

A Study of the Architecture of Metaphor Under Multimodal Discourse Analysis: The Case of Xi'an City Image Campaign

Mei Dong, Yu Gao

Xi'an Shiyou University Shaanxi Xi'an 710000

Abstract: Socio-cultural and situational contexts constrain the use of multimodal metaphors, as is evident in the Xi'an city campaign, which is more of a cognitive and linguistic phenomenon. The study of multimodal metaphors and their aesthetic features from the perspective of architecture theory can better understand the conceptual connotation, operation mode of multimodal metaphors, and discover the mechanism and unique functions of metaphorical meaning generation and comprehension; This allows us to create a warm and harmonious environment for interaction and to continuously improve the artistic level of our promotional films so that people can consciously identify with them and actively create a good and inclusive impression of the city.

Keywords: Xi'an City; Image Promo; Multimodal Metaphor; Architecture Theory

1. Introduction

With the rapid development of urban economy and the globalization of capital, the competition between countries and cities is increasing day by day. If we want to gain the attention of the public and capital, improve the comprehensive competitiveness of the city, and stand out among the homogeneous city images, it is crucial to manage the city image. For example, Nahit and Aylin studied how to incorporate city websites into city brand image management; Alan and Derek explored the role of image thinking in city image construction. However, few studies have explored the mechanisms of generating and understanding multimodal metaphors in urban promotional videos at a deeper level from the framework theory. In view of the fact that human beings have entered the era of multimodal communication, multimodal discourse with the interweaving of images, sounds, words, shapes and other media symbols in order to improve images, and multimodal metaphors have become a wide range of applications means in promotional discourse, this study intends to examine the conceptual connotation and cognitive characteristics of multimodal metaphors in Xi'an city image promotional videos from the perspective of architecture theory. The present study is intended to examine the conceptual connotation and cognitive characteristics of multimodal metaphors in Xi'an city image publicity films from the perspective of architecture theory, in order to discover the mechanisms of metaphorical meaning generation and understanding, and provide references for improving the taste and aesthetic effect of Xi'an city publicity films.

2. Theoretical Basis

A Cognitive Revolution took place in the 1980s, resulting in metaphor and metonymy no longer falling within the scope of rhetoric, but were framed as a means of thinking, a way of acting, and a cognitive tool "by which humans live". As the study of metaphor progressed, Lakoff, the founder of cognitive linguistics, created Framing Theory based on the concept of frame developed by American sociologist Goffman and linguist Fillmore. Lakoff & Johnson list more than a dozen types of cognitive models of conceptual metaphor, hence the term cognitive metaphor.

3. Analysis of Multimodal Metaphors and Their Architectures in Promotional Videos

3.1 Anthropomorphic Metaphors

Example 1: Here, the genetic heritage of Chinese civilization is concentrated.

The film makes extensive use of the anthropomorphic metaphor of “Xi’an is a human being” to give the city a human character, feelings and values. The anthropomorphic metaphor is affectionate and vivid, which make them empathize with it. In Example 1, the language reflects the conceptual metaphor based on “Chinese civilization is human”: “Xi’an is the genetic heritage of the Chinese nation”. It reveals the most fundamental national spirit and cultural tradition of the Chinese nation and condenses the genetic genes of the Chinese civilization.

3.2 Plant Metaphors

Example 2: Xi’an, where the ancient roots of a people are reproduced.

The concept of “the nation as a plant” is implicit in this metaphor. The roots of plants can make plants absorb nutrients and water in the soil and have a defensive effect against natural disasters. Cultural traditions can help a nation develop and grow. This metaphor has activated the public’s knowledge of cultural context. As the most authentic source of strength for the development of the Chinese nation, and as the birthplace of the Chinese nation, Xi’an, located in the Yellow River basin, bears a profound historical and cultural origin. In the development of the new era, let our nation’s development in the new era endow with fundamental Chinese characteristics and Chinese spirit.

3.3 Animal Metaphors

Example 3: Modern equipment manufacturing and high-tech industries fly on both wings.

Here, the city is compared to a bird. A bird can fly only when it has wings. In the sentence, the modern equipment manufacturing industry and high-tech industry, like the wings of a bird, play an important role in the economic construction of Xi’an and become the pillar industry of Xi’an. It is easy to understand the meaning of metaphor here by combining the situational context and the main content of the promotional film, as well as the information interaction and communication between the public as a discourse participant and the producer.

3.4 Container Metaphor

Example 4: The scientific concept of development injects new life and vitality into the city.

The container metaphor is a conceptual metaphor with high frequency of use. Here Xi’an is the container, and it is also a pun. It contains the physical metaphor of “the scientific concept of development is a nutrient”. The combination of the two conveys such a message: just as human survival needs the nutrition of food, the scientific concept of development provides the nourishment for the urban development of Xi’an, reflecting that the scientific development has brought a very promising development prospect for the city.

3.5 Journey Metaphor

The journey metaphor is also a conceptual metaphor throughout the film, powerfully connecting the different parts of the film and conveying the history, present and future development of Xi’an and its vision.

