
Identity Construction in Website News Discourse: A Corpus-assisted Comparative Study of Top 10 American and Chinese Banking Corporations¹

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Abstract: The post-COVID-19 period has witnessed the fierce trade war between America and China as the two supreme world powers in the global economic meltdown. Under these circumstances, it is essential that banking corporations due to their significant role in economic transformation and resuscitation should construct a strategic identity in the global market. In light of this, this research aims to find out what key attributes of corporate identity are projected for American banking corporations (hereinafter referred to ABCs) and for Chinese banking corporations (hereinafter referred to CBCs) in website news discourse and to highlight their similarities and differences so as to offer insight into future development. To achieve this, this research adopted monologic perspectives and two corpora were built; following MIP, a detailed systematic cognitive metaphor analysis was carried out by application of Wmatrix to examine how the three metaphors in the pyramid hierarchy (concrete metaphors, conceptual metaphors, abstract conceptual keys) collaborate with each other for semantic representation. The findings show that Both ABCs and CBCs attach strategic significance to metaphorical representation of corporate identity, whose different frequency and distribution of concrete metaphors in the semantic field THE BODY AND THE INDIVIDUAL in accordance with USAS demonstrates different attributes of corporate identity; that there is one shared abstract schema: BANKING CORPORATIONS ARE ORGANISMS; that while ABCs are constructed kings who enjoy highest social reputation and projected as doctors who can diagnose their own symptoms, CBCs are constructed as hunks who have saved many people's lives in emergency and projected as patients who have gone into therapy due to serious illness. The paper also offers empirical and theoretical implications for future research.

Keywords: American banking corporations, Chinese banking corporations, corporate identity, corporate metaphor, website news discourse

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Introduction

Corporate identity demonstrates unique attributes of a corporation and differentiates it from other competitors. As a force to boost employees' morale in the workforce, to smooth their difficulty in adapting to corporate culture, to promote managers' ability to recruit highly skilled intellectuals, corporate identity possesses considerable power in facilitating corporations with superior performance so as to possess strategic advantage in the market. Corporate identity construction could lead to corporations' favorable societal reputation (Melewar).

The post-COVID-19 period has witnessed a sluggish global economic meltdown, which has been worsened by the fierce trade war between America and China as the two supreme world powers. Under these circumstances, it is essential that banking corporations due to their significant role in economic transformation and resuscitation should construct strategic corporate identity in the global market.

In the post-COVID-19 period, while challenged with social transformation, ABCs should be adapted to a new environment, in spite of their rich experience and intricate systems, promoting China's current "the Belt and Road Initiative," namely, the Silk Road Economic Belt and the 21st Century Maritime Silk Road, CBCs also demand an accelerating identity construction process. In comparison, in the pre-COVID-19 period, the new world of start-ups in America's development slowdown and China's growth upsurge have also challenged the world with backlash and barriers. The data development analysis investigated by Song Han et al. showed that several reforms and structural transformations before the pandemic's breakout (especially in the past several years) enhanced corporations' performance in efficiency. Thus, examining ABCs' and CBCs' corporation identity in the pre-COVID-19 period can offer implications for future construction of the post-COVID-19 period.

Corporate identity is constructed through embodying and promoting corporate values during corporate communication. Nowadays, enhanced by computers' development and people's access to telecommunications, corporate communication as a process of information delivery has been challenged during new media transformation and its influence upon the public and social members. This reality has aroused growing research interest in corporate communication between the audience and journalists on new media, such as Facebook, Twitter, blogs, and websites. Unlike traditional mass media channels, corporate websites whose multiple pages could target different people (Esrock and Leichty, "Organization"; "Social Responsibility") thus address the largest audience (such as the staff, stakeholders, customers, and the world), and it was also online interaction discourse practice (Antal et al.). In addition, website information disclosure has many roles, such as in assessing social and environmental issues (Williams and Pei), examining CSR (Corporate Social Responsibility) behaviors, building a reputation (Spencer-Cooke), and tracking performance (Yuen and Yip). Thus, among all the new media, websites are the most significant vehicle for almost all corporations to transmit information.

Since metaphor can generate new perspectives, it is able to facilitate researchers with

“disciplined imagination” (Weick) so as to construe mental experiences and representations before a further exploration is carried out into the disciplines. A. J. Soyland compared metaphor to a “promissory note” and suggested that “future research would be aimed at fulfilling the promise” or “at least until the prospects of such a fulfilment are described as unattainable or misconceived” (37).

Covering these overlapped research areas, this research aims to promote corporate identity construction awareness in banking corporate website news discourse and to offer empirical implications for global banking corporations as a whole for corporate website communications. By doing this, it endeavors to present new perspectives for corporate identity investigation, to offer insight into the conceptual representation of corporate attributes, and to explain how underlying force affects identity construction in website news discourse. To achieve this, two research questions are raised:

RQ1: What are the key attributes of corporate identity being projected by the American and Chinese banking corporations in their website news discourse?

