A Corpus-Based Study On Snake Metaphors In Mandarin Chinese And British English

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Abstract

This study is based on the data obtained from the Modern Chinese Corpus compiled by the Center for Chinese Linguistics of Peking University (CCL Corpus) and the British National Corpus (BNC). Via exploring snake metaphors across the two languages within the framework of Conceptual Metaphor Theory and the GREAT CHAIN METAPHOR, this study aims to identify the existence of both universality and individuality of metaphors cross-linguistically when the snake is mapped onto human beings. It investigates the snake metaphors from three aspects. The findings show that, first, the metaphorical expressions in Mandarin Chinese and British English are both mainly generated from the snake's characteristic and appearance. Second, in terms of the conceptual metaphor of HUMAN BEINGS ARE ANIMALS, Mandarin Chinese and British English share the same metaphor of HUMAN BEINGS ARE SNAKES. However, when the gender of human beings is taken into consideration, the specific conceptual metaphors generalized for the man and the woman from these two languages are different. This provides evidence to show that cross linguistically, like other kinds of conceptual metaphors, the universality of snake metaphors exists at the generic level and the individuality of these metaphors exists at the basic level. Third, in terms of evaluation, the snake metaphorical expressions have a much more derogative meaning for the man in Chinese but a more derogative meaning for the woman in English.

Keywords: snake metaphorical expressions, Mandarin Chinese, British English, Conceptual Metaphor Theory, the GREAT CHAIN METAPHOR.

Introduction

After putting forward the notion of conceptual metaphor in *Metaphors We Live By* (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980) and elaborating on the poetic metaphors in *More Than Cool Reason* (Lakoff and Turner, 1989), Lakoff (2006, p.195-196) takes LOVE IS A JOURNEY as an example to argue that mappings generally happen at the superordinate

level rather than at the basic level, which means generalization happens at the superordinate level accordingly and the special cases exist at the basic level. In effect, past studies have shown that cross-linguistically, universality exists at the superordinate level and individuality exists at the basic level for the anger metaphor. For example, according to Lakoff and Kövecses (1987, p.197), the generic-level metaphor for anger in English is ANGER IS HEAT and its two subversions are ANGER IS FIRE and ANGER IS A HOT FLUID IN A CONTAINER. After conducting a comparative study on ANGER metaphor in Chinese and English, Yu (1998, p.52-59) finds that although Chinese shares the anger metaphor of ANGER IS HEAT at the generic level with English, its two subversions are not the same as those of English, because the second subversion is ANGER IS THE HOT GAS IN A CONTAINER (1998, p.54). In view of this, the question to ask is what about the case of other kinds of metaphors? Are they the same cross-linguistically? Does universality exist at the generic level and does individuality exist at the basic level respectively for these metaphors?

From anecdotal observations, there might be a host of metaphors that can be generated from people's understanding about animals. However, studies on animal expressions are relatively few (Hsieh, 2004; Hsieh, 2006) and studies on animal metaphors across cultures are not extensive enough (Talebinejad & Dastjerdi, 2005). Since both language and culture are dynamic (Lee, 2003), corresponding concepts in different languages and cultures can either be similar or different to a certain degree (Hazidi Abdul Hamid, 2002). This should also be applicable to the use of animal expressions and animal metaphors, in their use would vary in different cultures and by extension, languages. This scenario leaves a lot of room for continued research in the study of animal metaphors.

Previous studies on animal metaphors or animal metaphorical expressions mainly focus on two aspects: the conceptual metaphor of HUMAN BEINGS ARE ANIMALS and the evaluation of the metaphors or metaphorical expressions. Thus, this study aims to study both aspects with snake as the focus in order to contribute to the body of literature in this field. In addition, this study will not only examine the snake metaphorical expressions, but will also generalize metaphors from these expressions, which will doubtlessly contribute more to the research on animal metaphors.

Literature Review

With regard to animal metaphor, particularly when animal names are used to describe human beings, it is a very rich field. In this aspect, Davies and Bentahila (1989) examined animal terms in British English and Moroccan Arabic by collecting their data through an informal investigation from equal number of native language speakers. They find that it is not practical to have clear-cut dichotomies in the classification of conversational metaphors. Spence (2001) analyzed the application of animal names to humans in English, French, Italian, German and Spanish, Spence (2001) finds support to the statement that the frequent figurative application of animal names to human beings might be a shared feature in the major languages of Western Europe. Talebinejad and Dastjerdi (2005) discussed 44 animal metaphors generated by native speakers of English and Persian and find support to the metaphor of HUMAN BEINGS ARE ANIMALS. In

addition to this, they also find that although similarities exist between animal metaphors, many aspects of them are culturally specific.

