

Images Construction of Chinese Medicine in Chinese Media Discourses

-- Take *China Daily* as an Example

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Abstract

Presenting compelling stories of Chinese Medicine is a priority to spread Chinese culture to the world and enhance China's international position. Based on extended unit of meaning as theoretical framework, the paper combines qualitative analysis with quantitative analysis to carry out the research about image construction of Chinese Medicine in *China Daily*. Through analysis of collocation, colligation, semantic preference and semantic prosody, the research finds that *China Daily* constructs an image of Chinese medicine as an alternative and complementary healthcare system that encompasses a variety of therapies and works in cooperation with Western medicine. It highlights Chinese medicine's global recognition as a Cultural Heritage of Humanity, its integral role in Chinese culture, and its reputation as a trusted healthcare system that transcends national boundaries.

Keywords

Chinese Medicine; Extended Unit of Meaning; Image Construction.

1. Introduction

Chinese Medicine, also known as Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM), is a holistic medical system that can be traced back to ancient China and has been practiced for thousands of years. It has a long history and continues to play a significant role in various fields, like healthcare and wellness, and exert great impact on the world. Since the outbreak of pandemic, some traditional Chinese herbal remedies and practices were explored in the search for potential treatments or preventive measures. It proves Chinese Medicine can protect people from being infected and promote health and balance in the body. But at the same time, western society doubts the safety and efficacy of treatment or preventive approach of Chinese Medicine. It claims that scientific evidence and rigorous testing should be considered while using Chinese Medicine as a measure to treat disease. However, this is not the case and it brings tremendous challenges in terms of media construction of Chinese Medicine. As a prominent English-language newspaper in China, *China Daily* serves as an important platform for promoting China's perspective and policies to a global audience, offering insights into Chinese society, development, and international relations. Therefore, it is responsible for *China Daily* to demonstrate the spiritual essence and value of Chinese Medicine and present a positive image of it. The discursive construction of Chinese medicine in *China Daily* can influence the public's recognition and acceptance of Chinese medicine, and to some extent, it also promotes or hinders the internationalization process of Chinese medicine.

The paper intends to collect reports about Chinese Medicine from *China Daily* to conduct research. With the help of theoretical framework: extended unit of meaning, and the combination of qualitative analysis and quantitative analysis, the study will analyze the specific outcomes and effects of the relevant news coverage on constructing the image of Chinese

Medicine. In doing so, the study will provide important references and promote the Image construction of Chinese Medicine within the context of "presenting the Chinese story."

2. Definition of Extended Unit of Meaning

Traditional lexical semantics focuses on the meaning of individual lexemes. Firth[1] brought our attention to collocations and the fact that meaning is not isolated in the lexeme. As one of the students of Firth, John Sinclair introduced the term "Extended Unit of Meaning" in 1996 in his article *the search for units of meaning*. As the expression indicates, Extended Unit of Meaning goes beyond the lexeme. Sinclair puts forward the hypothesis that units of meaning are 'largely phrasal', that only a few words are selected independently of other words. His model consists of "four types of co-occurrence relations in extended lexico-semantic units". These four relations being collocation, colligation, semantic preference and semantic prosody. The theory of EUM is what Sinclair[3] claims to be a more comprehensive perspective to study words because it realizes the integration of lexicon, syntax, meaning and pragmatic functions. It can be seen that Extended Unit of Meaning has great practical values.

3. Studies of Extended Unit of Meaning

Many researchers both at home and abroad have conducted extensive research on Extended Unit of Meaning. The studies from the perspective of EUM abroad mainly focus on the words, phrases. As for studies of Extended Unit of Meaning at home, some researchers have applied this theoretical framework in the field of translation. For example, Pu [4] studies relationship among unit of meaning, unit of translation and corresponding unit based on the corpus-driven research. He finds that the correspondent Chinese and English in a parallel corpus is in need for reference when you decide whether a word or a group of words is a reasonable unit of translation. Lu & Wei employs a combined approach of comparable corpora and parallel corpora to demonstrate the role of semantic prosody in vocabulary and grammar from a bilingual perspective. Additionally, they reveals the corresponding relationships among translation equivalence from co-selection theory. The theory of Extended Unit of Meaning is not only applied in the field of translation, but also in the field of English vocabulary. For example, Wang & Tian study the semantic prosody of modern Chinese measure words by making a thorough investigation into the semantic prosody of yi fu (一副) in the framework of Extended Unit of Meaning. Many researchers focus on analysis of English synonyms based on Extended Unit of Meaning [5] [6].

Based on the above statement, current research about Extended Unit of Meaning most focus on the study of translation and vocabulary. There is no doubt that previous studies from the perspective of EUM have made successful contributions. Therefore, this study attempts to take Extended Unit of Meaning as framework to conduct research about discursive construction of Chinese Medicine in *China Daily*.

