
| RESEARCH ARTICLE

The Examination Metaphor and its Source Image Transformation in Chinese Urban Discourse

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| ABSTRACT

The examination metaphor in Chinese urban discourse appears more and more frequently, becoming a new kind of metaphor with Chinese characteristics, and its related research is an exploration of the external communication of urban image based on philosophical cognition and discourse rhetoric. The study of metaphors in urban discourse can follow the theoretical paradigm of "two identification and three grouping", in which specific metaphors are identified through quantitative and qualitative identification procedures, followed by a three-step grouping analysis of metaphor generation mechanism, diffusion performance, and motivation function to comprehensively and systematically describe and explain these metaphors. The examination metaphors in this investigation are used more frequently than war metaphors as the characteristic metaphors of Chinese urban discourse and enter the new-age urban discourse through the cognitive mechanism of conceptual integration; the examination metaphors have fixed types and rich collocations; they are generated under a variety of cognitive, rhetorical, cultural, and figurative motives and play the functions of discursive rhetoric, image shaping, and empathic cognition. Finally, it is important to balance the advantages and disadvantages of exam metaphors in urban discourse and to develop new paths of discourse metaphor research.

| KEYWORDS

Urban discourse; examination metaphors; rhetorical turn; mechanistic motives; "two identification and three grouping constructions"

| ARTICLE INFORMATION

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1. Introduction

In the new era, urbanization is still the most important development driver in China, and General Secretary Xi Jinping has repeatedly emphasized the need to "accelerate the modernization of urban governance system and governance capacity", while urban discourse governance is inevitably a part of the urban governance system.

In China, "urban discourse" was first proposed by Chen Xucheng (2003) in the form of a complete combination, after which some scholars have studied urban discourse from various perspectives, such as politics, literature, journalism, communication, film, and human beings, but these studies are all from a non-linguistic perspective. Fewer studies from linguistic perspectives, such as Shi Xu (2008) and Xu Liwen (2018), have been conducted from the perspective of city image or multimodal language, but none of them has been presented in the form of a combination of "urban discourse". The earliest literature on urban discourse also appeared in the fields of agriculture, politics, literature, and so on before the linguistic turn was achieved at a later stage. The definition of urban discourse in linguistics is not only confusing but also poorly defined. Considered together, we believe that urban discourse is a new rhetorical behavior with the city as the main body. It accompanies all stages of urban development and involves a multimodal form of language propaganda in all aspects of urban politics, economy, culture, society, ecology, and

external affairs, and plays an important role in building and regulating city image, city strength, and city communication, and is an indispensable part of urban planning and urban governance. Breaking the new governance of urban discourse and improve the soft power of urban culture, it is necessary to strengthen the construction of urban discourse communication capacity, intentionally build a city-related discourse system, improve the creativity, appeal and credibility of the city-related discourse to tell a good city story, spread a good city voice, and explain the characteristics of the city.

Exam metaphor is a common linguistic phenomenon in the new era of Chinese urban discourse, especially in the post-epidemic era; the frequency of using exam metaphors tends to overtake that of war metaphors. "In the 7th edition of the Modern Chinese Dictionary, the word "exam" is interpreted as "to test knowledge or skills by means of written or oral questions. Baidu's explanation is "a rigorous method of identifying the level of knowledge. The test can check students' learning ability and their knowledge reserve. In order to ensure that the results are fair and equitable, the examination room must require strong discipline, and there are special examiners and invigilators to supervise the examination process and any cheating is absolutely prohibited, otherwise it will be subject to legal and criminal liability". This shows that the examination is a whole process including before, during and after the examination. A search of the Chinese Internet using the title, keywords, and topics of "examination metaphor" did not reveal any literature related to this study in China. How is the examination metaphor specifically used in Chinese urban discourse? What are the reasons for using examination metaphors to express Chinese urban discourse? What are the effects of using test metaphors on Chinese urban discourse? These questions have become the focus of this study.

1.1 Identification procedure of examination metaphors

At the beginning of the study, based on a large amount of literature, we constructed a theoretical paradigm for the study of examination metaphors in urban discourse in the new era - "two identification and three grouping", which first identifies examination metaphors in two steps: quantitative and qualitative, and then analyzes the specific items in three steps: generation mechanism. In this way, a clear and complete picture can be presented. Accordingly, a clear and complete theoretical model of metaphor analysis can be presented.

