

A Comparative Study of the Evaluation Function of War Metaphors in the Perspective of Critical Metaphors

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Abstract: This paper analyzed the differences of China's political stance and attitude in response to the recent China-US trade war and China-US epidemic war, provoked by the United States, through comparing the distribution differences of war metaphors as attitudinal resources in regular speeches relevant to these two events on the official website of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs within the framework of conceptual metaphor and evaluation theory. Through the analysis of metaphorical interpretation and metaphor explanation, the study found that in the diplomatic discourse of the China-US epidemic war, the confrontational willingness is stronger and the signal of willing to ease the China-US relationship is significantly weakened, further more, the proportion of judgement resources, especially negative social constraint in the speeches relevant to the China-US epidemic war is the highest, which indicates that China's opposing attitude on this event is more resolute. It is hoped that the results of this study will help to explore the application potential of evaluative function of war metaphor discourse strategy in facilitating the enhancement of China's diplomatic discourse power.

Keywords: Conceptual metaphor, Evaluation theory, Attitudinal resources, War metaphors.

1. Introduction

Diplomacy is not only the official act of a sovereign state to exercise its sovereignty abroad, but also an important means for a country to defend its national interests in international affairs. The words and behaviors of diplomatic spokespersons reflect not only the poise and image of the country, but also the foreign policy and strategy of the country. In order to deal with the smear attacks and stigmatization of China by the United States in the China-US trade war and the China-US epidemic war, China needs to build a foreign discourse system to effectively counter and resist all kinds of negative public opinion. To this end, using metaphor and evaluation theory as a theoretical framework, we analyze the differences in China's political stance and attitude toward what the United States did in these two events by comparing the differences in the distribution of metaphorical keywords of attitudinal resources war in the speeches of the regular press conferences of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) in the two events, and then make suggestions for improving the diplomatic discourse system, enhancing international discourse power, effectively guiding international public opinion and thus obtaining support from the international community.

2. Theoretical Overview of Metaphors and Evaluation Systems

2.1. Theories related to conceptual metaphors

The theory of conceptual metaphor is put forward in *Metaphor We Live By* (1980) of George Lakoff and Mark Johnson, and systematically elaborated in *The Contemporary Theory of Metaphor* (Lakoff, 1992). Later, in *Metaphor: A Practical Introduction (2nd)* (2010), Zoltán Kövesces sorts through the metaphor-related researches of previous two decades and makes detailed explanation for relevant concepts, such as the definition of metaphor, the source and target domains, the foundations of metaphor, some features of metaphorical mapping, metaphorical implication and

metaphorical systems. It also points out that metaphor is a systematic mapping from a concrete conceptual domain to an abstract conceptual domain. Domestic scholars also point out that in conceptual metaphor theory, metaphor is divided into two levels: conceptual metaphor and linguistic metaphor, in which conceptual metaphor can be mapped systematically and correspondingly from one conceptual domain to another through human cognition and reasoning (Fauconnier, 1997: 149-151; Li Fuyin, 2008: 131-143; Wen Xu & Xiao Kaiyong, 2019: 27-28).

Conceptual integration (or blending) is a fundamental cognitive operational process of conceptual metaphor theory and also a theoretical framework for exploring the integration of information in meaning construction. It involves the operational process of merging dynamic cognitive models of mental space networks. The conceptual blending network is a virtual site where conceptual blending takes place, i.e., a mental space network constructed by speakers who integrate various information and background knowledge in order to achieve the construction and understanding of discourse meaning in the communication process. A typical conceptual blending network consists of four mental spaces constructed according to the structure of frames and cognitive models, viz. no less than two input spaces, a generic space and a blend.

In the process of conceptual blending, the two input spaces are mapped across spaces based on the shared schema structure in the generic space, and then some of the corresponding components are obtained and selectively projected to the blend through the interaction of the three cognitive operations, viz. composition, completion and elaboration. Composition refers to combining the projected elements from the input spaces to produce new relationships, so as to make the corresponding components and relationships organically combined in the blend through fusion; completion refers to projecting the combined structure from input spaces into the blend by using knowledge of the background framework, cognitive and cultural models, etc., then refining and supplementing the information not shown in the framework according to the Gestalt completion

principle, so as to make the blend as the example of “specific familiar framework”. Elaboration refers to cognitively expanding and processing the combined structure in the blend through the emergent logic and principles (Zhang, 2017: 10-13; Wen & Yang, 2022: 83-85). Conceptual metaphor and conceptual blending theory are complementary in dealing with metaphorical conceptualization, as the conventional conceptual pairings and one-way reflections studied by the former provide input spaces for the various dynamic conceptual networks proposed by the latter and constrain the operations of these conceptual networks (Zhang & Yang, 2008: 11).

