Լեզվաբանություն և բանասիրություն

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REPRESENTATION OF CONCEPTUAL METAPHORS IN AMERICAN AND CHINESE PRESIDENTIAL SPEECHES ON COVID–19

COVID–19 pandemic struck the world on a large scale and no nation could skip out from. Conforming to this, the authorities worldwide made their concerns public, measuring out those undertaking which were directed toward tackling the consequences of the pandemic. On that account, they delivered speeches and voiced their thoughts on the events in the wake of pandemic judiciously. The article goes through conceptual metaphors by analyzing metaphoric concepts used to describe the events and consequences of the COVID–19 pandemic by American and Chinese presidents. The article briefly introduces the theoretical basis of the study from the cognitive approach. Then, the analysis of the chosen material provides the means to evaluate the areas of knowledge that served as a source domain for metaphorically expressing the pandemic. The data accessed prove the pervasiveness of metaphors in two superpower countries' presidential discourse and their importance for understanding tough situations, effectively influencing the audience. The findings revealed that the most common used source domains in both political discourses are Unity Metaphors, Spatial Metaphors, Object Metaphors and War Metaphors. Nonetheless, American political discourse is much more persuasively and metaphorically expressed than Chinese political discourse.

Keywords: Conceptual metaphor, COVID–19, political discourse,

metaphor, president, speech, America, China.

Introduction

Following up the global issues and life–changing events worldwide, political authorities are necessitated to voice their opinions and attitudes towards these events. COVID–19 pandemic and the events a while later have become uppermost topics for research, debate and dialogue. They have been meticulously covered by media, presidential statements and official documents. As it has been vastly announced, the pandemic was originally discovered in Wuhan, China, from 10 January to 18 February 2020, during Chinese Chunyun (the annual largest scale travel rush). Apparently, the analyses of the Chinese political discourse on the issue should be a bottom line. The United States of America, in turn, has the power to influence other countries, and the choice of linguistic means of American politicians are major–league detectives, thereof. On top of everything, there are myriad similarities between the political interests of U.S and China; therefore, the article turns to compare conceptual metaphors used by two powerful countries and outline the challenges to be faced. Predominantly, conceptual metaphors are used to conceptualize the world and are often employed in political discourse and media to refer to important social issues, such as crises, political questions or diseases (Nerghes et al., 2015; Semino et al., 2018). The application of various metaphors can lead people to reason and act differently. Without regard to specific details or exceptions, metaphors are believed as powerful rhetorical devices that are used in multifarious contexts, including television news, advertisements and political settings. It is rooted in how people construct the world around them and for them. According to Lakoff and Johnson, "our ordinary conceptual system, in terms of which we both think and act, is fundamentally metaphorical" (G. Lakoff and M. Johnson, 1980/2003, p. 4). Resultantly, numerous studies on different types of discourse have been conducted to arrive at a point of metaphorical comprehension. Political discourse puts paramount importance in mobilizing the public and stimulating them to take actions. As for Charteris– Black (2005), metaphor is "a figure of speech that is typically used in persuasive political arguments". Correspondingly, the main objective of this paper is to comparatively analyze the most productive and persuasive metaphorical models of COVID–19 pandemic in the American and Chinese political discourses, attempting to disclose speech similarities and differences.

Theoretical Framework

As per Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy, metaphor is a poetically or rhetorically ambitious use of words, a figurative as opposed to literal use. Cambridge online dictionary, in turn, defines "metaphor" as "an expression, often found in literature, that describes a person or object by referring to something that is considered to have similar characteristics to that person or object. In the