Some scholars not only focus on the conceptual metaphor of HUMAN BEINGS ARE ANIMALS, but also generalize specific animal metaphors from their studies. For example, Kövecses (2002, p.125; 2010, p.153) generalized the conceptual metaphor of SEXUALLY ATTRACTIVE WOMEN ARE KITTENS in his study. And O'Brien (2003: 42) derived a conceptual metaphor of IMMIGRANT AS ANIMAL based on his finding that "Animal metaphors were often used when the particular characteristic of an animal was seemingly descriptive of the threat posed by the immigrant group". These conceptual metaphors in turn provide evidence to the existence of the metaphor HUMAN BEINGS ARE ANIMALS too.

With regard to the evaluation of animal terms or animal metaphors, Todasco in 1973 argues that animal metaphors are overwhelmingly used derogatively towards women. Similar results have been obtained by others, such as Allen (1984) as well as Halupka-Rešetar and Radić (2003). From over one thousand epithets or generic names that have been coined and used for persons of about fifty different ethnic groups in America, Allen (1984) focused on 96 terms that specifically target women of 20 various ethnic groups. She finds that animal metaphors such as bitch, frog-legs, moose and so forth are adopted as epithets and convey abusive meaning towards ethnic women. Halupka-Rešetar and Radić (2003) conducted a study with 100 participants who are university linguistics students in order to explore the use of animal names in Serbian in addressing people abusively and affectionately. They collected data in a survey with a questionnaire containing 40 animal names, and find that animal names are more often used abusively than affectionately. Additionally, gathering data from dictionaries in libraries, and book shops, Fontecha and Catalán (2003) concentrated on the word pairs of fox/vixen, bull/cow and their Spanish counterparts of zorro/zorra, and toro/vaca. They find that, with mapping from the source domain to the target domain, these animal pairs are indeed metaphorically applied to people in both languages. In addition, although some kind of semantic derogation appears in both languages, with a difference in the degree, the data indicate that the main metaphorical meanings of the female terms connote worse qualities than those of the male terms. Two thorough and detailed studies on animal metaphorical expressions have been done by Hsieh (2004, 2006). She conducted two corpus-based studies on animal expressions in Mandarin Chinese and German, and concludes that animal expressions can be used to convey people's value (2004) and can be used as terms of endearment and secular benedictions (2006).

It is very obvious that those who are interested in animal metaphors, focused on finding support to the conceptual metaphor of HUMAN BEINGS ARE ANIMALS and on exploring the evaluative meaning of the expressions. However, except for Hsieh, the other researchers did not make use of any corpora. Their data were from surveys or dictionaries. Since the corpus-based method now has been established to study metaphor in naturally occurring text (Deignan, 2007) and there is a growing trend to adopt a corpus-based method to research on metaphor (Oster, 2010), it is necessary to find more evidence to support the claims they obtained from the very limited sources. Thus, this

study chooses to research on snake metaphors cross linguistically by collecting the data from authoritative corpora in each language, aiming to identify some specific metaphors under the umbrella of HUMAN BEINGS ARE ANIMALS within the framework of the Conceptual Metaphor Theory and the GREAT CHAIN METAPHOR. Meanwhile, the evaluation of the snake metaphorical expressions with human beings as the target domain will also be looked into.

Mandarin Chinese and British English have been selected as the languages to be compared because the former belongs to the Sino-Tibetan language family and the latter belongs to the West Germanic branch of European languages, which make them very different. In turn, this difference might lead to more different metaphor varieties between them. In addition, although much research has focused on English metaphors, "cognitively oriented studies of figuration in the Chinese language have made significant contributions to our awareness and appreciation of culture-specific as well as universal patterns of conceptualization" (Jing, 2008, p.243) in emotion metaphors. Therefore, it is very appealing for us to focus on the animal metaphor cross-linguistically in order to uncover some cultural-specific as well as universal patterns of conceptualization in this type of metaphor.