1.2 Quantitative identification

First, a self-built mini-corpus of urban discourse was constructed. Firstly, all news headlines of China City Newspaper from People's Daily Online and China Knowledge Network newspaper database were crawled using Python; the time span was from the initial issue on the website, 2016.01.04, to the latest issue, 2023.02.27. China City Newspaper is supervised by People's Daily and was launched in November 2014, but the initial period of posting has not yet been formed electronically. The starting times recorded in the People's Daily and China Knowledge Network databases are different, so combining the two can maximize the corpus time range. The newspaper serves the national new urbanization strategy and is a professional media serving urban management and urban development, and is dedicated to creating a favorable public opinion environment for China to accelerate the new urbanization strategy. China City News is a stage to showcase the image of Chinese cities, and its news headlines can be said to be the most representative Chinese urban discourse concentrated since the new era. A total of 8305 news headlines were collected in this crawl, and then 101 invalid headlines, such as "Photo Report" and "New Film Express", were removed, and the total number of news headlines in the corpus was 8204.

Second, the urban discourse data were imported into the metric software for analysis. wmatrix5 online recognition software is the latest version of the metaphor recognition tool launched by Professor Paul Rayson at Lancaster University in July 2021. To operate, the txt version of urban discourse was first imported into My folders of the Wmatrix5 online software, and the system automatically generated lexical, lexical, and semantic domain frequency tables after running, and the BNC Sampler Written was selected from the reference corpus in the semantic domain frequency table, which was mainly determined by the written language nature of the self-built corpus, and similar text types were compared with reference. The distribution pattern can be found more clearly. Then, enter the Semantic domain frequency table tab and find the system default settings for a total of 383 semantic domains; we will determine the semantic domain containing options for the most relevant examination Education, refresh the list to get its education-related semantic domains, a total of 383 times, the 383 education-related semantic domain list will be downloaded for backup, continue to filter the P1 marked examination. This is not a complete exam metaphor, and the exam metaphor needs to be identified again.

1.3 Qualitative identification

A qualitative identification procedure was performed on the relevant entries of the examination metaphor. The identification procedure applied is the MIPVU metaphor identification method proposed by Steen's team in 2010, which is a simplified and

extended version of the MIP metaphor identification method, and the simple process can be summarized as follows: (1) Read the text word by word and look for words related to metaphors. (2) If a word adopts a non-direct meaning or adopts a symbolic meaning and can be interpreted by mapping its basic meaning or symbolic meaning across domains, it is marked as a metaphorical word. (3) The metaphorical vocabulary can also be further distinguished as shallow or deep metaphor depending on its degree of directness and indirectness, its meaning in the text, and the way of expressing the metaphor. A total of 243 test metaphors were identified by MIPVU after removing non-metaphorical items such as "Can the score line of the examination determine the success or failure of your life and mine?"

2. Source image generation of exam metaphors

The cognitive mechanism of metaphor has gradually shifted from the conceptual metaphor theory proposed by Lakoff and Johnson to the conceptual integration theory proposed by Fauconnier and Turner because the conceptual integration theory compensates for the lack of explanatory power of the conceptual metaphor theory for the generation of new meanings of metaphors. Conceptual integration regards the source and target domains as two mental spaces, which are called input spaces. The input spaces are juxtaposed and combined, refined and refined, and finally merged and operated to get a new integration space, which includes the information mapped from the two input spaces and is a new, dynamically presented conceptual structure. Accordingly, we can conduct an integration analysis of the examination metaphor of Chinese urban discourse.

