



Systematic Metaphors in L2 Public Speaking: A Contrastive Study of Advanced Chinese EFL Learner and Native English Speaker

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Abstract. While recent research has foregrounded language learners' metaphor production in second language writing, little research has explored such behavior in relation to public speaking, a discourse type inextricably linked with metaphorical expression. To fill the gap, this contrastive study explored how advanced Chinese EFL learners and native English speakers use systematic metaphors in English public speaking. This study analyzed 46 speech drafts containing 39854 words through a bottom-up discourse dynamic approach. Seven types of systematic metaphors with 69 occurrence numbers were identified in advanced Chinese EFL learners' data. Ten types of systematic metaphors with 113 occurrence numbers were identified in native English speakers' data. The study concludes the difficulty for second language learners' metaphor production and the complexity of influencing factors behind different systematic metaphor patterns. Pedagogical implications of helping learners develop metaphorical competence were discussed on the part of second language educators.

Keywords: systematic metaphor · L2 metaphor production · public speaking · EFL learner · native speaker

1 Introduction

Since the late 20th century, educators have begun to recognize the importance of metaphor in foreign language education. Some scholars proposed that the key to learning a foreign language is to know how that language reflects or encodes its concepts based on metaphorical structuring [1, 2]. Understanding and producing appropriate metaphors in a second language is an essential part of language proficiency because without such an ability L2 speakers cannot comprehend a native interlocutor fully or express themselves effectively [3]. However, until now, compared with other well-investigated aspects in foreign language learning, studies concerning the second language (L2) students' metaphor production have received less attention.

In this field, some previous research focused on the patterns and functions of L2 metaphor produced by L2 learners. For example, it is found that L2 learners could use various types of metaphors to achieve vividness, coherence, and persuasiveness [4–7]. Other previous studies investigated the influencing factors behind L2 metaphor

production. For instance, age, gender, L2 proficiency, comprehensive ability and native language culture were found to influence L2 learners' metaphor production [2, 8, 9]. However, an adequate discussion of L2 metaphor in public speaking discourse is notably missing since most previous research only focused on L2 writing.

In all, despite the important role it plays in L2 learners' language proficiency, metaphor production does not receive enough attention in L2 education. Furthermore, almost no study has attended to metaphor production in L2 public speaking. To fill the research gap, this study intends to explore how advanced Chinese EFL learners use systematic metaphors in English public speaking and compare their metaphor patterns with native English speakers. Systematic metaphor is a single metaphorical idea that covers a long stretch of related vehicle terms [10]. Compared with listing all the metaphorical expressions, systematic metaphor enables researchers to establish a structured pattern of figurative language and have a clear sense of the relationships among vehicle terms [11], which is an optimal choice for research focus in the current study. The research purpose is to contribute a better understanding of the systematic metaphors used by L2 learners, helping spoken English teachers provide teaching methods more conducive to students' metaphoric competence development in the future.

2 Literature Review

Previous research relevant to the current study focused on language learners' metaphor production in the L2 context, which mainly consisted of two strands of studies. The first strand of studies concerned the patterns and functions of L2 metaphors produced by L2 learners. For example, Lu's study identified extended metaphors and established 11 systematic metaphors (e.g., *SPENDING IS A VEHICLE*, *LOVE IS ILLNESS*) in L2 argumentative essays produced by 37 intermediate Chinese English majors, which revealed that these students were able to use metaphors strategically to achieve vividness, coherence, and persuasiveness [5]. Through analyzing metaphor's type frequency and source domains in medical academic papers written by native and non-native speakers of English, a quantitative study found that indirect metaphors had the highest occurrence number, and "object" metaphor and "social actions" metaphor were more frequently applied by native speakers [6]. The second strand of research investigated the influencing factors behind L2 learners' metaphor production. For instance, Littlemore et al. described how metaphors were distributed in 200 essays written by Greek- and German-speaking learners of English across different levels. The results showed that the general metaphor density increased from CEFR levels A2 to C2. Also, most metaphoric items at lower levels are closed-classed. At B2 level, more evidence of first language transfer was discovered [9]. Galantomos's study gathered the data by assigning in-class essays to 31 Creek learners, which indicated that female students outperformed male students in metaphor use [2]. By examining expository essays produced by 257 EFL students at three different year levels, Hoang and Boers's research revealed that the positive association between proficiency and the amount of metaphor held true for grammatically correct instances of metaphorical expression [8]. In all, the two lines of research well documented L2 learners' metaphor production.