2.2. Analysis of critical metaphors

In his book *Corpus Approaches to Critical Metaphor Analysis* (2004), Charteris-Black suggests that the focus of critical metaphor analysis is to combine linguistic analysis with cognitive understanding and social context, and to analyze the usage of metaphor in a particular context based on the basic framework of critical metaphor analysis operations (including metaphor identification, metaphor interpretation and metaphor explanation).

The similarity between the source and target domains constitutes a condition for mapping from the source domain to the target domain, and thus generates semantic tension, i.e., unconventional matches and inconsistency between the two domains. Metaphor identification mainly involves determining whether such semantic tension exists between the literal source and target domains. Metaphor itself is a coherent cognitive system with the cognitive hierarchical mode consists of conceptual key, conceptual metaphor and literal metaphor. Identifying conceptual metaphors can better sort out the relationships among metaphors, analyze the corresponding source and target domains of metaphors according to the contexts in which they are used, interpret the social relations represented by metaphors and the interrelationship of various pragmatic factors in the contexts, as well as explore the cognitive meaning behind metaphors. Metaphor interpretation focuses on revealing the pragmatic and cognitive factors of metaphor production through identifying the source and target domains of metaphors, interpreting their corresponding pragmatic meanings and analyzing how war metaphors describe and present China-US relations by qualitative methods. Metaphorical explanation is to consider metaphors in the dimension of social practices, revealing the relationship between metaphors and social contexts, as well as the social ideology and power relations underlying the metaphors (Charteris-Black, 2004: 34-35, 37-39, 244-246). The interrelationship between war metaphors in regular foreign ministry speeches is analyzed with a view to exploring the metaphorical discourse strategies, and ideological meanings behind the metaphors in different contexts are analyzed according to the social context of the regular meeting texts.

2.3. Evaluation theory

Martin & White (2005: 1) point out that one of the concerns of appraisal system is how the author/speaker constructs a unique authorship or role for himself, i.e., constructs his own attitudes, positions and identities, as well as the emotions and values of the linguistic group to which he belongs, through the discourse. Evaluation theory stems from the study on interpersonal meaning of the systemic functional linguistics. It focuses on the linguistic resources like expression,

negotiation, naturalized specific intersubjective relations and ideology of discourse or speaker, and divides evaluative resources into three modules of attitude, engagement and graduation according to semantics. Engagement includes linguistic resources that indicate the source of discourse sound, and notices the ways in which speech conducts negotiation with interpersonal or conceptual meaning. Graduation is concerned with the enhancement or diminution of intensity, and can span the entire appraisal system (Hu, 2017: 324-334). Since the main concern of this paper is the Chinese side's stance and attitude toward the China-US trade war and the China-US epidemic war provoked by the U.S. side, which mainly involves the attitude module, only a brief description of this module is given here.

In the attitudinal system, “affect” belongs to “reaction”, which is human emotion towards behavior, text, process and related phenomena, involving two opposing aspects of positive and negative. It can be divided into realis and irrealis, including four subcategories of happiness, security, satisfaction, inclination. “Judgment” meaning involves the evaluator's attitude towards some people and their behavior styles and character traits, which judges personal behavior in accordance with social norms and ethics. It is mainly divided into two categories: social esteem and social sanction, including five sub-categories: normality, capacity, tenacity, veracity and propriety. “Appreciation” is a judgment of the value of things, where things are human creations, human performance and natural phenomena, and can also be seen as an institutionalized set of positive or negative values for products, processes and entities, i.e., language users' judgement from aesthetic perspective on behaviors, texts/processes and phenomena, which are divided into three subcategories: reaction, composition and valuation (Martin, 2005: 48-56; Gao, 2015: 133-143; Peng, 2015: 10, 63, 114). For the specific classification, see Table 1.

3. Research Design

In this paper, the statements about the China-US trade war and the China-US epidemic war on the official website of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) is crawled by Python at first; and then the war metaphor-related expressions is manually screened out; next, the distribution of war metaphor words as attitudinal resources in the two events is counted; finally, under the theoretical framework of Charteris-Black's critical metaphor analysis, the differences in China's political stance and attitudes toward the US's behaviors in China-US trade war and China-US epidemic war is analyzed by comparing the differences in the distribution of the war metaphor words in these two events.

3.1. Research Questions

This paper focuses on the following three questions:

(1) What kinds of conceptual metaphors are used as attitudinal resources in the statements of the regular press conference of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) on the China-US trade war and the China-US epidemic war respectively?

