

A Study on Chinese TALK Metaphor from Corpus-based Approach

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Abstract—Metaphor is a vitally important concept in Cognitive Linguistics and refers to the mapping from source domain to the target domain. It is the mapping from the concrete entity to the abstract one, through which we can understand the process of men's mental cognition to handle abstract things through specific ones and has been researching by many linguistic scholars by means of traditional methods such as introspection. The Corpus method is a newly utilized and empirical method to conduct linguistic research and contains the language materials of real and the actual use of language, and corpus is the carrier of basic language knowledge resources based on the computer. The real corpus must be processed (analysis and processing), in order to become useful resources. This paper takes advantage of CCL Corpus(Center for Chinese Linguistics Corpus) which is the biggest Chinese Corpus in China constructed by Beijing University to investigate TAKL metaphor and conduct the empirical research to make metaphor research more objective and convincing.

Index Terms—metaphor, corpus, TALK, CCL

I. INTRODUCTION

Metaphor is sometimes and traditionally used as a general term for figurative or non-literal language. It is difficult to determine whether a word or phrase should be understood metaphorically or not. In Cognitive Linguistic view, metaphor is a creative process in which an existing linguistic form is used to express a meaning similar, but not identical, to its conventional meaning (Kovesces 2002). Individual metaphors are built on an inferable analogy between the original and the novel meanings, or the 'source' and 'target' meanings in Lakoff and Johnson (1980)'s terms. Importantly, however, metaphor is not a deviant special case of language use, nor is literal use the default setting for language; Metaphorical language use is often speciously considered exceptional only because of the seductively erroneous assumption that language is a tool which enables the speaker to encode meaning and the hearer to decode it (Wilson & Sperber 2012). Linguistic communication is, however, not simply an encoding-decoding process, nor is it even a process of reverse-engineering in which the hearer puts the speaker's original meaning back together again (Mufwene 2002; Brighton, Smith, & Kirby 2005). Rather it is best characterised by the complementary processes of ostension and inference (Sperber & Wilson 1995). Metaphors are defined by the analogical connections which can be drawn between the source and target meaning, and are interpreted in the same way: the hearer infers the parts of the source meaning relevant in the communicative context and constructs an ad-hoc interpretation based on the relevant semantic fragments.

Corpus contains a large scale computer-aided analysis of very extensive collections of transcribed utterances or written texts. Corpus data has led to methodological and theoretical innovation in linguistics in general. Clear and detailed explanations lay out the key issues of method and theory in contemporary corpus linguistics. A structured and coherent narrative links the historical development of the field to current topics in 'mainstream' linguistics. Practical activities and questions for discussion at the end of each chapter encourage students to test their understanding of what they have read and an extensive glossary provides easy access to definitions of all technical terms used in the text (McEnery & Hardie 2012). Currently, the research of Metaphor of Cognitive Linguistics is more convincing with the benefit from the empirical support provided by Corpus data.

Language is the most important communication tool for human beings. As a medium for human communication, language has an impact on politics, economy and society, science and technology, and culture. The cultural phenomenon of language is developing constantly, and its present spatial distribution is also the result of the development of the past. People use language to preserve and transmit the fruits of human civilization. Language is one of the most important characteristics of a nation. Talking is the oral manifestation of human communication, and we do a lot of talking every day to communicate with others. TALK is the most direct way for people to express themselves and transmit information. Thanks to talking, the relationship between people begins to become tight.

II. METHODS

As TALK can express people's thoughts and feelings, it has its own abstract features. However, in the use of language, people give it physical features by means of metaphor. In the contemporary view of metaphor, metaphor is not only a rhetorical phenomenon but a way of perceiving the world by human beings, in which human beings utilize the

experiences of one domain to explain or understand concepts of other domains. Metaphor is pervasive in human life. The TALK itself is just a voice form (spoken language) or text symbols (written) and the semantic carrier, which is abstract. But when people take as TALK as object, they often use the metaphor way to use the attribute of other things to understand it. The "talking", is abstract and difficult to understand. In order to enable people to understand this communication tool, this paper will study how the TALK's source domains are mapped onto its target domain with the help of the data attracted from CCL Corpus. The key word TALK related Chinese words such as *hua* 话, *yan* 言, *shuohuaxiang* 说话像, *shuohuaru* 说话如 are examined on CCL Corpus to get the sentences containing above words. If the numbers of the sentences are many that 2000 sentences are selected. And, the sentences of TALK which are met the standard of metaphor are selected from which the percentage is drawn to show the distribution of metaphor in the chosen sentences.