traditional sense, metaphor is a linguistic phenomenon and a rhetorical figure having mainly artistic purposes. In point of fact, metaphors are the foundational element of language through which our concepts and meaning are formed (Franke, 2000). Scott observes that metaphors give the speaker a particularly compact means of communication, one not laden with extraneous words (Scott, 2005). Charteris–Black (2009; 2011) proposes metaphor as one of the main tools in persuasion, and presents its ability to arouse emotions as one of the key mechanisms in persuasion. Namely, "metaphors change how we understand and think about politics by influencing our feelings and thoughts" (Charteris–Black, 2009), which suggests that "increasing the emotional impact is a very vital role for metaphor" (Charteris–Black, 2009, p. 105). No matter how, cognitive approach of metaphors by American linguists Geoge Lakoff and Mark Johnson markedly changed the established definitions providing fresh insights into metaphors. These insights have been fully formulated in their book "Metaphors we live by", which was written in 1980, and then refreshed in 2003. For the time being, metaphors are mostly defined conceptual objects and they become possible because they exist in the conceptual system of a person. Conceptual approach distinguishes the following types of conceptual metaphors: structural, orientational, ontological. Structural metaphors comprise a metaphorical system where one concept is metaphorical structured in terms of another (G. Lakoff and M. Johnson, 1980/2003, p. 14). More specifically, an abstract concept is represented with reference to more concrete concepts. Lakoff and Johnson fastidiously introduce structural metaphor by the example of the concept ARGUMENT and the conceptual metaphor ARGUMENT IS WAR. Alluding to various examples from life it is overt that the metaphor ARGUMENT IS WAR is reflected in our daily language in many forms. The examples are provided as follows:

ARGUMENT IS WAR
Your claims are *indefensible*.
He *attacked every weak point* in my argument.
His criticisms were *right on target*.
I *demolished* his argument (G. Lakoff and M. Johnson, 1980/2003, p. 4).

Orientational metaphors involve spatial relationship and help to introduce a system of ideas, juxtaposing it with interactions in space. Lakoff and Johnson support this by alleging the conceptual metaphor HAPPY IS UP. The fact that concept happy is oriented UP leads to English expressions like "I am feeling up today" (G. Lakoff and M. Johnson, 1980/2003, p. 14). As to ontological metaphors, it is believed that they help to comprehend events, actions, emotions and ideas as detached, sensually perceived objects and entities. Ontological metaphors ''serve various purposes, and the various kinds of metaphors there are reflect the kinds of purposes served. Take the experience of rising prices, which can be metaphorically viewed as an entity via noun *Inflation*" (G. Lakoff and M. Johnson, 1980/2003, p. 26). In "Metaphors we live by", *inflation* is represented as an entity

and it has the given form:

        INFLATION IS AN ENTITY
        Inflation is lowering our standard of living.
        Inflation makes me seek.

In further studies by Lakoff and Johnson the following examples are outlined: "AFFECTION IS WARMTH": "She gave me a warm embrace". "CHANGE IS MOTION": "She's going from bad to worse". "IMPORTANT IS BIG": "He's a big wheel in the company". "INTIMACY IS CLOSENESS": "They are really close friends" "KNOWING IS SEEING": "I see what you mean". "MORE IS UP": "Prices are soaring"; "World stocks have plummeted overnight". "SIMILARITY IS CLOSENESS": "These two colors are very close". "UNDERSTANDING IS GRASPING": "He was unable to grasp the notion of inter–subjectivity" (G. Lakoff and M. Johnson, 1980/2003). In outline, conceptual metaphor framework proposes a cross domain mapping where abstract concept (e.g. Argument) is conceptualized by a more precise concept (e.g. WAR).

Here, the analyst will also refer to the Metaphor Identification procedure (MIP), a model which was proposed by a group of seven metaphor analysts (Pragglejaz Group, 2007), to identify the metaphors found in the speeches of the American and Chinese presidential statements. MIP is created to provide metaphor analysts with a reliable tool for the identification of metaphorically used words in context. Pragglejaz Group (2007) states that metaphor identification takes effect when the researcher abides by the following steps:

1. Read the entire text–discourse to establish a general understanding of the meaning.
2. Determine the lexical units in the text–discourse
3. (a) For each lexical unit in the text, establish its meaning in context, that is, how it applies to an entity, relation, or attribute in the situation evoked by the text (contextual meaning). Take into account what comes before and after the lexical unit. (b) For each lexical unit, determine if it has a more basic contemporary meaning in other contexts than the one in the given context. (c) If the lexical unit has a more basic current–contemporary meaning in other contexts than the given context, decide whether the contextual meaning contrasts with the basic meaning but can be understood in comparison with it.
4. If yes, mark the lexical unit as metaphorical (Pragglejaz Group, 2007, p. 3)

Aims and questions of the study

This study closely examines conceptual metaphors in the American and Chinese presidential statements, providing a comprehensive understanding of the COVID–19 speeches of the presidents. Then, it throws itself into categorizing the most common ones according to the source domains proposed by Lakoff and Johnson (1980/2003). For the purposes of this study a corpus was compiled of coronavirus–

related speeches delivered by the presidents. Namely, the website of White House and that of Minister of Foreign Affairs of People's Republic of China (in English). The speeches have been chosen on a timeline from March 2020 to May 2022. The article tends to flawlessly assay the use of conceptual metaphors in the political speeches. For addressing this, a contrastive analysis of the speeches is carried out to outline similarities and differences in the use of metaphors on the part of the politicians. Along these lines, we can map out two major research questions (RQ) to be tackled:

RQ 1. What are the most frequent source–domain categories of conceptual metaphors used in COVID–19 speeches of Xi Jinping and Joe Biden?

RQ 2. What are the main functions of metaphors found in presidential statements?

Methods

The speeches selected for the given study include those delivered by the presidents during COVID–19 pandemic. Admittedly, for this study four speeches have been chosen read by the presidents between March 2020 and July 2020. For metaphor identification the researcher follows the Metaphor Identification Procedure (MIP). The data is analyzed both qualitatively and quantitatively. The sample of the study amounts to four COVID –19 Speeches: (1) Defeating COVID–19 with Solidarity and Cooperation delivered by Xi Jinping on June 17, 2020 (2) President Xi Jinping Attends Extraordinary G20 Leaders' Summit and Delivers Important Remarks, March 27, 2020, (3) Joe Biden COVID–19 Response & Vaccine Update Speech (R&V) delivered on July 6, 2021 (4) Remarks by President Biden on COVID–19, delivered on July 27, 2022.

Findings and Analysis

This section will analyze the use of metaphors in American and Chinese presidential discourse according to Lakoff and Johnson's (1980, 2003) perspective of metaphorical expressions as well as to Charteris–Black's Critical Discourse Analysis. Accordingly, the researcher will introduce Source–domain Categories of Conceptual Metaphors Used in COVID–19 Speeches of Joe Biden and Xi Jinping. On top of that, the main functions of metaphors found in presidents' speeches on COVID–19 are introduced.

Research shows that both presidents use abundant unity metaphors which implies that presidents put paramount importance to the unity and collaboration in tackling the problems associated with COVID–19. From Biden's speeches the following conceptual metaphors are outlined: UNITY IS A FORCE, UNITY IS A LOUD VOICE, and UNITY IS A LIGHT. As for Xi Jinping's speeches the researcher determines the given metaphors: COOPERATION IS A WEAPON, UNITY IS A GLOBAL NETWORK, UNITY IS A BETTER DAY. Suffice it to say, presidents address the world on behalf of their nations (the Americans, Chinese people, we, our nation) and

calls for unified action. Based on presidential statements, it can be posited that collaborating and working together will enable the nations to overcome the stumbling blocks they face. Hence, the application of metaphors functions as a way of elucidating on the unified actions of both countries. Both American and Chinese presidents apply unity metaphors nearly at the same frequency. To sound even more persuasive, presidents metaphorically present some abstract concepts as objects so that people can process them in terms of real world concepts. Howbeit, in Joe Biden's speech there are found more object metaphors than those in Xi Jinping's. During Extraordinary G20 Leaders' Summit president Xi Jinping (2020) utters that COVID–19 IS A FORMIDABLE TASK and PEOPLE ARE OBJECTS **(From day one of our fight against the outbreak, we have put people's life and health first).** As of aforementioned, object metaphors are more prevalent in President Joe Biden's speeches on COVID–19 inasmuch as he always states his intentions to address people from diverse backgrounds. Hence, the researcher has attempted to disclose the following object metaphors:

DAETH IS AN EMPTY CHAIRS (**Today, we mark a tragic milestone here in the United States: one million COVID deaths, one million empty chairs around the family dinner table — each irreplaceable. Today, we mark a tragic milestone here in the United States: one million COVID deaths, one million empty chairs around the family dinner table — each irreplaceable) (Global COVID–19 summit)**

A CRISIS IS A HOLE ("**We have to get to work immediately to dig ourselves out of this hole**"– (Biden's Speech on Coronavirus, 2022).

LIFE IS A DARK WINTER **(We just received a briefing from our COVID team. Truthfully, we remain in a very dark winter).**

Studying presidential speeches from ontological metaphors point of view, the researcher counts upon that president Xi Jinping mostly uses motion metaphors to describe the recovering situation of the country. MOTION IS A POSITIVE DIRECTION **(Now the situation in China is moving steadily in a positive direction)**. However, President Biden uses more ontological metaphors than Xi Jinping. Following the formula presented by Lakoff and Johnson (2003) HAPPY IS UP and SAD IS DOWN from Biden's speeches the following spatial metaphors can be outlined:

RAGE IS UP (And as the virus tragically rages in other countries, as other nations — even wealthy nations — are mired in the challenges of a slow vaccine rollout and poor economic conditions as a result, things are very different here)

TOP IS UP ("Last week we topped 120,000 new cases")

PROGRESS IS UP (The American people stepped up)

Most of all, however, war metaphors prevail in COVID–19 speeches. Both in American and Chinese presidential discourses the war metaphor built by means of vocabulary typically used in the domain of war: to fight, to combat, to win, victory, fight, war, battle, to defeat, enemy, and frontline, now transferred in the domain (source) of the disease caused by the coronavirus. Presidents employ war

metaphors and mostly talk about "fighting" and "defeating" the virus. (Next week, I'll be laying out the path ahead to continue our fight against COVID–19 to get us to July 4th). (**I'm back to announce our action plan to battle C0VID–19 this winter — not that any of it is a surprise to any of you because it's the combined advice from all of you that we developed this plan**)(Biden Speech on Coronavirus).

Table 1: Frequency of Metaphors used in President Xi Jinping's speeches

Unity Metaphors	Spatial Metaphors	War Metaphors	Object Metaphors
10	3	10	4

Table 2: Frequency of Metaphors used in President Joe Biden's speeches

Unity Metaphors	Spatial Metaphors	War Metaphors	Object Metaphors
11	6	10	10

Conclusion

Ultimately, the findings proclaim that presidents of America and China do convincingly use metaphorical language in their speeches during coronavirus pandemic. The type, function and use of the metaphors in two president's statements are nearly the same. On the whole, unity metaphors are applied ubiquitously in both presidents' speeches. This means that as two superpower states America and China call for united action on fighting against the pandemic and, therefore, act as power builders in the context of pandemic struggle. By the same token, the metaphor of war prevails in two presidents' speeches equally, meaning that presidents attach a serious attention to COVID–19 and present it war–like one which has to be fought. In distinction to unity and war metaphors, presidents use object and spatial metaphors. Yet, the president of America uses object and spatial metaphors more consistently than those of Chinese president. Supposedly, it can be assumed that President Joe Biden's speech is much more metaphorical and metaphors function differently in his speeches. Anyhow, President Xi Jinping uses mostly war metaphors, motion metaphors and collaboration metaphor.