However, fruitful as these studies are, they only focused on metaphors identified in students' writing while neglecting another very important discourse type: public speaking. It is possible that most previous studies chose written essays as data for data collection convenience. But public speaking also merits researchers' attention because it is generally regarded as the most sophisticated form of language communication, which matters in various social scenarios (e.g., business, education, job application, academic development) [12]. Besides, public speaking is closely related to metaphor use. Aristotle stated that metaphorical speeches are more effective than traditional expressions by evoking vivid associations in the audience [13]. To him, skillful use of metaphors is a sign of genius [14]. Tracing Western rhetoric research, it is basically a system built around public speaking with the goal of persuasion [15]. From *Art of Rhetoric* written by Corax, *Rhetoric and Poetics* written by Aristotle, to *Institute of Oratory* written by Quintilian, metaphor's key role in public speaking was reflected. Thus, we need a nuanced understanding of how metaphors are used in public speaking discourse.

Taken together, this study fills the gap and is guided by the following research questions: (1) What systematic metaphors related to the topic of English public speaking are used by advanced Chinese EFL learners and native English speakers? (2) How do advanced Chinese EFL learners and native English speakers use systematic metaphors differently? (3) Whether and how culture plays a role in these differences? The significance of this study lies in gaining an insight into EFL learners' systematic metaphor patterns and shedding light on L2 public speaking teaching.

3 Methodology

This study adopted the discourse dynamic approach. Based on the research purpose of better understanding the differences in systematic metaphor patterns between advanced Chinese EFL learners and native English speakers, this bottom-up approach is an optimal choice since it is highly effective in identifying and categorizing systematic metaphors from naturally occurring data [10].

3.1 Data Collection

The data source of this study was English speech drafts. Gender equality was selected as the theme of English public speaking to narrow down the scope and gain an in-depth understanding of systematic metaphors under a specific topic. For advanced Chinese EFL learners, 27 speech drafts were collected from two acknowledged national English public speaking competitions in China (i.e., "21st Century Cup" National English Speaking Competition, "FLTRP · ETIC Cup" English Public Speaking Contest), with each has about 740 words. For native English speakers, 19 speech drafts with an average of 1046 words were gathered on TED talk, a platform dedicated to sharing ideas and knowledge through presentations. The data size was in line with previous research, which was suitable to establish the validity of this study [5, 16].

Table 1. Systematic metaphors from advanced Chinese EFL learners

type	number
<i>ACHIEVING GENDER EQUALITY IS JOURNEY</i> ¹	29
<i>STEREOTYPE IS ADVERSARY</i>	11
<i>ACHIEVING GENDER EQUALITY IS WAR</i>	11
<i>STEREOTYPE IS PHYSICAL OBSTACLE</i>	9
<i>GENDER INEQUALITY IS BUILDING</i>	6
<i>GENDER EQUALITY IS LIGHT</i>	2
<i>GENDER INEQUALITY IS POISON</i>	1
7 types of systematic metaphors	69

(Photo credit: Original)

