

# 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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## 图书在版编目(CIP)数据

英汉社会话语中的隐喻比较研究:以政治演说为例/柳超健著.  
—北京:中国社会科学出版社,2018.3  
ISBN 978-7-5203-2209-6

I. ①英… II. ①柳… III. ①隐喻—对比研究—英语、汉语  
IV. ①H15②H315

中国版本图书馆 CIP 数据核字(2018)第 052702 号

---

出 版 人 赵剑英  
责任编辑 陈肖静  
责任校对 牛 玺  
责任印制 戴 宽

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出 版 中国社会科学出版社  
社 址 北京鼓楼西大街甲 158 号  
邮 编 100720  
网 址 <http://www.csspw.cn>  
发 行 部 010-84083685  
门 市 部 010-84029450  
经 销 新华书店及其他书店

---

印 刷 北京明恒达印务有限公司  
装 订 廊坊市广阳区广增装订厂  
版 次 2018 年 3 月第 1 版  
印 次 2018 年 3 月第 1 次印刷

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开 本 710×1000 1/16  
印 张 11.5  
插 页 2  
字 数 163 千字  
定 价 48.00 元

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## 浙江省社科规划课题成果（16NDJC164YB）



**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



## Acknowledgements

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.

I also appreciate the scholarly help I have received from Chai Gaiying, Chen Mingyao, Fan Zhenqiang, Jia Aiwu, Pan Zhangxian, Shang Biwu, Wang Lei, Wang Shuwen and Yang Xianju, whose teaching and lecturing are of great significance to the fulfillment of this research. But their help of course means a lot more for me than just taking scholarly advice.

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**



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# 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).

Your claims are *indefensible*.

He *attacked every weak point* in my argument.

His criticisms were *right on target*.

I *demolished* his argument.

I've never *won* an argument with him.

You disagree? Okay, *shoot*!

If you use that *strategy*, he'll *wipe you out*.

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