Cognitive Study of XHY via Conceptual Integration Theory in English Teaching

Wen Jia
School of Foreign Languages China West Normal University
No.1 Shida Road, Shunqing District, Nanchong City，637002 Sichuan Province,
People's Republic of China Nanchong, Sichuan,
China

Abstract
Based on the conceptual integration theory, this thesis makes a cognitive analysis on the meaning construction of Chinese XHY. Particularly, the author conducts case studies at length of four pieces of XHY in accordance with the categories of conceptual networks, i.e. simplex network, mirror network, single-scope network and double-scope network. Additionally, the analysis of the XHY is conducted in combination with the contextual information or the cultural entrenchment. Above all, this thesis makes a preliminary attempt to apply the conceptual integration theory to the construal of Chinese XHY in order to prove the explanatory power of the theory so that further relevant research can be conducted.

Key words: Chinese XHY, meaning construction, conceptual integration theory

1. Introduction

As is acknowledged, language is closely combined with culture and can reflect culture. Different languages are noted for their unique cultural elements and traits. Reckoned as the live fossil of Chinese culture, Chinese Xiehouyu (XHY for short) is created by people in their daily life. Chinese is of concise form, vivid image and rich implication. Additionally, XHY is widely favored for its figurative employment of language and innovative play on words, i.e. the prevalent use of metaphors and puns to achieve rhetorical effects like humor, satire, etc. owing to its interwoven relations with culture, XHY has drawn attention from Chinese linguists as well as philologers.

As is mentioned in the paragraph above, XHY is a language form heavily loaded with culture and it has a history of more than one thousand years. Since it has been in existence for such a long time, XHY has been widely accepted by people both in oral conversations and written works. Nevertheless, only when the Ballad Seminar was established in Peking University in the winter of 1920, did XHY start to attract attention from language researchers. In 1930s, some researches on the nature, denomination and other respects of XHY were conducted, which contributed to the foundation in the relevant field. The remaining part of the section mainly discusses the denomination, origin, definition, features and category of XHY.

1.1 Denomination of XHY

Since XHY is inextricably interwoven with Chinese culture, it is uniquely characterized by a host of Chinese factors. Consequently, there seems to be no equivalent to XHY in English language. Such a fact leads to disputes upon the denomination of XHY. Different English names are proposed by different scholars for Chinese XHY, however, no consensus has been reached on a unitary address of the charming language phenomenon. Jin Huikang (2004: 455) deems that XHY can be literally construed as "rest-ending sayings or post pause expressions". Enlightened by such a notion, some scholars interpret XHY as "example-explanation sayings". Dating back to its earlier history, XHY used to be the game played among the learned people and was called "wisecrack", therefore, another way of translating XHY is "Chinese wisecracks or quiz cracks"(Han Qingguo, 2002). Still some other scholars named XHY as "allegorical sayings", however, only a portion of them are allegorical. In addition, John S. Rohsenow (1991) put forward a popular denomination of XHY, and named it "Chinese enigmatic folk similes". Popular as the denomination by Rohsenow is, it is not appropriate in that the rhetorical techniques of XHY are not restrained to simile and that such a name cannot vividly or comprehensively reflect the unique structure and style of XHY. Based on the introduction above, it is easily seen that none of the mentioned terms can truly reveal the essence and reflect the features of Chinese XHY. In this sense, it is favorable to simply term the language phenomenon XHY, for it is deeply rooted in Chinese culture and like erhu, taiji, and toufu which are particular symbols in Chinese culture and are directly translated in accordance with its pronunciation in Chinese.

1.2 Origins of XHY

As a matter of fact, no consensus has been reached on the origin of XHY so far. Nevertheless, this does not mean that the emergence of XHY cannot be traced. On the whole, several notions regarding this topic have been put forward by distinct researchers.

To start with, it is generally accepted that XHY originates from Xiehoushi in Tang Dynasty. The term XHY was first employed in the famous chronicle book *Jiu Tang Shu*.

As Rohsenow (1991) puts it, XHY has been popular in spoken language as part of the rich oral repertoire of the common Chinese people for centuries, and they play an indispensable role in communication.

Besides, Zhai Hao in Qing Dynasty proposed another notion about the origin of XHY. He deemed that both homophonic and non-homophonic XHY evolved from the so-called feng ren shi ti.

Another notion is that XHY should be classified into the genre of Chinese proverbs. It is believed that XHY is a special language form evolving from Chinese proverbs and XHY has been considered as one type of proverbs before they were assigned their independent names and status.

Other scholars like Mao Dun claim that XHY originated from the so called "original" or "standard" XHY, which are distinguished based on whether they are extracted from idioms or sentences of poems or other well-known expressions in some classical works through concealing or leaving out one or more Chinese characters. Chen Wangdao endorses Mao Dun's opinion and he redenominates the classification by Mao. He names the original or standard XHY "Xiehou Cangci Yu", which are not abandoned now.

Admittedly, disputes about the origin of XHY still exist. However, researchers do reach a consensus on

certain respect of its emergence. That is, XHY derives from the folk and is created by ordinary people who gain inspiration in their life experience. Thus, XHY can reflect Chinese belief, religion and customs well. In the meantime, it can deliver complicated notions in effective and witty ways.

1.3 Definition of XHY

As is discussed above, XHY is a distinct language form that is mainly employed in China and is rather different than traditional Chinese proverbs, Chinese riddle, idioms or other Chinese Shuyu. In fact, researchers put forward various versions of definition, but they can hardly reach a consensus. This thesis adopts the definition proposed by Wen Duanzheng. According to Wen (2000: 272), XHY is defined as a kind of fixed sentence with special structure and humorous expression. The particular structure of XHY consists of two parts in the sequence of "A--B". According to Wen, part A acts as an introductive head which is noted for its vividness and it elicits the explanation in part B. Via the combination of the two parts, humor, satire, and other rhetorical effects are achieved along with the transmission of the intended meaning.