The snake has been chosen as the focus mainly due to two reasons. First, different human-animal relationships held by peoples in different countries might impose different influence upon their use of the language, in particular from the metaphorical perspective. In Chinese mythology, it is the godess of Nv Wa who invented human beings. She has a lady's head and a serpent's body, so the Chinese have a complex feeling of awe and being afraid of towards the snake. The British generally are Christians and hold the belief that God created them in his own image, so animals should be taken care of by them. Therefore, the Britisher's feeling and attitude towards the snake might be very different from that of the Chinese. Second, based on previous studies on animal metaphorical expressions and animal metaphors published in English, research focused on snake metaphors cross-linguistically in Mandarin Chinese and British English has not appeared yet, let alone approaching it by generalizing specific metaphor. Thus, this corpus-based study on snake metaphors in Mandarin Chinese and British English can contribute to the literature in this area. Next, the Conceptual Metaphor Theory and the GREAT CHAIN METAPHOR are going to be introduced.

Theoretical Framework

The Conceptual Metaphor Theory (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980; Lakoff & Turner, 1989) mainly refers to cross-domain mappings from a comparatively concrete source domain to an abstract target domain. The source domain refers to the concept used to help people understand the concept of the target domain which is not easy to grasp. A formula has been suggested to present a metaphor: A IS B, where A refers to the target domain and B refers to the source domain.

The GREAT CHAIN METAPHOR consists of four parts: the Great Chain, the commonsense theory of the Nature of Things, the GENERIC IS SPECIFIC metaphor and the communicative Maxim of Quantity (Lakoff and Turner, 1989, p.171-172). Although these four components exist independently, they can only work together to interpret the proverbs (Lakoff & Turner, 1989, p.172).

Lakoff and Turner (1989, p.166) claim that the cultural model of the Great Chain of Being displays different kinds of beings and their properties in a hierarchical order. It contains a scale of forms of being such as human, animals, plants, inanimate objects, as well as a scale of the properties that accordingly feature the forms of being such as reason, instinctual behavior, biological function, and physical attributes (Lakoff and Turner, 1989, p.167). The highest property of a being decides which level it belongs to and one kind of being shares all the properties borne by its lower level, but not vice versa (Lakoff & Turner, 1989, p.168).

The commonplace theory of the Nature of Things says that different forms of being have different essences and it is these essences that determine how these beings behave or function (Lakoff & Turner, 1989, p.169). Thus, the attributes of a form of being decide the way it behaves, and accordingly, the essential attributes decide its essential behavior and the contingent attributes decide its contingent behavior (Lakoff & Turner, 1989, p.170).

The GENERIC IS SPECIFIC metaphor maps one specific-level schema onto many parallel specific-level schemas that share the same generic-level structure as the source-domain schema (Lakoff & Turner, 1989, p.162). Namely, this metaphor has different numbers of source and target domains. The source domain is a specific-level schema, which has been mapped onto the target domain, a generic-level schema. In this way, the generic-level schemas are understood in terms of the specific-level schemas. Since via applying this generic-level metaphor to a specific one enables one to generalize a generic-level schema that can be applied to the rest of the specific-level schema, this metaphor "thus allow us to understand a whole category of situations in terms of one particular situation" (Lakoff & Turner, 1989, p.165), or even understand any proverb in the absence of any particular situation (Lakoff & Turner, 1989, p.165).

The communicative Maxim of Quantity demands the speaker or the writer to be as informative as is required for a certain purpose and not more informative than it is required (Lakoff & Turner, 1989, p.171). For example, if a salesman asks, 'How many oranges would you like to buy?' and the customer answers, 'Two,' we would say that this dialogue observes the maxim of quantity, as the customer gives enough information to the salesman, and no more, no less.

The four components function differently in the GREAT CHAIN METAPHOR. Specifically, the Great Chain gives people a sense that all forms of beings are in a hierarchy in the world. The commonsense theory of the Nature of Things indicates the relationship between the attributes of each form of being and the way each form of being functions or behaves. The two components endow the GREAT CHAIN METAPHOR

with a character of a commonsense theory. The GENERIC IS SPECIFIC metaphor makes it metaphoric (Lakoff & Turner, 1989, p.172) and the last element adds a communicative principle in it and restricts it in the sense of what can be understood in terms of what by selecting out the highest level properties suitable for a particular situation (Lakoff & Turner, 1989, p.173).