4. Data Collection and Research Procedure

Sinclair advocates combining corpus linguistics with Extended Unit of Meaning to conduct research. Corpus can collect large and real linguistic data, thus helping find regularity and summarize the features of language use through analysis of a great number of examples. It can explore meaning tendencies and emotional attitude behind discourse, which is of great importance for linguistic research.

Therefore, the study intends to collect reports about Chinese medicine from *China Daily* and use these data to build corpus. Through careful reading and screening, the research takes "Chinese Medicine" as a key word to collect relevant reports at random. As a result, 200 pieces

of reports from *China Daily* are collected. Then the study identifies “Chinese medicine” as node word to do analysis. In this study, AntConc 3.5.9 is used to retrieve relevant concordance lines, collocation and clusters. AntConc is a simple and intuitive corpus retrieval tool which is professional, practical and acceptable and it is easy to operate for beginners.

With the help of software AntConc 3.5.9 and combination of the model of Extended Unit of Meaning, the study will analyze the target corpus from perspectives of collocation, colligation, semantic preference and semantic prosody. Research procedures are as follows: firstly, the study will set the span within five words on the right side of the words, zero on the left side. Secondly, significant collocation is obtained from the concordance lines through setting the minimum MI value. In addition, by inspection the concordance lines, the colligational patterns of Chinese medicine are found. And finally, semantic preference and semantic prosody are investigated based on concordance.

In order to have a better understanding of how the discourses of Chinese medicine are constructed in *China Daily*, research questions are put forward as follows: 1) What image of Chinese medicine does *China Daily* construct? 2) How effective is the image of Chinese medicine constructed by *China Daily*?

5. Results and Discussion

The study will retrieve “Chinese medicine” as a key word in corpus and then analyze and discuss collocation, colligation, semantic preference and semantic prosody according to concordance.

5.1. Analysis of collocation

Table 1. The collocation of Chinese medicine

Rank	MI score	Word
1	8.27	exemplify
2	7.27	wellbeing
3	7.27	tobacco
4	7.27	relief
5	7.27	learners
6	6.75	relentless
7	6.69	prosper
8	6.69	massaging
9	6.69	lecture
10	6.63	incorporate
11	6.53	Thailand
12	6.27	Flu
13	6.05	cooperation
14	5.95	Culture
15	5.81	develop
16	5.81	diagnosis
17	5.69	intelligence
18	5.69	famous
19	5.69	diverse
20	5.69	effective

Collocation refers to a frequent co-occurrence of word form. Firth[7] argues that you shall know a word by the company it keeps. To further explore the image of Chinese medicine, the study chooses Chinese medicine as the core for analysis of collocation. MI value, according to Hunston[8], can be used to measure the strength of collocation. MI value shows how strongly two words collocate in a corpus. It gives the information about the mutual attraction between the node words and the collocations. The larger the MI value is, the stronger the collocational strength will be. According to Hunston, usually the collocations with the MI value of 3 or higher can be considered significant collocates. The study will choose the significant collocates (MI \geq 3). Therefore, the result of the top 20 significant collocation words is listed in table 1.

According to table 1, it can be found that the collocation words can be divided into three categories: verb collocation, adjective collocation and noun collocation. From the verbs like exemplify, develop, prosper, and incorporate and so on, it can be concluded that Chinese medicine as a dynamic, successful, and evolving field that exemplifies effective healthcare practices, develops through ongoing advancements, prospers in terms of its acceptance and impact, and is actively incorporated into broader healthcare systems. From the adjectives, like famous, diverse, effective and so on, it can be seen Chinese medicine has gained widespread recognition and popularity. Besides, it suggests that Chinese medicine encompasses various practices such as acupuncture, herbal medicine, massage, and dietary therapy, offering a comprehensive and versatile approach to healthcare. All these show Chinese medicine is an ideal and effective option for disease treatment. From the nouns like wellbeing, relief, learners, cooperation, Thailand, culture and so on, it seems Chinese medicine as a comprehensive healthcare system that promotes well-being, provides relief, fosters continuous learning, encourages collaboration, has potential cross-cultural influences, and is deeply intertwined with traditional Chinese culture.

In a word, from analysis of collocation, *China Daily* constructs an image of Chinese medicine as a dynamic, effective and significant healthcare system that has made great contributions to the wellbeing of people's and is deeply rooted in traditional Chinese culture.

5.2. Analysis of colligation

Colligation refers to the co-occurrence of grammatical choices. Pu [9] suggests positioning the left boundary of the extended meaning unit on the verb or adjective, generally excluding preceding modal verbs, adverbs, or copular verbs. The right boundary should be positioned on the central noun (head noun) of the noun phrase or prepositional phrase closely associated with it. The main colligation about Chinese medicine are: Chinese medicine +and/or +N; Chinese medicine +V; Chinese medicine +is a/an. Examples of the main collocation are as follows (table 2):

Table 2. Examples of the main collocation

Colligation	Examples of collocation
Chinese medicine +and/or +N	acupuncture; antigen test kit; public health; pills; therapy; western medicine
Chinese medicine +V	has; differs; emphasizes; plays; recognizes
Chinese medicine +is (a/an) +N	important part; necessity

(1) Chinese medicine +and/or +N

By observing table 2, it can be found that Chinese medicine is always mentioned with other medical approaches such as pills and antigen test kits. It has become an alternative to treatment. In addition, Chinese Medicine is often paired with acupuncture due to the common practice of combining multiple therapies in Traditional Chinese Medicine. What’s more, the relationship between Chinese Medicine and Western Medicine is a cooperative partnership rather than exclusive competition.