Cognitive Classification of XHY

Classification has long been treated as one of the important domains about the study of XHY. However, different scholars propose different versions of classifications. Considering the current research subject, this thesis focuses the attention on the cognitive classification of XHY.

Geeraerts (1995&2003) put forward two criteria, i.e. isomorphism and motivation, to scrutinize idioms from paradigmatic and syntagmatic perspectives. Isomorphism refers to syntagmatic transparency whereby there is a correspondence between the syntactic construction and its semantic structure. Motivation refers to paradigmatic transparency in which the semantic extension that relates the original meaning of an idiom to its idiomatic meaning is observed. Based on this pattern, four types of idioms can be identified, i.e. isomorphic and motivated, isomorphic and non-motivated, non-isomorphic and motivated, and non-isomorphic and non-motivated. (Lai Huei-ling, 2008). Lai reckoned that XHY could not be classified based on this conceptual apparatus since Chinese XHY is rather distinct from the English and Dutch idioms analyzed by Geeraerts. Lai (2005) established in her article a taxonomic framework to categorize Hakka XHY into six patterns. They are partially isomorphic with sound associations (e.g. Zhu she tou bang jiu—shuang she (shuang shi) 'having a pig's tongue with wine—double loss'); partially isomorphic with conceptual associations (e.g. lao hu jie zhu—you jie wu huan) 'tigers borrow pigs—never return what are borrowed'; totally isomorphic with sound associations (e.g. huo shao zhu tou—shu mian) 'burn a pig's head—look familiar'; totally isomorphic with conceptual associations (e.g. fen guang du ge shi tou—you chou you ying) 'a stone in the manure pit—extremely unpleasant and stubborn; non-isomorphic with sound associations (e.g. shi er yue de jie cai—shang xin) 'Chinese mustard in December—feeling sad'; non-isomorphic with conceptual associations (e.g. zhu bian de ya zi—mei xin gan) 'a bamboo-weaved duck—heartless. Lai's denomination stresses the culture model made up by nature of things and the great chain of being, which acts as the referential point of the thesis. Due to the fact that there is no consensus on the classification of XHY, the author will analyze the

cases based on the types of conceptual integration networks instead of patterns of XHY.

2. Overview of Conceptual Integration Theory

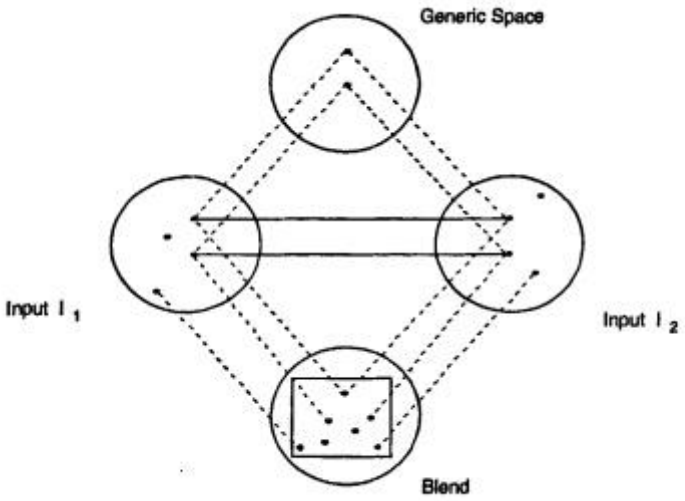
This part goes over the conceptual integration theory, on which the thesis is based. The principles of the theory will be discussed in the ensuing sections.

2.1 Conceptual Integration Theory

Conceptual Integration Theory, also called Conceptual Blending Theory or Mental Binding Theory was put forward by Gilles Fauconnier and Mark Turner (1994/1998), which explores human information integration and involves a set of operations for combining dynamic cognitive models in a network of "mental spaces" (Fauconnier, 1994), or partitions of speakers' referential representations.

Fauconnier (1985) proposed Mental Space Theory to account for various aspects concerning meaning construction of natural language in one of his representative book *Mental Spaces*. A mental space contains elements of the statement or discourse and relations between them and the elements are perceived imagined or remembered by language users. Language users set up mental spaces in order to divide the information evoked by a discourse into a series of simple cognitive models. Links between mental spaces capture the relationships that exist between elements and their counterparts in the other spaces.

On the basis of mental space theory, Fauconnier and Mark Turner (1995) added "blended space" to the perfect "many-space" model, which they first proposed in 1994. Fauconnier (1997) formally put forward the conception of Conceptual Blending Theory in his second work *Mappings in Thought and Language*. In 1998, Fauconnier and Turner gave fully detailed interpretation of the theory to explore the establishing, mapping and blending mechanisms. A detailed demonstration of the theory begins with the interpretation of the figure below. It is the basic network model in conceptual integration and describes a complete four-space blending process.



(Fauconnier 1997: 151)

The circles in the figure above represent mental spaces. A mental space is a (relatively small) conceptual packet built up for purposes of local understanding and action. It is concerned with long-term schematic

knowledge called "frames", and with long-term specific knowledge. A given mental space often recruits structure from more than one conceptual domain and is constructed whenever we think and talk. They are interconnected and can be modified as discourse unfold, and it can be used generally to model dynamic mappings in thought and language (Fauconnier, 1994; Fauconnier & Turner, 1996). It has proven to be useful for describing various sorts of semantic and pragmatic phenomena (Fauconnier & Sweetser, 1996). There are altogether four mental spaces in the figure, namely input 1, input 2, the generic space and the blend.

Input spaces are constructed by the information of independent cognitive domain. Each is a partial structure corresponding to one of the two identities. The solid lines between them represent counterpart connections produced by matching (Fauconnier & Turner, 2002: 47). They are cross-space mappings, which are correspondences between elements in different spaces based on shared relational structure. These connections include connections between frames and roles in frames, connections of identity, transformation or representation, analogical connections, metaphoric connections, and more generally, "vital relations".