TABLE 1.
TALK METAPHOR IN CCL

Lexical items	English Translation	Total Numbers	Numbers of Metaphor	Percentage
<i>hua</i> 话	Talk	2000	67	3.35%
<i>yan</i> 言	Talk	2000	31	1.55%
<i>shuohuaxiang</i> 说话像	"Talk" is like	45	18	40%
<i>shuohuaru</i> 说话如	"Talk" is like	15	13	86.66%

Table1 shows that life is the target domain and English TALK has two Chinese translations, namely, *hua* 话 (*shuohua* 说话) and *yan* 言. We use the Chinese lexical items *hua* 话 (*shuohua* 说话) "Talk", *yan* 言 "Talk", *shuohuaxiang* 说话像 "Talk is like", *shuohuaru* 说话如 "Talk is like" retrieve them in CCL respectively to see how many metaphors there are in their respective total numbers and what are their source domains.

In *hua* 话 (*shuohua* 说话) "Talk", the total surveyed numbers of sentences containing *hua* 话 (*shuohua* 说话) "Talk" are 2000, and the numbers of metaphor are 67. The percentage of metaphors is 3.35%. The *hua* 话 (*shuohua* 说话) "Talk" relevant metaphors are *paochuyijuhua* 抛出一句话 "throw a word", *hualoudongbaichu* 话漏洞百出 "The loopholes appeared in the words one after another.", *huasuanliuliu* 话酸溜溜 "The word is sour.", *zhonghua* 重话 "heavy words", *huaxiazi* 话匣子 "talking box", *huashuodedishuibulou* 话说得滴水不漏 "speak words tightly", *qinghua* 情话 "affectionate words", *ruanhua* 软话 "soft words", *yinghua* 硬话 "hard words", *changhuaduanshuo* 长话短说 "cut a long word short", *huafeng* 话锋 "topic of conversation", *huatou* 话头 "the beginning of the words", *huabing* 话柄 "handle", *hualiyouchi* 话里有刺 "words with sting", *wenluandehuayu* 温暖的话语 "warm words", *huabingbingliang* 冷冰冰的话 "cold words", *huahuoyaoweihennong* 话火药味很浓 "the words are full of the smell of gunpowder", etc.

In *yan* 言 "Talk", the total surveyed numbers of sentences containing *yan* 言 "Talk" are 2000, and the numbers of metaphor are 31. The percentage of metaphors is 1.55%. *yan* 言 "Talk" relevant metaphors are *zhiyanpianyu* 只言片语 "isolated words", *yanfangxingyuan* 言方行圆 "contradictions between words and deeds", *yanzhiwuwen* 言之无文 "words without literary", *yanquan* 言泉 "words as spring water gushed out", *yanbujinyi* 言不尽意 "Words cannot express all one intends to say", *yantongleshi* 言同勒石 "profound and precious words", *qingyanxiyu* 轻言细语 "mild tone", *renweiyangqing* 人微言轻 "one's word does not carry much weight.", *yanzhong* 言重 "heavy words", *jinshiliangyan* 金石良言 "good advice", *tianyanmiyu* 甜言蜜语 "honeyed words", *kuyanxiangquan* 苦言相劝 "persuade with honest words".

In *shuohuaxiang* 说话像 "Talk" is like", the total surveyed numbers of sentences containing *shuohuaxiang* 说话像 "Talk" is like" are 45, and the numbers of metaphor are 18. The percentage of metaphors is 40%. The *shuohuaxiang* 说话像 "Talk is like" relevant metaphors are *shuohuaxiangdayami* 说话像打哑谜一样 "Talk" is like guessing", *shuohuaxiangfanglianzhupao* 说话像放连珠炮 "Talk" is like guessing", *shuohuaxiangchaodouzi* 说话像炒豆子 "Talk is like fried beans", *shuohuaxiangjisuanjijiyangkuaisuheqingxi* 说话像计算机一样快速和清晰 "Talk is like a computer quickly and clearly", *shuohuaxiangjiyagaooyiyang* 说话像挤牙膏一样 "Talk is like squeezing toothpaste", *shuohuaxiangheshuihuanhuanliudong* 说话像河水缓缓流动 "Talk is like a river flowing slowly", *shuohuaxiangfangpaozhang* 说话像放炮仗 "Talk is like firecracker", *shuohuaxiang yinhangzhangmuyiyangzhenmi* 说话像银行帐目一样缜密 "Talk is like meticulous bank account", *shuohuaxiangkaijiguanqiang* 说话像开机关枪 "Talk is like a machine gun", *shuohuaxiangchileqiangzi* 说话像吃了枪子 "Talk is like eating bullets", *shuohuaxiangqiaozhong* 说话像敲钟 "Talk is like a bell", *shuohuaxiangyizhilijian* 说话像一支利箭 "Talk is like a sharp arrow", *shuohuaxiangyanzi* 说话像燕子 "Talk is like a swallow", *shuohuaxiangniaoyujijizhazha* 说话像鸟语叽叽喳喳 "Talk is like birds chirping", *shuohuaxiangguafengside* 说话像刮风似的 "Talk is like the wind blowing", *shuohuaxiangchangge* 说话像唱歌 "Talk is like singing", etc.