Example 5: From Nuwa to make up the sky and Cangjie to create characters, to the Zhou rites and Qin rule and the Han style and Tang rhythm, countless ancient myths, historical books, excavated cultural relics and monuments and sites in this land all tell of its glory and vicissitudes.

From the beginning of the formation of the Chinese nation of Nuwa and the creation of characters by Cangjie, the pioneering event of Chinese civilization, to the Zhou, Qin, Han and Tang dynasties that had their capitals in Xi’an, these significant events in the long history of Chinese civilization reflect and represent the outstanding cultural wealth created by our nation, and stimulate the public’s encyclopedic background knowledge about the development of Chinese history. The cultural symbols of Xi’an that appear on the screen deepen the public’s impression.

4. Analysis of Multimodal Metaphors and Their Architectures in Promotional Videos

In this section the author will analyse the multimodal metaphors and their architecture in the Xi’an image campaign.

4.1 Typical Features Represent the Thing Itself

4.1.1 Terracotta Warriors and Horses Represent Xi’an

At the beginning of the film, the face of the world-famous Terracotta Warriors and Horses, the symbol of Xi’an’s history and culture, is brought to the fore from the darkness, starting with a speech about the glory of Xi’an. The Terracotta Warriors and Horses, a concrete and perceptible cultural symbol, provides a psychological channel for the abstract concept of “ancient and long-standing Xi’an culture”, which is in line with the principle of prominence in human cognition and rapidly activates

the memory of Xi'an stored in the audience's brain. It conforms to the principle of highlighting human cognition, and quickly activates the cognitive context of cultural background knowledge about Xi'an stored in the audience's brain, which is easily accepted and recognized by the audience.

4.1.2 Thirteen Supreme Golden Seals and Jade Seals are Superimposed On This Heavy Piece of Land

The cultural background knowledge of "jade seal" as a symbol of imperial power in China's feudal dynasties has long been known to the audience. With the textual interpretation, the golden seal and jade seal in the picture embody the metaphorical operation of typical characteristics referring to things, highlighting the supremacy of Xi'an as the unique ancient capital of the 13th dynasty in Chinese history.

4.2 Representative Works of Tools

4.2.1 Ink and Paint are Pleasing to the Eye

The film features a wide range of ink, calligraphy and paintings, creating an impression of cultural Xi'an with visual images. Hanmo originally refers to pen and ink, but here it is used to refer to articles and calligraphy, which is a metaphor for the concept of "works in the place of tools".

4.2.2 Sub-Events Represent Complex Events

Everyone is very familiar with Qin Opera. Qin Opera is a symbol of Shaanxi's history and culture, which is well-known in Xi'an. Under the metonymic mechanism of partially referring to the whole, it represents the extensive Shaanxi culture, and performing Qin Opera also represents the inheritance of traditional culture. At the same time, young people like to ride bicycles and play roller skating on the city wall, which also makes the audience think that this is the representative of the city wall culture, which represents the Xi'an people's active pursuit of modern lifestyle, and also actively embrace the history and culture.

5. Conclusion

The interaction between metaphor and metonymy can be found by analyzing the multimodal metaphors and metonymy in the film. The many occurrences of Xi'an's city wall, clock tower and Big Wild Goose Pagoda represent the traditional cultural heritage, while the modernized skyscrapers represent the modernization of Xi'an. Based on the metaphorical operation of referring parts to the whole, the film embodies the conceptual metaphor of co-occurrence as co-existence, indicating that Xi'an people still pay attention to the inheritance and development of traditional culture while carrying out modernization and high-tech construction.

Socio-cultural and situational contexts constrain the use of multimodal metaphors, as is evident in the Xi'an city campaign, which is more of a cognitive and linguistic phenomenon. The study of multimodal metaphors and their aesthetic features from the perspective of architecture theory can better understand the conceptual connotation, operation mode of multimodal metaphors, and discover the mechanism and unique functions of metaphorical meaning generation and comprehension; This allows us to create a warm and harmonious environment for interaction and to continuously improve the artistic level of our promotional films so that people can consciously identify with them and actively create a good and inclusive impression of the city.

References

- [1] Gutt, Ernst -August. Pragmatic Aspects of Translation: Some Relevance-Theory Observance[M] // Hickey, Leo. Pragmatics and translation. Shanghai: Shanghai Foreign Language Education Press, 2001:41-53. (in Chinese)
- [2] Goffman, E, Frame Analysis: An Essay on the Organization of Experience[M]. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1944.
- [3] Lakoff, G. The Structure of Metaphor[M]. Cambridge: Cambridge University

About the author:

Mei Dong (1969 -), born in Baoding, Hebei Province, PhD in Applied linguistics, associate professor, Unit: School of Foreign Languages, Xi'an Shiyou University, Research Direction: Applied Linguistics, Aesthetic Linguistics, English-Chinese Comparison and Translation.

Yu Gao (1996 -), born in Yulin, Shaanxi Province, master of translation, student, Unit: School of Foreign Languages, Xi'an Shiyou University, Research Direction: English Translation.