3.2 Data Analysis

This study applied discourse dynamic approach to systematic metaphor identification and analysis. The topic of English public speaking, gender equality, was pre-defined. Thus, instead of identifying all the systematic metaphors appeared in the data, only those relating to gender equality as a whole were identified through a close reading of each speech draft. The data were processed through three steps. First, identifying linguistic metaphors (i.e., indirect metaphors and direct metaphors) by employing the Metaphor Identification Procedure (MIP) [17]. Indirect metaphors were identified by comparing the more abstract meaning of a lexical unit with its more basic meaning in other contexts and looking for a relation of comparison. To improve accuracy and reduce subjectivity, Oxford English Dictionary was consulted to establish lexical units’ basic and abstract meaning. Different from indirect metaphors, the cross-domain metaphorical comparison in direct metaphors is not initiated by the contrast between basic meaning and contextual meaning, but by “direct” language use (e.g., like, as if). Second, categorizing the identified metaphors into different vehicle groups according to the semantic links between their basic meanings. Then, by going through a flexible and iterative process, each vehicle group was labeled at the appropriate level of generalization: “the label should cover all the vehicles included in the set and, as far as possible, only those” [10]. Third, linking the vehicle groups with their subject terms in public speaking (e.g., gender equality, stereotype). This process resulted in 7 types of systematic metaphors from advanced Chinese EFL learners (see Table 1) and 10 types of systematic metaphors from native English speakers (see Table 2). Then, the occurrence number of each systematic metaphor was calculated.

¹ Conceptual metaphors are represented in capital letters (e.g., JOURNEY). Written in italicized capital term (e.g., *JOURNEY*), systematic metaphors were identified through the bottom-up discourse dynamic approach, which is different from the top-down approach of Conceptual Metaphor Theory.

Table 2. Systematic metaphors from native English speakers

type	number
<i>ACHIEVING GENDER EQUALITY IS WAR</i>	45
<i>ACHIEVING GENDER EQUALITY IS NEGOTIATION</i>	22
<i>STEREOTYPE IS ADVERSARY</i>	13
<i>ACHIEVING GENDER EQUALITY IS JOURNEY</i>	12
<i>GENDER INEQUALITY IS BUILDING</i>	8
<i>GENDER EQUALITY IS RELIGION</i>	5
<i>STEREOTYPE IS PHYSICAL OBSTACLE</i>	4
<i>MORALITY IS TRADE</i>	2
<i>GENDER EQUALITY IS LIGHT</i>	1
<i>GENDER INEQUALITY IS POISON</i>	1
10 types of systematic metaphors	113

(Photo credit: Original)

Table 3. Keywords in journey metaphors from advanced Chinese EFL learners

keywords	way	road	step	destination	guidance	journey	direction	roadblock
number	7	5	4	4	3	3	2	1

Keywords in journey metaphors from native English speakers

key- words	ste p	direc- tion	ar- rive	wa y	desti- nation
num- ber	5	3	2	1	1

(Photo credit: Original)

4 Research Findings

The data indicated that advanced Chinese EFL learners' English public speaking involved 7 types of systematic metaphors which appeared 69 times. For native English speakers, 10 types of systematic metaphors were identified with 113 occurrence number. Detailed analysis of each systematic metaphor is shown in the following sub-sections.

4.1 Achieving Gendre Equality is Journey

The process of achieving gender equality is understood by creating a structural analogy with the knowledge that people have about a journey. Table 3 shows the metaphorically used keywords in journey metaphor.

To unfold the structure of journey metaphor, some concrete examples of metaphorically used keywords are analyzed. A journey is goal-oriented, which involves going

Table 4. Keywords in war metaphors from advanced Chinese EFL learners

keywords	fight	battle	attack	arm	combat	conflict	ally
number	4	2	1	1	1	1	1

Keywords in war metaphors from native English speakers

keywords	fight	conflict	struggle	battle	defend	war	warrior	combat	win
number	7	4	4	4	3	3	3	3	3

force	resist	shoot	enemy	champion	against	shot	recruit	battlefield
2	2	1	1	1	1	1	1	1

(Photo credit: Original)

from one place to another and usually for a long distance. Since a journey is carried out on paths, different types of paths were found in the data. Achieving true equality is never easy, so the road ahead must be rough and long.

- (1a) I saw a bumpy, rocky *road* ahead of us.
- (1b) To achieve gender equality, there is still a long *way* to go.

On a journey, rather than traveling alone, people usually have a guide to help them find the right direction. In the case of gender quality, some women stand out as the role model, who show the way to people behind them.

- (1c) Our generation will be able to find the *direction* under the *guidance* of those remarkable women.