RQ2: What are the key similarities and differences between the American and Chinese banking corporations in the attributes projected?

Literature Review

Corporate Identity: Monologic Perspectives

Corporate identity has aroused increasing interest from scholars and practitioners, leading to a plethora of literature (Melewar et al.). Although all the existing research demonstrated the power of corporate identity as a corporate strategy for strategic advantage, together with its significance, paradoxes still existed (Melewar and Jenkins). The plethora of literature has always been controversial, and related concepts shared common meanings and were often interchangeably used (Balmer, “Corporate”; “From the Pentagon”; Melewar and Jenkins) and that corporate identity was covered within a multidisciplinary scope as a hybrid of strategy, communication, structure, behaviours, and culture (Westcott Alessandri).

In accordance with identity principles (Bucholtz and Hall), corporate identity was not only a psychological and sociological process but also an outcome of interaction discourse practice. Thus, two fundamental perspectives could be presented. The monologic perspectives considered corporate identity a stable collection of unique attributes that differentiated the corporation from its counterparts. The dialogic perspectives regarded identity as a process of developing and shaping in local discourse and social interaction. This research takes the monologic perspectives towards corporate identity. The focus was on the “identity mix” (Cornelissen and Elving; Karaosmanoglu and Melewar; Melewar and Jenkins; Otubanjo and Melewar; van Riel; van Riel and Balmer). The “identity mix” consisted of corporate symbolism, behaviour, and communication (van Riel and Balmer).

Balmer’s “From the Pentagon: A New Identity Framework” claimed there were two lenses in

monologic perspectives: The functional lens was based on the hypothesis that corporate identity was a social reality whose distinct attributes (Gray and Balmer) were physical. Thus, it could be identified and managed. Early research witnessed many paradigms (Balmer, “Alliance”; Balmer et al.; He and Balmer) to elaborate on relationships between the factors and consequences of corporate identity or the process of corporate identity construction. A serious problem with the functional lens was that the aim to make a clear distinction between the related concepts, such as corporate identity, corporate communications, corporate branding, and corporate reputation, often led to a failure of the whole research (Otubanjo and Melewar). Through the function lens, the core of corporate identity was a set of common beliefs and values shared by all the internal stakeholders (van Riel and Fombrun). The fundamental problem was how corporate identity affected cognition and action. These approaches aimed to uncover, measure, and manage corporate identity. The conventional method was the deduction of hypotheses testing for the variables and their relationships in identity representation (Popper and Weiss). The specific data were statements, observed actions, and demography.

Unlike the first lens, the core of the semiotics lens was experience and meaning. The hypothesis was that corporate identity was a socially constructed phenomenon that was a continuously negotiated set of meanings. The central task was to interpret how members construct interpersonal corporate identity. The most reliable data for the semiotic lens were symbols (Baker and Balmer) represented in the cognitive schema. Otubanjo and Melewar proposed a semiotic method for deconstructing corporate identity. Through the semiotic lens, corporate identity was considered everything the corporation felt, said, and did (Currás Pérez) to express corporate personality (Shee and Abratt). Furthermore, it was a set of central and essential features that distinguished (Albert and Whetten) the corporation from its counterparts. Corporate identity was all about the means corporations developed for corporate identity construction. Corporations endeavored to communicate their projected or desired identity (Anisimova; Arendt and Brettel) in formal documents such as corporate values, mission, and statements (Moingeon and Soenen). Podnar argued that corporate identity was a mix of attributes that a corporation possessed as a subject.

Corporate Metaphor: MIP

Corporate metaphor played a significant role in corporate research and in understanding corporate phenomena, on the assumption that corporate research was a science (Pinder and Bougeois). The early study of corporate metaphor met with criticism because it was inherently ambiguous and thus impossible to falsify the relationship between phenomena and theories. So far, neither theoretical models for elaborating corporate attributes and metaphor use in corporate theory nor examining corporate identity construction by employing metaphor has been fully explored.

The existing approaches toward corporate metaphor were never satisfactory. According to the comparison model (Oswick et al.; Tsoukas, “Analogical”; Tsoukas, “Missing”), understanding metaphor was to compare the source domain and the target domain to find out the existing features of the representations that were shared by or similar to each other in the two domains. Tsoukas argued

that according to structure-mapping theory, systematic parallels between the two domains could generate scientific knowledge about corporate phenomena in analogical reasoning and mapping relations (“Analogical”). However, working in the “cognitive comfort zone” of similarity (Oswick et al.), the focus of metaphors on sameness and overlapping ground could only elaborate and explicate existing knowledge. Therefore, the orthodox view of corporate metaphor was oversimplified. It could not explain how metaphor understanding needed inference beyond the standard or similar features in the source and target domains (Fauconnier and Turner; Gibbs, “Categorization”; Gibbs, “When”; Katz). The fundamental mechanisms behind producing and understanding new meanings were the creation of emergent features. Ortony argued that metaphorical comparisons involved salience imbalance, where a salient common feature was solely high in the source domain and thus gained more weight in the target domain (“Beyond”; *Metaphor*).

