Metaphorical Representations of Obesity in Chinese Media (2010-2020)

Xiang Huang

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Thesis supervisor

Dr. Mario Bisiada

DEPARTAMENT DE TRADUCCIÓ I CIÈNCIES DEL LLENGUATGE

Universitat Pompeu Fabra
Barcelona

To my mom, my wind
献给我的妈妈，我的风儿

Acknowledgements

As this PhD is about metaphor, I am thinking about what metaphors to describe my PhD experience. Looking back to the past three years, I would like to call the PhD a kindergarten, one which I had missed when I was a little girl.

In 1996, my father took me to the gate of the kindergarten in my village and tried to persuade me to get into the school. Seeing new faces and a horribly unfamiliar world, I refused, cried and held my father's legs tightly. One hour later, my father gave in. I was exempted from kindergarten and happily went back home. Many years later, in 2019, I resigned from my teaching job and decided to do a PhD in Barcelona. My father saw me off at the train station in my hometown. I did not cry. I knew what awaited me ahead was a kindergarten I had dreamed of for a long time.

The PhD, in many ways, is like a kindergarten. I have never been in a foreign country so far away from home before. Everything is new, the people, the language, the food..., etc. It is exciting but also exhausting. Kindergarten is not easy, especially during global Covid-19. My days sometimes are lonely, difficult, but most of the time, rewarding. Upon the end of this PhD, I would like to thank the teachers and friends who have made my stay in the kindergarten happier and less lonely.

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With all your love, it is time to graduate from the kindergarten and turn a new chapter of my life.

Any mistakes that remain in the thesis are my own responsibility.

Abstract

Obesity is a pressing health issue and a popular topic in Chinese media. This PhD thesis investigates the metaphors used to talk about obesity in Chinese media. Specifically, this thesis compares the editorials in the *People's Daily*, China's mainstream official medium and the blogs in Weibo, China's major social medium, in terms of their quantitative and qualitative metaphor uses around obesity. Based on a corpus of 160,000 Chinese characters (approx.), i.e., the Corpus of Obesity Discourse in Chinese Media I built for this project, the thesis identifies three dominant metaphors, i.e., Journey, War and Money. Systematic metaphor analysis of the three metaphors reveals different representations of obesity in different media. In detail, the editorials express a collective or nationalistic view of obesity, while the blogs reveal an individual perspective of obesity that emphasises personal responsibilities. Yet, there are shared neoliberal perspectives across the media, which seem to call for the development of ideal citizenship around the obesity issue in China. In all, this thesis demonstrates the unique media representations of obesity in the Chinese context.

Resumen

La obesidad es un problema de salud apremiante y un tema popular en los medios chinos. Esta tesis doctoral investiga las metáforas utilizadas para hablar de la obesidad en los medios chinos. Específicamente, esta tesis compara los editoriales en el *People's Daily*, el principal medio oficial de China y los blogs en Weibo, el principal medio social de China, en términos de sus usos cuantitativos y cualitativos de metáforas en torno a la obesidad. Basada en un corpus de 160.000 carácteres chinos (aprox.), es decir, el Corpus of Obesity Discourse in Chinese Media que construí para este proyecto, la tesis identifica tres metáforas dominantes, es decir, Journey, War y Money. El análisis sistemático de las metáforas revela diferentes representaciones de la obesidad en diferentes medios. En detalle, los editoriales expresan una visión colectiva o nacionalista de la obesidad, mientras que los blogs revelan una perspectiva individual de la obesidad que enfatiza las responsabilidades personales. Sin embargo, existen perspectivas neoliberales compartidas en los medios de comunicación, que parecen llamar al desarrollo de una ciudadanía ideal en torno al problema de la obesidad en

China. En total, esta tesis demuestra las representaciones mediáticas únicas de la obesidad en el contexto chino.

Resum

L'obesitat és un problema de salut urgent i un tema popular als mitjans xinesos. Aquesta tesi doctoral investiga les metàfores utilitzades per parlar de l'obesitat als mitjans xinesos. Concretament, aquesta tesi compara els editorials del *People's Daily*, el principal mitjà oficial de la Xina i els blogs de Weibo, el principal mitjà social de la Xina, pel que fa als seus usos quantitatius i qualitatius de metàfores al voltant de l'obesitat. A partir d'un corpus de 160.000 caràcters xinesos (aprox.), és a dir, el Corpus of Obesity Discourse in Chinese Media que vaig construir per a aquest projecte, la tesi identifica tres metàfores dominants, és a dir, Journey, War i Money. L'anàlisi sistemàtica de metàfores revela diferents representacions de l'obesitat en diferents mitjans. En detall, els editorials expressen una visió collectiva o nacionalista de l'obesitat, mentre que els blogs revelen una perspectiva individual de l'obesitat que posa l'accent en les responsabilitats personals. No obstant això, hi ha perspectives neoliberals compartides als mitjans de comunicació, que semblen demanar el desenvolupament d'una ciutadania ideal al voltant del problema de l'obesitat a la Xina. En total, aquesta tesi demostra les representacions mediàtiques úniques de l'obesitat en el context xinès.

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Conventions

The following formatting conventions have been used throughout the thesis:

Stress	is *stressed*
Highlighting	had been 'internalised'
Linguistic example	used *because* twice
Domain/Conceptual metaphor	SMALL CAPITAL
Systematic metaphors	*SMALL CAPITALS AND ITALICS*
Metaphor type	Journey metaphor

Special notes on the Chinese language data in this thesis:

1. This thesis uses the term 'Mandarin Chinese' or 'Chinese' to refer to the standard simplified Chinese writing system used in China's Mainland (thus is different from the traditional Chinese seen in Hong Kong and Taiwan);

2. Unless otherwise stated, all of the translations of examples in this thesis are done by myself. There are two kinds of Chinese examples in this thesis, and they are presented in different forms:

   1) Chinese examples in the running text, which are individual words or phrases intended as metaphorical, are presented in their original Chinese, followed by a bracket in which their word-for-word literal English translations and idiomatic English translations are offered.

      Examples:

      大象腿 [big elephant leg, one's legs look like those of elephants]

      水桶腰 [water bucket waist, one's waist size looks like a bucket]

   2) Chinese examples as listed examples, or the editorial or blog excerpts, in which cases no word-for-word literal English translations are offered. Instead, their demarcated forms are presented. The metaphorical expressions in the original Chinese and their English translations are highlighted as underlined in the examples. To be loyal to the original Chinese texts and also be friendly to readers who do not know the Chinese language, I have tried to achieve a balance between literal and semantic translations in their translations.