Along the way, travelers will inevitably encounter various difficulties. Factors hindering gender equality are conceptualized as roadblocks [example (1d)]. These difficulties mean that reaching the final destination takes time and requires perseverance. Every attempt people make is a step closer to equality [example (1e)]. By overcoming obstacles, travelers can finally achieve their goals at the end of the journey and enjoy the beautiful sceneries, i.e., the real gender equality [example (1f)].

- (1d) This prejudice is a *roadblock* on the *way* toward gender equality.
- (1e) In this case, we are moving towards gender equality *step by step*.
- (1f) This is a painful *journey*, but you will finally reach your *destination* of real equality and *arrive* at gardens full of flowers.

4.2 Achieving Gender Equality is War

War metaphors vividly describe the process of achieving gender equality. Table 4 lists the detailed information of metaphorically used keywords in war metaphor.

Some specific instances are analyzed in the following part. The basic meaning of war is an armed struggle between nations, political groups, and people. In this bloodless war of achieving gender equality, women fight against the imposed limitations bravely to win the rights they deserve.

- (2a) The *struggle* women face is overwhelming.
- (2b) But it was also a bloodless *war*. Women *won* the right to vote without a *shot* being fired.

Table 5. Keywords in negotiation metaphors from native English speakers

keywords	table	negotiate	discussion	voice	win-lose/win-win
number	8	4	4	3	3

(Photo credit: Original)

(2c) Women in my community *fight* against the unjust *attacks* together.

What people need to know is that gender equality does not equate to a battle between men and women. Patriarchal structure and toxic masculinity are also very harmful to men. Thus, men should ally themselves with women and combat the old stereotypes together.

(2d) We need more men who have the courage and the strength to *combat* the patriarchal structure and *resist* unreasonable regulations, and standing with women and not *against* them and pretend that somehow this is a *battle* between the sexes.

(2e) Men have their positions as *allies* with women on this *battlefield*.

People who support gender equality are conceptualized as warriors and champions, who form into forces, arming with new laws and policies, shooting at enemies and defending human rights.

(2f) We both decided that we were going to join *forces* and *defend* women's interests.

(2g) *Arming* with the law's protection, girls felt safe when they *shot* at patriarchy.

(2h) In the issue of gender inequality, what will hurt the most is not the words of our *enemies* but the silence of our friends.

(2i) The *conflict* breaks out. Now I'm here to *recruit* men as *champions* for changes, *warriors* against workplace discrimination.

4.3 Achieving Gender Equality is Negotiation

Negotiation metaphors are specific to native speakers' data. The detailed distribution of metaphorically used keywords in negotiation metaphor is as follows (Table 5):

Negotiation is defined as formal discussion between people who have different aims or intentions, during which they try to reach an agreement. By projecting this metaphor to gender equality, it is clear that the participants are men, women, policy maker or legal department, who make requests, voice their opinions, discuss the gender issue back and forth, and hopefully could achieve a win-win situation in the end.

(3a) Gender equality is not a *win-lose*. It is a *win-win* for everyone.

(3b) Every woman has a stake in the *discussion* that takes place here.

(3c) The great challenge of this conference is to give *voice* to women.

(3d) It's time for men and women to sit at the *table* and *negotiate* for themselves.

4.4 Stereotype is Adversary

The data indicated that speakers preferred to personify stereotype as an adversary in public speaking. Table 6 concludes all the metaphorically used keywords in adversary metaphor.

Table 6. Keywords in adversary metaphors from advanced Chinese EFL learners

keywords	demand	shackle	imprison	mock	prohibit	threaten	deprive	force
number	2	2	2	1	1	1	1	1

Keywords in adversary metaphors from native English speakers

keywords	crush	confine	constrain	chock	snatch	chain	enslave
number	4	3	2	1	1	1	1

(Photo credit: Original)

Table 7. Keywords in physical obstacle metaphors from advanced Chinese EFL learners

keywords	remove	block	break	barrier
number	3	2	2	2

Keywords in physical obstacle metaphors from native English speakers

keywords	barrier	break	obstacle
number	2	1	1

(Photo credit: Original)

STEREOTYPE IS ADVERSARY is closely related to and provides support for another systematic metaphor, *ACHIEVING GENDER EQUALITY IS WAR*. Since the stereotype is the adversary, it makes sense that people who support gender equality would declare war on it, shoot at it, and resist its attacks. Interestingly, this is the only systematic metaphor in which the keywords used by advanced Chinese EFL learners and native English speakers did not overlap at all. Many verbs related to violence and constraint can be applied to describe this abdominal adversary in the issue of gender equality. Here are some concrete examples taken from speech drafts.

