

The Ideology of China From Perspectives of Conceptual Metaphor—Illustrated by Xi Jinping's 2020 New Year Speech

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Metaphor not only is a rhetorical device but also could be a cognitive mechanism. Conceptual metaphor has raised great attention in cognitive linguistics in recent years. The present study examines the conceptual metaphor in 2020 New Year Speech and classifies different conceptual metaphor into their own type and calculates the frequency. The results show that orientation metaphor occupies highest frequency, 10 times. The findings reveal that all kinds of conceptual metaphors serve to make the speech vivid and try to get people closed. There is no aggression in the speech. President Xi used conceptual metaphor to better convey the gains of the past year and the direction of the next year, while at the same time conveying the image of a friendly country in the world.

Keywords: conceptual metaphor, discourse analysis, New Year Speech

Introduction

Conceptual metaphor has raised great attention in cognitive linguistics in recent years. Metaphors appear in almost every three sentences in our daily conversation (Richards, 1936).

The object of the present study is to investigate which types of conceptual are most frequently used in New Year Speech and how these conceptual metaphors serve to the speech, finally, to make a conclusion about the characteristics of President Xi's speech. The significance of exploring conceptual metaphor in New Year Speech is twofold. First of all, it provides a new way to better understand the meaning of the speech. Secondly, from an applied point of view, the results of the study could give us a new idea on how to deliver a perfect speech. In a nutshell, the analysis of the conceptual metaphor in New Year Speech might open up more avenues for studies of conceptual metaphor, cognitive linguistics as well as the usage of language.

This paper is organized as follows. Section 2 briefly reviews the development of conceptual metaphor and previous work of it. Section 3 illustrates the data that the paper used and methodology. Section 4 is an in-depth analysis of the conceptual metaphor in New Year Speech. The findings and results are then discussed in Section 5.

Theoretical Framework

George Lakoff and Mark Johnson (1980) first jointly developed the "Conceptual Metaphor Theory", which in turn has given birth to a lot of excellent academic research results. Conceptual metaphor theory discusses the cognitive mechanism of metaphors. It elaborates the deep logic of language and reflects human

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thinking and mind. Conceptual metaphor is defined as the core of human cognitive mechanism, which includes source domain, target domain, mapping, idealized cognitive model, and image schema. The source domain refers to the conceptual domain where the expression begins, and the target domain refers to the destination domain where the metaphor is applied. After a systematic mapping from source domain to target domain, the characteristics that originally belong to the source domain are mapping to the target domain. Thus, it established a similar relationship in order to construct a new concept, metaphorical meaning. However, conceptual metaphor theory mostly assumes that features and relationships from the source domain are automatically mapped with target domain, without predicting what reasons these projections occur.

Many scholars have studied conceptual metaphors from different aspects. Elly Ifantidou and Anna Hatzidaki (2019) investigated the impact of the modulation on metaphor understanding in second language learning. Dušan Stamenković et al. (2019) took an individual-differences approach to explore the comprehension of a variety of metaphors. Nadežda Silaški and Tatjana Đurovic (2019) analyzed the journey metaphor in Brexit-related political cartoons. Previous studies seldom focus on the discourse analysis; this paper will focus on New Year Speech. And we hope to share some lights on conceptual metaphor in discourse analysis.

Data and Methodology

The data of this paper are taken from New Year Speech, which was delivered by Xi Jinping in 2020. The speech consists of 1897 Chinese characters and the sentences which were covered by conceptual metaphor are 1,135 Chinese characters. Conceptual metaphor accounts for 59.83% of the full speech. From the statistics, it can be conducted that conceptual metaphors are frequently used in 2020 New Year Speech.

Based on the theory of George Lakoff and Mark Johnsen's conceptual metaphor, we classified different metaphors into different subcategories to explore the following questions:

1. Which metaphor is frequently used in the speech?
2. How do these metaphors serve to the speech?
3. What are the characteristics of President Xi's speech?

Analysis

Table 1

The Distribution of the Conceptual Metaphor in New Year Speech

	Economy	Politics	Culture
Architecture metaphor	4	1	2
War metaphor	3	0	0
Orientation metaphor	7	3	0
Apparel metaphor	2	0	1
Animal metaphor	1	0	0
Container metaphor	3	2	1
Accouchement metaphor	1	0	0
Journey metaphor	0	2	2
Personification metaphor	0	1	0
River metaphor	0	0	1
Literature metaphor	0	0	1
Total	21	9	8

We classify these conceptual metaphors into economic conceptual metaphor, political conceptual metaphor, and cultural conceptual metaphor. And within these fields of conceptual metaphor, we classified every conceptual metaphor into their types, as shows in Table 1.

From Table 1, we can conclude that in economical area total number of conceptual metaphor is 21, which is the highest among these three fields, followed by political area, culture area. In each fields of conceptual metaphor, there are one or more than one type of conceptual metaphor that is unique among the others. In economy, war metaphor, animal metaphor, and accouchement metaphor are special among other areas. Personification metaphor is only used in politics. There are two conceptual metaphors which are unique in cultural area, namely river metaphor and literature metaphor. And we will analysis these special cases in each area of the conceptual metaphor in following sections.

Economy

In this field, conceptual metaphors are most frequently used. Orientation metaphor most often occurs, totally seven times.

- a. 个人所得税起征点提高了, 老百姓常用的许多药品降价了, 网络提速降费使刷屏更快了。

Orientation metaphors show the trend. A is a typical example of orientation metaphor. The words “提高” “降价” are signs of this kind of conceptual metaphor. From the example, we could infer that our government pays more attention on the poverty and lets people work and live in peace. Also information era brings more convenience. The reason why orientation metaphor occupies the highest frequency is that our government needs the statics and trend to show how much progress we have made and make a difference during last year.