(2) How are these conceptual metaphors distributed as attitudinal resources in the statements of the regular press conference of the MFA on the China-US trade war and the China-US epidemic war? What is the difference in the distribution of the two events?

(3) How to analyze the differences in China's political stance and attitudes toward the US's behaviors in China-US

trade war and China-US epidemic war under the framework of metaphor and evaluation theory by comparing the

differences in the distribution of attitudinal resources in the two events?

Table 1. Attitudinal System (Martin 2000: 203-245; Ma, 2015: 102)

Attitudinal System	Judgement	Social Esteem	Normality Capacity Tenacity	How special? How capable? How dependable?
		Social Sanction	Veracity Propriety	How honest? How far beyond reproach?
	Affect	Realis		Happiness Security Satisfaction Inclination
		Irrealis		Fear Desire
	Appreciation	Reaction	Impact Quality	Did it grab me? Did I like it?
		Composition	Balance Complexity	Did it hang together? Was it hard to follow?
		Valuation		Was it worthwhile?

3.2. Sources of the corpus

The corpus for the study was selected by combing through the timeline of the regular press conferences of the MFA on the statements about the China-US trade war and the China-US epidemic war. The corpus of the China-US trade war contains a total of 201 statements with 117,287 words from April 3, 2018 (the first official response of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to the US tariff increase on imported steel and aluminum products imposed by the US under Section 232) to February 18, 2020 (the response of MFA about China’s implementation of the procurement commitment under the phase one China-US economic and trade agreement). The corpus of the China-US epidemic war contains a total of 126 statements with 118,766 words from November 31, 2019 (China’s first response taken by Foreign Ministry spokesperson Hua Chunying to the US’s unfriendly remarks about China’s fight against the epidemic) to December 23, 2021 (*The Human Rights Disaster of the U.S.-Style “Fight against the Epidemic”* reported by the Human Rights Law Institute of Huazhong University of Science and Technology points out that the root cause of the failure of the U.S.-style anti-epidemic measures lies in the flaws of the U.S. system, misplaced values and serious neglect of human rights. Foreign Ministry spokesman Zhao Lijian responded to the conclusion and condemned the U.S. for politicizing and weaponizing the epidemic, which has caused great disruption and damage to international cooperation in fighting the epidemic and tracing the source). Python is used to crawl the statements in the regular press conference of the MFA with the keywords of “trade / economic and trade” and “epidemic / virus / pneumonia” respectively, and then the required language materials are identified by manual screening and then imported into AntConc 3.5.7, so as to build the corpus of “China-US trade war” and “China-US epidemic war”. Functions of Word List (especially the “Use specific words below”) and Concordance are used to filter the war metaphor keywords as attitudinal resources, and count their frequency and distribution.

4. Research Results and Analysis

This paper uses metaphor and evaluation theory as the framework, and the three steps of critical metaphor analysis combined with specific corpus for example analysis: first, in the metaphor identification stage, the systematic nature of conceptual metaphor theory is used to construct a cognitive framework of war metaphors, and then filter out relevant war metaphor keywords; subsequently, in the metaphor interpretation stage, conceptual blending theory is used to explain the mapping relationship between each metaphor element, and then sort out the social relations between China and the US in these two wars, so as to derive the pragmatic meaning generated by the emergent structure; finally, in the metaphor explanation stage, since political tendencies are embedded in attitudinal resources, the differences in the distribution of war metaphor words as attitudinal resources in the two events are compared to analyze the differences in the Chinese side’s political stance and attitude toward the US.

4.1. Critical metaphor analysis: metaphor identification

Conceptual metaphor theory considers metaphor as a system consisting of a set of framing elements that can be mapped systematically and correspondingly from one conceptual domain to another through human cognition and reasoning. According to the two steps of metaphor identification, the text is first read carefully to identify candidate war metaphor words, i.e., the candidate war metaphors are screened from linguistic, pragmatic and cognitive levels according to the criteria of metaphor, the words that do not meet the criteria are excluded, and the words with war metaphorical meanings are classified as war metaphor keywords; subsequently, the context of war metaphor keywords in the corpus is analyzed to determine whether their meanings are war metaphorical. In this paper, the framework structure of war, including war participants, way of war, nature of war and outcome of war, are used in

combination with the framework structure and texts of the China-US trade war and China-US epidemic war to list the

relevant war metaphorical keywords and calculate them as types in the corpus (as shown in Table 2).