In *shuohuaru* 说话如 "Talk" is like", the total surveyed numbers of sentences containing *shuohuaru* 说话如 "Talk is like" are 15, and the numbers of metaphor are 13. The percentage of metaphors is 86.66%. *shuohuaru* 说话如 "Talk is like" are 15, and the numbers of metaphor are 13. The percentage of metaphors is 86.66%. *shuohuaru* 说话如 "Talk is like" are 15, and the numbers of metaphor are 13. The percentage of metaphors is 86.66%.

like” relevant metaphors are *shuohuarutongerxi* “说话如同儿戏” “Talk” is like a trifling matter.”, *shuohuarutongshengzhi* 说话如同圣旨 “Talk is like a decree.”, *shuohuarutongdadianhuayiyangqingxi* 说话如同打电话一样清晰 “Talk is like clear calling”, *shuohuarutongfangpi* 说话如同放屁 “Talk is like fart.”, *shuohuarutongbairanzao* 说话同白染皂 “Talk is like soap dye.”, etc.

From the table 1, we can see that the numbers of metaphor of *shuohuaru* 说话如 “Talk is like” and *shuohuaxiang* 说话像 “Talk is like” are highest accounting for 86.66% and 40% respectively. The numbers of metaphor of *hua* 话、*yan* 言 “Talk are lowest accounting for 3.35% and 1.55% respectively.

III. RESULTS AND EXPLANATIONS

According to the examples from CCL, we can conclude that TALK metaphors fall into different source domain: Material domain, State Domain, Sensory Domain.

A. Material Domain

Chinese always metaphorizes “words” as a container which can hold things, such as, *hualiyouthua* 话里有话 “have one’s tongue in one’s cheek”, *huaxiaozi* 话匣子 “talking box”, etc.

There are internal and external sides in the container. So there is the expression of “the word outside” and “the word inside” in Chinese, and words as a container can not only store things, but also can be opened and closed. As the material, words have two types: soft words and hard words.

(1) 他误认为我话里有话，眼睛中的灰色变得湛蓝。我看着他年轻起来的脸，皱纹和白发都成了一种伪装。

Ta	wurenwei	wo	hua	li	you	hua,
M,3SG	misunderstand	1SG	wordPL	inLOC	have	wordPL
yanjing	zhong	de	huise	biande	zhanlan.	wo
eye	inLOC	POSS	grey	become	blue.	1SG
kanzhe	ta	nianqing	qilai		de	lian,
look	M,3SG	young	up	POSS	face,	zhouwen
he	baifa	chengle	yizhong	weizhuang.		wrinkle
and	white hair	become	CLF	camouflage.		

He misunderstood that I had my tongue in my cheek and his eyes became grey blue. I looked at his young face, wrinkles and white hair had become a camouflage.

Words as container can also store things, feelings and emotions.

(2) 他对那个孤儿说的话饱含深情。

Ta	dui	nage	gu'er	de	hua	baohan
M,3SG	DAT	that	orphan	POSS	words	full
shenqing.						
affection.						

The words he said to the orphan was full of affection.

(3) 这篇散文言辞优美，诗意盎然。

Zhepian	sanwen	yanci	youmei,	shiyi	ang ran.
CLF	prose	words	refined	poetic flavour	abundant.

The prose has refined words and is poetic.