Generic space maps onto each of the input and contains what the inputs have in common ((Fauconnier & Turner, 2002: 41). Whatever structure is recognized as belonging to both of the input spaces constitutes a generic space (Fauconnier & Turner, 1998: 143). That is when cross-space mappings are projected into the third, a new space, the generic space, is generated. The dotted lines between input space and generic space refer to the conceptual projection between the elements of the two spaces. Since generic space represents information shared by the entire network, it is common that the information in the generic space is not concrete.

The most important mental space in the network is the blend. Structure from two input mental spaces is projected to a new space, the "blend" (Fauconnier & Turner, 2002: 47). The blended space contains information from each of the input mental spaces, the generic structure captured in the generic space as well as emergent structure that arises as a product of imaginative process of integration. In this figure, the square stands for the emergent structure in the blend (Fauconnier, 1997: 151). Emergent structure is not copied directly from any inputs, but generated through "composition of projections from the inputs", "completion based on independently recruited frames and scenarios", or "elaboration (running the blend)" (Fauconnier & Turner, 2002: 48).

2.2 The Process of Conceptual Integration

Conceptual blending involves three processes, namely, composition, completion, and elaboration, each of which may possibly lead to the production of emergent structure (Coulson, 1997: 192), which arises in the blend that is not copied there directly from any input (Fauconnier & Turner, 2002: 48).

Composition: blending composes elements from the input spaces, providing relations that do not exist in the separate inputs (Fauconnier & Turner, 1998: 144). That is to say, it involves ascribing a relation from one input space to an element or elements from the other input space (Coulson, 1997: 192). Fusion is one kind of composition. Counterparts may be brought into the blend as separate elements or as a fused element. (Fauconnier & Turner, 1998: 144).

Completion: completion is pattern-completion which occurs when structure projected from the inputs matching information in long-term memory (Coulson, 1997: 193). Knowledge of background frames, cognitive and culture models, allows the composite structure projected into the blend from the inputs to be viewed as part of a larger self-contained structure in the blend. The pattern in the blend triggered by the inherited structures is completed into the larger, emergent structure. (Fauconnier, 1997: 151).

Elaboration: elaboration develops the blend through imaginative mental simulation according to principles and logic in the blend (Fauconnier & Turner, 1998: 144). We elaborate blends by treating them as simulations and running them imaginatively according to principles that have been established for the blend. Some of the principles for running the blend will have been brought to the blend by completion (Fauconnier & Turner, 2002: 48). But some new principles and logic may also arise through elaboration itself.

The creative possibilities of blending stem from the open-ended nature of completion and elaboration. They recruit and develop new structure for the blend in ways that are principled but effectively unlimited. Blending operates over the entire richness of our physical and mental worlds. (Fauconnier & Turner, 2002: 48)

2.3 Classification of Conceptual Integration Networks

Basic types of Conceptual Integration Networks were classified into four by Fauconnier and Turner, and they were frame networks, one-side networks, two-side networks and single framing networks. After this initial attempt, the two linguists threw light upon the classification in the book The Way We Think—*Conceptual Blending and the Mind's Hidden Complexities*. The four basic types are simplex networks, mirror networks, single-scope networks and double-scope networks. Additionally, a more general model which is naturally extended from double-scope model was introduced, and it was named as multiple-scope network. The new classification is to be introduced in the following part and is taken as the analytical reference for XHY.

Before the discussion of different types of Conceptual Integration Networks, it is necessary to have a profound understanding of the terms like space, domain, frame and organizing frame.

A mental space contains elements and relations activated simultaneously as a single integrated unit. Often, a mental space will be organized by what we have called a conceptual frame (Fauconnier & Turner, 2002: 104). Mental spaces are built up dynamically in working memory (Fauconnier & Turner, 2002: 103). Mental spaces are built up from many sources, one of which is the "set of conceptual domains we already know about" (Fauconnier & Turner, 2002: 102); another is "immediate experience". (Fauconnier & Turner, 2002: 103)

The stable and systematic relations between two cognitive domains are treated as conceptual metaphor. Mental space is equated with domain, but the construction of mental spaces depends on domain. Stable knowledge structure related to a certain domain provides information needed in the construction of a mental space. And a mental space is the representational structure of a concrete scenario constructed by a domain. (Zhang Hui, 2003: 58)

Spaces have elements and there exist relations between them. When these elements and relations are

organized as a package that we already know about, we say that the mental space is framed and we label that organization a "frame". (Fauconnier & Turner, 2002: 123). Fauconnier and Turner pointed out an organizing frame for a mental space is a frame that specified the essence of the relevant activity, events, and participants. It provides a topology for the space it organizes, that is, it provides a set of organizing relations among the elements in the space. When two spaces share the same organizing frame, they share the corresponding topology and so can easily be put into correspondence. (Fauconnier & Turner, 2002: 123) In the process of constructing integration network, the organizing frame can be modified and elaborated.

2.3.1 Simplex networks

Fauconnier and Turner (2002: 120) proposed simplex network is an especially simple kind of integration network. In simplex network human cultural and biological history have provided an effective frame that applies to certain kinds of elements as values, and that frame is in one input space and some of those kinds of elements are in the other input space. The relevant part of the frame in one input is projected with its roles, and the elements are projected from the other input as values of those roles within the blend that integrates the frame and the value in the simplest way. In simplex networks, one input contains a frame with roles but no values, the other input contains unframed elements, and the inputs are matched by a Frame-to-Values connection. (Fauconnier & Turner, 2002: 121). In the simplex networks the entirety of this kind given by Fauconnier and Turner is "the family". We can take "Hillary is the wife of Clinton." for example. One input contains a kinship frame, such as roles of wife, husband, father, mother and kid, etc. while the other input contains two persons: Hillary and Clinton. The role wife connects to the value Hillary and the role husband connects to the value Clinton. The blended space integrates the frame "family" and the values, and then has the meaning "Hillary is the wife of Clinton".