Example:

父母 以 " 养猪 " 自诩

[Parents call their ways of feeding kids as if in the way of "feeding pigs".]

In cases of necessity, when there are culture-loaded words in the examples, I add explanations (inside the brackets) to make the translations more approachable.

Example:

让 人人 享有 健康 ， 是 实现 全面 小康 的 必由之路 。

[Allowing everyone to enjoy health is the route that must be taken to achieve *xiǎokāng* (a comprehensive well-off society, or a society in which all people lead a fairly comfortable life).]

Further, in cases where the personal pronouns are missing in the Chinese examples, I add the pronouns (inside the brackets) based on my understanding of the whole context.

Example:

要减肥了，一胖毁所有

[(I) must lose weight. Obesity destroys everything.]

3. For the Chinese language not from my corpus, e.g., the Chinese policies or Chinese phrases (not from my corpus) I use to help my metaphor analysis, only idiomatic translations in brackets are given after the Chinese characters.

Examples:

中国居民营养与慢性病状况报告(2020 年) [Report on Nutrition and Chronic Disease Status of Chinese Residents (2020)]

颜值即正义 [Face value (beauty) is justice]

4. Due to word limit restrictions, no *hànyǔ pīnyīn* is offered for the Chinese characters, except where their pronunciations play a role in understanding the metaphors and

are necessary to be explained for the metaphor analysis. They are presented in their original Chinese, followed by a bracket in which the *hànyǔ pīnyīn*, word-for-word literal English translations and idiomatic English translations are offered.

Examples:

肉肉 [*ròu ròu*, meat meat, meat]

饭饭 [*fàn fàn*, rice rice, rice]

Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1 What This PhD Project is About

Obesity has become a pressing health concern worldwide, with no exception in China. In this project, I aim to examine how the topic of obesity, including the people who experience it or who consider themselves to be obese, is represented in the Chinese media. I choose metaphor, one of the most prevalent discursive strategies in health communication, as my perspective to explore the representations of obesity in Chinese media. In detail, I analyse the metaphors that are used to represent obesity in news editorials produced in the mainstream Chinese official medium, i.e., the *People's Daily* and compare these against those used by the general public, including individuals living with obesity (or self-defined obesity) to discuss obesity in the major Chinese social medium, i.e., Weibo over a period from 2010 to 2020 (inclusive). Based on the findings, I discuss the implications of the metaphorical representations of obesity in the broader socio-cultural contexts in China and reflect on how metaphors can be used in a more compassionate and constructive way to lessen the weight stigma observed in society. To the best of my knowledge, this PhD project is the first book-length metaphor analysis on media representations of obesity in China.

This project falls into the interface between health communication, discourse analysis, metaphor studies and Chinese media studies. It is expected to be interesting for readers from the above disciplines. The topic, rationale and approach of this interdisciplinary project can be best introduced by explaining two keywords (phrases) in this project, i.e., *obesity in Chinese media* and *metaphor*. In the coming sections, I explain the keywords by answering two questions: 1) Why obesity in Chinese media? 2) Why metaphor?

1.1.1 Why Obesity in Chinese Media?

Obesity is usually seen as a physical condition in which a person is severely overweight, e.g., having a Body Mass Index (BMI) score (kg/m^2, one of the most popular and recognised measures of bodily fat) of 30 or above. Getting obese is deemed as sustained changes in the body (from holding less bodily fat to more and finally to too much bodily fat), which is often explained through the energy imbalance, particularly the imbalance

between food overconsumption and physical inactivity. However, such an imbalance model does not help much in explaining the confusing nature of obesity. There remains a strain of unanswered and poorly understood questions around obesity, e.g., why people exercise or do not exercise, why people do not eat better, and why some people eat large amounts of food but keep thin, yet some are reserved in eating but stuck in larger bodies, etc. Given the confusion associated with obesity, the American Association of Clinical Endocrinologists and the American College of Endocrinology propose using a new diagnostic term, i.e., *adiposity-based chronic disease* (ABCD), to replace *obesity* (Mechanick, Hurley, & Garvey, 2017). However, it is not within my intention to discuss different medical terms around obesity. In this project, what I am interested in and aim to explore is the media discourse (for a definition and explanation of *discourse*, see section 1.2) around obesity, specifically in the Chinese context.

It might seem strange, but it is true that Chinese people who used to be thin and underweight are now increasing in body sizes (Pan, Wang, & Pan, 2021). According to 中国居民营养与慢性病状况报告(2020 年)[1] [Report on Nutrition and Chronic Disease Status of Chinese Residents (2020)] released by the Chinese State Council, obesity has become a major public health concern in China. The childhood obesity rate in China has risen from 2.1% in 2002 to 6.4% in 2015 (Tang, Bu, & Dong, 2020). Over 300 million Chinese were overweight in 2017, catching up with or even surpassing the obese population in the United States. The soaring rate of obesity has increased to levels alarming to China's authorities. In October 2016, the Chinese government launched the campaign of 健康中国 2030 [Healthy China 2030], the latest and largest national health plan in China. The plan explicitly states the urgency to combat obesity through 超重、肥胖人口增长速度明显放缓 [a noticeable decline in the increase of overweight and obese population][2]. Various campaigns have been conducted at national and local levels to inform the public of the harm of obesity and stimulate weight control and loss amongst the population.

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[1] 《中国居民营养与慢性病状况报告（2020 年）》发布会图文实录 *[Photo and text record of the press conference on the Report on Nutrition and Chronic Disease Status of Chinese Residents (2020)]*. Retrieved April 2021, from
http://www.scio.gov.cn/xwfbh/xwbfbh/wqfbh/42311/44583/wz44585/Document/1695276/1695276.htm.
[2] 中共中央国务院印发《"健康中国 2030" 规划纲要》*[The Central Committee of the Communist Party of China and the State Council issued the "Healthy China 2030" Plan Outline]*. Retrieved April 2021, from http://www.gov.cn/zhengce/2016-10/25/content_5124174.htm.

In this context, obesity has become a newsworthy topic in China, as reflected by increasing levels of coverage around weight control or weight loss in Chinese media. However, at the same time, the media coverage has been found to stigmatise people living with obesity and foster weight stigma, e.g., fatphobia and negative stereotypes about people with obesity in society (Sun et al., 2021). Having a stigma, 'the situation of the individual who is disqualified from full social acceptance' (Erving, 1963: preface), implies that one or one's group is seen as different (*us* versus *them*) and possesses undesirable characteristics, which may result in negative evaluation towards the group and unequal treatment of them in society.

