The Community of Family and Country: A Metaphorical Analysis of Disaster Reporting in Local Media

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Abstract: Based on corpus-based metaphor analysis, this paper examines 497 local media reports on the earthquake in Luding, Sichuan, and analyzes the use of metaphors and their meanings. It was found that the reports used war metaphors and other metaphor types and formed a composite metaphor structure with regional metaphors and action metaphors to stimulate the audience's sense of community for the country and nation, as well as to strengthen the audience's collective memory of similar disasters.

Keywords: metaphor, imaginary community, collective memory

1.Introduction

Sudden disaster events bring a lot of instability to people's lives, especially in the post-epidemic era, which further intensifies people's insecurity. The news media plays an important role in guiding public opinion and maintaining social stability, and disaster news reporting has become one of the topics widely discussed and discussed in the field of news communication. We have observed that in disaster reports such as earthquakes, local media use metaphorical terms such as "lifeline" and "race against time" to present information, and these metaphors also play a role in maintaining a sense of community. In this regard, we are curious about what metaphors are constructed by local media in disaster reporting, what are their meanings, and what role does it play in building community.

2.Literature Review

2.1Metaphors and journalism

In ancient Greece, Aristotle defined metaphor as "the use of a word that denotes something to refer to something else". Subsequently, the famous philosophers of language George Lakoff and Mark Johnson developed textual metaphors into conceptual metaphors, and in their book “Metaphors We Live By”, they first introduced "conceptual metaphors", arguing that "the

conceptual systems on which our thoughts and actions are based are themselves based on metaphors. ". In the 1980s, the concept of metaphor was introduced to China, and domestic scholars' research on metaphor theory can be roughly divided into two categories, one using the comparative methods of conceptual metaphor theory and conceptual integration concept, and the other using inclusion theory, cognitive theory, synthetic space theory, etc. The other is the comprehensive study of metaphor from the cognitive perspective, which explores the cognitive mechanism through the study of philosophy. Metaphors are widely used in various fields, and the current research on metaphors in news reporting mainly focuses on two aspects, the first category is to analyze how metaphors describe news events, for example, war metaphors are used extensively in sports news to highlight the confrontation and intensity of sports games; the other category analyzes the ideologies pointed by metaphors in media texts, Charteris-Black has proposed a "critical metaphor analysis" to compensate for the missing "contextual" element in metaphors and to reveal the influence of metaphors on ideological constructions. For example, Fairclough analyzed a report of an air raid that occurred on British soil in the 1990s from a metaphorical perspective, and the analysis found that the Sun newspaper used a large number of metaphors to indicate its pro-air raid position.

2.2Disaster reporting and sense of community

In his book “Community and Society”, Tennesse defines community as "a primitive or natural perfect unity of human will", and Bauman further enriches the definition of community by combining "community" with "society". In his book “Imagined Communities”, Anderson defines "nation" as an imagined community, arguing that "all members have a larger community than face-to-face contact, and the basis for distinguishing different communities is the way they are imagined" In addition, Anderson affirms the role of the print media as a catalyst for community. He argues that media such as newspapers and novels have a reshaping effect on the way people imagine and that when people read them, they collectively construct a sense of "synchronicity".

The media play an important role in constructing people's identity and memory of a community. Some scholars have focused on mass media coverage of disasters and collective memory, and David Gross has argued that mass media play a role in reconstructing memories of disasters, arguing that mass media constitute the general framework of people's thinking. Yan Yan, in "Noise and Silence: Media Representation of Particularly Major Accidents in China," points out that how disaster events are presented in media coverage is not an act actively generated by the disaster itself, but depends on the media's retracing and co-opting of disaster events. Gao Ruijing proposes the intrinsic connection between power and mass media disaster writing, arguing that power and media jointly shape disaster memory. Huang Yueqin argues that under the coordination of political power, the suffering and loss caused by specific disasters are transformed into a unified national or state-level mobilization narrative to enhance identity. The disaster is shaped and reconstructed by the media, which eventually forms people's common

memory of the disasterFrom the existing literature, the media integration of disaster memory in the field of journalism and communication is mostly dominated by functionalist and structuralist paradigms, and this study explores how disaster coverage reconstructs people's perceptions and has a role in the sense of community from the perspective of media coverage and presentation, combined with metaphor theory.