2.3.2 Mirror Networks

A mirror network is an integration in which all spaces—inputs, generic, and blend—share an organizing frame. (Fauconnier & Turner, 2002: 122). The shared frame automatically provides linked roles. In a mirror network, there are no clashes between the inputs at the level of organizing frame, because the frames are the same. (Fauconnier & Turner, 2002: 125). Conceptual integration in mirror networks routinely performs compressions of vital relations, both inner-space and outer space, keyed by the shared frame of the network. Fauconnier and Turner (2002) put forward mirror networks perform compression over the vital relations of time, space, identity, role, cause-effect, change, intentionality and representation.

2.3.3 Single-Scope Networks

A single-scope networks has two input spaces with different organizing frames, one of which is projected to organize the blend. The defining property of single-scope network is that the organizing frame of its blend is an extension of the organizing frame of the one of the inputs but not the other. (Fauconnier & Turner, 2002: 126).since the inputs have different frames, single-scope networks offer a highly visible

type of conceptual clash and are the prototype of highly conventional source-target metaphors. Single-scope networks give us the feeling that "one thing" is giving us insight into "another thing," with a strong asymmetry between. (Fauconnier & Turner, 2002: 129). The sentence "'He digested the book.' elicits a single-scope network" (Fauconnier & Turner, 2002: 131). One input contains the whole process of eating, including chewing, swallowing, digesting and absorbing. The other input contains taking up the book, reading the articles, thinking about it, understanding and even remembering the whole article. In the blend, distinct events in reading are integrated into a unit in the frame from "eating" space.

2.3.4 Double-Scope Networks

A double-scope network has inputs with different (and often clashing) organizing frames as well as an organizing frame for the blend that includes parts of each of those frames and has emergent structure of its own (Fauconnier & Turner, 2002: 131). Therefore, both organizing frames of the two inputs make contribution to the blend and the clashes between them "offer challenges to the imagination", and the blend can be highly innovative. The typical example of double-scope network provided by Fauconnier and Turner is same-sex marriage. One input contains the traditional scenario of marriage, as a man, a woman, love between them and a house and so on. The other input contains two people of the same sex. From the first input, selective projection takes "social recognition", "wedding ceremonies" and "mode of taxation" and from the second input, it takes "same sex", "absence of biologically common children". And these concepts are contained in the blended space. And the emergent properties will "characterize this new social structure reflected by the blend". (Fauconnier & Turner, 2002: 134).

(The theoretical basis of the thesis is cited from the graduate thesis of Wang Peng (2009) from Nan Jing Normal University.)

3. Case Studies of XHY Grounded on Conceptual Integration Theory

It is argued that conceptual combination occurs in conceptual integration networks, which are networks of mental spaces structured with frames that the speaker constructs from background knowledge and contextual information (Coulson, 1997: 188). Via combining frames from different spaces, "the imaginative capacities of meaning construction are invoked to produce emergent structure (Coulson, 1997: 186)". As is mentioned in the last chapter, there are basically four types of conceptual integration networks, i.e. simplex, mirror, single-scope, and double-scope. (Fauconnier & Turner, 2009: 119-135). The author makes a preliminary attempt in this chapter to apply conceptual integration theory, especially conceptual integration networks, to explore the process of meaning construction of XHY.

Conceptual integration theory is appropriate to illustrate how people construct meanings. Now that the main points of the theory have been discussed, it is feasible to apply the penetrating notions of the theory to the analysis of XHY. Here the author takes one piece of XHY as an example to display the feasibility of the theory.

Tie jiang pu li mai dou fu—ruan ying jian shi

Selling bean curd in the blacksmith's shop—using both gentle methods and force

The construal of this piece of XHY relies on the background information of "blacksmith's shop" and

"bean curd". As is known, a blacksmith's shop is one which makes and sells instruments made of iron, which is characterized by the nature of hardness. In daily life, people usually use "strong as iron" or "man of iron/steel" to describe physical strength or moral firmness. In contrast, bean curd is a kind of food that are white, fragile and soft. In other words, bean curd is noted for its softness. Likewise, in daily life, people usually use XHY like "dou fu jia zi—bu lao" meaning that a frame made of bean curd is not firm and "dou fu zuo qiang jiao—gen ji tai ruan" meaning that a wall constructed on bean curd collapse easily to describe the feature softness of bean curd.

Grounded on the two frames, the conceptual integration operations in this XHY can be captured through a double-scope network. To be specific, two inputs are established on the basis of cognitive identity: one belongs to the space of a blacksmith's shop, and the other belongs to the space of bean curd. In effect, the blacksmith's products and bean curd respectively represent hardness and softness. Based on the clashing features, corresponding relations are set up between the two spaces, i.e. iron maps bean, ironworks maps bean curd, and features like hardness and durability map features like softness and fragility. Then the generic space contains products sold in distinct shops and the representatives of hardness and softness. Finally, a blended space is set up and contains the organizing frame from both the "blacksmith's shop" space and "bean curd" space.

A double-scope network has inputs with different (and often clashing) organizing frames (Fauconnier & Turner, 2002: 135). In this two part XHY, the organizing frame of the two inputs are respectively "blacksmith's shop" and "bean curd". The organizing frames of the two inputs clash in aspects like participant roles, identity, internal event structure and intentionality. The blended space includes the organizing frame and elements from both the "blacksmith's shop" space and the "bean curd" space. In the construction of the blend, a single but prominent shift that bean curd along with ironworks is sold in the blacksmith's shop, contributes to producing the emergent structure. The emgergent structure comes from the XHY itself and also from our common sense. In Chinese culture, when we refer to the strategies we adopt, the "ying" feature is used to describe a strategy that is tough, strong, firm or direct, while the "ruan" feature is used to describe a strategy that is gentle, soft, mild or indirect. Therefore, if a person is said to use both "ying" and "ruan" stategies to tackle problems, he or she is believed to resort to the stick and the carrot.