For example, in Chinese social media, terms like 死胖子[dead fat men], which refers to individuals with obesity as 'the living dead', and 肥猪[fat pigs], which calls the individuals 'pigs', are popularly used to humiliate the individuals. Weight stigma has been found not beneficial for public health. Instead, it may lead to health disparities (Puhl & Heuer, 2010). Many empirical studies have shown that weight stigma is ineffective in promoting healthy dieting and behaviours (Zhu, Smith, & Buteau, 2022). Under the stigma, instead of being motivated to adopt healthier behaviours, people with obesity could feel less capable of controlling their life, which may lead to self-stigma that paradoxically in turn worsens their mental and physical health (Puhl & Heuer, 2009; Vartanian & Porter, 2016, Wanniarachchi, Mathrani, Susnjak, & Scogings, 2020).

For example, weight stigma brings negative consequences, e.g., anxiety, depression and low self-esteem among Chinese adolescents, leading to emotional and uncontrolled eating among the group (Wang et al., 2020). Stigma may also lead to exercise and healthcare avoidance, discouraging individuals living with obesity from expressing and discussing their obesity issues and seeking social support when they are physically and mentally vulnerable. Weight stigma can also lead to self-starvation, which is popular among the weight-conscious public, especially young females, who are anxious about their 'not-thin-enough' or 'would-be-obese' bodies. Recent years have witnessed an increase in Chinese patients with anorexia nervosa due to fat concern, rejection or even phobia (Pike & Dunne, 2015).

Facing those social contexts, understanding and improving health communication surrounding the weight issue really matters. There is a pressing need to explore this highly relevant issue in the Chinese context. Media are the primary source of health

information for the public due to their role as 'an arena where various definitions and redefinitions of public issues take place' (Koteyko, 2014: 545). In particular, media play a crucial role in modern society's prevalence of body shape ideals (Wykes & Gunter, 2005). Up to date, while there have been rich studies on obesity in China in the fields of biosciences or sociologies (e.g., Ma et al., 2021; Zhou, 2019), obesity discourse in Chinese media receives little attention, even though it is a critical part of modern social life in China. It is necessary to pay critical attention to the coverage of obesity in Chinese media, figuring out how their use of anxiety or fear-inducing language has fueled the weight stigma and how the language further shapes the public understanding and evaluation of obesity, as well as people with obesity.

Further, obesity in media is based on and also reflective of its national and local contexts. The Chinese context is different from other countries, predicting this project would be an intellectually interesting endeavour. From a national-level view, China faces the dual burden of coexisting obesity issues and malnutrition in different parts of the country. As a middle-low-income developing country, China falls behind in its socioeconomic development (China ranks around 60th worldwide in 2021 in its GDP per capita). Yet, it witnesses an accelerated rate in its overweight population. A tricky situation of 未富先胖 [Getting fat before getting rich] is faced by the country. Different from the deadly sin of gluttony in Western culture, and also different from the association between a large body size with wealth in some African cultures, obesity in China is located in an in-between space. In detail, in some under-developed areas in China, especially the inland and remote areas in the western part of China, due to the historical fear of hunger, especially the traumatic memory of the famine during 1958-1962, a certain degree of plumpness is deemed as a symbol of wealth and good life-quality, typically seen in phrases like 心宽体胖 [when someone has a broad mind, his body becomes broad as well], which implies that one's weight gain through moderate fat accumulation can be a sign of one's lightheartedness and happiness; however, in the more affluent coastal areas in China, instead of these positive implications, obesity has been more associated with negative connotations, e.g., unhappiness.

As such, the regional differences, especially the different developmental levels in different regions, could lead us to see obesity in China as a 'development' issue, a 'spin-off' and 'wealth deficit' of China's economic development in the past decades (French & Crabbe, 2010: introduction). It is understandable because the obesogenic

environment in China makes it easy for people, especially the new rich or the 'newly emergent middle-class consumers' who have benefited the most from China's current economic context, to gain weight (ibid). Obesity in China has the potential to present unique features of the growing Chinese middle-class, reflecting their obesity-related ideas, norms and values.

Above all, discourses in contemporary China 'can be seen as the largest and most exciting lab for social scientists from both China and abroad' (Ji & Wu, 2018: 232). Given the increasing rate of obesity, the weight stigma and the dramatic sociocultural changes experienced in China in the past decades, obesity in Chinese media warrants more scholarly attention.

1.1.2 Why Metaphor?

Before introducing and explaining *metaphor*, it is necessary to review an umbrella term, i.e., *representation*. According to Hall (1997: 2), representation is the 'production of meaning through language'. As Baker, Gabrielatos, & McEnery (2013: 3) pointed out, when media present information about world events, 'it is never possible to present a completely impartial, accurate and full account of an event, instead the media offer representations of events'. Thus, in this project, what I explore is the 'representation' of obesity in media, in other words, the media's own production and perspective of obesity.

Representation is not straightforward; instead, it inherently involves linguistic choices and negotiations where specific versions gain prominence and priority over others. Language is essential in the process of representation as it is through language that things gain their meanings and later are understood by others. Along with Brookes & Baker (2021), I interpret the language used for representation as *discourse* and representation in this project specifically refers to *discursive representation*. A terminology explanation of *discourse* is needed here. In this project, my use of *discourse* covers both a macro level, i.e., 'a way of thinking about and representing some aspect of reality' and a micro level, i.e., 'the specific manner in which language, texts and images are produced and reproduced in order to achieve particular communicative or ideological ends' (Gwyn, 2002: 1). I draw on definitions of both levels. From this view, *discourse* functions as a hub concept to which different perspectives and approaches at different levels can be connected. Thus, *discourse* in this

project is used in a flexible continuum between a macro and a micro level. Specifically, in this project, the way I use *discourse* involves the broader social values and norms the media hold towards obesity on the one hand, and the specific language resources and phenomena that are used by the media on the obesity issue (thus can be used in a plural form, i.e., *discourses*) on the other hand. Obesity-related discourse is briefly referred to as 'obesity discourse' in this project.