Few researchers and practitioners have successfully gone beyond theoretical discussion. Isolated linguistic units constructed by researchers often failed to offer a proper understanding, and what constituted a metaphor was often different due to researchers’ different intuitions and research purpose.

Meanwhile, any empirical investigation of structures and functions of metaphors in natural language needs a standard criterion for identification, the lack of which will complicate the issues of metaphor frequency, its roles in discourse, and possible relations between language and thought, making the comparison analysis impossible (Cameron, *Metaphor*; Semino et al.). Semino et al. pinpointed methodological problems in the five-step cognitive paradigm (Steen) for identifying and analyzing metaphors in relation to how to extrapolate conceptual metaphors from syntactic structures; it was proposed that individual concepts might have multiple literal and conventionally metaphorical associates and the individual metaphorical expression should be related to conventional metaphorical patterns (1292).

While the automatic metaphor identification (Berber; Fass; Mason) was convenient, manual analysis was more detailed and thorough. Barlow et al.’s training manual has been widely used for metaphor identification. The manual offered a variety of figures of speech (e.g., metaphor, metonymy, irony, and personification) and presented representative examples of each category. In metaphor identification procedure, coordinators were trained to identify figures of speech in different contexts (e.g., political discourse, children’s composition, psychotherapy interview), the degrees to which they agreed with each other were determined. Barlow et al.’s training manual has gained popularity in many research fields since it could distinguish alive metaphors from dead metaphors. Nevertheless, Barlow et al.’s training manual could not explicitly judge whether a word was metaphorical since only prototypes in each category were considered, on which coordinators should develop classifications. In addition, many conventional words could be wrongly classified into dead metaphors. Cameron’s method (“Identifying”; *Metaphor*) differed from Barlow et al.’s training manual in identifying metaphor vehicles instead of metaphorical word(s).

Corporate News Discourse: Linguistic Perspectives

Corporate news discourse is an overlapped areas between corporate discourse and news discourse. Corporate discourse (Breeze) was the place where corporate identities were communicated. The significance of corporate discourse has aroused researchers' growing interest in many academic fields, such as genre analysis and CL (Corpus Linguistics) (Hunston; Sinclair, *Corpus*; Sinclair, *Trust*). "News discourse is an addiction" (Bednarek). Due to its enormous amount and ubiquitous existence in our daily lives, news discourse has an immense potential to shape our beliefs, values, and behaviors and to influence the government's decisions. Its immense production and distribution in our life has made it dominant and thus facilitated us with easy access.

Fundamentally speaking, the relationship between journalists and the audience was fostered by semiotic resources, such as words, texts, and images, the choice of which was meaning (Halliday) and thus had a powerful influence on the audience. In light of this, corporate news discourse can be studied by linguistic analysis of instances of language in particular contexts to discover syntactic and discursive features and to explain how these choices were made and combined to construct corporate identity. This research adopted linguistic perspectives and it was an integrated methodology of SFL (Systemic Functional Linguistics) and CL.

All the SFL approaches toward news discourse often overlapped and even combined. Conboy integrated sociolinguistics, diachronic linguistics, and media studies in researching the language of newspapers. In spite of this, if located in SFL (Halliday; Halliday and Matthiessen), all the approaches were focused on examining linguistic features and discourse structures of news. Butt et al. claimed that ideology could be created concerning text construction and grammar.

CL could be combined CL (Hunston; Sinclair, *Corpus*; Sinclair, *Trust*) with news discourse analysis (Baker). The strength of CL lied in its capability to facilitate researchers with a relatively unbiased representation of linguistic reality, providing that the analysis of concordance lines, keywords, and frequency could shed light upon wider linguistic patterns or themes about one or more theoretical frameworks, which could otherwise be impossible. Keyness and collocation were the two critical theoretical notions in corpus linguistic analysis. Examining keywords and clusters combined with concordance offered insight into a general representation of the subject matter, if grouped in terms of specific topics and metaphors concerning semantic and pragmatic words (Baker). Until now, only a few studies examined corporate discourse through corpus tools, and it holds promise for corporate identity research.

Website Communication: Comparative Study

In reality, not every page was supposed to be satisfactory on corporate websites, even for leading global corporations. Comparatively speaking, while ABOUT US, ANNUAL REVIEW, CSR REPORT, and SPONSORSHIP were frequently used and further explored, WHAT'S NEW or NEWS ANNOUNCEMENT was relatively less, and in extreme cases, there was none.