3.1 Cross mapping in XHY analysis

As is discussed above, a mental space may be structured by a specific frame as "selling ironworks" or a more generic frame as "running a store", or even "doing business". We can resort to a finer a typology in a mental space, which is below the organizing frame level. For instance, the organizing frame "selling ironworks" does not elaborate on the information of the shop owner or that of the ironworks, which can be referred to in a finer typology. The different topological properties of individual spaces naturally give rise to different possibilities for matches between them (Fauconnier & Turner, 2002: 10). These potentials for matches between topologies or organizing frames are inclined to bring about the mapping of space, a critical component of the imaginative construction of a network.

3.2 Cross-space mapping in simplex networks

"Hillary is the wife of Clinton" has been taken as the example to illustrate simplex network, which clearly states that simplex networks are in fact "role-to-value" networks. In this thesis, we first of all focus our mind one the type of XHY that can be construed through simplex network.

E.g. shu tu zi de—dan xiao tui chang

Born in the year of rabbit—coward with long legs

Shu hao zi de—you dong jiu zuan

Born in the year of rat—inclined to get in the hole wherever there is one

As is easily seen, these two pieces of XHY given above are of the same type, that is, the first part of them share the identical structure. In addition, both of them are associated with a certain "sheng xiao" (twelve common animals corresponding to the twelve earthly branches used to represent the years in which a person is born). In this section, the author will elaborate on the first XHY. To start with, traditional Chinese culture contributes to the construction of input 1, i.e. the frame of "sheng xiao" or the Chinese Zodiac, which cycles every twelve years and each year is named after an animal (the year of rat, ox, tiger, rabbit, dragon, snake, horse, sheep, monkey, cock, dog and pig). Input 2 involves only one element, i.e. the rabbit that shows up in this piece of XHY. In the simplex network, the relevant part of the frame of one input is projected with its roles, and the elements are projected from the other input as values of those roles within the blend (Fauconnier & Turner, 2002: 120).

The following figure is used to clarify the simplex network in this particular XHY.

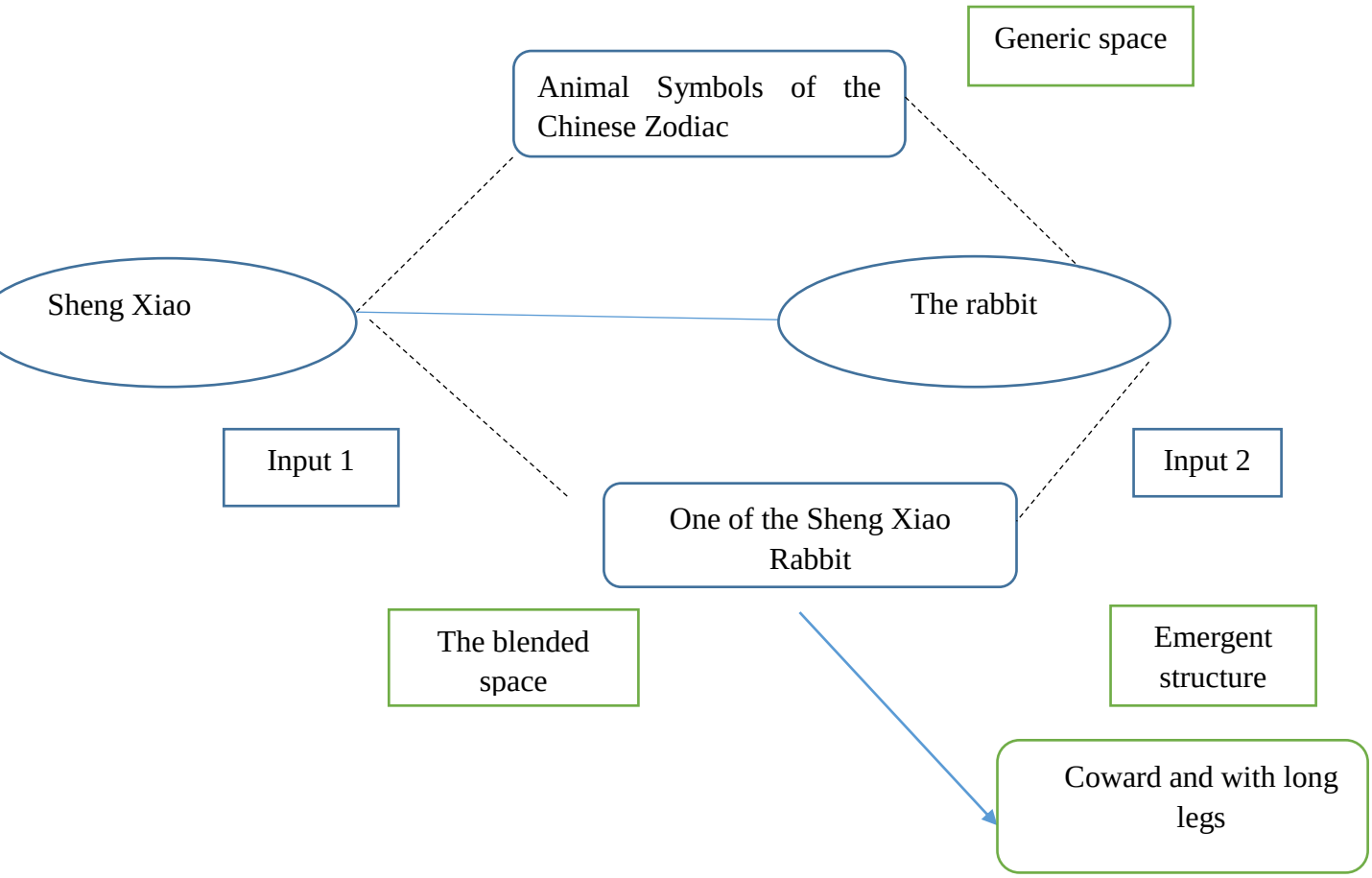


Figure 3.1

As is seen, in the simplex network, the blend integrates the frame and the values in the simplest way. The frame of input 1 (sheng xiao) is compatible with that of input 2 (the rabbit), as the rabbit is one of the animal symbols of "sheng xiao".