The representing power of discourse is a key concept to note in this project. As Block (2018: 10) argues, discourses are always ideological and positioned in that some discourses are preferred over others and contribute particular meaning and significance to events in the social world. This social constructionism view agrees that 'through discourse that certain, dominant ways of viewing and understanding particular phenomena come to be regarded as *truth*' (Lustig, Brookes, & Hunt, 2021: 2). In the case of obesity, instead of bodily weight itself, it is the meaning and significance of the bodily weight that individuals and societies have attached with obesity, in the form of producing a wide range of discourses, that makes obesity complex and also interesting for discourse analysts. A series of questions come along, e.g., What do we talk about when we talk about obesity? A health issue? A moral issue? An aesthetic issue? Or do we talk about something else? Who talks about obesity, and by whom are we told about obesity? These are vital questions for us to understand the representation of obesity in media.

Among various discursive phenomena, I am particularly interested in the capacity of metaphors (verbal metaphors) to represent obesity (I do not explore visual metaphors, which will be discussed in the limitations of this project). Metaphor is an essential tool of inquiry, which involves talking or potentially thinking about something in terms of something else, where the two things are different, but a certain degree of similarity can be perceived between them (Semino, 2008). What is especially interesting for this project is that metaphors have 'framing' effects: different metaphors reflect and facilitate different ways of making sense of and evaluating a particular topic or experience (Semino, Demjén, & Demmen, 2018: 3). For example, in the metaphorical expression *Obesity is an enemy*, associations of an enemy, e.g., being dangerous and calling for courage and efforts to fight against, are transferred to obesity. Further, as will be argued in this thesis, calling losing weight a journey is different from calling it a fight. Even the same metaphor, e.g., the Journey metaphor, when used in different

contexts (e.g., Chinese media vs. Western media or official media vs. social media inside the Chinese context), imply different meanings to fulfil their different communicative purposes. This relates to an idea I argue for throughout the project, i.e., *metaphorical representations of obesity cannot be fully understood without a detailed exploration of their social, cultural and institutional situatedness*. We need to delineate the contextual specialities, in particular, the social norms of people that might constrain or facilitate their health-related conceptions and practices, just as Koteyko (2014: 543) has reminded us that 'health and illness are given meaning through text and are inextricably linked to the cultural and social context'.

Metaphors also have empirically therapeutic effects. In earlier studies, van der Geest & Whyte (1989) note the practical value of metaphors in helping patients to grasp their illness experience, e.g., making their subjective experience of pain more concrete or even palpable to doctors. Casarett et al. (2010) found that physicians who used more metaphors elicited better patient ratings of communication and achieved better health communication results. Spandler, McKeown, Roy, & Hurley (2013) find the football metaphor encourages men to do emotional disclosure and thus brings positive effects for men to seek psychological services. Recent years have also seen the proposal of metaphor menus to benefit patients and aid health professionals, e.g., the metaphor menu for people living with cancer in the UK proposed by Semino and her colleagues (2018)[3] and the dictionary of mental health metaphors for people with severe mental disorders in Spain by Coll-Florit M., M. Sanfilippo & S. Climent (2021)[4].

To sum up, metaphor offers an essential perspective to exploring health issues. However, despite the widespread uses of metaphor and its versatility in health-related discourse, we still lack an understanding of how metaphor influences health communication outcomes around obesity. This lack is even starker in the Chinese context. Even though health communication scholars (e.g., Paek et al., 2010) have been calling for more studies on Asian societies for many years, we still know little about how a pressing public health issue like obesity is communicated in China, an emerging country in the world arena. This project aims to address this gap. To better explain the research aim, I move on to introduce my research questions.

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[3] *A 'METAPHOR MENU' FOR PEOPLE LIVING WITH CANCER*. Retrieved May 2022, from http://wp.lancs.ac.uk/melc/the-metaphor-menu/.

[4] *Diccionario de metáforas de salud mental [Dictionary of Mental Health Metaphors]*. Retrieved May 2022, from https://sites.google.com/view/metaforas-salud-mental/diccionario?authuser=0.

1.2 Research Questions

Focusing on the obesity discourses in China's official media, i.e., the *People's Daily* and China's social media, i.e., Weibo (with the timeframe between 2010 and 2020), I aim to answer three questions:

1) How is obesity metaphorically represented in the *People's Daily* and Weibo?
2) How do the metaphorical representations of obesity in the *People's Daily* and Weibo differ?
3) How do the metaphorical representations of obesity in the Chinese media relate to broader socio-cultural discourses in contemporary China?

The first question is the overarching question, which will be answered by metaphor analysis on the Corpus of Obesity Discourse in Chinese Media I have built for this project. Based on the first question, the second question tries to identify whether there is variation between the *Daily* and Weibo in their metaphor uses in representing obesity. The third question is more reflective in finding out what motivates the representations. Answering these questions can give us a more complete picture of media representations of obesity in the Chinese context.

1.3 Significance of This Project

This project has both academic and practical relevance:

For academic research, this project is unique in its Chinese focus. Brookes & Hunt (2021: 14) note that health communication in developing countries warrants more scholarly attention. Though recently, more health communication studies in the Asian context have been conducted (e.g., Watson & Krieger, 2020), extant studies are criticised for their relatively unsolid or insufficient theoretical framework (Lwin & Salmon, 2015). This project can show how discourse analysis, specifically metaphor theories, can bring theoretical insights into health communication scholarship in Asia. This project also merits its originality in conducting metaphor analysis on the relatively under-explored Chinese language. It expands prior work on health communication by examining a language other than English.

On a practical level, this project is expected to increase public awareness of their and others' linguistic practices, particularly the metaphor used around obesity. Though successful obesity prevention and treatment require many changes in our society, a sensible starting point could be reviewing, reflecting and revising how we describe and discuss obesity through our language. From a clinical perspective, better knowledge of how obesity is talked about in the media can help medical professionals better explain obesity in their treatment, contributing to increased empathy towards people with obesity and achieving better health communication experiences and outcomes. In the long run, this is also helpful for issuing and practising better-informed obesity-related health policies in China.

Moreover, writing the thesis during the global epidemic of novel coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) and the higher obesity risk and a potential rise in weight stigma brought by it has made this project in many ways 'hot off the shelf' (The Covid-19 is still raging at the time of writing this chapter, September 2022). Weight stigmatisation has led to a more significant decline in the well-being of individuals with obesity during the pandemic (Sutin et al., 2021). This project is expected to help send 'educational and informative but also supportive' public health messaging around obesity (Stewart & Ogden, 2022). Findings on obesity can also be expected to be used to communicate about other related issues, e.g., postpartum depression, where pregnancy obesity is a major cause.