While considerable attention was devoted to western corporate websites (Chambers et al.;

Chaudhri and Jian; Thompson and Zakaria), Chinese banking corporations' online websites were seldom discussed. CSR due to its substantial role in corporate identity construction has become a dominant research area, and its typical topics included public image (Connolly-Ahern and Broadway), crisis communication (Segars; Stephens et al.), and environmental reports (Bartkus et al.; Cormier and Magnan; Shepherd et al.). In contrast, corporate attributes so far have not gained adequate attention.

On the other hand, content analysis and survey were two conventional methods in corporate website communication research, comparative studies were few. There were studies on adaptation degree to different cultural backgrounds (Cyr and Trevor-Smith; Okazaki and Alonso Rivas; Robbins and Stylianou "Global"; Robbins and Stylianou "A Study"; Singh et al.; Singh and Matsuo). Insight could be offered into corporate identity construction; linguistic approaches were still not further pursued. An in-depth study was lacking in determining how discursive strategies were implemented to communicate corporate values to construct positive identity.

Thus, the set of tools adopted in this research is integrated. Located in SFL, the concept of instantiation was borrowed from Halliday to refer to the relationship between language as an overall potential system to generate meanings and a text as a particular instance of language use and text types. CL was applied to objectively analyse linguistic features.

The Data

Fortune Global 500 ("Fortune") and Forbes Biggest 2000 ("Forbes") were chosen to confirm the rankings of the Top 10 CBCs and ABCs. The data was retrieved on January 1, 2017, respectively from The World's Biggest Public Companies and from Global 500. The difference between Forbes Biggest 2000 and Fortune Global 500 in ranking parameters and statistics methodology brought about two distinctly different lists of banking corporations' rankings. Despite this, the 10 top CBCs listed in Forbes biggest 2000 were also listed in Fortune Global 500. In contrast, only five ABCs in Forbes biggest 2000 were listed in Fortune Global 500. Considering that the five were listed in consequence in Forbes biggest 2000, this ranking was still influential for analysis (see Table 1).

The official website homepage of each listed banking corporation was chosen. All the chosen banking corporations owned more than one website homepage. Several top 10 ABCs and CBCs had unique global homepages to target the global market.

Table 1 Banking Corporations' Rankings in 2016

China			America		
Banking corporation	Forbes biggest 2000	Fortune Global 500	Banking corporation	Forbes biggest 2000	Fortune Global 500
ICBC	1	15	JPMorgan Chase & Co.	5	55
China Construction Bank	2	22	Wells Fargo	7	67
Agricultural Bank of China	3	29	Bank of America	11	64
Bank of China	6	35	Citigroup	13	70
Bank of Communications	36	153	US Bancorp	97	490
China Merchants Bank Co.	38	189	PNC Financial Services	153	/
SP Development Bank	57	227	Bank of New York Mellon	161	/
Industrial Bank	59	195	BB&T	274	/
China Minsheng Banking	65	221	Regions Financial	588	/
China Citic Bank	79	156	KeyCorp	736	/

Every article covered by ANNOUNCEMENT, CORPORATE RELEASE, NEWS, NEWS AND UPDATE, released from January 1st to December 31st, 2016, was manually retrieved. There were hybrid genres of news discourse with others. The data collection result was two corpora composed of 519 American website news articles in 303,587 words (hereinafter referred to as Corpus A) and 135 Chinese website news articles in 98,251 words (hereinafter referred to as Corpus C).

Table 2 offers an overview of Corpus A and Corpus C. The amount of news articles was significantly different for the top 10 CBCs and ABCs. Many banking corporations did not have news articles on their website homepages. They were the four privately-owned CBCs and the five ABCs. Amounts of news articles were also different. The number of American ones was nearly four times larger than the number of Chinese ones. On the Chinese side, Industrial Bank had a large amount of 98, and on the American side, Citigroup has a considerable amount of 169. Despite this, considering the total data of one year, the number of news articles was reasonably small. No corporation managed to offer one news article every day. The size of news articles was relatively similar. Although the number of words in Corpus A was almost three times larger, they were pretty close to Corpus C on average.

Regarding the number of news articles, if it is not necessarily the sole objective criterion, CBCs and ABCs failed to use news discourse to present their key attributes before the audience.

