

A Synchronic Comparative Analysis of Emotion Metaphors of 悲 (bei) /SADNESS in Chinese and German memorial texts

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As Ortony et al. (1988: 3) said, “the study of human emotion constitutes one of the essential components in our probe into human cognition.” Metaphor as non-literal use of a linguistic expression in a particular communication situation serves as the ubiquitous method of expressing of emotions and feelings in the world languages (s. Skirl/Schwarz-Friesel 2013). The study of emotion metaphors can be seen as a tool to the conceptual systems of emotions (s. Kövecses 2000, Yu 2002, Stefanowitsch 2006 etc.). In the context of Critical Cognitive Linguistic of Schwarz (2008), Schwarz-Friesel’s (2013, 2015), Kertész’ et al. (2012), which provide the possibility to divide verbal manifestation (metaphor) from emotion concept (SADNESS) and also emphasize the importance of corpus study in the cognitive linguistics, the present paper attempt to investigate the metaphorical constructions of emotion concept 悲/SADNESS within the internet-based Chinese and German memorial texts between 2001-2016.

Using a corpus-based approach this study will contrast the collected data in three parts: firstly, which convergences and divergences in relation to conceptual domain of emotion category 悲 /SADNESS can be found in both Chinese and German texts; Secondly, how the classifications of metaphorical expressions by degree of conventionality (chengyu/idiom, lexicalized metaphor, cliched metaphors, creative metaphors, innovative metaphors) will be distributed in both of the corpora; Thirdly, whether the referencing/denoting and expressing metaphors of sadness to be found in the corpora, which usually be ignored in the most of present studies.

The result has shown that there are 24 conceptual combinations of the metaphorical verbalizations in the German corpus and 19 in the Chinese corpus. The majority of them (16) can be found in both of the corpora. With regard to the non-equivalent conceptualization patterns, however, it is more common to seen in the German corpus that positive associating concepts are used as source domains in the conceptual combinations.

Additionally the result shows that all of the classifications of metaphorical expressions are discovered in both corpora. Among them the lexicalized metaphors have the largest proportion in the German corpus and cliched metaphors have the largest part in the Chinese corpus. Since creative and innovative metaphors emphasize the particularity of verbal constructions and are able to enhance the intensity of the emotionality, so it is difficult to get any similarity between Chinese and German corpora. The speakers of different languages creative also in different ways in metaphor use. The innovative metaphors of SADNESS have the smallest proportions in both corpora. It is noteworthy that more terms for organs or parts of the body have been used in Chinese metaphors than those in German. This could be related to deep-rooted cultural thoughts as well as TCM influences.

Thirdly, most of sadness metaphors enable not only to denote but also express the sad feelings. Based on the theory of dividing emotion words from emotion-laden words of Schwarz-Friesel (2013) the present paper has also developed a method to differ emotion-denoted metaphors and emotion-expressed metaphors. The empirical research has shown that (over) half of the sadness metaphors express the sad feelings in both Chinese and German corpora. The metaphors, which only want to denote grief, have the smallest shares in both languages. It is also clear that sad feelings are construed and perceived to a greater extent within the help of metaphorical formulations.

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