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Սոնա Հակոբյան

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ՔՈՎԻԴ 19 ՀԱՄԱՃԱՐԱԿԻ ՀԱՄԱՏԵՔՍՏՈՒՄ ՀԱՍԿԱՑՈՒԹԱՅԻՆ ՓՈԽԱԲԵՐՈՒԹՅՈՒՆՆԵՐԻ ԱՐՏԱՊԱՏԿԵՐՈՒՄԸ ԱՄՆ–Ի և ՉԻՆԱՍՏԱՆԻ ՆԱԽԱԳԱՀԱԿԱՆ ՈՒՂԵՐՁՆԵՐՈՒՄ

Քովիդ–19 համաճարակը հանկարծակի բռնկվեց ամբողջ աշխարհում և իրապես որպես պետություն անմասն չմնաց: Այս առումով ամբողջ աշխարհի իշխանությունները իրենց անհանգստությունները սկսեցին արտահայտել քաղաքական ելույթներում` փորձելով ներկայացնել իրավիճակի կայունաց–ման ուղիներ: Սույն հոդվածում ուսումնասիրվում և վերլուծվում են

համաձարակը նկարագրող հասկացությային փոխաբերությունները ԱՄՆ–ի և Չինաստանի նախագահների ուղերձներում: Հոդվածում հակիրճ ներկայաց– վում են փոխաբերությունների տեսական հիմքերը ճանաչողական մոտեցման տեսանկյունից: Այնուհետև փորձ է արվում վերհանել այն աղբյուրները, որոնք ներկայացնում են համաճարակը փոխաբերորեն: Վերլուծությունը թույլ է տալիս եզրակացնել, որ երկու գերտերությունների նախագահների ելույթ– ներում առկա են մեծ թվով փոխաբերություններ, որն էլ փաստում է, որ փոխաբերության կիրառությունը շատ կարևոր է օրհասական իրադար– ձությունների մասին խոսելիս: Մեր հետազոտության արդյունքում պարզ է դառնում, որ ամենաշատ հանդիպող փոխաբերությունները երկու նախագահ– ների ուղերձներում միասնություն, տարածականություն, առարկա և պա– տերազմ արտահայտող փոխաբերություններն են: Այնուամենայնիվ, հարկ է փաստել, որ ամերիկյան քաղաքական խոսույթում ավելի շատ են կիրառվում փոխաբերական արտահայտություններ, քան չինական քաղաքական խոսույթում:

Հիմնաբառեր. հասկացությային փոխաբերություն, քաղաքական խոսույթ, նախագահ, ելույթ, փոխաբերություն, Ամերիկա, Չինաստան:

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КОНЦЕПТУАЛЬНАЯ МЕТАФОРА В АМЕРАИКАНСКИХ И КИТАЙСКИХ ПРЕЗИДЕНТСКИХ ВЫСТУПЛЕНИЯХ

Пандемия COVID–19 поразила мир в широких масштабах, и ни одно государство не смогло избежать ее. В соответствии с этим, власти во всем мире выражали свою озабоченность, оценивая мероприятия, направленные на преодоление последствий пандемии. По этой причине их руководители выступали с речами и высказывали свои мысли о событиях, произошедших после пандемии. Статья посвящена концептуальным метафорам, анализирует метафорические концепции, используемые для описания событий и последствий пандемии COVID–19 американскими и китайскими президентами. В статье кратко представлена теоретическая основа исследования в рамках когнитивного подхода. Затем анализ выбранного материала дает возможность оценить области знаний, которые служили исходными областями для метафорического выражения пандемии. Полученные данные доказывают распространенность метафор в президентских выступлениях двух сверхдержав и их важность для понимания сложных ситуаций, эффективно воздействующих на аудиторию. Исследования показали, что наиболее часто

используемыми областями источников в обоих политических дискурсах являются единство метафоры, пространственные метафоры, объектные метафоры и военные метафоры. Тем не менее, американский политический дискурс гораздо более убедительно и метафорически выражен, чем китайский политический дискурс.

Ключевые слова: Концептуальная метафора, COVID–19, политический дискурс, метафора, президент, речь, Америка, Китай.