Thus, the GREAT CHAIN METAPHOR provides us the possibility to understand human beings' attributes in terms of nonhuman attributes and vice versa (Lakoff & Turner, 1989, p.172). Based on this claim, we can deduce the conceptual metaphor of HUMAN BEINGS ARE ANIMALS. In order to understand human attributes in terms of animal attributes, the animal must be personified first, and then the human character trait that has been mapped onto the animal should be mapped back to the human (Lakoff & Turner, 1989, p.196). Kövecses (2002, p.125) expressed a similar opinion when he says "animals were personified first, and then the 'human-based characteristics' were used to understand human behavior".

The Study

This study aims to explore snake metaphors across Mandarin Chinese and British English in order to show the existence of both universality and individuality of metaphors cross-linguistically by identifying certain similarities and differences between snake metaphorical expressions and snake metaphors in the two languages. In particular, this study aims to investigate three aspects of the usage of snake metaphorical expressions in Mandarin Chinese and British English when the snake is mapped onto humans. First, it is interested in knowing which aspects of the source domain mainly map onto human beings and if there is any difference when the gender of the target is taken into account. Second, it generalizes some metaphors to see what the differences between these two languages are when the conceptual metaphor of HUMAN BEING IS A SNAKE is focused. Third, it makes a comparison of the evaluation of the snake metaphorical expressions concerned with human beings in these two languages.

Methodology

Since "one of the major developments in metaphor research in the last several years has been the focus on identifying and explicating metaphoric language in real discourse" (Group, 2007, p.1) rather than from isolated constructed examples from scholars' intuition, this study seeks to further contribute to the literature by selecting data from the corpora where all the data have been produced by the writers and speakers in various contexts. Specifically, the Modern Chinese Corpus compiled by the Center for Chinese Linguistics of Peking University (CCL Corpus) was chosen for Chinese and the British National Corpus (BNC XML Edition) was chosen for English. They were selected as the data sources of this study for the following reasons. First, both corpora are large enough with about 307 million characters in Chinese and 100 million words in English. Second, the two corpora share common sources for data collection, such as literary works and newspapers. Third, both of them are concerned with the modern variety of the languages

of their own country respectively, as the majority of the data in Chinese corpus is modern Chinese and the data in BNC are totally modern.

In order to only focus on the modern language used in the People's Republic of China, the data authored by writers of Taiwan, Hong Kong as well as those that were published before 1949 and the translated materials in the Chinese corpus were not included. The data written by writers from Taiwan and Hong Kong were deleted partly because these two areas were separated from their motherland of China for a long time and this might result in their different use of Mandarin Chinese from the variety of Mainland China, partly because the data authored by writers of Taiwan and Hong Kong that were included in the corpus were only restricted to novels, mostly, concerned with ancient Chinese good at Chinese martial arts. Thus, only the works of the mainland Chinese writers in the corpus is selected. The data before 1949 were deleted as only modern Chinese was selected in order to compare with modern British English, and the data before 1949 constitute the contemporary Chinese rather than modern Chinese. The contemporary variety is characterized by the presence of the elements of ancient Chinese. Historically, the development of the Chinese language can be divided into three phrases: before 1919, from 1919 to 1949 and after 1949. The variety before 1919 is called ancient Chinese. In 1919, because of the May 4th Movement, it was proposed that the vernacular variety of Chinese rather than the ancient variety should be adopted for use. Therefore, the change in Chinese began and the variety known as contemporary Chinese was used from then on till 1949. Three decades after the May 4th Movement, with the establishment of the People's Republic of China, it was declared modern Chinese be used. The translated data were deleted because they might not be natural as a translator's cultural background may imbibe into the work which might change the style and meaning from the original version.

With regard to data collection and data analysis, the data from the corpora concerned with the snake in the two languages were extracted first with a large enough context. Specifically, the span for Chinese is 100 words on both sides of the word '蛇/she/snake' and the span for English is 2 words on the left side of the word 'snake'. Then the metaphorical expressions with the snake functioning as the source domain and human beings functioning as the target domain were identified manually. As long as the word of 'snake' appears in the expressions and as long as the word does not just function as the name for the animal but explicitly or implicitly conveys some metaphorical meaning, the phrases, or sentences were selected as an object of analysis for this study.