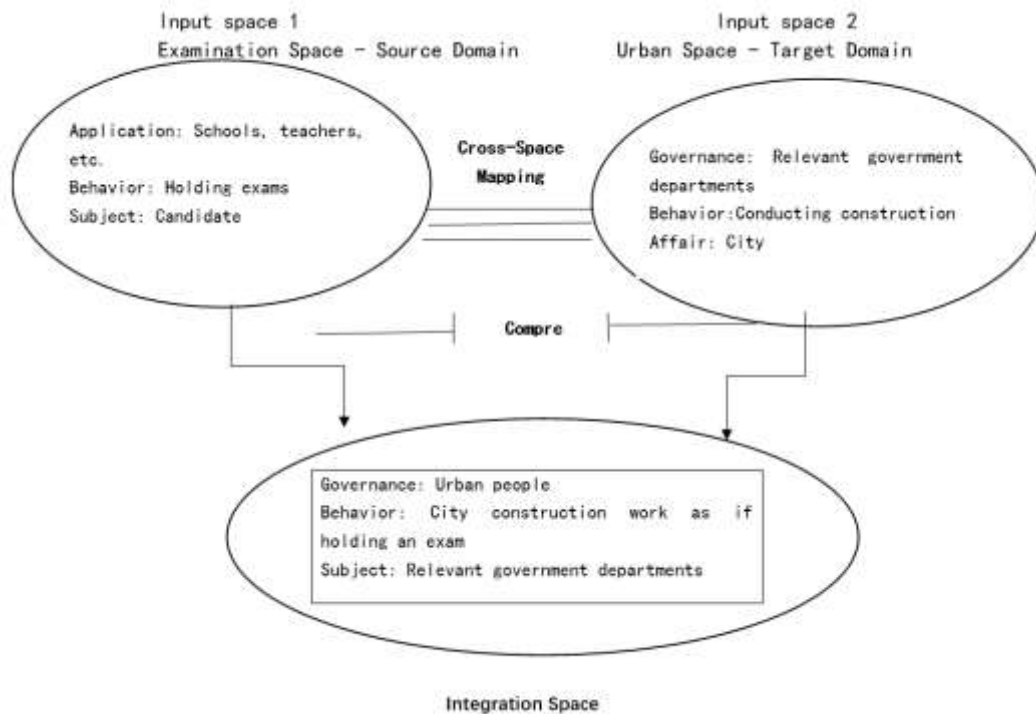


Figure 1 Caption: Diagram of conceptual integration of exam metaphors

Figure 1 Alt Text: The circle representing the examination space and the circle representing the urban space are integrated into the circle of urban discourse examination metaphor.

Figure 1 Long Description: The circle of the examination space as the source contains different elements, and the circle of the urban space as the target also contains different elements, which have homogeneity among them and are integrated into the circle of the new urban discourse examination metaphor by means of cross-spatial mapping and compression, and the individual elements are redistributed.

As shown in the above diagram, the actors in the input space1 who carry out construction actions are transformed into actors in the integration space who need to be examined. In addition, the role of "city people" is integrated into the integration space by means of refinement, and some of the city discourses do not directly specify the identities of the giver and the receiver, for example, "It is a good move to force poverty alleviation through assessment" (2016.12.26). In 2019, General Secretary Xi Jinping stressed

during his visit to Shanghai that the people's city is built by the people and the city is for the people. The people's city is for the people. The meaning and scope of the people in this integration space are wide, and the higher level of leadership, city residents, external evaluators and even the government departments themselves can be the people.

The two input spaces fill the integration space, and they are directly connected through cross-spatial mapping, which is based on the sameness that represents the important relationship between the two. That is the sameness between the act of holding an examination (input space 1) and the act of carrying out urban construction (input space 2). In order to establish this integration space, both input spaces undergo combination and refinement, and finally, the final goal, the integration space, is obtained through compression. In the above diagram, the compression of the sameness results in the formation of a new union in the integration space, a new structure that can be described as "conducting the city construction work like an examination", where the goals of both actions are finally unified to "satisfying the city construction work like a good result of the examination".

Finally, through conceptual integration, the metaphor of "city construction is an examination" is compressed. In other words, after the relevant government departments carry out all aspects of urban construction work, the evaluators evaluate the effectiveness of their work and give positive or negative opinions. The evaluator is equivalent to the role of a school and a teacher, and the preparation, implementation, and post-production of the city construction work correspond to the three stages of the examination, while the government departments assume the role of a test-taker and take the test actively, and the final opinion given by the evaluator is the result achieved by the government departments. The examination is a process event with core elements such as pre-test preparation, examination conduct, and post-test evaluation. The city construction is also a process event, and accordingly, there is a city construction preparation process with the pre-examination stage as a metaphor, a city construction proceeding process with the mid-examination stage as a metaphor and a city construction follow-up process with the post-examination stage as a metaphor.