(4a) What these stereotypes actually do is *constrain*, *confine* and *crush* girls.

(4b) All these seven habits *snatch* life away from girls.

(4c) We now know it *chains* men to an emotionally limited path; it *shackled* women with the so-called responsibilities of family.

(4d) It *mocks* the boys dancing in ballet shoes; it *deprives* women of many opportunities to compete with men in the workplace; it *prohibits* the male artists from wearing glittering makeup; it *threatens* the female doctoral holders that they will die an old maid.

4.5 Stereotype is Physical Obstacle

Apart from adversary, stereotype was also visualized as physical obstacle by speakers. The metaphorically used keywords are listed in Table 7.

In a sense, *STEREOTYPE IS PHYSICAL OBSTACLE* is related to *ACHIEVING GENDER EQUALITY IS JOURNEY*, because stereotype is usually materialized as a stumbling block on the way toward the destination, gender equality. Thus, if the stereotype is a

Table 8. Keywords in building metaphors from advanced Chinese EFL learners

key- words	decon- struct	w all	struct ure	fall apart
num- ber	2	2	1	1

Keywords in building metaphors from native English speakers

keywords	deconstruct	structure	build	foundation	fall apart
number	3	2	1	1	1

(Photo credit: Original)

physical obstacle, it should be removed or broken down so that it cannot block travelers’ road.

(5a) This stereotype would *block* many talented women from getting into this career.

(5b) It is very hard to *remove* these stereotypical expectations in our culture.

(5c) The passion I developed for knowledge, which allowed me to *break barriers* toward a better life was the motivation for my feminist movement.

(5d) She was referring to the rise of the “good wife” image, which is another *obstacle* to women in particular.

4.6 Gender Inequality is Building

Gender inequality is treated and comprehended as a building. The detailed keywords distribution is as follows (Table 8):

As a building, gender inequality is grounded in the patriarchal structure, which is a shaky foundation. Vested interests in this unequal situation want to maintain the status quo, so they build a wall, hoping to keep the feminist movement out. But this building will finally be deconstructed and fall apart under the effort of everyone who supports gender equality. Some specific examples are shown below.

(6a) What we need to do now is to *deconstruct* the gendered *structure* of our society.

(6b) But this cannot stand up under close examination because the inequality you see here was *built* on a shaky *foundation*.

(6c) This *structured* inequality won’t *fall apart* in a short period of time. The *wall* is still there, even getting taller and taller.

4.7 Gender Inequality is Poison

Since gender inequality is harmful, it is comprehended as poison to individuals and the whole society. This poison has a deceiving appearance, covered with sugar coating. But judicious use may also be able to turn it into an antidote. Example (7a) comes from an advanced Chinese EFL learner. Example (7b) comes from a native English speaker.

(7a) On the surface, this inequality seems to work in favor of men. Indeed, it is the *poison* given to men but sweet in taste.

(7b) But if it is the *poison*, it can also be the *antidote*. By analyzing this inequality, we may find the root cause of the current situation.

4.8 Gender Equality is Light

Gender equality is conceptualized as light in public speaking, which is very accessible because people usually associate light with hope and a bright future, and associate darkness with uncertainty and dilemma. Example (8a) and (8b) come from advanced Chinese EFL learners. Example (8c) comes from a native English speaker. Intriguingly, this systematic metaphor also seems to have some relations with *ACHIEVING GENDER EQUALITY IS JOURNEY*, as expressions like “the end of the tunnel”, “prospect” and “path” all indicate that we may see the light and hope when we finish this long and tough journey.