(2) Chinese medicine +V

Concordance	
1	traditional Chinese medicine emphasizes the importance of the four traditional diagnosis methods
2	The country also held more than 100 communication and live-streaming events on the role that traditional Chinese medicine plays in epidemic control
3	Traditional Chinese medicine recognized in treatment and rehabilitation
4	Traditional Chinese medicine has spread to 196 countries and regions

By observing concordance, it can be found that Chinese medicine is a scientific diagnosis system and has gained worldwide recognition and reputation for its unique strengths in disease prevention and control and rehabilitation.

(3) Chinese medicine +is (a/an) +N

Concordance	
1	Chinese Medicine is Cultural Heritage of Humanity in UNESCO's Representative List.
2	Traditional Chinese medicine is an important part of Chinese culture
3	Chinese medicine was a necessity when he went back to his home in Germany.

The verb "be" is used to identify or equate a subject with a noun, adjective, or pronoun. It can be used to describe or attribute characteristics or qualities to the subject. Therefore, the colligation pattern "Chinese medicine + is (a/an) + N" is used to introduce and describe a noun (N) that represents a characteristic, quality, or aspect of Chinese medicine. The concordance suggests that Chinese medicine is not only valued within China but also recognized internationally for its cultural and historical importance and Chinese medicine is considered a valuable and reliable healthcare system that is sought after even in other countries.

Overall, from observation of colligation, *China Daily* constructs an image of Chinese medicine as an alternative and complementary healthcare system that encompasses various therapies and works in cooperation with Western medicine. Besides, Chinese medicine as a globally recognized Cultural Heritage of Humanity, an integral part of Chinese culture, and a trusted healthcare system that transcends national boundaries.

5.3. Analysis of semantic preference

Semantic preference is the semantic set formed around the core. It is a concept created by Sinclair[9], which is used to describe the semantic characteristics of some content words/phrases collocated with node words. Based on the table 1, the study classifies and categorizes collocation words. it is found that the discursive construction of Chinese medicine with mainly revolves around the following three aspects (three semantic tendencies): 1)

Medical Practices and Effects: exemplify, relief, massaging, diagnosis, effective, Flu. These words pertain to medical practices, treatment effects, and healthcare concerns. They highlight the effectiveness, relief, and diagnosis aspects of Chinese medicine in addressing various health conditions, including the flu; 2) Health and development: wellbeing, develop, relentless, learner, lecture, intelligence. These words emphasize the concepts of wellbeing, health, and continuous improvement. They highlight the positive impact of Chinese medicine on individuals' overall health and well-being. In addition, learners can acquire knowledge and expertise in Chinese medicine and make progress; 3) Cultural Aspects: incorporate, Thailand, cooperation, culture, diverse. These words focus on the cultural dimensions and diversity associated with Chinese medicine. They highlight the integration of Chinese medicine into broader healthcare systems, cross-cultural collaborations (e.g., with Thailand), and the influence of traditional culture on Chinese medicine practices.

5.4. Analysis of semantic prosody

According to Stubbs's classification[11], if the collocates present a positive atmosphere, the word is seen as positive semantic prosody; if the collocates present a negative atmosphere, the word is seen as negative semantic prosody. From above statement, semantic prosody of Chinese Medicine is divided into two aspects: positive and neutral. On the one hand, *China Daily* praises advantages of Chinese Medicine. Positive semantic prosody collectively contributes to the positive perception and appreciation of Chinese Medicine as a valuable healthcare system that offers unique perspectives and potential benefits for individuals seeking holistic and natural approaches to health and well-being. On the other hand, *China daily* objectively describes the nature of Chinese Medicine, thus constructing the neutral semantic prosody.

6. Conclusio

The above results show that Chinese Medicine is constructed by *China Daily* as more than a medical entity. Chinese medicine as a comprehensive, culturally significant, and respected healthcare system that combines traditional wisdom with modern advancements, embodying a holistic approach to wellness.

The image construction of Chinese Medicine by *China Daily* has its own effectiveness. In the face of western society's doubt and concerns about Chinese Medicine, *China Daily* as a leading national media outlet, has a significant influence on public opinion and perception in terms of image construction of Chinese medicine. *China Daily's* effort to construct positive image of Chinese medicine can shape other countries' correct understanding of Chinese Medicine, thus enhancing awareness and recognition of Chinese medicine in the West, creating a favorable international public opinion environment, and further promoting the internationalization of Chinese medicine.

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