3. The proliferation path of examination metaphors

3.1 Process-centric

After two identification procedures, quantitative and qualitative, we obtained 243 examination metaphors of urban discourse, accounting for 2.96% of the total number of valid news headlines (retained to two decimal places, same below). The overview analysis reveals that the examination metaphors are widely distributed in all aspects of urban development, and the pattern that each process before, during and after the examination can be used to form discourse metaphors can also be abstracted from the discourse use. Accordingly, we divide the examination metaphors in Chinese urban discourse into three major categories and seven aspects, and the following is a concrete analysis of the distribution of examination metaphor types.

3.1.1 Pre-test as a metaphor

(1) Exam preparation: The core metaphorical words used in this stage are move, start, down, homework, primary, course, and upgrade, etc., appearing 14 times in total. The metaphor of preparation for the exam includes the process of preparing for the exam by doing various exercises in order to advance gradually. For example:

① Shandong Rizhao: ecological start, a blueprint drawn to the end (2019.09.30)

② Urban Management "Red Flag Class" (2020.05.04)

(2) Examination points: The core words of metaphors used in this stage are past tense, equation, arithmetic, proportion, etc., which appear 28 times in total. The knowledge point metaphor is a collection of various types of knowledge points before the exam, containing relevant knowledge from various disciplines. For example:

③ Hainan: "cold resort" become a thing of the past? (2019.02.25)

④ Innovation answers the equation of the times for urban governance in the capital (2019.07.22)

It can be seen that the metaphor of the stage before the exam is mainly related to the imagery of knowledge reserve, and the metaphors of penmanship practice, level-up classes, and knowledge points of various subjects before the exam can all enter the urban discourse. For example, example ② is generated based on the examination metaphors of elite classes and youth classes, which are widely seen around the world; example ③ is formed by the past tense examination points of foreign language subjects. The frequency of the metaphor in the pre-test period should be 1/3 or 33.33% in theory but 17.28% in reality, which is much lower than the theoretical value. The reason for this is that due to the lack of attention received before the exam, there are not many texts that can be paired with the exam metaphor to be formed at that stage. However, with this as the urban discourse, it is possible to imagine the thick and thin step-by-step efforts and transformational thinking in the process of urban development to respond to the continuous progress of the times, which has a very high similarity with the candidates' review before the exam. Such a city

discourse can easily arouse the effortful recollection and psychological response of every reader in the city and achieve the purpose of promoting the city discourse.

3.1.2 Using the exam as a metaphor

(1) Examination: The core metaphorical words used in this phase are mainly: big exam, final exam, and "1+X", which appear 39 times in total. The examination metaphor is the most central theme word in this study and refers to the names of the various types of examinations involved in the conduct of the examination. For example:

⑤ The big test of e-commerce Who has been tested (2016.11.14)

(6) Jiaozuo City, Henan Province: Health poverty alleviation wins final exam (2020.08.31)

(2) Topics: The core words of metaphors used in this stage are mainly compulsory questions, choice, extra credit, questions, problems, tricky questions, broken questions, articles, and answers. They appear 85 times in total. Topic-based metaphors refer to the various types of questions encountered during the exam. For example:

(7) Did you get the "essential questions" of garbage classification right (2019.06.10)

⑧ Guandu District: "red property" to solve the problems of residents of old neighborhoods (2022.10.17)

It can be seen that the use of this stage in the examination as a metaphor is mainly related to the imagery directly pointing to the examination, the name of the examination, the type of questions in the examination and other metaphors that can enter the urban discourse. For example, example (6) is a metaphor for the last exam to illustrate the confidence of the test of health poverty alleviation in Jiaozuo City, Henan Province. For example, the last exam is used as a metaphor to illustrate the importance of waste separation in Jiaozuo City, Henan Province. The number of metaphors in the test is theoretically 1/3 or 33.33%, but the actual percentage is 51.03%, which is much higher than the theoretical value. The reason for this is that since the exam is the most highly valued one, there are a large number of topics and imagery that can form exam metaphors at that stage, and the suitability with other texts is high. If this is the urban discourse, one can imagine the striving posture of the key steps in the development of the city, the high degree of attention to the relevant events, and the seriousness of the "medical examination" of the city's transformation and development with the attitude of taking the test to the fullest. For the audience of such urban discourse, elevating garbage sorting and online shopping in daily life to the serious level of examinations can draw the audience's attention to such events and make them think about whether they can pass the examinations if they participate in them, which can achieve the purpose of discourse communication.