3.Research design and research methodology

3.1Object of research

The subject of this study is the local media coverage of earthquake disasters in China. Local media, as opposed to central media, are based on specific markets and conduct media activities within their own regions. Local media can find locally relevant news points in major events to report, thus providing accurate news content for local audiences. At the same time, local media, as victims of disasters, also take on the main task of instantly communicating local information, acting as an "intermediary" between local residents and the government.

Earthquake disaster reporting is a typical example of disaster journalism in China, and it is also an important area for the pragmatic exploration of journalism in China. In this study, we focus on the earthquake in Luding, Sichuan, which occurred on September 5, with a magnitude of 6.8, causing more than 110,000 people to be affected and more than 50,000 houses to be damaged.

3.2Data collection

This study used "earthquake" as the title and internal keywords to search all media articles in the WiseSearch news search database, and manually filtered out central media and corporate media to obtain 577 relevant articles. Disaster reporting requires the news media to inform the development of news events at the first time or to provide early warning of disasters. This study focused on metaphors in disaster reports, so after reading through all relevant articles, short messages that only reported and warned of earthquake disasters were manually removed, resulting in 497 relevant reports, totaling about 470,000 characters, with an average of about 981 characters per article.

3.3Research process

This paper adopts a corpus combined with an analysis software research method to analyze the metaphors of disaster reports. In the field of metaphor research, the corpus method possesses the advantages of systematicity, adequacy, and objectivity, and the corpus method, which provides both qualitative and quantitative perspectives, is widely used by scholars in metaphor

theory research.

In their book "Metaphors We Live By", George Lakoff and Mark Johnson proposed a "five-step approach" to identifying metaphors, i.e., identifying metaphorical concepts, comparisons, analogies, and mappings. Subsequently, Steen proposed a "seven-step" conceptual metaphor recognition principle based on the "five-step" method, namely (1) decomposing discourse into units; (2) decomposing units into propositions; (3) explaining concepts that are omitted, referred to, or co-referred to in sentences; and (4) explaining all concepts that are not referred to. ; (4) explaining all abstract definitions that are not realized but have a tendency to be in the sentence; (5) checking whether the words in the argument involving entities reveal the application of metaphors -- mainly checking the words used superficially; (6) checking the nature of the entities specified by the predicate or argument and the entity relations in the text -- mainly check the epithet modifier; (7) checking the nature of the relationship specified by the predicate and the argument or the nature of the entity relationship -- mainly checking the definite or dative modifier. This paper focuses on manual identification based on Steen's "seven-step" identification principle.

The specific research steps are as follows: a corpus of all relevant articles is made, the CorpusWordParser software of Xiao Hang is used for word separation, the corpus is analyzed by the corpus analysis research tool AntConc (version 4.1.1), and the ToRCH2019 Modern Chinese Balanced Corpus is used as the reference corpus to establish the key topic word list of all reported texts. The key subject words list, key subject words are high-frequency words repeated in the study corpus relative to the reference corpus. All key subject words are manually screened, put in the original context for judgment, and then supplemented and deleted according to the subject words, and finally, the screened metaphorical words are summarized and analyzed with the help of AntConc (version 4.1.1).

4.Research findings

4.1Overview of metaphors in earthquake disaster reporting

Through the combination of the AntConc (version 4.1.1) corpus analysis tool and manual screening, seven major metaphor categories were identified: life protection metaphor, rescue scene metaphor, war metaphor, memory metaphor, post-earthquake scene metaphor, post-disaster reconstruction metaphor, and collective metaphor. The most frequent metaphor is the war metaphor, which appears 599 times in all samples, with a dispersion index of 0.954. war metaphor includes "front line", "front line", "rigid requirements", etc. "The dispersion index can be used to measure the dispersion of a class of words. The dispersion index can be used to measure the uniformity of the distribution of a category of words in an article, and the more the index tends to be close to 1, the more uniform the distribution is. The war category metaphor appears frequently and evenly distributed in the study corpus, and this type of metaphor is used

in almost every report. The life protection metaphor is second only to the war metaphor, and contains keywords such as "lifeline", "living bridge" and "life channel". The frequency of these metaphors is 351 and the dispersion index is 0.894.

