

A Study of Conceptual Metaphors in Economic Reports

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The language policy and curriculum in Taiwan have been balancing academic needs, ideology, and political intention. This is an exploratory case study whose purpose is to explore the interrelationship between teachers and administrators and immigrants' perceptions of this language policy. Four teachers, three administrators, and a male immigrant were interviewed. Data were collected through interviews and a classroom observation in northern and central Taiwan. This study found that present policy has caused teachers' difficulty in teaching these new immigrants due to diverse student body that contained elder Taiwanese and new immigrants with different Mandarin proficiency. Also, the textbook and limited resources and facility also had become the challenge for local schools to implement RCCC (Recognizing Chinese Character Class).

Keywords: language policy, immigrants, Chinese instruction, policy implementation

Introduction

Conceptual metaphor is considered to be everywhere in human's life when it was first mentioned in the book *Metaphors We Live by*. The British rhetorician also argues that metaphors can be found every three sentences in daily conversation (Gan, 2015). The output of this theory provided a cognitive foundation for the study on the production and presentation form of language. It is directly stated that metaphor is a cognitive statement and it is the fundamental condition of human's organizational conceptual system. And similarity is the fundamental condition of metaphoric meaning.

In daily life, people tend to understand more thoroughly to something they are familiar with. When you want to express the characteristics of one thing by another thing, you will habitually choose a thing that you are most familiar with or interested in. You may use a familiar thing to analogy a strange thing, or use a concrete thing to express an abstract thing, even a tangible thing to analogy an intangible thing. All of these ways are to fulfill the aim of metaphor. The working mechanism of metaphor exists in the mapping of source domain to target domain, which enables people to understand the abstract concept of target domain through an understandable concept.

This paper tries to analyze economic discourse in the perspective of linguistics, which is of great practical significance for domestic economic development and research and try to explore the conceptual culture behind the economic discourse.

Literature Review

The study of metaphor began in 1990 in China, when Shu Dingfang stated clearly that metaphor is a

cognitive method, which breaks the limit of the theory that metaphor is only a figure of speech. Lin firstly studied the word “angry” by conceptual metaphor through Chinese and English. And the research objects are also increasingly wide, varying from advertisement to news media. She believes that metaphor is a cognitive structural system combining dynamic and static state. Then Wang and Xiong’s further study proved the origin of metaphor lies in the similarity between the two objects in the source domain and target domain it refers to. Xiao studied the none of locality in Chinese and English through the conceptualization of space-time and linguistic representation. Liu and Liu also made a systematic study on the conceptual metaphors of upper and lower spaces in Chinese and English.

There are also many studies on political speech. Liang and Wang attempt to use the conceptual theory to analyze the conceptual metaphor in the corpus of the two speeches on health insurance by Bush and Obama, and to reveal the different moral values of these two parties through the framework theory (Liang & Wang, 2015). Gan (2015) selected some speeches by Chinese and American leaders and made a comparative analysis of the conceptual metaphors in them, trying to find out the similarities and differences of political metaphors between China and the United States, so as to help us better understand the deep meaning behind the political discourse between China and the United States.

Economic discourse is an important part of real-world interaction. So economic metaphor has drawn the attention of both economists and applied language scholars. Economic metaphor was initially regarded as an instrument to decorate economic discourse. Then it becomes an important mechanism to explore the nature of economic phenomena. Later the naming of economic phenomena also has its corresponding metaphor label. Because economics is not only scientific and logical, but also flexible and humanistic, large amount of metaphor appears in economic texts. Economists study the knowledge representation in economics while linguists emphasize the recursive and communicative functions of metaphor.

At present, the research on the essence of metaphor has been quite mature, and many scholars have put it into practice, such as the combination with literary discourse, the combination with people’s political and economic life, and the combination with teaching practice. However, domestic research on economic discourse in the English-speaking world is obviously insufficient.

The Conceptual Metaphor Analysis on Economical Discourse

In order to have a better comprehension of the conceptual metaphor in economic discourse, we take China’s position on Sino-US economic and trade consultations as an example. It is published in June 2019 by the State Council Information Office of the People’s Republic of China. The aim of this White Paper is to show a clear picture of the China-US economic and trade conditions and present China’s policy attitude.