- b. 坚决打赢脱贫攻坚战。

- c. 基层减负年让基层干部轻装上阵。

War metaphor uses some words which are related to war to mapping with events, thus putting the salience on the event. Examples b and c are typical in this kind of conceptual metaphor. The government uses “war” to indicate the difficulties of the event and the determination to fight against the event. “轻装上阵” is a state that fights against in the war. Using this war metaphor is to show the reduction of the workload of grassroots workers. The reason why New Year Speech uses war metaphor is that to harvest a better economic development, our government is like to fight against a war.

- d. 北京大兴国际机场 “凤凰展翅”。

This is an example of animal metaphor. Beijing Da Xing Airport is a new airport. The government uses phoenix to describe the new airport. In China, “phoenix” means reborn. Da Xing Airport was built to divert passenger flow from Beijing Airport. Therefore, it is a perfect mapping between two entities.

- e. 改革开放不断催生发展活力。

Accouchement metaphor is only used in economic area. “催生” vividly describes the burst of vitality. Reform and opening up policy is like the birth of a new baby. The effect of reform and opening up is stupendous. Thus using accouchement metaphor is most suitable.

Politics

The usage of conceptual metaphor in political field ranked second. Like in economic area, orientation metaphors are most frequently used, totally three times, followed by container metaphor and journey metaphor two times. What is unique in this area is personification metaphor.

- a. 中国继续张开双臂拥抱世界。

A is the example of personification metaphor. In New Year Speech, President Xi personifies China into human who have arms and can hug. The reason why he uses personification metaphor in political area is to create a friendly image of a great country in the world and promote world peace and stability. Thus, using personification metaphor is a sagacious choice.

b. 国防和军队改革扎实推进。

Like in economical fields, orientation metaphors also are the most frequently used conceptual metaphor in political area. Sentence b is the typical example of orientation metaphor. In Example b, our country has increased National Defense Forces to protect our nation safety. From what have already discussed above in economy section, we are aware of the purpose of using this kind of conceptual metaphor. That is to show the trend of our nation's politics. Therefore, we could infer that China always pursues a friendly foreign policy.

Culture

Economy, politics, and culture are three essential aspects for a country. Economy is the foundation of a country, and culture is the superstructure. And culture reflects the prosperity of a country. River metaphor and literature metaphor are unique in this field. Architecture metaphor and journey metaphor occurs most frequently.

a. 爱国主义精神构筑起民族的脊梁。

b. 河西走廊穿越千年。

A and b are architecture metaphors. In Example a, the verb “构筑” always uses in construction. In architecture metaphor, the source domain is related to architecture; the target domain is highly overlapped with those features which the architecture has. In Example b, corridor belongs to one of the edifice. Only corridor has the quality cross; therefore, the vivid image of the Hexi Corridor reflects the heritage of culture.

c. 初心和使命是我们走好新时代长征路的不竭动力。

It is the instance of journey metaphor. The sentence “life is a journey” is recognized as a famous example in conceptual metaphor. Every journey has a beginning and an ending, and on the way to the destination, we will definitely go through all kinds of sadness and happiness. Our life has the same features; thus, life is a journey. In Example c, Chinese revolution is a path. What we should do is to go through it with determination. Finally, the results will surely satisfy us.

d. 天安门广场成了欢乐的海洋。

River metaphor is only used in cultural field. The characteristic of the ocean is wide. President Xi used this river metaphor which can indicate that Tiananmen Square was full of people at that time. People get together to celebrate our country's birthday. And everyone is happy and satisfied. We could infer that the quality of life of residents has improved significantly. These are all manifestations of cultural prosperity.

e. 他们以普通人的平凡书写了不平凡的人生。

Literature metaphor occurs only in cultural field. As we all know, our life cannot be written down. But, President Xi used literature metaphor to describe those ordinary people who live the extraordinary life. We could notice the sameness between “write” and “live”. The words that are written down are like the life we live, which is full of struggle and sweetness. Thus, there is a phrase in Chinese “书写人生”.

Discussion and Conclusion

The paper use conceptual metaphor to analyze 2020 New Year Speech from three fields (economy,

politics, and culture). We classify these metaphors into architecture metaphor, war metaphor, orientation metaphor, apparel metaphor, container metaphor, accouchement metaphor, journey metaphor, personification metaphor, river metaphor, and literature metaphor. In total, 11 types.

In economics field, orientation metaphor often occurs, totally seven times. Animal metaphor and accouchement metaphor only occur in this field. In political field, also, orientation metaphors are most frequently used. Personification metaphor is a unique type in this field. In cultural fields, architecture metaphor and journey metaphor are highly used. There are two special types in this field: river metaphor and literature metaphor. In total, orientation metaphor occupies highest frequency, 10 times. The reason why this type of conceptual metaphor ranked the highest is that it shows the trend. New Year Speech aims to show the production of the last year and let people know the direction we are following. It is highly coincide with the purpose of using orientation metaphor. Therefore, orientation metaphor was used throughout New Year Speech.

From what we have already discussed above, we can draw the conclusion that the conceptual metaphors are used in almost every sentence in New Year Speech. And different types of conceptual metaphor have their own contribution to the whole speech. War metaphor demonstrates the difficulties in fighting against the poverty; orientation metaphor indicates the trend for development; journey metaphor illustrates the process we are carrying on. All these conceptual metaphors serve to make the speech vivid and try to get people closed. There is no aggression in the speech. President Xi used conceptual metaphor to better convey the gains of the past year and the direction of the next year, while at the same time conveying the image of a friendly country in the world.

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