The Cognitive Construction of China’s Foreign Discourse System under the Background of “Belt and Road”: Take the News Report of Sino-US Trade Dispute as an Example

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Abstract: In the context of the “Belt and Road” initiative, it is particularly important to promote language security strategies and build a political discourse system in China. This study will reveal the explanatory power of metaphor theory in news reports through the comparative analysis of the surface structure and deep structure of political discourse, identify the conceptual metaphors and their embedded deep structure, explore the political motivation and political interests behind the metaphor language, and explore the process of the political subject using different political metaphors to complete the cognitive construction, with a view to guiding the construction of the Chinese political discourse system.

Keywords: China’s Foreign Discourse System; Sino-US Trade Disputes; Cognitive Construction

DOI: 10.47297/wspciWSP2516-252712.20200411

1. Introduction

In keeping with the development of the times, President Xi put forward the “overall national security concept.” Among them, language security cannot be ignored. Language security refers not only to the security of the use, status, and identity of the language itself, but also to the issues of language for national security and political stability. From the perspective of linguistics, many cognitive linguists conduct interdisciplinary research combining the achievements in the fields of communication and political science. At the same time, in-depth mining of political discourse from the perspective of critical discourse theory and analysis of political

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discourse using cognitive metaphor theory has become a hot topic for scholars at home and abroad.

2. Research Overview

Critical discourse analysis method is a strong research orientation in the field of political discourse research in the United States today. Its representative Fairclough proposed a three-dimensional analysis model of critical discourse analysis (1995) and studied the ideological changes in political discourse. Wodak (2009) made a basic introduction to the critical discourse analysis of political discourse, proved the obvious connection between political struggle and conflict, and applied the keyword analysis in the corpus analysis method to political discourse analysis. Van Dijk (1996) focuses on the social cognitive analysis of political discourse. He believes that critical discourse analysis is mainly used to interpret the relationship between discourse and social power. The most influential in analyzing political discourse from the perspective of cognitive metaphor theory is Lakoff, who (1993) revealed the political ideas and values hidden behind political metaphors. Lakoff also introduced the “frame” into the field of political science and found that the two parties in the United States construct different political metaphors through different moral values. Compared with the study of political discourse by foreign linguists, a key task of current domestic political discourse research is to build a Chinese political discourse system.

Although the current academic research on the Chinese political discourse system, the research dimension mostly stays on the comparison and integration of various theories; on the level of textual description and interpretation, there is a lack of meticulous research into the cognitive mechanism behind the text. Domestic studies researched mostly from a synchronic perspective, with relatively few diachronic perspectives; or focusing solely on a national news media report, lacking comparative analysis; or merely qualitative analysis, not quantitatively grasping the political discourse of political figures and news media select. Existing research rarely finds the important role of cognitive construction in news discourse on the construction of China’s political discourse system from the perspective of cognitive framework theory, combined with the theory and methods of critical discourse analysis. Specifically study the following three issues: (1) What are the similarities and differences in the choice of reporting methods regarding tariffs, intellectual property rights, and human rights in Sino-US trade disputes; (2) Tariffs, knowledge, and knowledge leading to Sino-US trade disputes Property rights, human rights reports, many different factors and the ideology contained in them, the role of the surface structure and the deep structure of these metaphorical structures in influencing people’s cognitive thinking mechanism; (3) How the report of China-US trade disputes in political discourse uses cognitive metaphor to complete
the cognitive construction of the political discourse system and ultimately serve political interests.

3. Research Analysis

(1) Research methods

1) Quantitative research method

The corpus of this article comes from the English political discourse reports on China-US trade disputes in China Daily and Washington Post. The author has selected a total of 62 reports of these two news organizations involving Sino-US trade disputes in the LexisNexis database in the recent period, and established a dedicated corpus. Based on the construction of a corpus, combined with Halliday’s system functional grammar, with the help of the corpus analysis software Wmatrix as an auxiliary tool, using its subject semantic domain function and semantic assignment to quantitatively extract subject words that may be conceptual metaphors, the author completed automatic part-of-speech assignment and semantic domain assign codes to obtain word frequency lists, part-of-speech frequency lists, and semantic domain frequency lists. Since the self-built corpus is a written news report, BNC Sampler is selected as the reference corpus, and the critical value of the log-likelihood ratio of BNC Sampler is the default value of 6.63 (critical value 6.63), and the topic semantics sorted by thematic value are generated.