1.4 Outline of the Thesis

The thesis consists of ten chapters. Following this introduction, I explain various obesity discourses in the media (Chapter 2). I then introduce my theoretical underpinnings of metaphor, including a general introduction of major metaphor theories (Chapter 3) and a more focused explanation of metaphor in health communication (Chapter 4). This progression allows readers to begin with general ideas of metaphors and later 'zoom in' on the most relevant metaphor scholarship for this project. Later, I explain my data and methodology (Chapter 5), results and findings (Chapters 6-9) and conclusion (Chapter 10).

Chapter 2 provides an overview of different discourses around obesity in the media, aiming to reveal the intertwined discourses around obesity. Specifically, I explain four

discourses around obesity in Western media, i.e., medicalised, moralised, gendered, and politicalised. I also show the limited studies on obesity discourse in the Chinese media. A key point this chapter aims to prove is that obesity is not simply about bodily weight but is a socially constructed phenomenon represented in diverse discourses.

Chapter 3 provides a broad view of three major strands of metaphor theories this project draws on: a) conceptual metaphor theory, b) critical metaphor studies, and c) discourse dynamics approach. I explain how the theories shed light on my metaphor analysis. I further introduce metaphor studies in the Chinese language. Readers of this chapter will see how I broadly approach metaphor and some special issues in analysing Chinese metaphors.

Chapter 4 focuses on metaphors in health communication. I first introduce a key concept, i.e., metaphorical framing. Later I examine two prevalent metaphors in health communication, i.e., the Journey metaphor and the War metaphor. A central idea I propose in this chapter is that there are no, by default, positive or negative metaphors and the framing effects of metaphors are context-based. Later, I present metaphor studies focusing on obesity, which are somewhat limited and call for more studies. Following the review (along with the metaphor theories presented in Chapter 3), I introduce the novelty of this project, especially the multi-level metaphor analysis model. Through this chapter, readers will know the most relevant metaphor literature for this project and understand how this project is built upon and novel from the existing scholarship.

Chapter 5 introduces my data and methodology. I start by introducing the media landscape in China. I then introduce how I collect data and construct my corpus from different media, focusing on the challenges in the process, e.g., the sampling criteria. I also explain how I identify linguistic metaphors in my data, especially in terms of the unique linguistic structures in the Chinese language. Readers of this chapter will see how I manage to construct my corpus and identify metaphors in my corpus.

Chapters 6-9 bring us to the detail of how this project answers the research questions and what answers this project gets. Chapter 6 commences the metaphor analysis by presenting big-picture findings. I present the quantitative results of my metaphor analysis, including the frequency and types of metaphors in my corpus. I decided on the three most dominant metaphors, i.e., Journey, War and Money, to which I have devoted

individual chapters, thus setting the scene for the remainder of the thesis. To cover a more complete picture, I also briefly introduce some less frequent metaphors, i.e., Dehumanisation/Personification, Disease and Education, to give some preliminary texture of my metaphor analysis and first gaze at the different representations of obesity in my corpus.

Chapter 7 analyses Journey metaphors. I first present the frequency of different Journey metaphors in my corpus. In detail, the editorials focus on "position", "path" and "co-travellers", while the blogs focus on "position", "path" and "way of movement". Based on this, I propose systematic journey metaphors and illustrate them through qualitative case studies. The key finding is that the editorials depict a collective journey aiming for national progress and prosperity. In contrast, the blogs depict an individual journey in life trajectory, especially in terms of upward social mobility.

Chapter 8 investigates War metaphors. I show that the editorials and blogs use different wars to represent obesity. In detail, the editorials focus on "war strategy", "danger," and "battle", while the blogs focus on "battle", "war strategy" and "win/lose". The systematic war metaphor analysis has shown that the editorials highlight the government's 'military commander' role and the danger obesity brings to the nation. By comparison, in the blogs, 'tough-love' towards oneself is stressed as a strategy to lose weight through which individuals can avoid becoming 'losers' at the societal level. I also discuss the overlapping framing effects of War metaphors which frame individuals with obesity as the enemies, the warriors, the war strategies, and the battlefields simultaneously in the war against obesity.

Chapter 9 considers Money metaphors. I show that the editorials and blogs turn to different elements of money to discuss obesity. In detail, the editorials frame obesity as a national economic burden and losing weight can help to contribute to national wealth. On the other hand, the blogs represent obesity as a symbol of poverty or the predictor of one's future poverty and losing weight is deemed necessary for self-promotion. Based on these metaphors, I explain how neoliberal ideologies impact body-related ideologies in China. I also discuss the different connotations of 'poverty' and their relation to obesity in the Chinese context.

Chapter 10 is the conclusion chapter. I tie together the significant findings of the previous chapters around two key questions: What is behind obesity? Who should be

responsible for obesity? I relate my metaphor analysis to the two questions, i.e., how different metaphors and their implications answer the two questions. Later, I reflect on the ramification of the metaphors and give some suggestions for changing the metaphors in the media. In the end, I reflect on the merits and limitations of this project, suggest directions for future studies and present my concluding remarks.

In sum, what this project attempts to do is, in fact, rather new and complicated. Throughout the chapters, I have tried to present my theoretical assumptions and methodological decisions in a self-reflective and explicit way. However, as I have explained, the topic at hand is complicated and relatively under-explored, with few previous studies (at least in the Chinese context). There will always be rebuttals to my analysis in this project. I thus hope this project can bring out more health communication studies around obesity in the Chinese context. Bearing all these in mind, I now move on to introduce media discourse around obesity in Chapter 2.

Chapter 2: Obesity in the Media

2.1 Introduction

In this chapter, I explain obesity discourses in the media. Though Chinese media differ considerably from other media, it is helpful to get some references from how other media (mainly the Western media) have represented obesity. To this end, I first explain obesity discourses in Western media (section 2.2). Specifically, I review four discourses around obesity, i.e., medicalised discourse (section 2.2.1), moralised discourse (section 2.2.2), gendered discourse (section 2.2.3), and politicalised discourse (section 2.2.4). I also review obesity discourses in Chinese media (section 2.3), which are admittedly limited but also bring essential insights. At last, I summarise the existing studies on obesity discourses in media and point out some open issues calling for more studies (section 2.4).