Table 2. Cognitive framework of war metaphors

Framework of war	China-US trade war	China-US epidemic war
Participants of War	Originator, risk maker, rule breaker	Masterminds, manipulators, fiction experts, troublemakers, creators of political viruses, purveyors of disinformation
Way of war	Smear and attack, distort facts, lie, fabricate rumors, make groundless accusations, frame and slander, confuse public opinion, turn things upside down, and beat people with a big stick	Smear and attack, smear, demonize, label, stigmatize, politicize, denigrate, blame, deflection, defend, make groundless accusations, scapegoat, deliberately distort, fabricate and defame
Nature of war	Hegemonic behavior	Clumsy farce, racism, racial discrimination
Outcome of war	Lose-lose outcome, lose support, no winner, reap the consequences of their own harm, good to none but worse to oneself, harm others without benefiting oneself	Rack one's brains in vain, good to none but worse to oneself, doomed to failure, destined never to succeed, doomed to be futile, who plays with fire will burn himself, become a laughingstock
Number of types	20	32

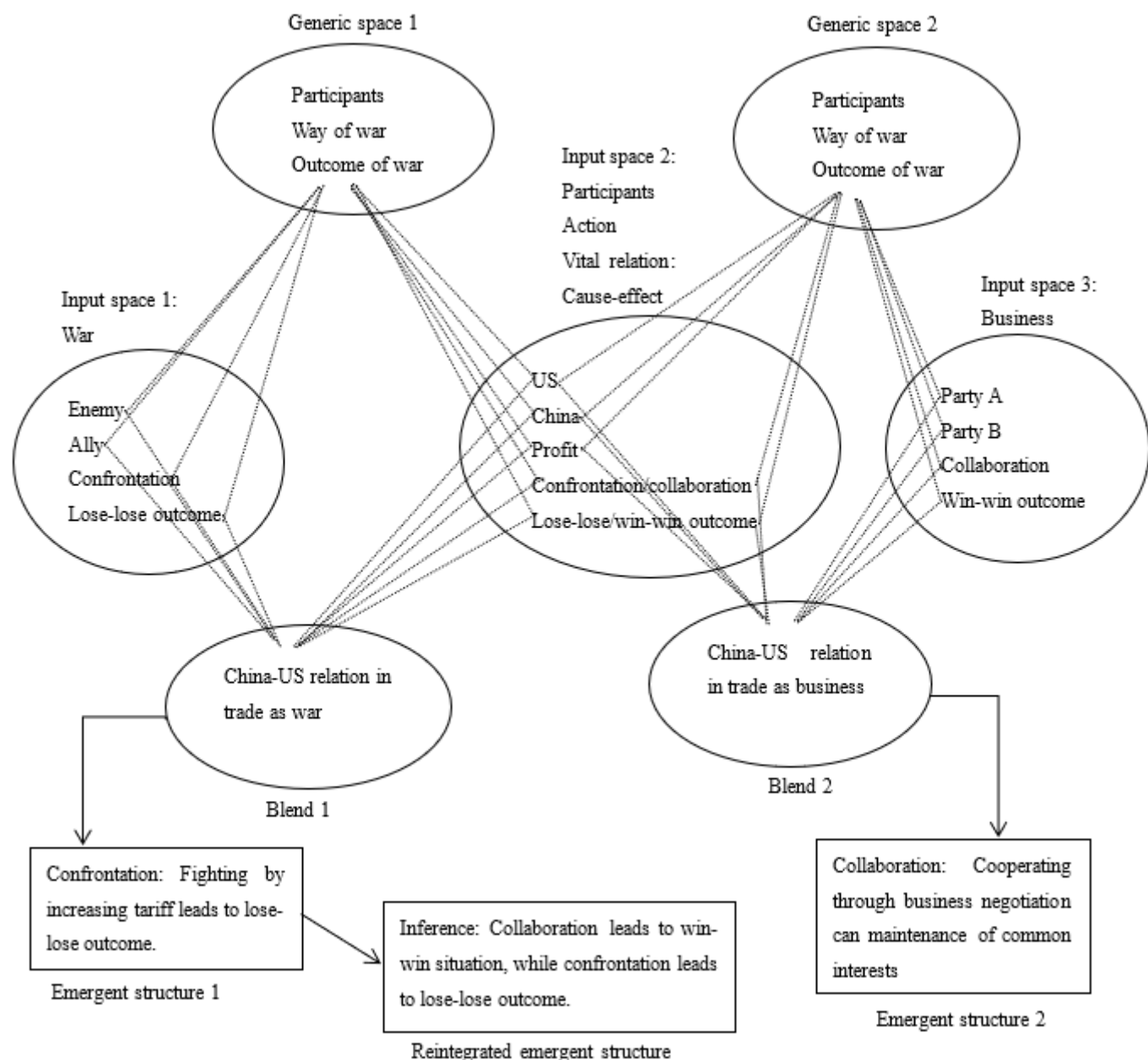


Figure 1. Conceptual Blending of the China-US trade War (adapted from Liang & Wang, 2022: 26)

