

Conceptual Metaphors in Chinese Government Work Reports and American State of the Union Addresses

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Abstract: This study focuses on the types of conceptual metaphors used in Chinese Government Work Reports (CGWRs) and American State of the Union addresses (ASUAs). The corpus selected in this paper is government work reports of China and United States for three consecutive years (2020-2022). The Conceptual Metaphor Theory of cognitive linguistics is used as the theoretical basis, and the differences in the use of political metaphors between Chinese and English are compared by combining critical metaphor analysis (CMA). Through CMA, conceptual metaphor types are derived from these two discourses, and combined with metaphorical criticisms, the hidden ideologies in CGWRs and ASUAs are analyzed.

1. Introduction

Metaphors are widely used in everyday communication, politics, education, science, and other fields. The famous British rhetorician Richards^[1] pointed out that metaphors are pervasive in our daily lives; on average, there is a metaphor in every three sentences. However, at present, Chinese college students generally lack metaphorical competence. Danesi^[2] argues that metaphorical competence is as important as communicative competence because it is closely related to the way in which a conceptual system constructs a culture. CGWRs and ASUAs are an advanced form of political speech, representing the different attitudes and ideologies possessed by the two countries toward the world. The ideological differences reflected in the government work reports lead to the differences in the foreign behavior of the two countries, which become the behavioral guidelines for the political, economic, and military activities of the two countries. In terms of the research on government work reports, fewer scholars in the west have studied discourse of government work reports, while there are relatively more in China, but most of their studies focus on the English translation of the CGWRs.

2. Theoretical Framework

2.1. Conceptual Metaphor Theory

Metaphor is not linguistic in nature but conceptual, and Lakoff & Johnson (2008)^[3] points out that the trajectory of metaphor is not in language but in the way we conceptualize one mental

domain in terms of another, and that the general theory of conceptual metaphor is a description of cross-domain mappings. Metaphors in everyday life are cross-domain mappings in conceptual systems. Specifically, a metaphor can be understood as a mapping from a source domain to a target domain. Where the source domain is a familiar and more concrete thing, and the target domain is a relatively unfamiliar and abstract thing.

Metaphorical mapping consists of four basic processes: mapping from the source domain to the target domain; various relationships in the source domain are mapped to various relationships in the target domain; attributes in the source domain are mapped to attributes in the target domain; and knowledge in the source domain is mapped to knowledge in the target domain.

2.2. Critical Metaphor Analysis

CMA is a metaphor analysis method proposed by Charteris-Black in 2004, which combines corpus analysis, CDA, pragmatics and cognitive linguistics to analyze the linguistic, pragmatic, and cognitive features of metaphors. CMA uses a corpus approach to identify metaphors, interpret them from a pragmatic and cognitive perspective, and determine their ideological rhetorical basis by analyzing their discourse functions. CMA is an effective complementary method for delving into the relationship between language, thought, and society.

Just as CDA aims to reveal the power relations in discourse, CMA aims to reveal the implicit intentions of discourse users. How does CMA achieve this function? Charteris-Black^[4](2004) summarizes three steps of CMA, namely, metaphor identification, metaphor interpretation and metaphor explanation. Metaphor identification aims to check the semantic tension between the source domain and the target domain and consists of two steps: the first step is to read the text carefully and identify candidate metaphors according to certain criteria, and the second step is to analyze the candidate metaphor keywords to determine their meaning. Metaphor interpretation is to reveal the pragmatic and cognitive factors of metaphors, and to identify the conceptual metaphor and conceptual key in the discourse. Metaphor explanation aims to reveal the relationship between metaphor and social context as well as the social ideology and power relations implied behind the metaphor. The three steps build up a framework for CMA. CMA is like a mirror that highlights the social reality hidden behind the discourse and exposes the relationship between language, thinking and society behind the discourse.

3. Methodology

3.1. Research Design

This study uses the qualitative approach utilizing rhetorical criticism particularly metaphorical criticisms. In this qualitative study, the linguistic features of ASUAs and CGWRs from 2020 to 2022 are described, analyzed and compared to ascertain the differences in the use of metaphors between the two political discourses from the perspective of conceptual metaphors. Based on the CMA method, conceptual metaphor types are derived from these two discourses, and the hidden ideologies in CGWRs and ASUAs are analyzed.

