

Metaphor in Hakka proverbs

Linguistic and cultural constraints

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This paper investigates metaphor in Hakka proverbs by examining a corpus of 933 couplets based on a refined analytic framework from Lakoff & Turner (1989). For the source domain, the being of the state of affairs and the rhetorical relations of the two chunks are identified. For the target domain, the projected theme and the connotative tendency are examined. The results show that source domains significantly correlate with the rhetorical relations and target domains, respectively. Four metaphorical mapping mechanisms based on the *GENERIC IS SPECIFIC* metaphor are proposed for the operation of the global construal. A mirror image mapping is demonstrated: whole-for-part metonymy in the source domain and part-for-whole metonymy in the target domain. Both the evoked knowledge schemas, encompassing real-life Hakka folk experiences, and the projected themes, including family values, individual characters, and evaluations or standards of life, are found to be culturally constrained. A coalescence of linguistic, cultural, and affective forces is claimed to represent the metaphors in Hakka proverbs. The study contributes to a better understanding of metaphors in proverbs by establishing a solid ground from their linguistic and cultural features, and to expanding the conceptual metaphor theory by building the conceptual universality with specific cultural information.

Keywords: Hakka proverbs, rhetorical relations, connotative tendency, conceptual metaphor, conceptual metonymy