The war metaphor is a structural metaphor that helps the audience understand the concept of the target domain. With its excitement, urgency, and powerful mobilizing power, war has been extended from its own meaning to the economic, sports competition, and political disease domains. In reports on epidemics, Chinese and Western media have drawn analogies between epidemics and war to highlight the severity of the epidemic and the determination to overcome it. The origin domain of war has the connotation of overcoming an external enemy. In the target domain of earthquake disaster coverage, earthquakes are "invaders" from nature that disrupt the local harmony and should be "fought". At the same time, the deployment of disaster relief is also infinitely close to war, which is divided into rear command, front line, advance assault force, rear force, etc. In the earthquake disaster coverage in Luding, Sichuan, the words "front line" and "front line" became high-frequency words. Words such as "warriors", "assault troops" and "command" reflect relief operations close to war deployment.

For example, quote 1 " 'We are about 38 kilometers from the epicenter to the town of Tou, and almost all of the emergency vehicles from this hospital are driving to the front line, and the medical staff from the emergency department and ICU are constantly moving forward to support.' Jiang Qin, who supported Luding in July last year, stayed the longest among the four, and their task was to guard the rear and do a good job of transferring patients." Medium. The "front line" refers to the earthquake site, becoming the "front line" where doctors, firefighters, and other government officials rush to, and the place outside the earthquake center is called the "rear" that public officials want to protect.

4.2 Compound metaphors strengthen emotional communication

Among the seven categories of metaphors mentioned above, there are several compound metaphors under each category, among which, race metaphors become the most frequent compound metaphors. Under the category of "rescue scene metaphor", race metaphors such as "race against time" and "race against time" appear most frequently, with a frequency of 61 times, accounting for 1/5 of the total. Its dispersion index also reached 0.82.

Quote 2 "multiple rescue forces under unified command to the fastest speed into the earthquake zone, together with the local cadres and masses, every second, to launch rescue .... 19:10 or so, the fire team from Chengdu has marched to the epicenter of the town of Moxi 5 kilometers from the vicinity of Gongdu Bridge."

In the composite frame of competition and rescue, the composite frame refers to "the entire disaster relief operation is full of hardship and urgency". In addition, the frequent use of time points in the report, which is precise to the minute, further emphasizes the sense of urgency and urgency of disaster relief.

Geographical metaphors became the most frequent compound metaphors in the post-

earthquake scenario metaphor category. Under the "post-earthquake scenario metaphor", the frequency of "isolated island" and "isolated island in the earthquake" and other locality metaphors reached 58 times, accounting for 1/3 of this parent category, and their dispersion index was The dispersion index is 0.726.

Citation 3 "On September 7, the third day after the Luding '9-5' earthquake, roads and communications were restored to Caoke Township in Ya'an City, which had once become an 'isolated island', after an emergency rescue by multiple rescue forces." Quote 4 "After the earthquake, the area became an 'isolated island' with no water, no electricity, no network, and no roads. The stranded people spent the first night after the earthquake in the cold with a shortage of supplies, and villagers lit bonfires all night waiting for rescue."

The "isolated island" refers to a desolate and uninhabited island that is not connected to the outside world, and the composite structure of this geographical metaphor and the post-earthquake scenario metaphor together create the semantic meaning of "the disaster is severe and the relief is difficult" for the audience. At the same time, in Quotation 4, the semantic contrast between "isolated island" and "campfire", which symbolizes hope, alludes to the rescue team as "hope".

5.Analysis and conclusion

5.1Adopting heroic narratives to enhance people's sense of security

Local media reports on earthquake disasters use heroic narratives to inspire empathy and mobilize people's power. Local media reports portray heroic characters through the depiction of both scenes and actions. The war metaphor is the most frequent metaphor in local media reports, and war is also the main arena where heroes appear. The words "front line" and "frontline" appear many times in the reports, creating a basic field for the audience to see the heroes. In addition, words such as "mission" and "order" are also commonly used in military scenes, and such military use will stimulate the audience's cognitive base models about soldiers and heroes.

The action metaphor further portrays the heroic image. In the reports of this study, the life protection metaphor and rescue scene metaphor appear only second to the war metaphor. The "human bridge" and "life passage" in the life protection metaphor, "building a bridge with body and rope" and "working around the clock" in the rescue scene metaphor are all action metaphors. "The rescue scene metaphor of "building bridges with bodies and ropes" and "working around the clock" are all compound metaphors of action.

