Abstract

This thesis investigates the use of metaphors in news reports and discussions on two Chinese language policies, namely, Chinese “B” and Bicultural Elites, both took place in 2004. The theoretical framework is taken from Lakoff and Johnson’s (1980) study on metaphors.

The data is taken from the main Chinese newspaper Lianhe Zaobao. They are classified under “official” and “non-official” reports. The former represents the government’s point of view while the latter represents views from the public.

The results show that for the Chinese “B” issue, the main metaphor used by the official viewpoints is the TAILOR metaphor. The government seems to want to show that this policy is a tailor-made one for those in need of a lower standard of Chinese education. On the other hand, the main metaphor used by the non-official viewpoints is the WAR metaphor. This reflects that threat felt by the public regarding the lowering of the standard of Chinese. Hence the conflicting viewpoints are reflected in the different use of metaphors.

The metaphor for Bicultural Elites is unanimously the GARDENING metaphor from both the official and non-official reports. This shows that both parties have the similar point of view regarding this issue.

Previous studies show that metaphors could be used to persuade readers. This study shows the other side of the story: metaphors are a conduit through which the public
may use to express their concerns and emotions towards related policies. This is a meaningful study as it shows that metaphors are not merely used to ‘beautify’ language but it is a powerful tool in expressing viewpoints and also in reflecting viewpoints in social issues.