

A Comparative Study of Metaphors in China's and Britain's English News Reports on Chinese Cross-border E-commerce

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Abstract

The rhetoric of metaphor as a language of journalism is not only the category of vocabulary, but also the way people perceive the world. In the process of writing news, a lot of metaphors were used. On the one hand, through appropriate metaphors, two different domains (such as abstraction and concreteness) can be linked, so that authors and readers can achieve a high degree of unity of information understanding. On the other hand, in order to attract more viewers, the news media also emphasizes the image of news reports. The use of metaphorical expression can activate the reader's cognitive environment and effectively attract more readers.

Conceptual Blending Theory is a theoretical framework for exploring the construction of meaning, especially the real-time meaning of constructing information integration. In the metaphor analysis of discourse, most of the research focuses on the study of conceptual metaphor, but from the perspective of Conceptual Blending Theory, the study of discourse metaphor is rare. Therefore, the author tries to use Conceptual Blending Theory, starting from the conceptual metaphor of Chinese Cross-border E-commerce news in Chinese and Britain English reports, exploring the similarities and differences of metaphors in Chinese and English news discourse and the attitude towards Chinese Cross-border E-commerce.

Keywords: Conceptual Blending Theory, news comparison, Chinese Cross-border E-commerce

1. Introduction

Metaphor is a very common linguistic phenomenon. People use a lot of metaphors in their daily life. Therefore, the metaphor has always been one of the research focuses on the field of linguistics. Moreover, in the process of writing news, a lot of metaphors are used.

Conceptual Blending Theory originated from the "Conceptual Metaphor Theory" proposed by Lakoff and Johnson. The theory is based on Fauconnier and Turner's monograph "Mappings in Thought and Language". For the first time, it was officially proposed, and it has been continuously improved and developed in subsequent research. However, in the metaphor analysis of discourse, most of the research focuses on the study of conceptual metaphor, but the study of discourse metaphor from the perspective of Conceptual Blending Theory is rare. There are few metaphors for studying news discourse from the perspective of Conceptual Blending Theory. However, there are not many metaphorical contrast studies on news texts, and researchers tend to study Chinese-American English news texts comparisons. There are few studies on the study of Chinese-Britain English news texts, so there is a certain exploration significance.

2. Theoretical basis

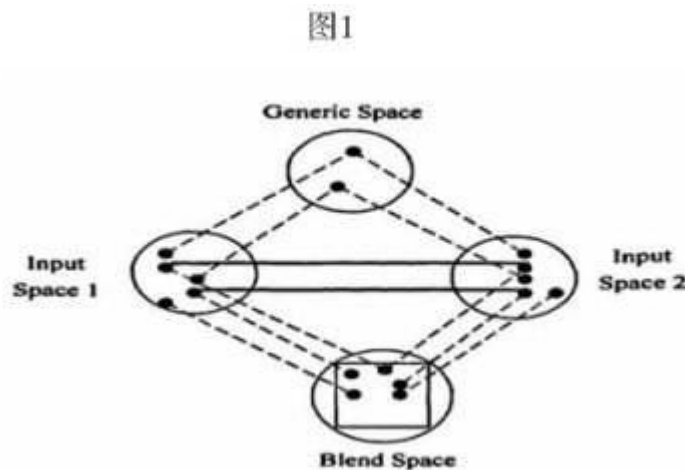
2.1 Conceptual Blending Theory

2.1.1 Introduction to Conceptual Blending Theory

In 1985, the American linguist Fauconnier proposed the concept of mental space and described it as a "small concept package". He believed that to understand the meaning of language, it is necessary

to study the formation of people's long-term cognitive domain in conversation or obedience. In the 1990s, Fauconnier further proposed Conceptual Blending Theory. This theory provides a powerful explanation for the creation of innovative thinking and new concepts.

An important part of Conceptual Blending Theory is the concept blending network, which refers to the psychological space network based on the framework. The framework is built from the background knowledge of the speaker. According to Gilles Fauconnier and Mark Turner, a complete concept integration network consists of four conceptual spaces: Input Space I, Input Space II, Generic Space, and Blending Space. And these four spaces are represented in the form of images, as shown in Figure 1:



Wu Weishan (2011) pointed out that the generic space map has two input spaces, and the integration reflects the common, common, abstract organization and structure of the input space, thus defining the core cross-space mapping. He believes that people do not get a single concept, and usually going through the following process: first, to “compose” the representations in general; and secondly, to make the preliminary materials in the knowledge framework. The “completion”; the final “celebration” is the delicate processing integration of the concept of “perfect”. After these three interrelated mental cognitive activities, an Emergent Structure, an innovative structure, is created.