Table 2 Banking Corporations' Website News Corpora

Corpus C			Corpus A		
Banking corporation	articles	words	Banking corporation	articles	words
ICBC	4	4115	JPMorgan Chase & Co.	37	14902
China Construction Bank	8	6372	Wells Fargo	146	100281
Agricultural Bank of China	11	5309	Bank of America	0	0
Bank of China	10	6796	Citigroup	169	107338
Bank of Communications	0	0	US Bancorp	0	0
China Merchants Bank Co.	0	0	PNC Financial Services	70	47372
SP Development Bank	0	0	Bank of New York Mellon	97	33694
Industrial Bank	98	73517	BB&T	0	0
China Minsheng Banking	4	2142	Regions Financial	0	0
China Citic Bank	0	0	KeyCorp	0	0
Total	135	98251		519	303587

Method

Metaphor Identification Procedure

The semantic field THE BODY AND THE INDIVIDUAL in the USAS (Archer et al.) was chosen to be the semantic scope of metaphor identification. Since human has natural nature, one hypothesis thus could be formulated concerning corporate identity: corporations possessed both individual natural attributes. In light of this, corporate identity construction in corporate website news discourse with metaphor use was a process of semantic representation of human's individual attributes. On the other hand, words in the semantic field THE BODY AND THE INDIVIDUAL was explicit linguistic resources respectively for semantic representation of individual attributes, acknowledging that linguistic resources in other semantic fields can also be implicitly implemented for projecting corporate attributes.

Consequently, exploring cognitive metaphors could be narrowed down to the words in the semantic field. While the semantic field THE BODY AND THE INDIVIDUAL (Archer et al.) can nevertheless work to offer the cornerstone for cognitive metaphor analysis. The meanings conveyed by words in the semantic field THE BODY AND THE INDIVIDUAL was supposed to demonstrate key attributes of individual corporate identity.

The metaphor identification procedure (MIP; Group) was followed to achieve this goal *Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary of Current English* (the 9th edition) was chosen for primary contemporary meaning reference.

A clear illustration of the metaphor identification result (see Table 3) and text details (see Table 4) was reported. The use of corpora resources and *Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary* eliminated the possibility of inconsistent judgement. The kind of genre in the entire text was supposed to be merely news.

Table 3² Reporting the Use of MIP

Text details	(See Table 4)
Readership	Current audience
Lexical unit decision	Linguistic decision
Resources	Corpora <i>Oxford Advanced Learners' Dictionary</i>
Coding decision	Common nominal and lexical verbal groups
Analysis details	3-session
Reliability analysis	Cochran's Q and Cohen's Kappa

Table 4 Text Details

Text details	Chinese	American
Source	Corpus	Corpus
Mode	Written	Written
Genre	News	News
Retrieving date	January 1, 2017	January 1, 2017
Length of text	98251	303587
Tokens	55981	282089

Findings

Overview

Metaphors are common discourse strategies implemented in corporate website news discourse. A detailed examination of 40794 concordances in Corpus A and 7738 concordances in Corpus C in the two corpora demonstrates 45 types of metaphors in the semantic field THE BODY AND THE INDIVIDUAL. The relatively large number of metaphors attaches real significance to this research.

In accordance with the lexical density, Chinese corporate website news discourse shows stronger awareness and more conscious widespread of metaphorical representation. Although Corpus A is more considerable, Corpus C indicates higher lexical density of metaphor use. Table 5 illustrates a total number of 1,159 metaphors (2.84%) in Corpus A and a total number of 368 metaphors (4.76%) in Corpus C.

Table 5 Concrete Metaphor Frequency

	Corpus A	Corpus C	Total
Concordance	40794	7738	48,532
THE BODY AND THE INDIVIDUAL	25	20	45
Metaphorical lexical density	2.84	4.76	7.6

While the occurrences of metaphor representation in the semantic field contribute to the key attributes projection for corporation identity construction, their different outcome well demonstrate different metaphor use in different sub semantic fields. The number of metaphors in Corpus A and Corpus C indicates uneven distribution of occurrences in different semantic fields, few of which are even missing. The first semantic field THE BODY AND THE INDIVIDUAL demonstrates 25 concrete metaphors in Corpus A and 20 in Corpus C, which further shows uneven distribution of occurrences in the five sub-semantic fields: ANATOMY AND PHYSIOLOGY, HEALTH AND DISEASE, MEDICAL TREATMENT, PERSONAL CARE AND CLOTHES, PERSONAL BELONGS. The two sub-semantic fields MEDICAL TREATMENT and PERSONAL CARE are missing in American corporate website news discourse, while the sub-semantic field PERSONAL BELONGS is missing in Chinese corporate website news discourse.

Concrete Metaphor Level

The semantic field THE BODY AND THE INDIVIDUAL demonstrates both familiar and different concrete metaphors in Chinese and American website news articles. By projecting the conceptual system from the source domain to the target domain, the concrete concept MUSCLE in the conceptual system, which is cognitively represented in the word *muscles*, is mapped to the abstract concept STRENGTH in the corresponding conceptual system, which is linguistically represented in the word *strength*.