Subsequently, all the identified expressions were categorized according to their source domain and target domain. Specifically, the source domains of the metaphorical expressions are the snake's appearance, behavior, characteristic, and the snake-human relation. This categorization is adapted from the work of Wierzbicka (1985). Taking her definition for the tiger as an example (1985, p.164), she thinks that when talking about the tiger, people will say things such as the tiger's habitat, size, appearance, behavior and the tiger's relation to people. Considering the similarity or overlap between the animal's size and animal's appearance, as well as the distinct characteristics different animals bear, this study includes the snake's size into the category of the snake's appearance and adds

another category of the snake's characteristic into the source domain. The target domains of the metaphorical expressions are general person/people, man/men and woman/women. Here, the general person appears in the situation when the expressions refer to both man and woman. The general people appear in the situation when the expressions refer to groups of people probably including both man and woman.

Following this step, the evaluation of each expression was ascertained according to the context. And finally, the results from the two languages were compared in order to see the universality and individuality of snake metaphors cross-linguistically.

Results and Discussion

This section describes the results obtained from the Mandarin Chinese data and the British English data for the three aspects related to the snake metaphorical expressions. The data are interpreted from both the angle of the source domain and the target domain. For the details, it can be seen from the following two tables. Specifically, Table 1 presents the statistics for snake metaphorical expressions in Mandarin Chinese and Table 2 summarizes the statistics for snake metaphorical expressions in British English.

Table 1: Snake metaphorical expressions in Mandarin Chinese

Source \ Target		General person	Man	Woman	Total	Evaluation		
						Negative	Neutral	Positive
Appearance		391 (33.9%)	15 (1.3%)	40 (3.5%)	446 (38.7%)	379 (32.9%)	50 (4.3%)	17 (1.5%)
Behavior		36 (3.1%)	25 (2.2%)	15 (1.3%)	76 (6.6%)	37 (3.2%)	27 (2.3%)	12 (1%)
Characteristic		455 (39.5%)	107 (9.3%)	42 (3.6%)	604 (52.4%)	545 (47.3%)	4 (0.35%)	55 (4.8%)
Relation		3 (0.3%)	20 (1.7%)	3 (0.3%)	26 (2.3%)	0	8 (0.7%)	18 (1.6%)
Total		885 (76.8%)	167 (14.5%)	100 (8.7%)	1152 (100%)	961 (83.4%)	89 (7.7%)	102 (8.9%)
Evalu-ation	Negative	760 (66%)	125 (10.9%)	76 (6.6%)	961 (83.4%)			
	Neutral	67 (5.8%)	17 (1.5%)	5 (0.4%)	89 (7.7%)			
	Positive	58 (5%)	25 (2.2%)	19 (1.6%)	102 (8.9%)			

Table 2: Snake metaphorical expressions in British English

Source \ Target	General person	Man	Woman	Total	Evaluation		
					Negative	Neutral	Positive
Appearance	11 (9.7%)	10 (8.8%)	6 (5.3%)	27 (23.9%)	19 (16.8%)	7 (6.2%)	1 (0.9%)
Behavior	10 (8.8%)	15 (13.3%)	6 (5.3%)	31 (27.4%)	18 (15.9%)	5 (4.4%)	8 (7%)
Characteristic	9 (8%)	33 (29.2%)	13 (11.5%)	55 (48.7%)	50 (44.2%)	3 (2.7%)	2 (1.8%)
Relation	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total	30 (26.5%)	58 (51.3%)	25 (22.1%)	113 (100%)	87 (77%)	15 (13.3%)	11 (9.7%)
Evaluation — Negative	18 (15.9%)	45 (39.8%)	24 (21.2%)	87 (77%)			
Evaluation — Neutral	7 (6.2%)	7 (6.2%)	1 (0.9%)	15 (13.3%)			
Evaluation — Positive	5 (4.4%)	6 (5.3%)	0	11 (9.7%)			

Table 1 indicates that 1152 snake metaphorical expressions with the snake as the source domain and human beings as the target domain in Mandarin Chinese have been identified. Table 2 indicates that 113 snake metaphorical expressions with the snake as the source domain and human being as the target domain in British English have been identified. Besides, the two tables also manifest that the spread of snake metaphorical expressions is different from both the angle of the source domain and the target domain in Mandarin Chinese and British English respectively. In terms of the source domain, snake metaphorical expressions with human beings as the target domain are mainly generated from the snake's characteristic (52.4%) and appearance (38.7%) in Chinese, but from its characteristic (48.7%) and behavior (27.4%) in English. In addition, a few expressions can be found in Chinese when the source domain is snake-human relation, but such expressions are absent in English.