2.1.2 News metaphor and Conceptual Blending Theory

Metaphor as a rhetoric of news language is not only the category of vocabulary but also the way people perceive the world. In the process of writing news, a lot of metaphors are used. On the one hand, through appropriate metaphors, two different fields, such as abstraction and concreteness, can be linked, so that authors and readers can achieve a high degree of unity of information understanding. On the other hand, in order to attract more audiences, the news media also emphasizes the image of news reports. The use of metaphorical expressions can activate the reader's cognitive environment and effectively attract more readers.

Metaphors are ubiquitous in the news, and Conceptual Blending Theory provides a set of reasoning mechanisms for the study of news metaphors. The input space, spatial mapping, spatial integration and other knowledge can be used to study the metaphorical phenomenon in news,

analyzing the meaning construction process of news metaphor and the cognitive mechanism behind it, and provide a reference for the research of news metaphor.

2.2 Conceptual Metaphor Theory

2.2.1 Introduction to conceptual metaphor

The concept metaphor theory begins with Lakoff and Johnson's book *Metaphor We Live By*. According to Lakoff and Johnson (1980), language is full of metaphors and metaphorical expressions often derived from some basic metaphors that form the basis of the human conceptual system, called conceptual metaphor. The formation of the concept is derived from the characteristic experience formed by people in the world and in the continuous practice, reflecting the attributes and characteristics of things. The conceptual metaphor refers to the concept expressed in a metaphorical form. People use abstract ways of thinking formed in concrete things to express abstract concepts. Thus, the use of one thing to experience and understand another is the essence of conceptual metaphor. For example, "Life is a journey" and journey is a mapping of life. The journey is a process of suffering, happiness and pain, meeting with all kinds of people, and finally reaching the destination. The metaphor is that life is like a journey, experienced, met, and finally arrived. In the book "The Metaphor We Live by", conceptual metaphor is divided into three categories: structural metaphor, orientation metaphor and ontological metaphor. The structural metaphor refers to the construction of another concept through a concept, such as "time is money"; orientation metaphor refers to image schema metaphor established through human experience and knowledge, such as high mood, low mood, superior-subordinate Etc. The ontology metaphor is that people transform the intangible concepts of fuzzy abstract emotions, thoughts, and psychological activities into tangible entities. The most typical ontological metaphor is container metaphor, such as going abroad, leaving home, and no one in sight.

(2) News metaphor and conceptual metaphor

With the help of conceptual metaphors, people can use the relatively rich source domain experience to understand the phenomena in news metaphors and can classify the metaphors in news more systematically and explore the cognitive ways hidden behind metaphors.

3. Research Design

3.1 Research corpus

We selected 20 articles from China Daily and the UK Financial Times on China's cross-border e-commerce as a metaphor for metaphor analysis. The corpus time span is from January 1, 2016, to December 30, 2018. The collected news texts are less than 400 words, which is the volume of most news, and it can also reduce the research workload to some extent.

3.2 Research questions

(1) What are the metaphor types in China Daily and Financial Times about China's cross-border e-commerce news?

(2) What are the similarities and differences between the types of metaphors in China Daily and Financial Times, and what's their attitudes toward cross-border e-commerce in China?

3.3 Research methods:

This study uses 40 English-Chinese news articles on cross-border e-commerce in China as the research corpus, based on Conceptual Blending Theory, supplemented by Conceptual Metaphor Theory, using a combination of quantitative and qualitative research methods. The metaphor of the selected corpus is compared and analyzed.

4. English text analysis based on Conceptual Blending Theory

4.1 The types of Metaphor in China Daily and Financial Times

Table 1: The types of Metaphor in China Daily

| Source domains | Total types | Total tokens | Resonance | Percentage of total resonance |
|----------------|-------------|--------------|-----------|-------------------------------|
| War | 17 | 193 | 456 | 36.2% |
| Building | 13 | 129 | 322 | 25.6% |
| Plant | 11 | 134 | 241 | 19.2% |
| Others | 8 | 122 | 234 | 18.6% |

Table 2: The types of Metaphor in the Financial Times

| Source domains | Total types | Total tokens | Resonance | Percentage of total resonance |
|----------------|-------------|--------------|-----------|-------------------------------|
| War | 16 | 224 | 514 | 36.3% |
| Machine | 12 | 129 | 367 | 25.9% |
| Human | 9 | 148 | 258 | 18.2% |
| Others | 10 | 146 | 274 | 19.3% |

From Table 1 and Table 2, we can see that in the metaphor types on China daily, the War metaphor, Building metaphor and Plant metaphor account for 36.2%, 25.6%, and 19.2%, respectively. Among the metaphor types in the Financial Times, the War metaphor, the Machine metaphor and the Human metaphor are 36.3%, 25.9%, and 18.2%. It can be seen that the most metaphorical type of China Daily and the British Financial Times is the War metaphor because the economic competition is actually a war without smoke. China Daily and the British Financial Times have different metaphor types. China Daily focuses on building metaphors and plant metaphors. In contrast, the British Financial Times focuses on using Machine metaphor and Human metaphor.