It is believed that a person's character is associated with the particular "sheng xiao", i.e. the particular year, in which he or she was born. One of the characteristics of rabbits is described in the second part of the XHY as "coward and with long legs". When the saying is used to describe a person, it refers to the person that is timid and tends to escape in face of danger.

Generally speaking, simplex networks could hardly be treated as the single network in the meaning construction of XHY, instead, it is more often than not used together with other networks as one part of a multiple-scope network.

3.3 Cross-space mapping in mirror networks

In a mirror network, inputs reflect each other. The generic and the blended space share the same frame with them. But in the blend, the common organizing frame of the network inheres in a yet richer frame that only the blend has (Fauconnier & Turner, 2002: 123). The following XHY all belong to the type of mirror network.

Cang lao shu he lao gua qu jie liang—shou zhe mei you, fei zhe de you

The rat in the barn asks a crow for grain—a bird on the wing has some while the rat living in the barn has none.

Ai zi kan xi—ren jia jiao hao, ta ye jiao hao
A short guy goes watching a show—he applauds as others do.

The author would take the second piece of XHY as the instance to illustrate the mirror network

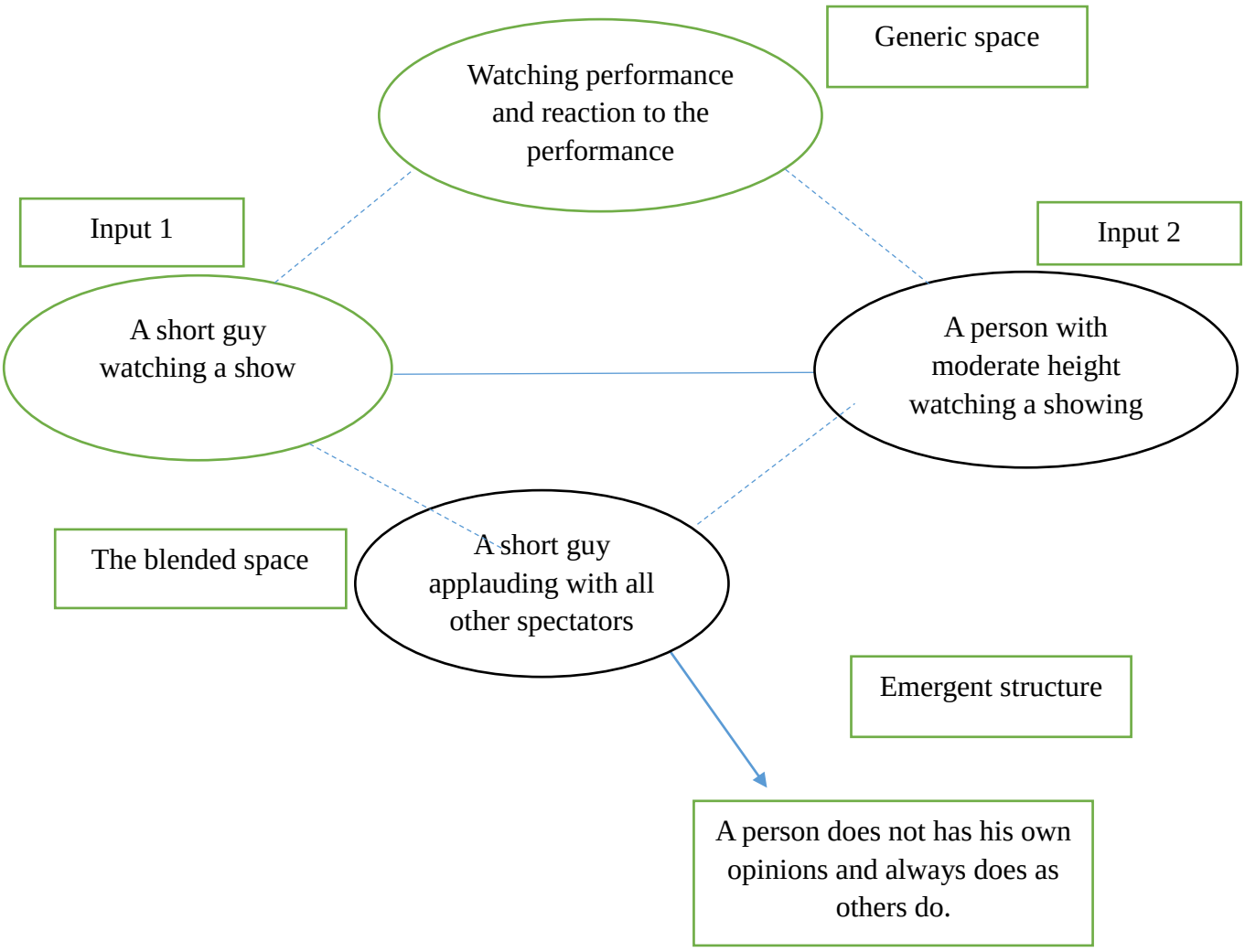


Figure 3.2

As is seen, two inputs are set up in accordance with the XHY, i.e. the "short guy watching a show" and the "guy moderate with moderate height watching a show". There are certainly similar factors in the two inputs, such as the spectator, the show, and the setting of the show, etc. Therefore, we could state that the two inputs share the same organizing frame—a person watching a show, which is also the frame for the generic space and the blended space. In fact, elements in the two inputs are similar, but they are by no means identical. Although the two inputs both describe the event that a person watches a show, input 1 involves a short guy, which implies that he cannot see what the show is like on the stage; while input 2 involves a guy with moderate height, which indicates that he can see what is going on on the stage. When the show reaches its climax, the people who can see it will normally applaud. However, the short guy who cannot watch the show himself could only follow the other people to applaud. When the XYH is used metaphorically, it refers to a person who is a copycat and could not make decisions himself.

3.4 Cross-space mapping in single-scope networks

In a single-scope network the relations between the two inputs are rather similar to the conventional source-target metaphor. One input provides the organizing frame to the blend, and the framing input is

often called the “source”. The other input that is the focus of construal, the focus input, is often called the “target”. (Fauconnier & Turner, 2002: 127).