More specifically, with regard to the source domain, when the target domain is the general person, the expressions are also mainly generated from the snake's characteristic and appearance in Chinese, but from the snake's appearance and behavior in English. When the target domain is the man, the expressions are mainly generated from the snake's characteristic and behavior in both Chinese and English. When the target domain is the woman, the expressions are mainly generated from the snake's characteristic and

appearance in Chinese, but only from the snake's characteristic in English. Clearly, both languages stress the metaphorical usage mapped upon the general person by the snake's characteristic, and the metaphorical usage mapped upon man by the snake's behavior. However, when taking the female gender into account, while Chinese emphasizes the metaphorical usage mapped upon woman by the snake's appearance, English neither emphasizes the snake's behavior nor its appearance.

With regard to the target domain, the metaphorical expressions are mainly mapped onto the general person in Chinese, but onto the man in English, although the expressions with the woman as the target are the least in number in both languages. In detail, when the source domain is the snake's appearance, the same conceptual metaphor of PEOPLE IN QUEUE IS A SNAKE can be generalized for the general person from both languages. When the target domain is the man, the snake's appearance can map onto man's eyes, hair and genital organ in both languages. However, Chinese also prefers to delineate man's gazes, back and waist with snake expressions while English prefers to delineate man's tongue, fingers and hip with snake expressions. When the target domain is woman, the story is the same in both languages in that only when the snake's appearance is mapped onto woman's hair. The difference lies in the aspect that the Chinese snake expressions can be mapped onto woman's tongue, arms, fingers, waist, hands, feet and vein, but the English snake expressions can be mapped onto woman's gaze, facial expression and skin. Accordingly, a conceptual metaphor of A SLIM-WAISTED WOMAN IS A SNAKE can be generalized from Chinese. Clearly, Chinese usage in this aspect is more varied than that of English.

When the source domain is the snake's behavior, more expressions are mapped onto the general person in Chinese, but more expressions are mapped onto the man in English. Besides, the salient behaviors of the snake are different in these two languages. Chinese stresses the action of 'squeezing' but English stresses the action of 'coiling' and 'uncoiling'. Since Chinese has more expressions, one conceptual metaphor is generalized for woman from the behavior of 'squeezing': BEING HUGGED BY A WOMAN IS BEING SQUEEZED BY A SNAKE. Additionally, English maps the snake's way of striking onto people's way of speaking, but this kind of usage is absent in Chinese. Furthermore, as 'swallowing' appears in Chinese expressions, one conceptual metaphor can be generalized for both man and woman: A GREEDY MAN IS A SNAKE and A GREEDY WOMAN IS A SNAKE.

When the source domain is the snake's characteristic, most of the expressions are mapped onto the general person in Chinese, but onto the man in English. Further, those that are mapped onto the woman in Chinese and those that are mapped onto the general person in English are the least in number respectively. The metaphorical expressions stress cruelty when they are mapped onto both the general person and the man in Chinese, but they stress woman's treacherous character when they are mapped onto the woman, in particular, the beautiful woman. Different from Chinese, the expressions in English stress the cowardly, slippery and treacherous character of the general person, the cruel, treacherous, mean and sexually abusive character of man as well as the treacherous and slippery character of the woman. Therefore, the two languages generalize different

conceptual metaphors from these expressions. For Chinese, they are A CRUEL MAN IS A POISONOUS SNAKE and A BEAUTIFUL WOMAN IS A POISONOUS SNAKE. For English, they are A CRUEL MAN IS A SNAKE, A WOMANIZER IS A SNAKE and A TREACHEROUS WOMAN IS A SNAKE. Clearly, although both languages have the same conceptual metaphor of A CRUEL MAN IS A SNAKE, Chinese bears a greater degree of negative meaning by adding the word POISONOUS in front of the word SNAKE. Additionally, Chinese mainly stresses man's cruelty and does not have the meaning of a womanizer which is the salient feature of English. When the snake's characteristic is mapped onto the woman, the difference is also striking. Although both languages stress woman's treacherous character, Chinese stresses the woman's treacherous character under the cover of beauty, while English pays no attention to the influence that might be imposed by a woman's physical appearance.