4.2 Metaphor Analysis of China's Cross-border E-commerce in China Daily

Example1: Last year, Alibaba Group Holding Ltd invested another \$2 billion in Southeast Asian online retailer Lazada Group, after the Chinese Cross-border E-commerce giant increased its stake in Lazada from 51 per cent to 83 per cent in 2017.

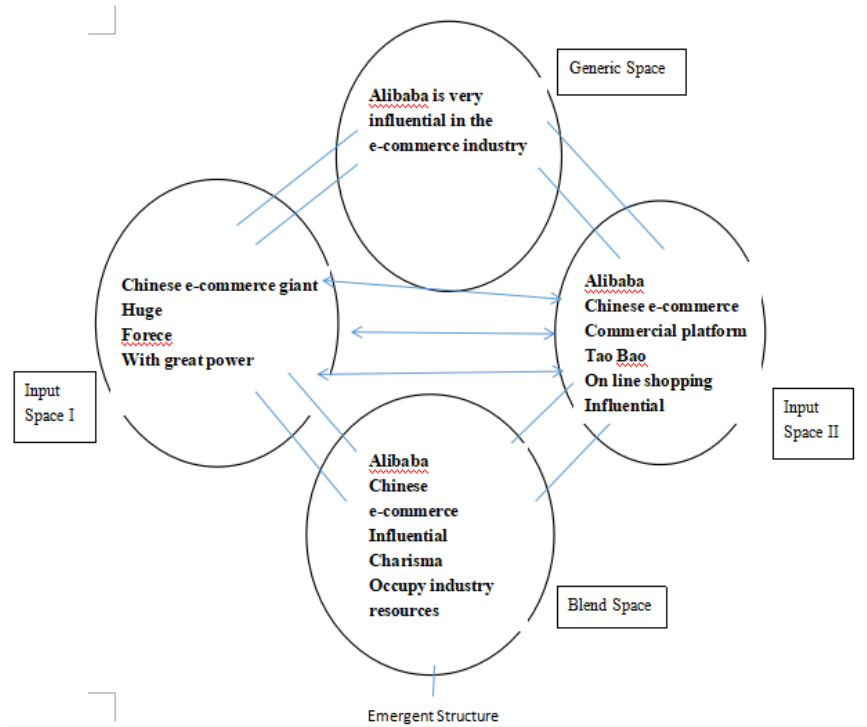


Figure I: Metaphorical Blend for Example 1

As shown in Figure I, in this news metaphor, the words of the two input spaces are “Alibaba” and “e-commerce giant”. Through the word “Alibaba”, we can think of “e-commerce platform”, “Taobao website”, “double eleven(like Black Friday in China)”, “Ma Yun”, “very influential”, “powerful”, and “large scale” in our brain. Through the “e-commerce giant” we can think of “large scale”, “have a big voice”, “high station”, “have great power” and other words. In the generic space, we can know that “Alibaba” and “e-commerce giant” mean great influence. Through the combination, we can know that Alibaba has great influence, large scale and far-sightedness in China’s cross-border electric business. Explain that China Daily’s attitude towards China’s cross-border e-commerce is relatively friendly and affirmative.

4.3 Metaphor Analysis of Cross-border E-commerce in the Financial Times

Example2: It should, therefore, come as no surprise that fortunes are easily lost as well as made in China: while 106 people became billionaires in the country last year, nearly half as many dropped off the list. The stakes are high, and Chinese entrepreneurs are not afraid to play their cards.