3.1.3 Using post-test as a metaphor

(1) Achievement: The core words of metaphors used in this stage are mainly answer sheet, answer, report card, performance, extra credit, high score, etc., which appear 33 times in total. The achievement metaphor refers to the gainful situation obtained after the examination. For example:

⑨ Safe Fair Jiading security guards delivered a satisfactory answer (2018.11.19)

⑩ China-Laos railroad "annual examination" answer sheet results are bright (2022.12.19)

(2) Ranking: The core metaphorical words used in this stage are top 10 TOP5, first, target, etc., which appear 35 times in total. The ranking metaphor refers to the ranking situation conducted at the end of the examination. For example:

No display for Shenzhen to face the "first difficulty of China's shanty reform" (2017.06.12)

⑫ Chongqing overtakes Guangzhou to rank fourth Nanjing squeezes into the top 10 (2022.01.17)

(3) Post-test: The core metaphorical words used in this stage are mainly: consolidation, graduation, and second half, etc., which appear 10 times in total. The post-test category metaphors refer to the reflective, re-enhancement activities that take place after the exams are over. For example:

After ⑬ bright results, how to consolidate the foundation of economic upturn (2020.10.26)

In the Era of "Strictly Out", Those Who Mix Up Diplomas Should Stop (2021.04.12)

It can be seen that the metaphor of the post-examination period is mainly related to how to finish the follow-up work of the examination, such as marking, registering scores, ranking, and how to continue to maintain the achievements and start again, with the metaphors of report card, ranking, consolidating the effect, and completing the transformation from campus to society entering this part of the urban discourse. For example, Example ⑩ is a direct metaphor of report card, representing the excellent results obtained by Hong Kong city in rural governance; Example ⑫ is a metaphor of obvious rankings such as "fourth" and "top ten", representing the progress made in the process of urban development; Example ⑬ Example ⑬ first mentions "after the bright results", suggesting that it is already the post-examination stage, and then uses the consolidation exercises often conducted after the examination to metaphorically describe the process of thinking about how to continue to maintain and improve after the city has achieved good results in its economic activities. The compulsory and optional questions in the examination are a metaphor for the importance of waste sorting and the compulsory nature of the event for all. The number of post-test metaphors should

theoretically be 1/3 or 33.33%, but the actual percentage is 32.10%, which is slightly lower than the theoretical value but basically the same and consistent with the estimated value. The reason considered is that since the post-exam period is one of the moderately valued segments, the stage receives less attention after going through this important phase in the exam, but its importance ensures that it will not be ignored. Therefore, there are still a large number of post-test metaphors of achievement, ranking, and re-advancement that have successfully entered the urban discourse. This type of urban discourse belongs to the "acceptance" stage, which can well grasp the nervousness and excitement of the candidates waiting for the results so that the city will be relevant to itself in a disguised way, thus receiving more attention than other urban discourses, and can achieve the purpose of competing for urban discourse.

3.2 Matching-centered

In general, the linguistic expressions of test metaphors are mainly noun structure and verb structure, which account for 91.77% of the total number of test metaphors. Noun structure metaphors account for the largest proportion, 70.37%, and the majority of them are based on nouns as the central word; verb structure metaphors are also present in large numbers, but the proportion is significantly lower, only 21.40%, and the structure types are mostly verb-object and parallel structures; adjective structure metaphors are less common, accounting for 7.41% of the total; in addition, there are also Idiom structure test metaphors are also found, but they only account for about 0.82%.

3.2.1 Noun structure examination metaphor

The noun structure exam metaphor appears 171 times in total, and its structure types are basically fixed-medium structures, such as big exams, difficult questions, answer sheets, report cards, compulsory answers, equations, C-position, etc. Very few of them are parallel structures, such as choice, answer, etc. when they are nouns. Since urban discourse uses the concept of examination when using metaphors, the superordinate and subordinate concepts of examination are bound to appear in large numbers, and the noun structure can express these concepts clearly, so a large number of definite middle structure examination metaphors dominate. In addition, we find that exam metaphors in both Chinese and English intermingled appear and become headings, indicating that urban discourse has a strong adaptive ability to capture new things.