(8a) After generations of struggle, are we seeing the *light* at the end of the tunnel?

(8b) Corresponding to a *dimmer* prospect at the workplace, women contribute more unpaid labor to their household.

(8c) These women *lit* my path with unbelievable strength.

4.9 Gender Equality is Religion

Religion metaphors were only found in native speakers’ data. The metaphorically used keywords include faith and belief, which convey hope, passion, loyalty and make the speakers’ position seem sacred and unquestionable. Religion has a profound impact on Western culture. Thus, religion metaphors can infuse the audience with spiritual motivation, boost their morale and encourage them to stand firm in their beliefs and continue to fight for women’s rights.

(9a) They were motivated by the *faith* that one day gender equality can come true.

(9b) The *belief* in women’s power promoted them to fight against child marriage.

4.10 Morality is Trade

This is also a systematic metaphor that is specific to native English speakers. Debt and deficit are metaphorically used here. Since people are better off if they have the things they need, well-being is usually associated with wealth. And moral action can increase another’s well-being, which is metaphorically understood as increasing another’s wealth. Thus, morality is perceptualized as trade. When those brave women speak up for gender equality, people are in their debt. If girls are not brave enough to break free from stereotypes, they are in a crisis of bravery deficit. Through the more concrete concept of trade, this metaphor can raise the audience’s attention to the more abstract concept of morality.

(10a) We owe a *debt* to those brave women who have the courage to speak up.

(10b) Some people worry about our federal deficit, but I worry about our bravery *deficit*. The bravery *deficit* is why women are underrepresented in STEM, in C-suites, in boardrooms, in Congress, and pretty much everywhere you look.

5 Discussion and Implications

This contrastive study investigated how advanced Chinese EFL learners and native English speakers use systematic metaphors in English public speaking. In terms of the type and quantity of systematic metaphor, the study has shown that native English speakers use more types and number of systematic metaphors than advanced Chinese EFL learners. This echoes previous research that learners still struggle with the new L2 metaphorical system even after many years of learning and practice [1]. Clearly, metaphoric competence is a more difficult part of the target language to acquire than linguistic knowledge. Since advanced L2 learners in this study are already close to native speaker level in terms of language accuracy and fluency, the bottlenecks in their language development are conceptual rather than grammatical. As Danesi noted, the “unnaturalness and literalness” of learner discourse expose the problem that students have little or no opportunity to access the metaphorically structured conceptual domains inherent in second language discourse, which also reflects the lack of metaphoric competence training in second language teaching [1]. Unfortunately, even though the interest in metaphor is as old as Aristotle, mainstream English textbooks in Chinese higher education still introduce metaphor as a decorative rhetoric device. Thus, this study may provide some pedagogical implications for enhancing students’ ability to understand and use L2 metaphor. L2 educators and textbook editors should be aware that in addition to language itself, the collaborative cultivation of students’ thinking ability and metaphorical knowledge construction also needs to be paid attention to. Metaphor knowledge should not be limited to textbook explanations or teachers’ lectures. Public speaking classes or other forms of spoken English courses can provide L2 learners with enough opportunities to apply metaphors in real communicative situations. It would be helpful if teachers could take advantage of such opportunities, then guide and encourage students to incorporate metaphorical expressions in their L2 public speaking.

To answer the third research question, the systematic metaphor patterns identified in research data reflect that culture did play a critical role in the difference of metaphor use between advanced Chinese EFL learners and native English speakers. For example, the most frequently used systematic metaphor for advanced Chinese EFL learners was *ACHIEVING GENDER EQUALITY IS JOURNEY*. But for native English speakers, it became *ACHIEVING GENDER EQUALITY IS WAR*. This indicates that people from different cultures view the same thing differently [18]. Some metaphors that appear only in native speakers’ data can also show the influence of culture. For example, the occurrence number of *ACHIEVING GENDER EQUALITY IS NEGOTIATION* ranked third in the native speakers’ data. Negotiation has great significance in Western culture. Whether it is facilitating a deal in the business community or promoting the implementation of law in the political world, the final result needs to be reached through negotiation. Also, the expression “sit at the table” appeared 8 times in negotiation metaphor, which is suitable in the context of gender issues because a round table in Western culture symbolizes democracy and equality. However, those advanced EFL learners did not produce similar expressions as Chinese people usually associate round table with harmony and reunion. This Western tradition of valuing democracy and equality is also reflected in another metaphor: *MORALITY IS TRADE*. Rohrer related this metaphor with equality in his study: since debt needs to be paid to achieve equality, moral “trade” is closely associated