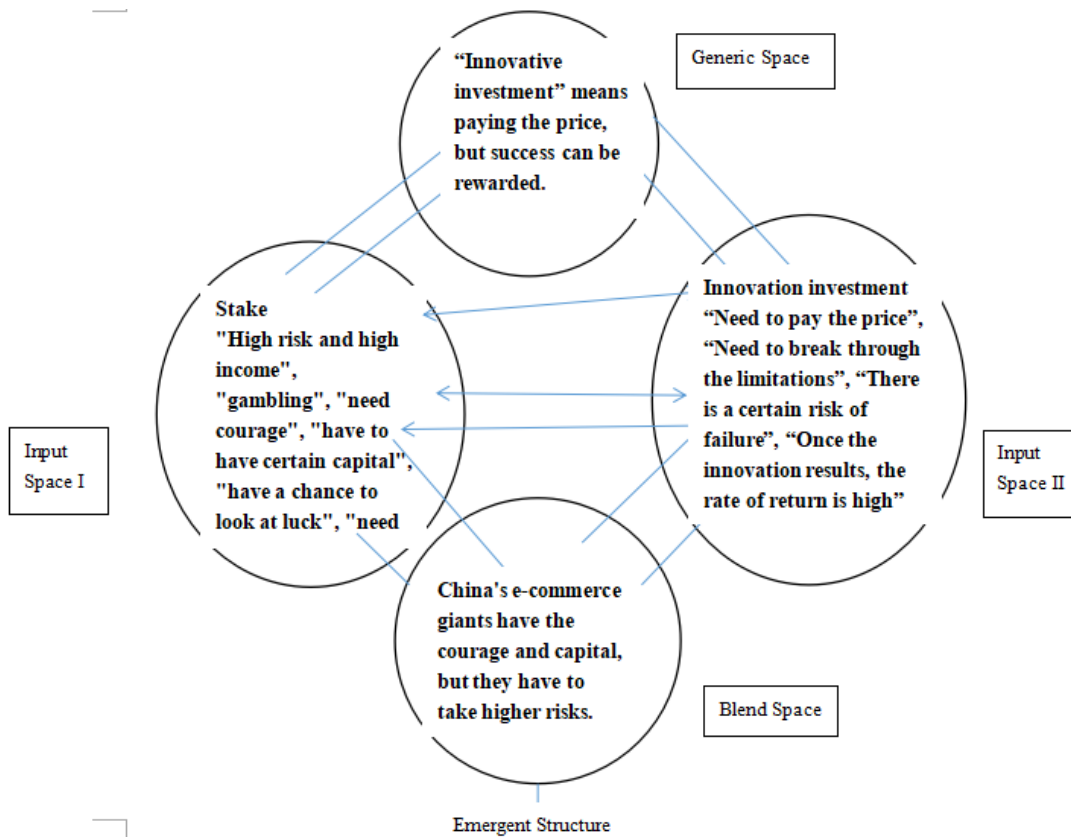


Figure II: Metaphorical Blend for Example 2

After reading the full text, we can understand that e-commerce compares “innovation investment” to “Stake”. In Figure II, the words in the two input spaces are “Stake” and “Innovative Investment”. Through the term “Stake”, we can think of “high-risk, high-income”, “gambling”, “need courage”, “have to have certain capital”, “have to look at luck”, and “need to have a good attitude” in our brain. Through “innovative investment” we can think of the words “need to pay the capital price”, “need to break through the limitations”, “have a certain risk of failure”, “once innovation results, the rate of return is high” and so on. In the generic space, we can learn that “Stake” and “innovative investment” mean paying the price, but success can be rewarded. Through the combination, we can know that China’s e-commerce giants have the courage and capital, but they have to take a higher risk. Explaining that the Financial Times affirms the adventurous spirit of its cross-border e-commerce in China, but it costs a lot, just like gambling, showing slight negative attitude towards cross-border e-commerce in China.

5. Conclusion

This paper aims to use Conceptual Blending Theory to start from the conceptual metaphor of China’s cross-border e-commerce news in China Daily and the British Financial Times, comparing the similarities and differences of metaphors in Chinese and English news discourse. The role of metaphor, exploring the hidden cognitive models behind its metaphor and the image of Chinese cross-border e-commerce in Chinese and British newspapers and magazines. The metaphor types in China daily,

the War metaphor, Building metaphor and Plant metaphor account for 36.2%, 25.6%, and 19.2%, respectively. Among the metaphor types in the Financial Times, the War metaphor, the Machine metaphor and the Human metaphor are 36.3%, 25.9%, and 18.2%. It can be seen that the most metaphorical type of China Daily and the British Financial Times is the War metaphor because the economic competition is actually a war without smoke. China Daily and the British Financial Times have different metaphor types. China Daily focuses on building metaphors and plant metaphors. In contrast, the British Financial Times focuses on using Machine metaphor and Human metaphor. China Daily's attitude towards China's cross-border e-commerce is relatively friendly and affirmative. The Financial Times has certain expectations for China's cross-border e-commerce, but overall it has a negative attitude.

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