2.2. Obesity Discourse in Western Media

Western media in this project refers to media in the 'developed countries, with capitalist market economies and formally democratic political structures' (Hardy, 2010: 1). As a prominent health issue in Western countries, obesity has been a popular topic of media coverage in Western media since the 1980s (Lupton, 2013). Growing studies have explored how the media have covered obesity. This vein of research generally conducts content analysis and has been conducted in the USA (Barry, Brescoll, & Gollust, 2013), the UK (Nimegeer, Patterson, & Hilton, 2019), Germany (Hilbert & Ried, 2009), Canada (Holmes, 2009), Spain (Ortiz-Barreda, Vives-Cases, & Ortiz-Moncada, 2012). Recent studies have started to adopt linguistic approaches, e.g., the recently finished research project on obesity in the British media by Brookes & Baker (2021) and the in-progress counterpart project on obesity in Australian media by Vanichkina & Bednarek (2022).

Among the large volume of media coverage on obesity, according to Atanasova, Koteyko, & Gunter (2012) and Brookes & Baker (2021), the coverage mainly falls into three frames of obesity, i.e., the medical frame which constructs obesity as a disease, societal responsibility frame which highlights the role of government and society in the obesity issue, and the individual responsibility frame which foregrounds personal

responsibility for obesity. Based on the three frames, in more detail, I classify four problems around obesity and their discourses in media, i.e., obesity as a health problem (medicalised discourse); obesity as a moral problem (moralised discourse); obesity as an aesthetic problem (gendered discourse); and obesity as a political problem (politicalised discourse). Please note that the four problems are interconnected or even with some overlapping in nature. I distinguish them for the convenience of presenting related work and, more importantly, for revealing the multidimensional and complex nature of obesity discourse.

2.2.1 Medicalised Discourse on Obesity

It is appropriate to begin a discussion on obesity discourse in media regarding the medicalisation of obesity. Despite the reductive link between bodily weight and one's health, e.g., some people could be 'fat yet fit', obesity has generally been deemed as a medical issue, as shown in its wide-accepted (also taken-for-granted) definition in the World Health Organisation (WHO) (2022) that obesity is 'abnormal or excessive fat accumulation that presents a risk to health'[5].

There is an increasing consensus that obesity has been 'medicalised' (Conrad, 2007). Medicalisation is 'the expansion of medical jurisdiction, authority, and practices into new realms' (Clarke et al., 2003) or a process by which 'nonmedical problems become defined and treated as medical problems, usually in terms of illnesses or disorders' (Conrad, 1992) (e.g., the medicalisation of hair loss among men in Harvey, 2013). Medicalisation is also seen in a trend where medical attention shifts its focus away from the eradication of diseases to the maintenance of fitness and health, where daily activities, e.g., sleep, food intake and exercise, are sanctioned based on whether they help maintain health (Brookes & Hunt, 2021). Health has become an unequivocally positive and obligatory goal that individuals are urged to pursue in their life.

In the case of obesity, many people think and worry a lot about their bodily weight because obesity is deemed hazardous to health, e.g., bringing higher risks of cardiovascular diseases and cancer. Despite the efforts of health-at-every-size (HAES) activists who try to loosen and deconstruct the link between mortality and weight (Penney & Kirk, 2015), as well as the groups which aim to reduce the weight stigma,

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[5] *Obesity*. WHO. Retrieved June 2022, from https://www.who.int/health-topics/obesity#tab=tab_1.

e.g., the National Association to Advance Fat Acceptance, it is undoubted that obesity has primarily been associated with health problems, or be deemed as an 'illness' category itself by the public. I prefer using 'illness' to 'disease' to describe obesity in this project. As argued by Frank (2013) that 'illness' is a social experience, while 'disease' is a physiological process, or 'patients suffer "illness" and doctors diagnose and treat "disease" (Eisenberg, 1977), it is more appropriate to use 'illness' to describe obesity in this project.

In media, a typical example of the 'illness' status of obesity is typically seen in the metaphorical phrase '*obesity epidemic*', especially the choice of the evocative word '*epidemic*', which means '*rapid spread of infectious disease to a large number of people in a given population within a short period of time*' (Wikipedia). Early appearance of the metaphor was seen in the New York Times in 1994, '*We're frightened right now because obesity is an epidemic that has made all of us wake up*' (cited from Boero, 2007: 43). More media enthusiastically echoed the alarm and now the epidemic metaphor has been popularly used to the extent of being natural or even taken for granted. However, it needs to be mentioned that though obesity is not of infectious origin and communicable nature from a strictly medical sense, associations of globalisation have made obesity appear to be socially transmittable through lifestyle choices, e.g., similar eating and physical activities (Kumanyika, 2007), especially given the spread of fast-food worldwide. As argued by Wright & Harwood (2009), the 'obesity epidemic' now has become one of the most potent and pervasive discourses influencing our ways of thinking about health and the body in modern society.

Yet, without specific pathogens, the 'obesity epidemic' has caused heated discussions and extensive academic scrutiny. For example, Boero (2007), based on content analysis of 751 articles on obesity published in the *New York Times*, points out that the obesity epidemic has been extended from a traditional epidemic like cholera to a 'post-modern' epidemic, where unevenly medicalised phenomena lacking a clear pathological basis put everyone at risk of obesity. Similarly, Wright & Harwood (2009) argue that medicalised discourses exaggerate the health problem of obesity, and they call for alternative ways of thinking about obesity. Hilton, Patterson, & Teyhan (2012) conduct the first large-scale examination of the obesity epidemic in the UK newspapers covering the period of 1996-2010. Based on a content analysis of 2,414 news articles, they find that over half of the articles report on the health implication of obesity, showing the

British media's fever in medicalising obesity. There are studies, however, favouring and justifying the 'epidemic' on the other hand. For example, Bonfiglioli et al. (2007) claim that Australian television news portrays obesity largely only as a personal health issue, thus missing an opportunity to generate adequate and united support for addressing obesity. In more depth, Holmes (2009) argues that the 'epidemic' framing in media provides an opportunity to strengthen national pride based on the argument that while obesity as an illness can be framed as a risk to the individual, an epidemic presents a threat to populations and therefore needs to be addressed at the population level through collective focused efforts.