The three concrete metaphors FACE, DNA, and IMPAIRMENT are shared in Corpus A and Corpus C. The common goal of the material process *face* shared in Chinese and American website news articles is *challenge*, which represents the difficulty that the actors should deal with. In the local context, the common task for CBCs and ABCs is to strengthen their corporate competence to tackle economic problems. The projected abstract concepts of the concrete metaphor DNA are common corporate values, which will not be compromised in the market change. Examples:³

- (1)... and today a developer of green finance, Gao Jianping has taken the command for 16 years and introduced green DNA to the Industrial Bank. (CBC)
- (2) Investing in cities has been central to our business since Citi was founded in 1812; it is in our DNA. (ABC)

By the concrete metaphor IMPAIRMENT, Chinese and American website corporate news articles project the conceptual representation of bodily damage from biological diseases to show the economic decline caused by the global market meltdown. The essence of human metabolism is physically reflected in gradual physical growth and health status, which is adaptability to the living environment. The metaphor representation of different parts of the human body that are suffering denotes different business areas that are suffered from the economic crisis. While CBCs' entire business scope is personal deposits and loans, considering that China's most significant population means tremendous economic potential, ABCs' primary business is investment, considering that the

large majority of their clients are organizations, corporations, and governments.

- (3) The ratio of allowance for loan impairment losses to non-performing loans and the allowance for loan impairment losses to total loans of domestic institutions recorded 153.30% and 2.62% respectively, meeting regulatory requirement. (CBC)
- (4) ... including net securities gains or losses, other-than-temporary impairment of investment securities and certain trading activities. ... (ABC)

In Corpus A and Corpus C, the four unique concrete metaphors are MUSCLES, ARTERY, INJECTS and PURIFIES. Although it is relatively smaller, Corpus C demonstrates intricate metaphors to cover human internal organs and tissues. The words in the target domain indicate inner strength. Concrete concepts in the source domain ISSUES, such as MUSCLES and ARTERY, are mapped to the target domain to convey that CBCs are very powerful and appreciate the significant role of the national project “One Belt, One Road.” Examples:

- (5) ...cooperating with the government and foundation for poverty alleviation and other charitable organizations to add muscles to poverty alleviation efforts. (CBC)
- (6) The Bank also accelerated the building of the financial artery of the Belt and Road initiative. ... (CBC)

INJECTS and PURIFIES are the only two concrete metaphors to project the literal meaning of medical treatment and personal care in the two corpora as a whole. Examples:

- (7) Thirdly, it injects new impetus into the development of offshore RMB market. (CBC)
- (8) Love is like a spring that purifies the world. (CBC)

The six concrete metaphors in Corpus A are LEG, TAILOR, SEAMLESS, CROWN, CLOTHES, and WOVEN.

The metaphor LEG construes the meaning that the Citi Mobile Challenge is one of the cornerstones for economic development in the Asia-Pacific regions. One example:

- (9) The Asia-Pacific leg of the Citi Mobile Challenge was launched in August 2015... (ABC)

The semantic representation of the four concrete metaphors TAILOR, SEAMLESS, CROWN, and WOVEN reflects ABCs’ persistent corporate values. It construes the meaning that they retain a unique and societal solid identity. By metaphor representation of clothes, the modifiers *tailored* and *seamless*, the participants *crown* and *clothes*, and the material process *woven*, the source domain of fabrics is projected to the target domain of corporate image to build a positive corporate

image through indicating the constant corporate values of integration, experience, and social responsibility. The literal meaning of the fundamental functions of clothes denotes protection, identification, modesty, status, and uniqueness. The statement of particular materials of the clothes allows for corporate identity and uniqueness in the market. The metaphor CROWN indicates the corporation's honor and strength in society and the corporation's highest social position in the banking business. Examples:

- (10) We're confident this will be a seamless integration, and we will continue to provide our customers with excellent service... (ABC)
- (11) Social responsibility is deeply woven into our business strategy and culture. (ABC)
- (12) BNY Mellon has retained its crown as best transactional bank for financial institutions in EMEA Finances Annual Treasury Services Awards. (ABC)

Conceptual Metaphor Level

As the outcome of the collection of linguistic evidence from the mapping projection of 45 types of concrete metaphors in the semantic field THE BODY AND THE INDIVIDUAL in American and Chinese corporate website news discourse, conceptual metaphors arise by employing the schema projection of the whole mental inner structures in mental space, where the cognitive process of analogy and induction of their relations leads to a large number of occurrences of concrete metaphors. Figure 1 illustrates a general schema mapping of concrete metaphors.

