

A Corpus-Based Study of Season Metaphors in Chinese News Discourse

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While conceptual metaphor is a hot issue in cognitive linguistics, season metaphors in both written and dialogical Mandarin news discourse have not been scientifically studied. Studies based on statistically informed corpus linguistic methodologies are rare in literature, too. Considering this, this paper studies season metaphors in Chinese news discourse through the integration of a corpus-based approach and Conceptual Metaphor Theory. Our corpora include the whole “Chinese text” in *LDC on line* (about 1 billion words) and a collection of scripts from two famous news review programs broadcasted in CCTV (China Central Television) (about 6 million words). In the Dictionary of *Mandarin Synonyms* 1996, three hundred and two seasonal expressions are found, all of which are searched one by one in corpora and metaphorical concordance lines are all collected. Then a statistical analysis of concordance lines is undertaken in three aspects, i.e., overall distribution analysis, analysis of distribution in different subjects and contrast analysis of distribution in written and dialogical corpora. The findings of the present study are as follows: (1) in Chinese news discourse, the degree of metaphorization of the majority of season and seasonal weather terms is not high. However, compared to written news discourse, the degree of metaphorization of such terms in spoken news discourse is much higher. (2) As far as the distribution of season metaphors in different types of news discourse is concerned, economic news discourse has the highest frequency. With regard to the metaphorical meanings of season and seasonal weather terms, “春风”(spring breeze), “春雨”(spring rain), “春天”(spring), “小阳春”(Indian summer), and “春雷”(spring thunder) belong to positive metaphors, whereas “冬天”(winter), “寒冬”(frigid winter), “严冬”(severe winter), “寒流”(cold current), “寒冷”(frigidity), and “寒风”(cold wind) can be classified as negative metaphors, and “高温”(high temperature), “秋风”(autumn wind) as well as “秋天”(autumn) can be both positive and negative metaphors. (3) In Chinese news discourse, season metaphor is a kind of complex metaphor composed of primary metaphor, proposition and sub-complex metaphor.

Keywords: Season metaphors; Chinese news discourse; corpus-based approach; Conceptual Metaphor Theory