Covid-19 has witnessed highlighted medicalised discourse of the 'obesity epidemic' in the media (Prohaska, 2022). In particular, the epidemic contributes to increased obesity stigma (Gailey, 2022). However, the relationship between the medicalisation of obesity and weight stigma is complicated. For example, Hoyt et al. (2017) find that framing obesity as a disease, compared with framing obesity as changeable through exercise and diet, has two contradictory effects at the same time: 1) it decreases the blame on obesity and 'decreases' the anti-fat prejudice; 2) while it also increases the belief that weight is unchangeable and in this way 'increases' anti-fat prejudice. Such opposing effects show the complex nature of obesity stigma. It makes the moralised discourse on obesity especially complex, which I move on to explore below.

2.2.2 Moralised Discourse on Obesity

As health has become a new morality (Metzl & Kirkland, 2010), the medicalisation of obesity has the potential to reduce obesity into a moral issue (Kite et al., 2022), further a form of symbolic violence toward individuals living with obesity (Gailey, 2022). In contrast to other health concerns like cancer or flu, individuals with obesity are blamed for their body size for eating too much and exercising too little. Though people gain weight and become obese for different reasons, e.g., due to stress, not getting enough sleep, genetic reasons or simply because of other health issues, obesity has been overwhelming deemed a fault made by the individuals, which implies that they would not be obese if they do not make mistakes and behave in a right way. In early studies, the moralised discourse around obesity is caught by Burka (1996: 258):

We live in an era in which greed is supposed to be expressed through ambition, not indulgence; in which we are led toward excessive consumption of products and services, not food. The standards for what is or is not attractive become equated with what is good or bad, right or wrong, and so matters of appearance become confused with issues of morality.

In the modern era, people assume moral responsibility for their physical appearances. A moral agenda has been set up to link obesity with moral decay. The moral annotations around obesity work by constructing a fantastic body, epitomised by a well-behaved body that is slim, strong and self-disciplined. Approximation to the fantastic body becomes the basis by which people are given moral legitimacy, and deviance brings obesity stigma.

Media have played an important role in fueling the obesity stigma. Though the focus of media reporting has tried to shift away from the individual to societal solutions to obesity and more external responsibility is found on the part of society and institutions (Nimegeer, Patterson, & Hilton, 2019), stigmatisation of people with obesity based on the notion of individual responsibility is easily seen and remains dominant in the media. For example, Saguy & Almeling (2008) examine the interconnected role of medical science and news reporting in shaping how obesity is represented in the US media. Their study finds that the media dramatise and even exaggerate individual blame for weight by colouring morally neutral scientific accounts with moral overtones. Similarly, in reviewing research published between 1994 and 2009 in the US, Ata & Thompson (2010) find a wide range of media—from television shows to books, newspapers, and the internet—negatively portray individuals with obesity via i) idealisation of body types that are inconsistent with being overweight and ii) under-representation and stereotyping of the individuals. Hilbert & Ried (2009) also find similar tendencies in the German media. They analyse 1,563 issues of five high-circulation daily newspapers in Germany, showing that the coverage of obesity in daily newspapers contributes to the perpetuation or generation of stigmatising attitudes in Germany.

All the above studies prove the media reinforce a dichotomous role around obesity, i.e., the thin moral and the fat immoral, which is also seen in national comparison. For example, Atanasova & Koteyko (2017) observe a shared cross-national framing of obesity in terms of self-control, underscoring individual responsibility in both British

and German news. Such individual responsibility-based moral judgement is not only seen in traditional media. Compared with traditional media, social media even more blatantly express weight bias. For example, Yoo & Kim (2012) analyse 417 obesity videos on YouTube and find that the videos carry a theme of weight-based teasing or show obese persons engaging in stereotypical eating behaviours, which could further reinforce the bias towards obesity. Based on an analysis of 2.2 million posts, Chou, Prestin, & Kunath (2014) also find weight stigmatisation or even weight-based cyberbullying marked by sentiments of anger, disgust, and alienation on Twitter and Facebook. In recent studies, individuals with obesity are found to face harsher weight stigma during Covid-19 in the British media (e.g., Carbone-Moane & Guise, 2021) based on the idea that the individuals lack self-governance, cost the taxpayers' money and bring an additional burden to the NHS (the National Health Service). For example, Brookes (2021a) finds that more stigmatising discourses, especially the fatalistic terms (e.g., *die*, *dying*), are produced by English media in the pandemic context to blame the individuals with obesity for being responsible for the problem facing the NHS.

Thus, individuals with obesity are positioned as being responsible for their health and simultaneously adding a burden to society. Moral judgement, in particular, expands to the field of gender, which I move on to explain in the next section.

2.2.3 Gendered Discourse on Obesity

If the medicalised and moralised discourses of obesity discussed above appeal to reason and rationality, then emotions and affect are mobilised in the gender, specifically the gender aesthetic dimension of obesity. Aesthetics, broadly referring to the particular insight that a strong sense of beauty imparts (Korsmeyer, 2004: 37), is a key dimension in gender. Physical appearance, especially bodily weight, has become a key measure of one's gender identity. Though obesity has long been related to aesthetics, recent times have witnessed an unprecedented preoccupation with the beauty of Thin-Ideal (Harper & Tiggemann, 2008). Thinness is attached to beauty, while obesity is attached to ugliness, unpleasantness, or even repulsiveness. The media, filled with lookism, prejudice or discrimination based on one's physical appearance, use plenty of editorial space and sensational headlines to reinforce the dichotomy between the Thin-Ideal and the Fat-Ugly. Young girls, in particular, are told that being thin is beautiful and being

fat is ugly. By sending information about 'what is beautiful/ugly', the media convey strictly defined gender norms of beauty.

For example, Sandberg (2007) examines 1,925 articles on obesity in Swedish daily newspapers (1997-2001) and finds out obesity and overweight are mainly represented as a beauty dilemma, especially for women. Similarly, Murray (2008: 2) supports that fatness or obesity is inherently gendered, and fat women are especially cast as less-than-woman. Grant, Soltani Panah, & McCosker (2022) find that obesity-related terms in the Australian news media from the 1990s to 2019 were stigmatised, particularly towards femininity. Thinness has become a vital premise for women to maintain femininity under the male gaze. Under pressure to be thin, prevalent body dissatisfaction, shame, anxiety and depression are well observed among women (Wardle, Waller, & Rapoport, 2001).