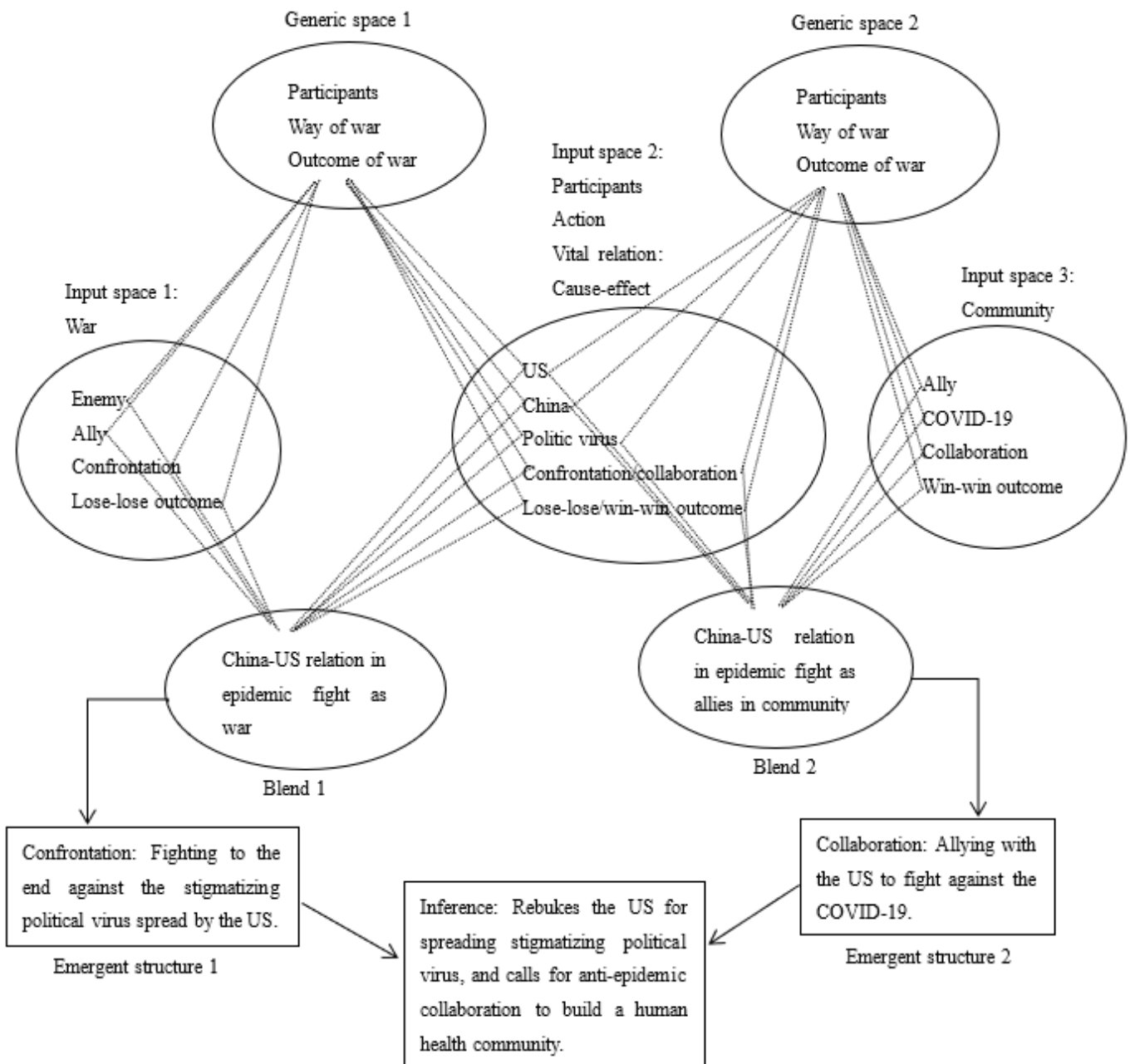


Figure 2. Conceptual blending of the China-US Epidemic War (adapted from Liang & Wang, 2022: 26)