(4) 既然大家把话说开了，那也没事了，咱们还是抓紧进行会议的下一议程吧。

Jiran	dajia	ba	hua	shuo	kai le,	na
As	3PL	CAUS	words	talk	open,	then
yemei	shi le,	zamen	haishi	zhuajin	jinxing	huiyi
NEG	problem,	1PL	still	hurry	doPROG	meeting
de	xiayi	yicheng	Ba!			
POSS	next	agenda	IMP			

Now that we have talked things out, it is all right. Let's hurry up to the next agenda of the meeting.

(5) 几杯酒下肚后，小伙子打开了话匣子。

Ji	bei	jiu	xia	du	hou,	xia
CLF	cupPL	wine	down	stomach	after,	young
huozi	dakai le	hua	xiazi.			
fellow	openPST	talk	box.			

After a few drinks, the guy opened the talkingbox.

(6) 他知道妻子心肠软，就一个劲儿地说软话。

Ta	zhidao	qizi	xinchang	ruan,	jiu	yige jing de
M,3SG	know	wife	heart	kind,	then	constantADV
shuo	ruan	hua.				
say	soft	words.				

He knew his wife was soft, and he said soft words to her.

(7) 新中国建立初期我中国怎敢谈那类强硬话呢?

Xin	zhongguo	jianli	chu	qi	wo zhongguo	zem
New	China	foundPASS	beginning	period	1PM	NEG AUX
gan	tan	nalei	qiangying	hua	Ne?	
dare	say	such	hard	words	Q	

How can China dare to say such hard words in the founding of People's Republic of China?

B. State Domain

We humans live in the physical world, and know things from the understanding of the specific matter, which provides the material basis for our physical experience to understand and express thoughts and feelings and psychological abstract fuzzy activities, events, and other intangible concepts. In general, we tend to organize our non-physical experiences with physical experiences. The expression and understanding of words are abstract, and people always use the metaphorical cognitive approach to make the TALKmetaphor a concrete and tangible entity.

Words has the feature of Weight. Because the object has a weight, "words", after being metaphorized into entity, has the weight difference. The weight difference depends on the importance of "words" in the minds of people. In general, important words" shows the feature of weigh and vice versa.

Words has the feature of shape. As an object, it has an external shape. When we make the words metaphor into an entity, we also give the words a certain shape.

(8) 她举止优雅,说话轻言细语,一副江南女子的模样。

Ta	juzhi	youya,	shuohua	qingyan xiyu,	yifu	jiangnan
F,3SG	manner	Elegant,	talk	gentleADV	CLF	South of China
nvzi	de	moyang.				
woman	POSS	image.				

She is elegant talks gently and is a typical Jiangnan woman.

(9) 你可以觉得自己是人微言轻的无名之辈,也可以心灵充实。

Ni	keyi	juede	ziji	shi	renwei yanqin	de
2SG	AUX	think	REFL	COP	humble	POSS
wuming zhi bei,	ye	keyi	xinling	chongshi.		
nobody,	also	AUX	heart	enrich.		

Though you think you are in humble position and your word does not carry weight, you can also enrich your heart.

(10) 听了孙中山这一番语重心长的话语后,当时几个孩子深受鼓舞,且仿佛一下长大了许多似的。

Ting le	Sunzhongshan	zheyi fan	yuzhongxinchang	de	huayu	hou,
ListenPST to	Sunzhongshan	CLF	sincere	POSS	words	after,
dangshi	jige	haizi	shenshou	guwu,	qie	fangfu
ADV	CLF	children	deepADV	inspirePASS,	and	seem
yixia	zhangda le	xuduo	si de.			
suddenly	growPERF	a lot	DUR.			

After hearing Sun Zhongshan's sincere words, the children were inspired, and seemed to grow a lot.

(11) 老师的话很有分量,学生们只有乖乖服从。

Laoshi	de	hua	hen	you	fenliang,	xuesheng men
teacher	POSS	words	ADV	have	weight,	studentPL
zhi you	guaiguai	fucong.				
only	obedient	obey.				

The teacher's words carries weight and the students only obediently obey.

(12) 老师对学生的失败说了一句轻飘飘的话。

Laoshi	dui	xuesheng	de	shibai	shuo le	yiju
teacher	DAT	studentPL	POSS	failure	sayPST	CLF
qing piaopiao	de	hua.				
light	POSS	words.				

The teacher said a light words to the students who failed in the examinations.