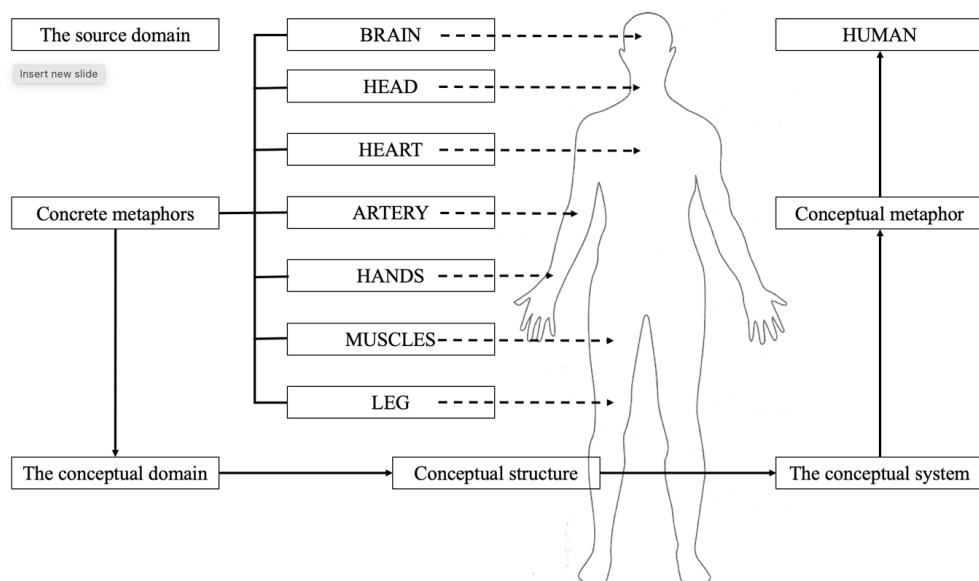


Figure 1 Schema mapping

The findings have now confirmed the formulated hypothesis that corporations possess both individual attributes. Corresponding to the duality of human's individual attributes, the broad corporate metaphor that CORPORATIONS ARE HUMAN itself postulates two common fundamental conceptual metaphors shared in Chinese and American corporate website news discourse:

In relation to individual attributes, the two shared concrete metaphors FACE and DNA for the static semantic representation of static creatures' anatomy and the shared concrete metaphor IMPAIRMENT for the dynamic semantic representation of bodily damage to creatures give rise to the schema mapping of the whole conceptual network to project concrete concepts in the source domain to abstract concepts in the target domain, so that a banking corporation is metaphorically represented as an organism.

Conceptual Key Level

The process of projecting the unique concrete metaphors in the semantic field in American corporate website news articles and in American corporate website news articles into the common conceptual metaphor is, in essence, a process of mapping new schemas, where conceptual keys present their unique corporate identity.

Pair 1 CBCS ARE HUNKS vs ABCS ARE KINGS

In the sub semantic field ANATOMY AND PHYSIOLOGY, the blended schema of unique concrete metaphors for the cognitive representation of human anatomy, HANDS, which is the symbol of strength, MUSCLES, which is the symbol of muscularity, and ARTERY, which is the symbol of energy, highlights hunks' attributes, stressing CBCs' business competence and enthusiasm for customers and clients; and the blended schema of unique concrete metaphors for the cognitive representation of clothes and accessories, CLOTHES, the symbol of dignity and image, and CROWN, the symbol of kings' honour and authority, reflects ABCs' corporate values of achievement, pride, and superiority and their awareness about the significance of corporate reputation and identity construction in business development.

Pair 2 CBCS ARE PATIENTS vs ABCS ARE DOCTORS

In the sub-semantic fields HEALTH AND DISEASE, MEDICINES AND MEDICAL TREATMENT, CLEANING AND PERSONAL CARE, the blended mapping of the two unique concrete metaphors INJECT and PURIFY denotes the therapy process of patients' absorption into and disposal of chemical substances out of the inner body, representing the recovery process of CBCs' capital financing and restructuring in business operation after the economic loss from the global crisis. The unique concrete metaphor DIAGNOSE construes doctors' routine work of describing symptoms and causes of illness, indicating ABCs' professional competence for economic crisis analysis and resolution.

Discussion

RQ1: What are the key attributes of corporate identity being projected by the American and Chinese banking corporations in their website news discourse?

Among many facets of corporate identity, corporate competence is the dominant set of key individual attributes. The semantic representation of corporate attributes reflects corporate values, beliefs, and norms, which in turn are underpinned by corporate culture. The hypothesis projects key attributes of ABCs' and CBCs' shared identities: BANKING CORPORATIONS ARE ORGANISMS, which is evidenced by empirical findings of the conceptual metaphor analysis. To be more specific, key attributes of achievement, arts, awards, commitment, consolidation, cooperation, customer priority, courage, donation, education, efficiency, employment, enthusiasm, environment, equality, family love, friendship, health care, history, hi-tech, human rights, internship, nationality, partnership, quality, reform, rewards, sponsorship, stability, success, teamwork, and transparency are projected in Chinese and American corporate website news discourse.

