

Metaphoric and metonymic X-phemisms for in next magazine

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ABSTRACT

X-phemisms may be classified into two groups: euphemisms and dysphemisms. They are widely used but rarely discussed from the perspective of cognitive linguistics. In 2007, some X-phemisms provoked heated debate and discussion on the definitional problems with regard to such terms in Taiwan. Specifically, the 2007 revised MOE Mandarin Chinese Dictionary 教育部國語重編字典 defined 打炮 as 放鞭炮. However, the current meaning of 打炮 refers to 'have sexual intercourse with'. Thus, learners may misunderstand the meaning of the terms and misapply it. To help compensate for such situations, this author collected X-phemisms from the XY Columns of Next magazine, one of the most popular tabloid magazines in Taiwan, and conducted a textual survey of Mandarin Chinese X-phemisms. The purpose of this study is to explore the figurative meanings of Mandarin X-phemisms by investigating metaphor and metonymy as the cognitive-semantic mechanisms behind such terms. The research questions are: (1) How many types of metaphoric and metonymic X-phemisms for sex are there in the XY Columns of Next magazine? (2) Do all metonymic X-phemisms for sex in the XY Columns tend to be euphemistic? There are two surveys in the research: a textual survey and a questionnaire survey. In the textual survey, the researchers employed the revised edition of the MOE Mandarin Chinese Dictionary to determine the meaning and source domain. When some X-phemisms were in doubt, the researcher also adopted the 'is-like test' to test whether they were metaphors or metonymies. The questionnaire survey was an attempt to assess the general population's perception of X-phemisms based on the following three variables: 'direct or indirect', 'losing face or not losing face' and 'dysphemism or euphemism'. The data analysis was divided into three steps: (1) In order to determine whether the X-phemisms collected were euphemisms or dysphemisms, the mean values of the X-phemisms were calculated. (2) In order to answer questions concerning the relationships between the variables tested, 'losing face or not losing face', 'direct or indirect' and 'dysphemism or euphemism', three sets of Pearson-product moment correlations were calculated. (3) To determine whether the X-phemisms were more euphemistic than the neutral word (orthophemism for sexual intercourse), 性交, a one sample t-test was conducted. The results show that metaphor and metonymy play significant roles in the euphemistic or dysphemistic nature of X-phemisms in the data. The main findings of this research are: (1) There are four kinds metonymic X-phemisms for sexual intercourse (part-for whole, whole-for-part, event-for-series and series-for-event metonymies) in Next magazine. Metaphors for sexual intercourse are from nineteen source concepts and four of them are those for one-shot creative metaphors. (2) Most sex-related metonymies tend to be more euphemistic than the neutral word, 性交. However, only the metonymies with core action tend to be more dysphemistic than the neutral word.

Keywords : X-phemisms、euphemisms、dysphemisms、metaphor、metonymy、Mandarin Chinese、Next magazine

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