The War Metaphor

War metaphor always has always accounted for a large proportion in conceptual metaphor. And it has a significantly important impact on human society. The current situation between China and the United States can be regarded as a strict fierce economic and political war. War metaphor has the characteristics of realism and universality, which can well reflect the importance and antagonism of relevant issues to a certain extent, and enhance people’s attention to relevant events and arouse people’s enthusiasm to participate in political events. War metaphor is a widely used metaphor in conceptual metaphor, and can be mapped to many aspects, such as economy, politics, and culture. It not only reflects people’s understanding of the objective world,

current society, and current political and economic situation, but also exerts an important influence on people's cognition. Here are some examples selected from the White Paper which demonstrated the specific types of war metaphor.

- (1) Specifically targeting China, in August 2017 it launched a unilateral investigation under Section 301.
- (2) Binding the two economies is mutually beneficial and property in joint win-win.

Based on the concept of war, the Chinese spokesperson described the situation of china-US trade in terms of specific war scenarios. This approach enables the audience to better understand the severity of the current Sino-American trade situation, and as a rhetorical device, metaphors can achieve outstanding results in controlling public opinion, policies, and political ideologies, thus influencing the perception, attitude, and behavior of the audience.

The Human Being Metaphor

In economic discourse, economy is often regarded as a life entity. With human being as the source domain, people tend to be easier to understand the abstract objects. The growing and being weak of a person is the same as the prosperity and decline of the economy in this trade war. Like human infants, the economic growing behaves in the same way and it also processes several stages. The founding of a company can be viewed as a birth of a person and the acquisition or integration of two companies can be seen as a marriage between two people.

Here are some examples selected from the White Paper which show the demonstration of human being metaphor.

- (1) A mutually beneficial and win-win relationship with strong complementarity and interlinked interests has been forged, benefiting not only the two countries but also the entire world.
- (2) Through the use of reasonable and cooperative attitude of the two countries it successfully resolved previous conflicts, narrow differences, and showed bilateral commercial relations, through dialogue and consultation, more mature.

Based on the concept of human being, people can have a vivid picture of the trade and a clear attitude towards Chinese government. And through human being metaphor, it can reinforce the passion between our citizen and nation, which will make people pay more attention to the situation between these two countries and arouse their patriotism.

The Journey Metaphor

The journey metaphor is a journey from a place to a destination along a road for some purpose. The journey metaphor is the mapping of the word "journey", which considers journey as a source domain and the abstract object as a target domain. Only through these two countries unremitting persistence and efforts can they finish the journey. And people have experienced different kinds of journeys because of the economy and policy. They thus have a very deep comprehension and knowledge of commonality, causing an ingrained impression of journey.

Here are some examples which indicated this type of metaphor.

- (1) During the 10 years from 2009 to 2018, China was one of the fastest growing export markets for American goods.
- (2) Chinese investment in the United States continued to decline; US investment growth in China has slowed.

By the utilization of journey metaphor, people realized that Sino-China trade is a long and difficult task. And no matter how tough it is, we have to show our firm attitude and never give up. And during this long fight, all of us should give a hand to our motherland. We should in her position and fight with her anyway.

The Up/Down Metaphor

Oriental metaphors are quite different from other metaphors in that in Oriental metaphors, source domain and target domain have a strict relationship because the conception it acquires is from people's physical experience and is the common material experience of mankind. This metaphorical method of combining of quantity and space makes abstract objects more three-dimensional.

Here are some examples selected from the White Paper which demonstrated this metaphor.

(1) And the number of IP applications and registration surge.

(2) Many of the concerns raised by foreign firms doing business in China have already been addressed through judicial reform and a strengthened enforcement mechanism.

The up/down metaphor makes use of people's perception of orientation to vividly understand the abstract concepts in the target domain. Words such as "raise", "lift", "rise", and "increase" all derive from up which is good in conceptual metaphor.

Conclusion

After a detailed analysis of this economic discourse, we can find that there are still a large amount of metaphorical phenomena. So we can know that metaphors are prevalent in our daily live and can be mapped into economic field. And through metaphors, people do can better get into these abstract objects and know things well. We can conclude the essence of metaphor is cognition. Different metaphors help people to obtain different cognition which depends on the knowledge and experiences of people themselves. Thus the deep meaning of economic discourse can be correctly and comprehensively mapped from the source domain and target domain. There are also some similarities between different types of metaphors. And the variations on using conceptual metaphors are influences by different political, economic, and cultural context. So for the better understanding, people should attach more focus on the background of these metaphors.

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