The following are the instances of this type.

Shu tian chi sheng jiang—re la la de

Eating ginger on a scorching summer day—a burning feeling

Ni pu sa guo he—zi shen nan bao

A clay Bodhisattva fords the river—hardly able to keep oneself safe

Xiu cai yu dao bing—you li shuo bu qing

A scholar meets with a soldier—persuasion cannot work

The author here takes the third piece as the example to illustrate the single-scope network. We can imagine the following scenes. First, when two people have different opinions towards one issue, they probably would argue with each other and the one that holds reason would prevail in the argument and consequently, he will win; while the other who is untenable will lose the argument. This is what we call “input 1”. Additionally, we can imagine another scene: a scholar runs across a soldier on a narrow path. Generally speaking, the soldier is physically strong but intellectually inferior compared with the scholar. If both of them would like to cross the path first, it is likely the frail scholar would compromise. This is what we call “input 2”.

The two inputs have distinct frames—one is of the frame of controversy, and the other is of the frame of running-across. But both of them are inferior to a higher organizing frame, i.e. “contest”, which is the generic space in this network. The construal of such a situation establishes a conceptual integration network, which involves cross-space mappings between the two inputs, such as scholar to the weak debater, the soldier to the strong debater, a blow to an effort by the strong debater, a piece of reason to the reaction of the weak debater, and passing the path to winning the argument, etc. Those factors are selectively projected to anther space—the blend. The justified debater acts as the value of the soldier, but the result of the running-across is not changed. Then the emergent structure is built up—even holding reason, frail people cannot compete with or persuade strong but reckless people. The following figure helps to understand the network better.

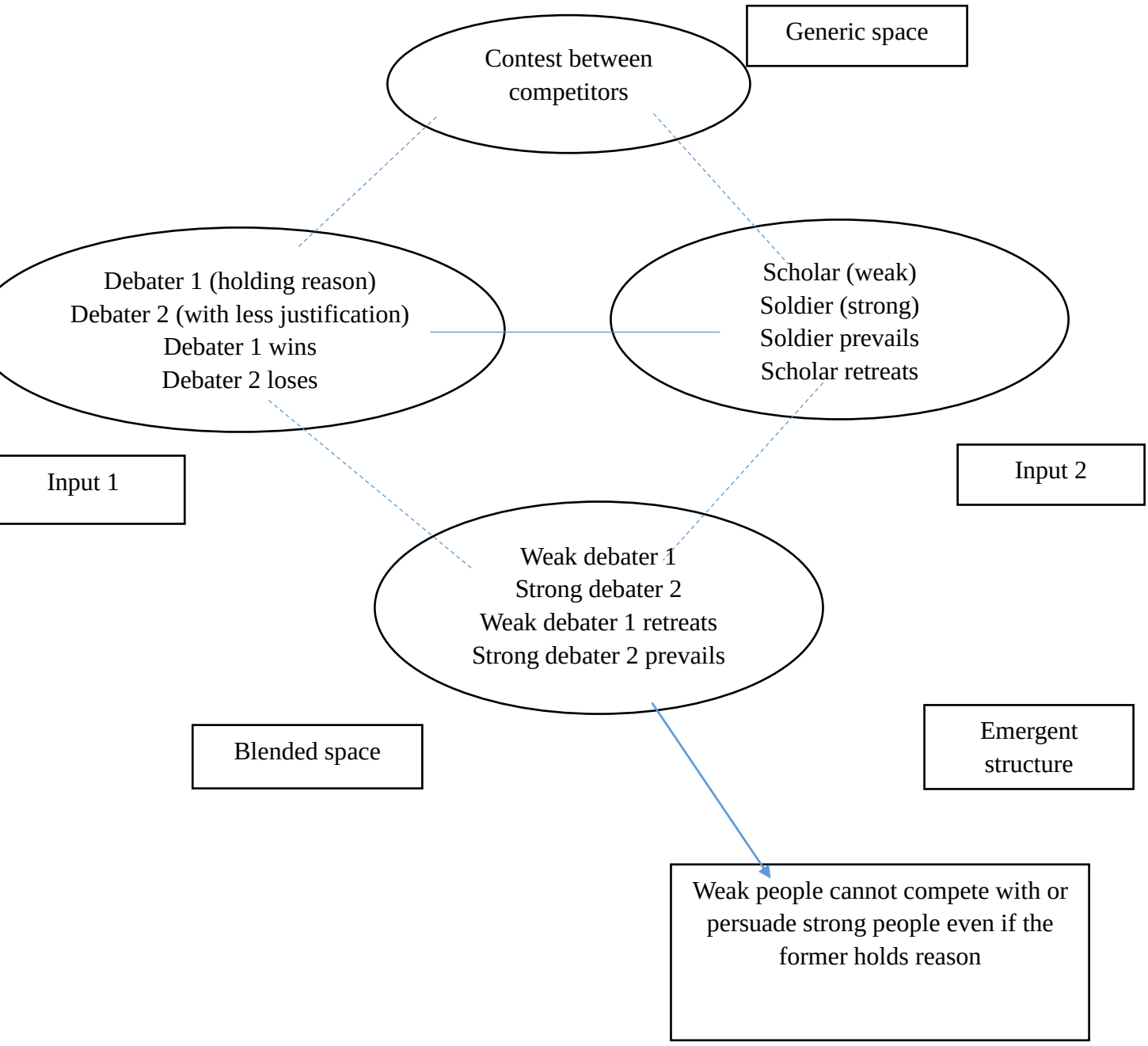


Figure 3.3

3.5 Cross-space mapping in double-scope networks

The following are instances of XHY that are characterized by double-scope networks.

He shang jian shu zi—mei you yong chu

A monk picks up a comb—getting a useless thing

Huang shu lang gei ji bai nian—mei an hao xin

The mink pays a New Year call to a cock—coming with evil intents

Lao hu dai nian zhu—jia chong shan ren

A tiger wears prayer beads—pretending to be a charitarian

The author takes the second piece of XHY as the instance to illustrate the double-scope network.

