	36
3.2.2	<i>Metaphor identification</i>	37
3.2.3	<i>Metaphor interpretation</i>	41
3.2.4	<i>Metaphor explanation</i>	42
<b>Chapter 4 Data Description and Analysis</b>		43
4.1	Conceptual metaphors in English data	43
4.1.1	<i>JOURNEY metaphor</i>	44
4.1.2	<i>HUMAN metaphor</i>	51
4.1.3	<i>BUILDING metaphor</i>	55
4.1.4	<i>DRAMA metaphor</i>	56
4.1.5	<i>FAMILY metaphor</i>	59
4.1.6	<i>RELIGIOUS metaphor</i>	62
4.2	Conceptual metaphors in Chinese data	65
4.2.1	<i>JOURNEY metaphor</i>	65
4.2.2	<i>HUMAN metaphor</i>	72
4.2.3	<i>WAR metaphor</i>	75
4.2.4	<i>FAMILY metaphor</i>	80

4. 2. 5	<i>BUILDING metaphor</i>	86
4. 2. 6	<i>CIRCLE metaphor</i>	90
<b>Chapter 5</b>	<b>Comparative Analysis and Discussions</b>	95
5. 1	Comparative analysis	95
5. 1. 1	<i>Categories of the conceptual metaphors in the data</i>	95
5. 1. 2	<i>The same metaphors in the data</i>	96
5. 1. 3	<i>Differences between the similar metaphors in the data</i>	97
5. 1. 4	<i>Comparison between the unique metaphors in the data</i>	107
5. 2	Discussions	112
<b>Chapter 6</b>	<b>Conclusion</b>	114
6. 1	Major findings of this study	114
6. 2	Implications of this study	116
6. 2. 1	<i>Metaphor and language teaching</i>	116
6. 2. 2	<i>Metaphor and translation</i>	117
6. 3	Limitations of this study and prospects for future research	118
	<i>Glossary</i>	120
	<i>English Bibliography</i>	126
	<i>Chinese Bibliography</i>	133
	<i>Appendix I Data Sources</i>	137
	<i>Appendix II Sample Texts</i>	139

## List of Figures

Figure 1	Principle stages of critical metaphor analysis	37
Figure 2	Method for critical metaphor analysis	40

## List of Tables

Table 1	Speeches from two leaders	35
Table 2	The statistics of conceptual metaphors in English and Chinese data	96
Table 3	The manifestation of cross-domain mappings of the two same metaphors	97
Table 4	The manifestation of JOURNEY metaphor	99
Table 5	Comparison between JOURNEY metaphor in English and Chinese data	99
Table 6	The correspondence of JOURNEY metaphor in English data	100
Table 7	The correspondence of JOURNEY metaphor in Chinese data	100
Table 8	Comparison of FAMILY metaphor in English and Chinese data	104
Table 9	DRAMA metaphor in English data and WAR metaphor in Chinese data	109

# Chapter 1 Introduction

## 1.1 Some preliminaries

Let me just begin by reflecting on the key concept of this book *metaphor*. By ‘metaphor’ I mean the phenomenon whereby we talk about, potentially, understand, experience and even reason about one kind of thing in terms of another (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980: 5; Semino, 2008: 1). For example, in the linguistic expression ‘long, rugged path towards prosperity and freedom’, we can see that a nation’s rising and development is talked about in terms of a long journey that involves some form of short-term suffering or struggle, which may reinforce a particular but perfectly reasonable way of thinking and even reasoning about the cause in terms of a PATH schema.

The common knowledge is that languages are dependent on human thoughts, and the processing of human thoughts is inseparable from the conceptual judgment and logical reasoning as well. To reveal the nature of language, we need to analyze and make sense of the cognitive subjects’ way of thinking through the use of their languages. Moreover, dialectical materialism theorists hold that people’s social existence determines their social consciousness and that people’s way of thinking is

closely related to their behavioral patterns which at least include the mode of social existence, the personal experience, and the social and cultural patterns. In fact, metaphor studies mainly deal with the complex relationships between people's way of thinking and their behavioral patterns in that metaphor is pervasive in everyday life, not just in language but in thought and action, and our ordinary conceptual system, in terms of which we both think and act, is fundamentally metaphorical in nature (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980: 1; Xie, 2007: preface). The following is an example of such a set (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980: 4).

- 100 Your claims are *indefensible*.
- 110 He *attacked every weak point* in my argument.
- 120 His criticisms were *right on target*.
- 130 I *demolished* his argument.
- 140 I've never *won* an argument with him.
- 150 You disagree? Okay, *shoot!*
- 160 If you use that *strategy*, he'll *wipe you out*.
- 170 He *shot down* all of my arguments.

Given all these sentences, we may note that a large part of the way we speak about argument or debate in English derives from the way we speak about war. Technically, some elements in the concrete conceptual domain 'war' equipped with a highly organized structure get mapped onto the elements in the relatively abstract conceptual domain 'argument' without a systematic structure. Within CMT, an important distinction needs to be implicitly introduced between metaphorical expression, such as 'shoot down' and its corresponding conceptual metaphor