4.2. Critical metaphor analysis: metaphor interpretation

The war framework, business framework and China-US trade relations framework constitute the three input spaces of the blend of “China-US trade war”, and the similar characteristics of the three spaces form the generic space. The characteristics of both the generic space and the input space are projected into the blend to go through the operations of composition, completion and elaboration, so as to generate an emergent structure that is consistent with the two input spaces and has its own characteristics (as shown in Figure 1). Input space 1 is the framework of “war”, input space 2 is the framework of “China-US trade”, and the common elements of the two input spaces form the generic space 1. The partial projections of input space 1 and input space 2 form the blend 1, and the “war” framework provides the organizational framework for blend 1. On the basis of blend 1, the concept

of “war” is further expanded according to the emergent logic, and the emergent meaning is drawn that “regarding the China-US trade friction as a war: fight to the end”. At the same time, the “business” framework of input space 3 and the common elements of input space 2 form the generic space 2, and then after partial projection form the blend 2, the “business” framework provides the organizational framework for the blend 2, and constructs and constructs the emergent meaning of “regarding China-US economic and trade relations as business negotiations: achieving a balance of interests between the two sides through dialogue and negotiation with a view to realizing a win-win situation”. The two emergent structures are reintegrated to realize the overlapping of metaphorical connotations, which constructing the double emergent meaning that China-US trade relations are both like war and business cooperation, viz. “collaboration leads to a win-win situation, while confrontation leads to a lose-lose outcome”, the outcome of which depends on whether both

sides adopt a struggle or cooperation attitude to deal with China-US trade relations.

The blend of “China-US epidemic war” consists of three frameworks: war, fight against COVID-19 epidemic, and China-US relation in the fight against COVID-19 epidemic (or China-US anti-epidemic relationship in short). As shown in Figure 2, input space 1 is the framework of “war”, input space 2 is the framework of “China-US anti-epidemic relationship”, and the common elements of the two input spaces form the generic space 1. The partial projections of input space 1 and input space 2 form the blend 1. The “war” framework provides the organizational framework for blend 1, and constructs the emergent meaning of “regarding the China-US anti-epidemic relationship as a war”, which rebukes the US side for shirking the blame and clarifies that “the fight against the COVID-19 virus”, should have been a war between the people of the world and the COVID-19 virus, but it is weaponized as “political virus” to provoke a political struggle between China and the US due to some ulterior motives.

At the same time, the “community” framework of input space 3 and the common elements of input space 2 form the generic space 2. Subsequently, the partial projection from input space 2 and input space 3 form the blend 2. The “community” framework provides the organizational framework for blend 2, which constructs the emergent meaning of “dealing with China-US anti-epidemic relations as allies of the community”, and calls for China-US

cooperation against the COVID-19 epidemic. Finally, the two emergent structures are reintegrated to construct the emergent meaning that the China-US anti-epidemic relations can be regarded both as two confrontational sides of a war and two allies of a community, from which a pragmatic meaning inferred to the real world, viz. expressing both China’s determination to fight to the end against the stigmatized political virus war initiated by the US side, while also clarifying that China wants the US side to think clearly that their true enemy is the COVID-19 virus, not China, and calls on the international community to unite and cooperate together to defeat the COVID-19 virus.

According to the concept of “resonance of source domain” proposed by Charteris-Black (2004: 89), the distribution and weight of various conceptual metaphors in the China-US trade war and the China-US epidemic war can be better understood. The resonance of source domain is used to measure the frequency of occurrence of source language in the corpus, i.e., the prevalence of the source domain, and is calculated as follows:

$$\text{Resonance} = \sum \text{types} \times \sum \text{tokens}$$

In this formula, “Resonance” represents the resonance value, “ $\sum \text{types}$ ” represents the sum of the number of type in a source domain, and “ $\sum \text{tokens}$ ” represents the sum of the number of token in a source domain, and the product of the two is the source domain resonance value. The results are as follows:

Table 3. Statistics on the categories of war metaphors

Source	Source domain	Types of keywords	Types of tokens	Resonance value	Percentage of total resonance value
China-US trade war	War	20	139	2780	$2780/(2780+845)=76.69$
	Business	5	169	845	$845/(2780+845)=23.31$
China-US epidemic war	War	32	703	22,496	$22,496/(22,496+1140)=98.18$
	Community	4	285	1140	$1140/(22,496+1140)=4.82$

The number of types and tokens for the war keywords in the China-US trade war and the China-US epidemic war in Table 3 are calculated from Table 2 and Table 4 respectively. 5 types and 169 tokens appears in the business source domain of China-US trade war. 4 types and 285 tokens appears in the community source domain of China-US epidemic war.