Quotation 5: "Carrying a 10-and-a-half-month-old baby, carrying a child Tong Hongqing who could not walk, they opened the way in every mountain and built a bridge in every water, moving all the trapped people to safety." "The composite structure of the action metaphor and the rescue scene metaphor creates a sense of the rescuers' strength and courage and further enhances the audience's trust in the rescuers. The action metaphor and the rescue scene metaphor

create a sense of trust and security for the rescuers.

5.2Building a family community through collective metaphors

Anderson proposed the idea of "imaginary communities" and argued that "nations share a common mythology, historical memory, and popular public culture, coexist in the same economic system, and share a general set of legal rights and obligations that apply to all members"[[[] Benedict Anderson. (2016). Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism. Shanghai People's Press. (in Chinese)]], and Hobbes Baum argues that the role of the nation as an imagined community "is undoubtedly to fill the human emotional gap that arises when real communities or networks are degraded, deconstructed, or fail[[[] Zhang, Dian. (2004). Eric Hobsbawm: Nation and Nationalism. Scholastic Sea (1), 2. (in Chinese)]]. Local media reports use a large number of collective-type metaphors, such as "when one side is in trouble, all sides support each other," "all the people are united," and "all the people are one," which symbolize collective-type words, and such These metaphorical words form a strong emotional implication, and the country is portrayed as a community with a common goal and a strong internal drive. Building a family community through collective metaphors

The metaphor of "family" in the report forms a strong bond and builds a family-nation community. In the post-disaster reconstruction metaphor, the metaphors of "temporary mother", "maternal family" and "reunion dinner" symbolize family and unite the audience into one family. For example, quote 6: "Quickly launched care services for employees affected by the disaster. The union's 'mother's family rushed to the earthquake epicenter in Luding to urgently search and collect the sudden disaster situation of the company's employees and their families." In the "family", the macro concept of the country is concretized into the "small family" through the universal character of ordinary people's family - "mother's family", and the "family and country as one The collective emotion of "family and nation as one" is embedded in the local media's disaster coverage.

Affectionate metaphors inspire audiences to empathize. In the post-earthquake scenario metaphors, "mom is gone" and "seeing mom for the last time" is from the perspective of the affected people. The direct quotation also draws audiences directly into the situation of the death of their loved ones, and they form an emotional community while empathizing with the affected people.

5.3Construct collective memory and stimulate emotional identity

Collective memory, also known as social memory, refers to the memory shared by a group or society. Collective memory influences people's perception of national belonging and national identity through space, landscape, rituals, and other material carriers. In the memory metaphor, words such as "Flying over Luding Bridge", "Dadu River" and "Red Army" appear many times, pulling audiences' memories back to the period of the Long March of the Red Army, and such

historical memories strengthen audiences' identification with the national community. Such historical memories strengthen the audience's identification with the national community and further strengthen the abstract concept of the nation.

Constructing collective memory and stimulating emotional identity is linked to the memories of the Wenchuan earthquake, stimulating the audience's collective memory of the disaster. Quote 6 "On September 7, a photo of a young forest firefighter holding a baby in his arms moved the whole Internet. On his shoulder patch, there was the word "Wenchuan", and many netizens called him 'Wenchuan Brother'." The "Wenchuan brother" metaphor became a bridge between the two earthquakes, connecting the audience's collective memories of the 5-12 Wenchuan earthquake to the 9-5 Luding earthquake, and the cognitive base of the Wenchuan earthquake was integrated into the annual commemoration day rituals of collective silence and media activities. By mobilizing the collective memory of the Wenchuan earthquake, the audience's empathy can be stimulated most directly and rapidly, and the audience's emotional identification with the disaster can be strengthened.

6.Reflection and summary

This study investigates the metaphors and the emotions behind the reported discourse through a corpus of local media reports on the Luding earthquake. The study found that the use of various metaphorical terms, such as war and life rescue, by local media built up the audience's community of national and ethnic emotions and strengthened the sense of "family and country as one". However, due to the time and data search, this study is not comprehensive enough in terms of data and diversity. In future studies, scholars in the field of narrative research may need to pay more attention to the phenomenon of discourse metaphors in diverse samples.

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