The evaluation here, either from the angle of the source domain or the target domain, has shown that the negative meaning and connotation occupy most of the expressions in both languages. Specifically, 83.4% of the Chinese snake metaphorical expressions are negative in meaning and 77% of the English snake metaphorical expressions are negative in meaning. When the 'man' expressions are compared with the 'woman' expressions in Chinese, only in the expressions that are used metaphorically for man's behavior, is there some positive meaning. When the expressions are mapped from the snake's appearance onto the man's appearance, they are all negative. When the expressions are mapped from the snake's characteristic, they are mainly negative in meaning. When the target is the woman, the expressions bear both negative and positive meaning when they are mapped from the snake's appearance, behavior and characteristic. Thus, snake expressions convey much more negative meaning of man than woman in Chinese. In English, when the snake's appearance and behavior are mapped onto the man, the expressions have negative, neutral or positive meanings, and when the snake's characteristic are mapped onto the man, the expressions are overwhelmingly negative. If the target is the woman, only when the snake's appearance and behavior are mapped onto the woman, the expressions are totally negative, and when the snake's characteristic is mapped on the woman, the expressions are overwhelmingly negative. Therefore, snake expressions convey much more negative meaning of woman than that of man in English which is in line with other scholars' findings (see e.g. Todasco, 1973; Allen, 1984; Halupka-Rešetar & Radic, 2003; Fontecha & Jiménez Catalán, 2003).

Conclusion

In terms of the number, 1152 snake metaphorical expressions are targeted at human beings in Mandarin Chinese. According to the source domain, the metaphorical expressions are mainly generated from the snake's characteristic and appearance. According to the target domain, the expressions are mainly mapped onto the general person. 113 snake metaphorical expressions are targeted at human beings in British English. According to the source domain, the metaphorical expressions are also mainly generated from the snake's characteristic and appearance as in Chinese. However, for the target domain, the expressions are mainly mapped onto the man, which is different from Chinese.

In terms of the conceptual metaphor HUMAN BEINGS ARE SNAKES under the umbrella of HUMAN BEINGS ARE ANIMALS, Mandarin Chinese and British English share the same metaphor of PEOPLE IN QUEUE IS A SNAKE when the general person is taken into account. However, when the gender is taken into consideration, the specific conceptual metaphors generalized for the man and the woman from these two languages are different. Chinese has the metaphors of A CRUEL MAN IS A POISONOUS SNAKE and A GREEDY MAN IS A SNAKE, but English has two different ones: A CRUEL MAN IS A SNAKE, and A WOMANIZER IS A SNAKE. Apart from this finding, the conceptual metaphors generalized for the woman are totally different in these two languages: A SLIM-WAISTED WOMAN IS A SNAKE, A GREEDY WOMAN IS A SNAKE, BEING HUGGED BY A WOMAN IS BEING SQUEEZED BY A SNAKE and A BEAUTIFUL WOMAN IS A POISONOUS SNAKE in Chinese and A TREACHROUS WOMAN IS A SNAKE in English. This provides evidence to show that cross-linguistically, like other kinds of conceptual metaphors, the universality of snake metaphor exists at the generic level and individuality exists at the basic level. Additionally, Chinese generalizes more conceptual metaphors compared to English.

In terms of the evaluation, the snake metaphorical expressions also work differently in Mandarin Chinese and British English, because the snake expressions have a much more derogatory meaning of man in Chinese but more a derogative meaning of woman in English.

Thus, on the one hand, this study provides supportive evidence to the metaphor HUMAN BEINGS ARE ANIMALS by generalizing certain number of snake metaphors from the two languages for the general person, the man and the woman, which is in echo with Lakoff and Turner's (1989, p.172) claim that human beings' attributes can be understood through nonhuman attributes. On the other hand, the finding on the evaluation of the snake metaphorical expressions in Chinese endows people with a different view that not all kinds of animal expressions bear worse connotation in woman than in man in all languages, which provides additional evidence to the existence of cultural specific in animal expressions.

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