According to Table 3, the proportion of war metaphors (indicating confrontational relations) is higher than that of business and community metaphors (indicating collaborative relations) in both the China-US trade war and the China-US epidemic war, but the proportion of business metaphors in the China-US trade war is 23.31%, which is significantly higher than that of community metaphors in the latter at 4.82%, demonstrating that the sense of confrontation is stronger in the diplomatic discourse of the China-US epidemic war, and the signals released to express the willingness to ease China-US relations are significantly weaker. This result also shows that on important issues such as China’s national honor and international fairness and justice, Chinese diplomacy must

resolutely counter all malicious provocations, and forcefully defend national interests and dignity, as well as promote the establishment of a more just and equitable international system and order.

4.3. Critical metaphor analysis: metaphor explanation

According to the definitions and subcategories of affect, judgment and appreciation in the attitudinal system, the war keywords in the cognitive framework of war metaphors of the China-US trade war and China-US epidemic war in Table 2 are categorized into different attitude resources in accordance with the attitude system in Table 1. The frequency and proportion of war keywords in each type of attitude resources are filtered and counted by the Word List (Use specific words below) and Concordance functions of AntConc 3.5.7 (as shown in Table 4).

Table 4. Distribution of war metaphorical attitude resources

		China-US trade war (negative)		China-US epidemic war (positive)
		Subcategory	Words and frequency	Words and frequency
Attitudinal System	Affect	happiness	0	0
		security	0	0
		satisfaction	Lose support (8), reap the consequences of their own harm (1)	Who plays with fire will burn himself (1), become a laughingstock (2)
		inclination	0	doomed to failure (3), destined never to succeed (8)
		Subtotal	9 (6.48%)	14 (1.99%)
	Judgement	Social normality	0	0
		Esteem capacity	0	0
		tenacity	0	0
		Social Sanction veracity	Distort facts (2), lie (44), fabricate rumors (15), confuse public opinion (10)	Distort facts (1), lie (55), fabricate rumors (11), fiction experts (1), creators of political viruses (17), purveyors of disinformation (13)
		propriety	Smear and attack (31), turn things upside down (8), make groundless accusations (6), beat people with a big stick (2), originator (1)	Smear and attack (46), smear (69), blame (54), slander (4), demonize (2), politicize (46), manipulator (33), label (8), scapegoat (88), pass the buck (57), shift the blame (10)
Subtotal	98 (70.50%)	684 (97.30%)		
Appreciation	Reaction	Hegemonic behavior (2)	Clumsy farce (1)	
	Composition	0	0	
	Valuation	Lose-lose outcome (1), no winner (6), good to none but worse to oneself / harm others without benefiting oneself (23)	Rack one's brains in vain (2), good to none but worse to oneself (2)	
Subtotal	32 (23.02%)	5 (0.71%)		
Number of types		139	703	

Table 4 shows that among the war metaphor resources of the China-US trade war and the China-US epidemic war, the proportion of judgment resources (70.50% and 97.30%, respectively) is the largest, and both belong to the category of social sanction. The difference is that in the China-US trade war, the proportion of “not veracious” words is higher, for example, the frequency of “lie” is as high as 44 times. But in the China-US epidemic war, the proportion of words used to criticize the US as “improper” is higher, for example, “scapegoat” appears 88 times, which shows that China’s opposition to the China-US epidemic war is stronger. Then, the proportion of appreciation resources in the two events is the second highest, but the difference of proportions is fairly larger, 23.02% and 0.71% respectively. In addition, both of the two events highlight that no matter in a trade war or an epidemic war, it is harmful not beneficial to both sides. Finally, the affect resources of the two events are 6.48% and 1.99% respectively, with relatively small proportional differences.

However, in the China-US trade war, China is more inclined to express dissatisfaction, such as “lose support”. While in the China-US epidemic war, the Chinese side takes a firmer and more assertive stance, making it clear that the US will not succeed in its plot to stigmatize China, which can be exemplified by the words like “doomed to failure” and “become a laughing stock”.

Overall, among the attitudinal resources of the China-US trade war, the highest proportion of judgment resources accusing the US side of insincerity, followed by the appreciation resources pointing out the worthlessness of the trade war, and the smallest proportion of affect resources expressing dissatisfaction. In contrast, in the China-US epidemic war, the highest proportion of judgment resources (as high as 95.5%) denouncing the US side as unjustified, followed by the proportion of inclination that hope the stigmatization of the epidemic is doomed to fail, and the smallest proportion of appreciation resources that indicate

that the political war on the epidemic is meaningless. Since the evaluation criterion of propriety is whether someone's behavior is socially reprehensible, and one of the typical cases is to judge the behavior of the evaluation target by social morality and social virtue standards. In this sense, the 95.5% share of "not veracious" resources is sufficient to show that China strongly condemns the US side's immoral and irresponsible practice of transferring its anti-epidemic responsibility by means of politicization and stigmatization despite the repeated twists and turns of the global epidemic.