with this core value [19]. Also, it is reasonable to find *GENDER EQUALITY IS RELIGION* only exists in native speakers' data because religion does not have much influence on Chinese culture as it does on Western culture, especially for Christianity. By far, it seems that the metaphor patterns are in line with the "cultural features": Chinese culture values collectivism, cooperation, and harmony, and hence advanced Chinese EFL learners tended to use less powerful metaphors (e.g., journey); Western culture emphasizes democracy, equality and competition, and therefore native English speakers tended to use more powerful metaphors related to conflict (e.g., war, negotiation).

However, rushing to this conclusion cannot help to reveal the complexity of the influencing factors behind different systematic metaphor patterns. Apart from these typical descriptions of Chinese and Western culture, this study suggests that there are other cultural and non-cultural factors behind this phenomenon. First, the choice of metaphor could be affected by the different public speaking styles in different cultures. The Western tradition of public speaking has its roots in ancient Greece. The ancient Greeks were good at using rhetorical devices and exaggeration to attract the audience's attention and make their public speaking more persuasive [20]. However, as a civilization places more emphasis on writing, there are no similar public speaking skills in the Chinese tradition [15]. This difference in public speaking style may partly explain why native speakers used more metaphors related to conflicts, since this type of metaphor is more emotionally powerful and persuasive than journey metaphor according to De Landtsheer's classification [21]. In other words, native speakers may strategically manipulate the metaphor patterns to elicit emotional reactions from the audience and achieve the desired effect. Second, the specific issues discussed in public speaking can also influence the metaphor patterns. In native English speakers' data, the gender issues included abortion rights, child marriage, domestic violence, female circumcision, sexual harassment, and workplace discrimination, most of which were related to physical damage. For advanced Chinese EFL learners, their public speaking discussed gender stereotypes, workplace discrimination, changed child-bearing willingness, and toxic masculinity. These gender issues are worthy of attention but are more subtle than what appeared in native speakers' data because women do not suffer direct physical harm in these issues. Thus, the reason native English speakers chose to use more metaphors of violence and conflicts is probably that their public speaking topics were more related to physical damage, which cannot be attributed entirely to their culture's emphasis on competition. Previous research also confirmed that specific topics can exert influence on the types of vehicle terms [22].

In all, this line of discussion tries to show that metaphor use is influenced by an interaction among a number of cultural and non-cultural factors. Overall, culture did play an essential role in the metaphor patterns of the current study. But simple labeling or overgeneralization of "cultural features" should be avoided.

6 Conclusion

This contrastive study, involving 46 speech drafts with 39854 words in total, has investigated the systematic metaphors used by advanced Chinese EFL learners and native English speakers in English public speaking by adopting a discourse dynamic approach. Focusing on L2 metaphor production, the present study concludes that compared with

linguistic knowledge, metaphorical expression was a harder aspect for advanced L2 learners to acquire. Also, the use of metaphor was influenced by various factors, including both cultural and non-cultural factors. But despite the complexity of these factors, culture did play a key role in different systematic metaphor patterns.

The limitation of the study also needs to be acknowledged. The current study is a relatively small-scale study, which means the generalization of research conclusions should be treated with caution. The analysis results may not characterize all Chinese EFL students' systematic metaphor use in L2 public speaking. Nevertheless, it is sufficient for the current study as this research is about the in-depth understanding of metaphor production under a specific topic, rather than seeking a generalized conclusion. Future enquiry may include more empirical data and explore more public speaking topics.

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