2) Qualitative research method

Combined with the above quantitative research methods, qualitatively analyze the subject words that may be conceptual metaphors in combination with political context, and use the metaphor recognition criteria proposed by Charteris-Black (2004) and Pragglejaz (2007) to extract and carefully read some sample texts to find out those The expression that can cause semantic tension determines whether its meaning is metaphorical or purely literal. If it is a metaphor, the source domain of the metaphor will be marked and the subject under discussion would be used in the context to judge the conceptual metaphor and finally determine the metaphor expression.

(2) Research corpus and retrieval tool

The study used the corpus analysis software Wmatrix developed by Professor Paul Rayson of Lancaster University. In this study, the author will follow the corpus method and compare two self-built corpora, the China Daily corpus and the Washington Post corpus. In order to ensure the balance of the sample, each corpus sample contains 31 articles of equal size, and the English articles related to trade disputes between China and the United States, with a total of 87,342 types and 154,331 tokens.
4. Research Discussion

Starting from the study of critical discourse theory, the theoretical foundation of the cognitive metaphor framework theory is explained; a diachronic comparative analysis of the *China Daily* and *New York Times* is carried out. Then combined with the context in which the metaphor keywords’ location, the political positions of the representatives of both parties qualitative analysis of conceptual metaphors is explored; moreover, analysis and presentation of surface and deep structures of cognitive metaphors and political discourse in Sino-US news media to build political identity by using metaphors to gain recognition will be presented. Finally, it summarizes the important role of the deep structure of cognitive metaphor in constructing a political discourse system suitable for my country’s current political image and political identity.

As shown in Figure 1, the mainstream US media on Sino-US trade disputes vilify Chinese companies as thieves. The basic principle of this thief model’s moral values is concealed theft, gaining nothing, and stealing the intellectual property of American companies. The deep structure contained in the report is to discredit the political image of Chinese companies and the Chinese government. The corresponding conceptual metaphor is expressed as: The company acts like a family. Outsiders invade the family and steal the unauthorized trade secrets as thieves, infringe on the right to privacy, and cause unfair and disgraceful trade competition, which requires the US government to take measures and resort to law so to punish thieves.

As shown in Figure 2, the English mainstream media reports on Sino-US trade disputes mainly follow the basic principles of the moral values of the victim-persecutor model. The deep structure contained in their reports is that the U.S. government is the perpetrator, and the business opportunities And deprive Chinese
companies of their legitimate interests in terms of commercial resources, and make victims suffer discrimination and persecution. At the same time, the increase in tariffs in China also persecuted related industries in the United States, making related domestic industries and companies in the United States the victims.

The mainstream media reports on Sino-US trade disputes are related with the economy in the surface, but they have repeatedly described the deepest principles on the moral level and the most basic concepts in the audience’s psychology, touching on the audience’s moral system or worldview to guide the audience to view trade disputes and the entire economic and political situation from different angles. It is connected with cognitive law of political discourse, which has a significant guiding and leading role in the construction of China’s political discourse system.

5. Conclusion

Regarding the negative and negative expressions of American media, do not simply negate or repeat the other party’s structure. Instead, reports should choose to actively set the agenda, from your own point of view, try to reshape the structure or establish a new structure, and adopt a structure with Chinese characteristics to eliminate the beauty The negative effects of media discourse. Reconstruct the other party’s “civilization conflict theory” with China’s “Harmony Culture”; reconstruct the other party’s “zero-sum game” with our “cooperation and win-win”; follow our concept of “the world is public” and reconstructing each other’s “anti-globalization”, etc. We should spread the concept of cooperation, tolerance and win-win of the “Belt and Road” initiative to promote the establishment of human “common destiny of community” will be the focus in the future.

References