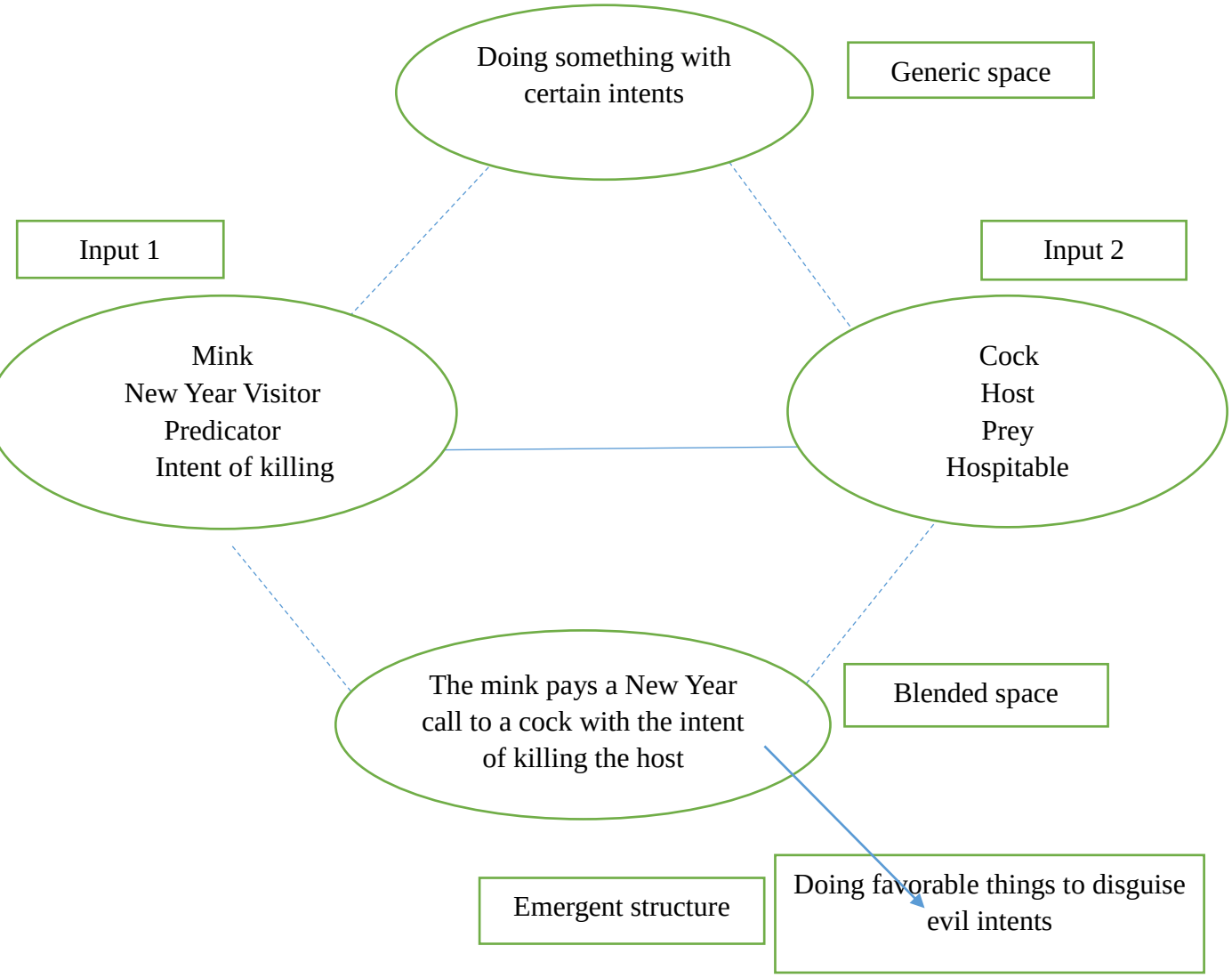


Figure 3.4

From the perspective of double-scope network, this piece of XHY has two inputs, the input of mink and the input of cock. The mink is a kind of meat-eating animal, and it is characterized by its cunning feature. By contrast, the cock is relatively peaceful and not aggressive. In addition, minks sometimes feed on fowl, so it is likely that minks feed on cocks. When we associate the mink and the cock with the situation of a New Year call, several interesting cross-space mappings emerges, such as the mink to the cock, a New Year visitor to a host, a predicator to a prey and the intent of killing to hospitality, etc. In general, people pay a New Year call to their relatives or friends with good intentions. Here, the generic space involves the frame of doing something with certain intents, either good or evil. Then, the elements of the two inputs are selectively projected to organize the blend—a blend where someone pays a New Year call with evil intents. Therefore, the emergent structure is established—sometimes, people can do some favorable things to disguise their evil intentions.

Conclusion

In chapter three, the author makes a preliminary attempt to study four pieces of XHY in detail through conceptual blending and conceptual integration networks. We can make the following statements grounded on the study.

Firstly, the construal of Chinese XHY can be conducted by means of conceptual integration theory, the interpretation of the process of meaning construction in different conceptual networks. In other words, we can use conceptual blending/integration network to illustrate the meaning construction of Chinese XHY and probably that of other traditional Chinese proverbs.

Secondly, from the cases that we analyzed in chapter three, it is found that the construal of XHY through conceptual integration depends considerably on the related background information in Chinese culture. It is sensible to claim that having a good knowledge of Chinese culture is the fundamental requirement to interpret XHY adequately. Since different have distinct mastery of background knowledge and cultural entrenchment, and that the operations of conceptual blending are innovative, meaning construction by means of conceptual blending theory is inclined to be diverse.

On the whole, this thesis is only a preliminary trial of the conceptual integration theory in the construal of concrete language form. Due to the limited research level and lack of data, the current study is far from thorough. For instance, this thesis does not make classifications in terms of XHY, so further research could make some breakthrough from such perspective.

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