(13) 中国队也要用实力来赢球,不要给别人话柄。

Zhongguo	dui	ye yao	yong	shili lai	ying	qiu,
Chinese	team	also FUT	use	strength	win	game,
buyao	gei	bieren	huabing.			
NEG	DAT	otherPL	handle.			

Chinese team should use its strength to win the game, don't give others handle.

(14) 一位老大爷慢悠悠地接过话茬儿。

Yiwei	lao daye	manyoyoude	jieguo	hua cha' er.
CLF	old man	leisureADV	take over	talk.

An old man leisurely talked with others.

(15) 见他收不住话头,妻子忙给他使眼色,并斟满酒向着客人唱起了欢乐的歌。

Jian	ta	shou	buzhu	hua tou,	qizi	mang
Look at	M,3SG	stop	NEG AUX	words	wife	busy
gei	ta	shi	yanse,	bing	zhenman	jiu
DAT	M,3SG	give	Wink,	and	fill	wine
xiangzhe	keren	chang qi le	huanle de	ge.		
DAT	guestPL	sing	jouful	song.		

He could not stop his words and the wife was busy giving him a wink and filled wine to the guests to sing the song.

C. Sensory Domain

Words are heard by people with ears and then people use the brain to understand its meaning. Different words causes different feelings in the minds of different people,so different words are then metaphorized into different things and different things give people various feelings. And some feelings have similarities though they are diverse. So through the feeling transfer,we get the words with characteristics which are sour, sweet, bitter, hot and cold,pain.

(16) 我的意见完全是被杨某的甜言蜜语所欺骗。

Wo	de	yijian	wanquan	bei	yang mou	de
1SG	POSS	opinion	completeADV	PASS	yang	POSS
tianyanmiyu	suo	qipian.				
sweet words	PASS	fool.				

My opinion is completely fooled by Yang's sweet words.

(17) 医院明白了张朝安为什么要提出带张春华回乡,更加苦言相劝。

Yiyuan	mingbai le	zhangchaoan	weishenme	yao	tichu
Hospital	understand	zhangchaoan	why	have	propose
dai	zhangchunhua	huixiang,	gengjia	kuyuan	xiangquan.
take	zhangchunhua	back home,	COMPA	honestwords	persade

The hospital understood why Zhang Chao'an wanted to take Zhang Chunhua home, and persaded him honestly.

(18) 别老说那些酸溜溜的话。

Bie	lao	shuo	naxie	suan liuliu	de	hua.
NEG IMP	always	say	those	sour	POSS	words.

Don't say those sour words again and again.

(19) 看到一张张亲切的脸,听到那一声声温暖的话语,我便激动不已。

Kandao	yi zhangzhang	qinqie	de	lian,	ting dao	na
See	CLF	kind	POSS	facePL,	hear	that
yishengsheng	wenluan	de	huayu,	wo	bian	jidong
CLF	warm	POSS	words,	1SG	then	exciteADJ
buyi.						
very.						

Seeing the kind faces and hearing the sound of warm words, I felt excited.

(20) 电话那头甩来一位女士生硬冰冷的话,便挂断了。

Dianhua	natou	shuailai	yiwei	nvshi	shengying bingleng
Phone	opposit side	transfer	CLF	lady	stiff
de	hua,	bian	guaduan le.		
POSS	words,	then	hung up.		

Upon hearing a lady' stiff and cold words from the phone, I found the phone hung up.

IV. CONCLUSION

This paper makes a tentative analysis of the metaphorical meaning of “words” by means of corpus and cognitive linguistics to show that TALK is abstract but by means of metaphor, we can use the concrete entities to describe it and make it tangible and easy to understand. The Corpus data offers valid and real language materials to explain the amount of metaphor TALK in real world. We can see that the understanding of the concept TALK depends on the other related concepts such as material, food, taste, etc. These materials are closely related to our daily lives and provides vivid picture to let the men know how concrete our TAKL metaphor is because we know these experiences well. So metaphor is grounded in our daily experiences. All the understanding of TALK must be connected with these concepts by means of metaphor. It is difficult to talk about the concept of TALK without these elements in source domains. The reason why life is so rich in metaphorical expression is that metaphor mapping is a process of feature focus and feature suppression. Every focus of the metaphor of talk can only highlight the characteristics of a certain aspect, and all aspects of TALK need to be understood.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This research was financially supported by the Fund Project of Education Department of Sichuan Province. (The Application of Dynamic System Theory in English and Chinese Attrition, NO. 16SB0293)

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