3.2.2 Verbal structure examination metaphor

There are 52 occurrences of verb structured test metaphors, with two main types of structures: verb-object structured ones, such as to issue questions, to evaluate papers, to add marks, to punish marks, etc.; parallel structured ones, such as to enhance, to evaluate, to assess, to answer, etc. In addition, there are also exam metaphors of dative-medial structure, such as tricky solution, sequel, etc., and exam metaphors of dynamic-complementary structure, such as answer right, squeeze in, etc. Like examinations, urban discourse cannot only be expressed statically; dynamic examination metaphors are also an indispensable part of urban discourse. The development of the city, like the conduct of examinations, is accompanied by a large number of activities throughout, and the results and degrees that such activities require are reflected in the verbally structured examination metaphors.

3.2.3 Adjectival structure examination metaphor

Adjective structure test metaphors appeared 18 times, such as TOP10, Top 100, No.1, No.4 and so on. It is worth noting that the adjective structure test metaphors are completely non-Chinese, and this "TOP + ranking" approach is very popular for title writing. In addition, adjective structure test metaphors are basically related to ranking, and the traditional expressions of "first" and "second" are not very common and the headlines tend to add fresh linguistic elements before or after ranking to make the headlines brighter as a whole, such as fourth The top ten and so on, to achieve the effect that the stone of other mountains can attack the jade stone.

3.2.4 Idiom examination metaphor

Only two cases of idiom test metaphors were found in the corpus, namely, the world's first and the distinguishable. This is very different from the author's prediction, as idioms account for a very small proportion of the test metaphors that reflect traditional culture well, even less than the number of test metaphors that are mixed with Chinese and English. Even such widely used and not difficult-to-understand idioms as "the best" are hard to find in the urban discourse. On the one hand, this is a reflection of the city's inclusiveness and progression with the times, but on the other hand, there is also the hidden worry that the excellent traditional culture is "lost" in the construction of urban discourse.

4. Motivations for the transformation of the examination metaphor

4.1 Cognitive empathic motivation

Metaphor is not only a way of using linguistic means to express ideas and add charm to style but also a way of thinking about things (Peng, Li-Ching 2019). In other words, metaphor is a cognitive activity in which human beings use the known experience of a commonly used domain to illustrate or understand another newly known uncommon domain. With the development of society as a whole, people form an imagery schema, an abstract cognitive pattern of associated things, in their brains after repeatedly perceiving some associated things. After forming this imagery pattern, people will consciously or unconsciously use it to recognize new things they are not familiar with. The metaphor of "city building is an examination" is not only a linguistic issue but also a philosophical way of thinking about human beings. People use the test metaphor to illustrate urban construction because the test exists in people's conceptual system first, so they use the test metaphor to construct the concept of urban construction. Although in reality, urban construction is not about reciting knowledge points, penning answers, reading and correcting papers, and the purpose of urban construction is not to get a good-looking score, in the human thinking system, urban construction is the relevant government departments, under the premise of preliminary investigation and preparation, carry out construction work such as renovation and upgrading of various aspects of the city, so as to achieve the purpose of satisfying the people, and satisfying the people is the result that the government The relevant departments get the achievement.

The directional nature of cognitive metaphors tells us that humans always use the concepts they cognize first to metaphorize the concepts they cognize later, from easy to difficult, from simple to complex. The exam event has obvious linguistic eminence, and the exam event is simpler and more complete compared with the systematic nature of the urban construction event, so using the exam metaphor for urban construction discourse can help people better organize and understand the event. In addition, we also believe that the wide application of exam metaphor lies in its unique linguistic power, that is, exam metaphor can naturally put the addressee in a state of tension of actively preparing for the exam and seriously taking the exam, and the attention to the exam result is always high, mobilizing people's psychological touch from both receiving and giving, which is another cognitive-philosophical rationale for the wide application of exam metaphor in urban discourse.