RQ2: What are the key similarities and differences between the American and Chinese banking corporations in the attributes projected?

Regarding their similarities, due to the significant role of metaphorical semantic representation, most key individual corporate attributes, if not all, are projected in American and Chinese corporate website news discourse. The occurrences of individual identity attributes correspond to different sub semantic fields in the semantic field THE BODY AND THE INDIVIDUAL, the distribution and frequency of which lead to different diversity of identity construction. To consolidate customers' confidence in corporate business, the attributes of corporate competence are particularly continuously highlighted by ABCs and CBCs in the ideational representation of their unshakable cornerstones for economic growth after the global market meltdown. Thus, in the face of economic crisis, their common determination to enhance economic strength in tackling economic problems is demonstrated, and a shared sense is conveyed that corporate values, principles, and norms will never be compromised. In addition, customer-priority awareness is overwhelmingly highlighted in American and Chinese corporate website news discourse.

Regarding their differences, while ABCs project and promote a wider diversity of corporate attributes than CBCs do, CBCs dramatically highlight corporate competence in corporate website news discourse. Nevertheless, although corporate competence is put in the first business position, ABCs and CBCs boost economic strength and power in different business areas: the global market in American corporate website news discourse and the domestic market in Chinese corporate website news discourse; in fundamental business scope: investment American corporate website news discourse and deposits and loans in Chinese corporate website news discourse. While ABCs metaphorically represent developing business in the Asia-Pacific regions, CBCs metaphorically represent promoting the Belt and Road Initiative. While different professional areas are illustrated to demonstrate ABCs' power in handling global business, business achievement and customers' demand are addressed to display CBCs' competence. While ABCs promote values of transparency, efficiency,

and consolidation, CBCs focus on comprehensive customer services. ABCs' preferred business scope indicates their assimilation into the international community. Meanwhile, the creation of closeness in customer relations is achieved by CBCs in their statement of equal status to other social members. ABCs and CBCs are represented as persons playing different social roles. After the global economic market meltdown, for branding a favorable reputation, ABCs are metaphorically represented as kings and doctors, and in contrast CBCs are as hunks and patients. CBCs are powerful muscular hunks who have gone into therapy due to serious illness. At the same time, ABCs are professional doctors who can diagnose their symptoms and enjoy the highest social reputation.

Conclusion

Empirical Perspectives

The evidence shows news articles in website pages due to its significant role needs a much larger frequent coverage. As an effective discursive strategy in corporate website news discourse, metaphorical representation should promote heightened awareness and conscious use in order to highlight business scope, to consolidate customers' confidence in corporate business, and to demonstrate their determination to enhance economic strength to tackle economic problems; its distribution in semantic fields should be also governed for the sake of better performance. Although metaphorical semantic representation can differ from projecting different attributes of corporate identity, ABCs and CBCs should not be to their restricted corporate competence.

ABCs and CBCs can learn from each other. In future development, ABCs need to further strengthen communicating their attributes of corporate competence if they are determined to win business in the East Asian market; CBCs can promote a wider diversity of corporate attributes and assimilate into the international community. During the post-COVID-19 period when the resolution to the economic meltdown is a typical metaphor of the therapy of the pandemic, it is highly suggested that CBCs build the identity of doctors.

Theoretical Perspectives

This paper so far has illustrated how interdisciplinary areas of corporate identity, corporate news discourse, website communication, corporate metaphor, and comparative studies can go far. First, postulating that BANKING CORPORATIONS ARE ORGANISMS, it has managed to fully acknowledge the dynamic nature of corporate identity. Its multi-disciplinary exploration of corporate news discourse by integrating CL and SFL through corpus tools is new. It is a brand-new in-depth study into how discursive strategies are implemented for corporate identity construction. Second, it has taken good advantage of comparison studies, leading to a common-sense interpretation of the prominence of particular corporate attributes, reflecting ABCs' and

CBCs' corporate identity in particular. Third, it has also contributed to website communication research, examining website pages such as WHAT'S NEW or NEWS ANNOUNCEMENT. Last but equally importantly, it has been leading in a detailed systematic empirical investigation of how corporate metaphors can be identified and represented in website corporate discourse.

Notes

1. This research was funded by the Project No. 19YBA232. 2019-12-31, entitled "Corpus-assisted Critical Comparative Study of News Values in Sino-American Trade War Discourse."
2. The original was proposed by Praggeljaz Group, "Mip: A Method for Identifying Metaphorically Used Words in Discourse." *Metaphor and Symbol*, vol. 22, no. 1, 2007, pp. 1-39, doi:10.1080/10926480709336752.
3. All the examples were from the two corpora: Corpus A and Corpus C.

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