The basic purpose of metaphorical criticism employed in this study is the following: First, how do CGWRs and ASUAs use metaphor to guide the listener/reader in the direction it wants? Second, how does the metaphor help CGWRs and ASUAs construct a "reality" that is favorable to it or that it wishes to present to the audience and convince the audience/reader of its truth? What are the motives for doing so? Third, how does metaphor work in stimulating the listener's/reader's emotions and thus influencing his or her attitudes and behavior?

3.2. Corpora of the Study

The corpus of this study involves the transcripts of the three latest CGWRs and three latest American State of Union Addresses as shown in table 1. The transcripts of the English version of the CGWRs were taken from www.cicg.org.cn/(China International Communications Group), and the transcripts of the ASUAs were taken downloaded from www.whitehouse.gov/(the United States Federal Government). China International Communications Group is an international communications agency that undertakes the task of promoting the People's Republic of China to the outside world. It is an institution directly under the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China and plays an active role in building a Chinese discourse and Chinese narrative system. Therefore, the agency can guarantee the accuracy of the translations to the greatest extent and reflect the official Chinese views. www.whitehouse.gov/ is the official U.S. website that contains transcripts of the President, Vice President, their families, press releases, announcements, executive orders, and speeches by White House officials.

Table 1: CGWRs and ASUAs Selected as Corpora of the Study

Discourse	Premier	Year	Discourse	President	Year
CGWR	Li Keqiang	2020	ASUA	Donald J. Trump	2020
CGWR	Li Keqiang	2021	ASUA	Joseph R. Biden	2021
CGWR	Li Keqiang	2022	ASUA	Joseph R. Biden	2022

3.3. Instrumentation

Observation in qualitative research is "one of the oldest and most fundamental research methods approaches. This approach involves collecting data using one's senses, especially looking, and listening in a systematic and meaningful way" [5]. This study focuses on observation as a research tool to examine the types of conceptual metaphors used in CGWRs and ASUAs and to reveal the ideological differences behind the different conceptual metaphors.

Throughout the research project, the researchers were required to read and annotate the corpus texts several times, and then to conduct comparative analysis of CGWRs and ASUAs through CMA. In addition, what is noticed and considered important in the conceptual metaphor identification process varies depending on the researcher's level of experience.

To ensure the validity of the statistical results, peers and researchers were asked to label and negotiate the differences, and the final labeling results were obtained after two rounds of revision. Therefore, the researcher's supervisor, a senior faculty member at his institution with a PhD, and two of his colleagues were also involved in the process of observe conceptual metaphors to ensure maximum reliability and consistency of the observations.

Finally, the observation report is not just descriptive; it is also analytical. According to CMA, a critic is expected to both report what he sees - which may not be all he sees - and comment on the implications of what he sees. Therefore, special attention must be paid to the steps of CMA analysis to make reliable and appropriate judgments.

4. Results and Discussion

4.1. Types of Conceptual Metaphors in the CGWRs and ASUAs

After sorting and summarizing the corpus, 9 types of conceptual metaphors were derived. The researcher classified the types of conceptual metaphors in CGWRs and ASUAs and determined the statistical distribution of conceptual metaphors in CGWRs and ASUAs, as shown in table 2 and

table 3.

Table 2: Types of Conceptual Metaphors Identified in CGWRs and ASUAs

Types of Metaphors	Conceptual Metaphors
Orientational metaphor	Up/down metaphor
	Front/back metaphor
	Central/peripheral Metaphor
Ontological metaphor	Body metaphor
	Plant metaphor
	Container metaphor
Structural Metaphor	Journey metaphor
	Building metaphor
	War metaphor

From the table we can see the biggest difference between the metaphors in CGWRs and ASUAs is reflected in the central/peripheral metaphor. From the table 2 we can see that in the CGWRs, there are 60 central/peripheral metaphors, while there are only 3 central-peripheral metaphors in ASUAs. Through the analysis of metaphor keywords "core" and "central", there are two main cases of collocation, one is the president as the "core", another is Party as the "central", which reflects the high status of the president in China and the absolute leadership of the Chinese Communist Party.