Due to the anthropomorphism of discourse rhetoric, the examination metaphor of urban discourse transforms the city from a static identity to a dynamic identity so that the city possesses the symbolic meaning of the good character of human beings, and the urban discourse can, through the description of the good character pursued by human beings, establish a philosophical thinking pattern of punishing evil and promoting good in people's minds, influence the thoughts and behaviors of urban people, and eventually participate in the construction of urban reality. The urban discourse of the examination metaphor is most likely to have a subtle influence on people, especially the influence on the quality of struggle and perseverance through empathic cognition, to reach the community of human-city destiny, the development process of the city maps the process of life's efforts, the city becomes better and better through planning and development, and inspires people to work hard to have satisfactory results, thus contributing to the construction of a harmonious society and inspiring all walks of life to work together To build a beautiful city and efforts. But at the same time, we should pay attention to avoid repeated meaningless propaganda, which will lead to excessive construction of the audience and produce the opposite effect in their hearts.

4.2 Discursive rhetorical motives

In addition to the cognitive reasons mentioned above, the examination metaphor in the new-age urban discourse must also have the rhetorical intention of its generation, and we think the main motive is to attract traffic. Comrade Deng Tuo, who was once the president of the People's Daily, once wryly said, "Whoever comes up with a good headline for me, I'll kowtow to it three times". This shows that the production of news headlines is important to a journalist. In the new era of data quantification and accelerated pace, fewer and fewer people will read the main part of the news carefully; often, "a glance at the headline determines life and death", so the headline is the lifeline of journalists, and the headline of the new era of urban discourse is also the same.

On the one hand, the examination metaphor can alleviate the aesthetic fatigue of common metaphors such as container metaphor, war metaphor, and journey metaphor to refresh the readers, and news editors intentionally avoid too many previously used metaphors and use new examination metaphors to attract readers' attention instead. On the other hand, the psychological mechanism of exams mentioned above is once again at play. Almost all of us have taken exams, large or small, and the cycle of preparing for them, taking them, waiting for the results to be consolidated, checking the gaps, and then cycling back to preparing for them makes us inexplicably familiar with the intentions involved in taking them. While exam metaphors provoke a positive, tense psychology, they also inevitably elicit feedback from people's various senses about exam imagery, again mobilizing their cognitive and emotional responses. News editors also do this deliberately to stimulate readers' reading excitement and increase the article's traffic attraction, thus achieving the purpose of spreading urban discourse.

First of all, the use of examination metaphors in Chinese urban discourse will be refreshing to the audience. Due to the concealment of the deep subject of government-related departments, the general public will not analyze it from the perspective of linguistics; the subject of action initiator should be human and will simply look at the title from the surface subject - the city, at which time the city acquires the human subjective initiative, people and city are integrated as one, and the city is anthropomorphized with deep human aesthetic characteristics. In addition, based on the cognitive commonality of the test metaphor, the headline achieves the function of expressing the concept concisely and clearly, and the three stages of the test construction completely connect the chapter structure of the text with distinctive stylistic features. After receiving the "metaphor bonus", news editors will be motivated to explore new urban metaphors so that the rhetorical function of urban metaphors can be better utilized. Finally, it is worth noting that the use of test metaphors in urban discourse is too much, and even if the rhetorical function of the test metaphor is used to the fullest, the abuse of the test metaphor will lead to aesthetic fatigue one day.

4.3 Cultural Continuity Motivation

In 1910, in the 11th edition of the Encyclopedia Britannica, under the article "Examination", it is written that "The earliest examination system in history was the Chinese system of selecting administrative officials by examination." Language is a product of society, and as a "barometer" of changes in social life, vocabulary plays a good role as a "co-variant". The examination metaphor has been the basis for the metaphorical production of the Chinese people since early times.

First of all, at the educational level, for the Chinese people from ancient times to the present, examinations have left deep memories in everyone's mind. In the new era of growing competition, almost everyone is also going through countless exams. In China, examinations have had no less impact on the culture of social life than in any other country or region, so the examination metaphor has naturally entered all other areas of people's lives. Secondly, at the political level, from the "going to Beijing to catch an examination" when the CPC Central Committee set off from Xibaipo to Beijing in 1949 to the "new road to catch an examination" when celebrating the 100th anniversary of the founding of the CPC, the political leaders of our Party have often used the examination metaphor. The People's Daily is an important propaganda window, and its political guidance will also lead it to adopt the test metaphor in pursuit of consistency with the policies of the Party and the state. News editors naturally follow the trend of the times and choose expressions that are popular with the people, thus further generalizing the test metaphor.