In the context of the current socio-political background, the U.S. National Security Strategy Report and the National Defense Strategy Report released in 2017 described China as a "revisionist power" and a "strategic competitor" of the US that is trying to subvert the existing international order. In addition, the US has repeatedly advocated such discordant arguments as "the theory that the US is losing out" "the theory that China is going back on its word" and "the theory that China is regressing" which do not bear scrutiny. In March 2018, the US launched a trade war against China with an aggressive stance (Zeng & Li, 2020). In response, China has always insisted on the position that "cooperation is mutually beneficial, but confrontation is mutually injurious", hoping that the US side will take the overall situation into account and act in the same direction as the Chinese side, but in return, the US has intensified its smear campaign.

In March 2020, while the epidemic in China was initially under control, the epidemic in the US ushered in a major outbreak that seriously affected its society, politics and economy. The US-led Western countries, at a time when they should be working together to fight the epidemic, are spreading the "China responsibility theory" and "China evil theory" to demonize China's image, and labeling the COVID-19 virus with derogatory regional and country-specific labels such as "China virus" "Wuhan virus" and "Kung Fu virus". Stigma is a derogatory and insulting term used in political interactions between countries around power games, while stigmatization is essentially a discursive construction driven by competition and exclusion. Therefore, by digging deeper into the political intentions underlying the stigmatization initiated by the US, it can be found that the reason why the US side spreads the political virus of stigmatization and insists on elevating a public health crisis to an ideological issue is not only to find a scapegoat for its own ineffectiveness in fighting the epidemic, but also to weaponize the epidemic to damage China's international reputation, to maximize the containment of China's development, and to prevent China from challenging its international leadership position (Xu & Chen, 2019: 6; Shu, 2020: 10; Liu, 2021: 58).

In general, based on the difference in the distribution of attitudinal resources and the socio-political context of the two events, it can be seen that, compared to the China-US trade war, the Chinese side has responded more resolutely and forcefully to the US side's stigmatization and political manipulation in the China-US epidemic war, straightforwardly exposing the US side's plot to shift the blame for its ineffectiveness in fighting the epidemic onto China by spreading the stigmatized political virus. The distribution of judgement resources related to the China-US trade war and the China-US epidemic war in diplomatic discourse shows that the Chinese side, on the one hand, has taken the initiative to seek strategic cooperation with the US side and, on the other hand, has demonstrated a tenacious spirit of struggle, an indomitable will to defy the hegemonic

political manipulation against the US side, and a firm determination to fight to the end to defend national dignity and core interests.

5. Conclusion

The metaphor theory and the attitudinal module of evaluation theory are used as the framework to analyze the differences in China's political stance and attitudes toward the US by comparing the differences in the distribution of war metaphor words as attitudinal resources in the China-US trade war and the China-US epidemic war, with a view to exploring the possibility of enhancing diplomatic discourse power by comparing the different evaluation functions of war metaphors as attitudinal resources in the two events, more specifically, adjusting the diplomatic discourse strategies in accordance with the socio-political background and specific diplomatic events, especially by increasing the strength and intensity of the discourse expressing the opposing position, so as to break through the western discourse hegemony and resolutely defend the national honor as well as the core rights and interests.

After analyzing the metaphor interpretation process, it is found that the ratio of the war source domain to the total resonance value in the diplomatic discourse of the China-US epidemic war is much higher than that of the China-US trade war, and the proportion of its cooperation source domain (viz. the community source domain) is correspondingly lower. Through the analysis of metaphor explanation process, it can be further seen that the differences in the distribution of war metaphor keywords as attitude resources in the two events reflect, to some extent, the differences in China's political stance and attitude towards the US in the two events. Among which, it is more obvious that the judgment attitude resources, especially the social sanction (only negative resources, i.e. war words meaning "not veracity" and "improper", are used in this paper) have the highest proportion in the statements in the China-US epidemic war, indicating that the Chinese side has a stronger opposition to this event. Therefore, it can be seen that a higher proportion of negative social sanction indicates a more resolute opposition stance on the Chinese side.

Due to some subjectivity in the selection process of war metaphor vocabulary and attitude resources, some words may have been omitted in the paper, thus inevitably affecting the accuracy of the statistical results to some extent. It is hoped that subsequent studies will improve such shortcomings of this paper, continue to probe into the evaluation function of the war metaphor discourse strategies as attitudinal resources and explore its potential application in enhancing China's diplomatic discourse capacity, so as to further enhance China's image as a great power and improve its international discourse power with a view to realizing China's transformation from "great power diplomacy" to "strong power diplomacy", and presenting a new image of a strong rise in the international arena.

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