Table 3: Frequency and Percentage Distribution of Conceptual Metaphors in CGWRs and ASUAs

Types		CGWRs		ASUAs	
		F	%	F	%
OrM	UM	136	24.42	102	43.59
	FrM	28	5.03	21	8.97
	CeM	60	10.77	3	1.28
Subtotal		221	39.38	126	53.85
OnM	BoM	88	15.80	21	8.97
	PM	89	15.98	14	5.98
	CoM	20	3.59	15	6.41
Subtotal		197	35.37	50	21.37
SM	JM	64	11.49	15	6.41
	BuM	53	9.52	17	7.26
	WM	22	3.95	26	11.11
Subtotal		139	24.96	58	24.79
Total		557	100.00	234	100.00

Note: F=frequency, %=percentage, OrM=orientational metaphor, UM=up/down metaphor, FrM=front/back metaphor, CeM=central/peripheral metaphor, OnM=Ontological Metaphor, BoM=body metaphor, PM=plant metaphor, CoM=container metaphor, SM=structural metaphor, JM=journey metaphor, BuM=building metaphor, WM=war metaphor

4.2. Ideologies Manifested in CGWRs and ASUAs

Conceptual metaphors reflect the way of thinking behind the language and the ideology behind it, and have social functions.

First, metaphors are characterized by ideological consistency. This is evident from the similar overall proportions of orientation metaphors, ontological metaphors, and structural metaphors in CGWRs and ASUAs. The most basic values in Chinese culture are consistent with the metaphorical

structure of most basic concepts in American ideology. In up/down metaphors, the orientation concept "up" implies positive attitude both in Chinese and English, which is associated with good things; the orientation concept "down" implies a negative attitude, which is associated with bad things. For example, "having control or force", "more", "high status", expressed in the same orientation metaphor "up", are considered as good things; while "being subject to control or force", "less", "low status" is considered bad things and are expressed in the same orientation metaphor "down". The same is true for ontological metaphors, as in English culture "HUMAN BODY IS A CONTAINER FOR EMOTIONS", and in Chinese culture we say "chong man le fen lu", means full of anger. In this way, the ideologies of any culture in any country do not exist independently, but form a coherent system with the conceptual metaphors we rely on.

Second, conceptual metaphors can reflect different ideologies. In terms of national image construction, although both Chinese and American governments want to build a great power image, they do it in different ways. ASUAs put China on the opposite side by using a lot of war metaphors and explicitly state "China's massive theft of American jobs (A1¹, P31, S1) ""China has taken advantage of the United States (A1, P31, S4)" "We're in a competition with China and other countries to win the 21st Century (A2, P37, S3)", "That means making sure every nation plays by the same rules in the global economy, including China.(A2, P137, S2)" thus placing the image of China in opposition to the ideologies promoted by the United States, "theft"" competitor" "rule-breaker" and other images spread among the American public. This is clearly intended to divert social discontent from the U.S. economic downturn, to direct public hatred toward China, and to justify the U.S. government. The CGWRs, on the other hand, are building the government's image by what they have done in the past year, such as the extensive use of STATES ARE CONTAINERS in the container metaphor, which is meant to show the Chinese government's achievements in poverty eradication.

5. Conclusions

Based on the findings, the researcher drew the following conclusions: First, country leaders tend to use different types of metaphors for different purposes, such as the building of the image of the country or the government, the highlighting of their achievement, and the planning for the next year. Second, the ideological differences reflected in the government work reports lead to the differences in the foreign behavior of the two countries, which become the behavioral guidelines for the political, economic, and military activities of the two countries. Third, conceptual metaphors and ideology are closely related. Conceptual metaphors imply multiple ideological functions, while ideology and power relations also determine the construction of conceptual metaphors.

References

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¹ Note:A1=ASUA 2020, A2=ASUA2021, A3=ASUA2022, P=paragraph, S=sentence