4.4 Motivation of image building

Hu Fanzhu (2013) suggests that "the rhetorical study of the national image needs to be further expanded, and the rhetorical issue of the institutional image of various regions, state power organs at all levels, various enterprises, and various groups need to enter the vision of contemporary rhetoricians", so the rhetorical issue of the urban image should also receive attention. Therefore, the rhetoric of city image should also receive attention.

In this study, we also retrieved the use of war metaphors and searched the semantic domains involving "warfare, defence and the army; weapons antiwar" in Wmatrix5. 103 war metaphors were found, accounting for 1.26%. In contrast, we retrieved 243 test metaphors in the study design, accounting for 2.96% of the total, which is more than twice the proportion of test metaphors than war metaphors. Although war metaphors are still in use as well, their decline is evident. One important reason for this phenomenon is that different metaphors shape different images of the city. The urban discourse of war metaphors is too tense and may even lead to negative associations of violence and bloodshed, and for young people who live in peaceful times and have never experienced the cruelty of war, repeatedly shocking them with high-pressure discourse is likely to provoke their rebellion. That's why during the New Crown epidemic when war metaphors were most prevalent, some experts also argued that "wartime states should not be abused". In contrast, the examination metaphor is much milder and more acceptable in terms of tension. The examination metaphor presents a more positive image of the city, symbolizing a young and energetic city posture that continues to struggle and move forward as if it has a human life and meets the test together with its people. Such a city image is widely popular for both internal and external publicity and is even more beneficial to the shaping of the city image itself.

On the one hand, the urban discourse of exam metaphor assumes an important role in information transmission and image dissemination. Internally, city discourse tends to focus on people's livelihood, and the exam metaphor represents the higher degree of urgency of things. The combination of the two has the function of reflecting the real society, which can urge all walks of life to pay attention to the city's focal issues that need to be solved properly. For example, Yiwu's city image slogan on CCTV: an ocean of small commodities, a shopper's paradise, with two container metaphors in a row, is a fascinating example of the prosperity of Yiwu's small commodity economy. On the other hand, we should also deal with the possible adverse effects of the test metaphor, such as the question of how to grasp the test metaphor and whether it can be accurately understood in the process of urban

discourse translation. If exam metaphors are frequently promoted, the possibility of psychological tension, in addition to aesthetic fatigue, should also be taken into consideration.

5. Summary

Research on the metaphor of exams in the discourse of the new era city is a beneficial attempt in the field of rhetoric. This study explores the significant role of exam metaphors in the dissemination of urban images in the new era and summarizes the analytical paradigm for such issues. The research findings indicate that the frequency of using exam metaphors in the discourse of the new era city is higher than that of war metaphors. The categorization of exam metaphors is closely related to the exam process, and the core thematic words of exam metaphors are formed by the conceptual framework of exams. Exam metaphors enter urban discourse through the mechanism of conceptual integration, which has its unique generalization factors. Lastly, exam metaphors exhibit multidimensional synergistic functions in urban discourse.

However, we also discovered that the absence of excellent traditional culture, especially red culture, in exam metaphors should be reflected upon. The generalization of exam metaphors should be moderate, and it should not be used to express trivial matters indiscriminately. Instead, more urban discourse metaphors should be constructed. These results all indicate the undeniable importance of exam metaphors in the social life of the Chinese people, particularly in the field of urban construction, where the trend of usage is more apparent. Nonetheless, this study has limitations in terms of sample size, and future research can apply the analytical model to a broader range of data to examine the distribution of exam metaphors.

In the contemporary context, the modernization of urban language governance has become a hot topic. Utilizing linguistic knowledge to make our cities operate smarter and wiser is the responsibility of every linguist. The rhetoric of urban image in the new era possesses the typical interdisciplinary feature of "rhetoric + society." The theoretical framework of "two recognitions and three constructions" in urban discourse rhetoric establishes another research paradigm, not only expanding the field of Chinese rhetoric studies but also opening up a new path of research for scholars in the field of rhetoric.

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