Against this background, feminist scholars have criticised the narrowly defined and unrealistic thin-ideal presented in the media. For example, Gilman (2010: 102) laments the long-time equation of the obesity problem with the 'women problem' in history. Lupton (2013: 53) criticises the media's frequent use of arresting 'before and after' photographs around weight loss. The juxtaposition of attractive (after) and ugly (before) bodies inculcates perceptions that the pursuit of thinness is an unquestioned prescription for beauty and youth. Recent studies have found that such aesthetic pressure is not exclusive to women. Men are also under the pressure of obesity-related body dissatisfaction delivered by the media. Muscle dysmorphia, low self-esteem in the body, excessive and addictive exercising and drug-taking for weight control and muscle building are on the rise among young men (Gough, Seymour-Smith, & Matthews, 2016; Weltzin et al., 2005). Therefore, it is justified to say obesity has become a gender issue both for men and women.

Besides the aesthetic dimension, recent studies have also found different gender representations regarding obesity in the media. For example, De Brún et al. (2013) find that in the Irish media, as caregivers, women are framed as gatekeepers for men's and children's diets while men are portrayed as unaware and unconcerned about their weight. Similar gender representation is also found by Brookes and Baker (2021) in British media. Their study finds that the UK press media reflect and reinforce the traditional rigid ideologies of femininity and masculinity in their coverage of obesity. For example,

women's weight loss narratives, apart from male-gazed aesthetics of beauty (e.g., fitting into a wedding gown or bikini), also focus on their roles as mothers or wives (e.g., they are deemed responsible for the obesity of their kids), while men's are more likely to be represented in the arena of health concerns.

Thus, obesity has become a gender issue as it defines gender norms, or what bodily weight women or men are urged to have to keep their gender identities. The representation also reinforces the stereotypical gender norms, e.g., the roles of women and men in family life widely accepted in society. Closely linked with the gendered discourse is the politicisation of obesity in the media, which I move to discuss in the next section.

2.2.4 Politicalised Discourse on Obesity

Though usually health issues are deemed apolitical, as a contemporary manifestation of 'the personal is political', personal experience of health issues is now brought into the public and political sphere. By 'politicisation', I mean the intrusion of politics, e.g., the powerful institutions, into personal health. According to my observation, the intrusion could be seen from two levels: an overall level that takes society as a whole and a sectional level that focuses on specific groups inside a society.

For the overall level, obesity reflects deep-seated political insecurities and tensions between the public and the general political system. Gard & Wright (2005) argue that the media's immense coverage of obesity expresses the fear of Western decadence and decline or the effortless Western lifestyle, which has become progressively hostile towards physical activity and dietary restraint. Obesity, by embodying the decadence, could be interpreted as rebelling, protesting or even rejecting a flawless, robust and responsible Western style. Based on the worrying decaying Western system, a more recent trend is seen in a neoliberal view of individuals as self-governing independent entities engaging in endless self-examination and improvement (Peterson, 1997). Obesity is deemed more problematic in a society where individual responsibilities are more stressed (Monaghan, Bombak, & Rich, 2018).

From a sectional level, as suggested in the fear among the status-anxious middle-class (Ehrenreich, 1987), the media repeatedly associate obesity with lower socioeconomic status. In earlier studies, based on 1,660 adults representative of a residential area in

midtown Manhattan, Goldblatt, Moore & Stunkard (1965) find that obesity was six times more common among women of low status compared to those of high status. Recently, Brookes and Baker (2021) also find that unequal class relations are drivers of obesity incidence and health inequalities in the UK. The media's stereotypical depiction of certain social groups could produce political bias and inequality. For example, Saguy & Almeling (2008) identify several groups, such as the poor, African Americans, and Latinos, as the main fat groups reported in the US media. In subsequent work, Saguy & Gruys (2010) examine how many news articles about obesity mentioned specific racial or ethnic groups. They found that articles mentioned non-whites more frequently than whites. Though they do not examine the effects of these depictions, they conjecture that 'since overweight/obesity is described as a problem most common among the poor and minorities, such news reporting on obesity reinforces stereotypes of poor minorities as ignorant or willfully defiant of health guidelines' (Saguy & Gruys, 2010: 247). Put in another way, if a certain group of people is more commonly related to obesity, stereotypes that the group is weak-willed, lazy, sloppy, incompetent and untrustworthy may become attached and established in the society, thus additionally burdening and weakening the group who are already subject to social marginalisation, which again have the potential in causing obesity and thus forming a vicious circle. The contention between the culture of self-autonomy in freely choosing a lifestyle and the intervention from government has made obesity a central issue in power relations within modern politics.

In conclusion, based on the above discourses, Western media have problematised obesity and deemed individuals with obesity physically weak, morally condemned, aesthetically unattractive (sexually undesirable) and politically disadvantaged. Will the tendency reflected in the Western media also be seen in Chinese media? I now shift my attention to examining obesity discourse in Chinese media.

2.3 Obesity Discourse in Chinese Media

Compared with research on obesity discourse in Western media, much less is known about how obesity is represented in Chinese media. Though a book-length study, i.e., *Fat China: How Expanding Waistlines are Changing a Nation*, has been done by French & Crabbe (2010), suggesting obesity as a wealth deficit of China's economic

growth, a systematic exploration of obesity coverage in Chinese media is still lacking, which is surprising given the widespread stigma-inducing language observed therein.

There are two possible reasons for this neglect: first, coverage of obesity in Chinese media is largely taken for granted by its recipients. Weight stigma remains socially and culturally acceptable. People seem to uncritically accept the coverage of obesity in the media without questioning it. The limited public awareness of the framing effects of the media discourse on obesity leads to the lack of scholarly scrutiny on it; second, even for scholars who are critical of the discourse, the interdisciplinary investigation of obesity discourse in media means that there are no readily available theoretical frameworks for analysing the discourse. Some discourse analysts are simply unfamiliar with or feel awed by the potential complex work in analysing obesity discourse, especially in Chinese media, a context with intertwined social, cultural and political factors. They are further faced with the lack of integrated research methods to guide their collection of the media data and the dilemma of what to do, say or analyse once the data are collected.

Nevertheless, I have found a handful of content-analysis studies on obesity discourses in Chinese media, which can give us some preliminary clues. Earlier work is seen in Cui, Hu, & Ma (2005) in analysing 517 obesity-related Chinese news collected from Google in 2003. Their study reveals that most news focus on defining obesity and introducing solutions to losing weight. Later, Yi, Zhao, & Li (2011) explore 958 childhood obesity-related news on China Central Television (CCTV), another major official medium in China, from 1987 to 2009. They find that the media tend to report more on individual factors than social factors in accounting for the causes of and solutions to obesity.

Similarly, Yi, Xu, Zhao, & Li (2012) collect and analyse a larger sampling of obesity-related news (1,599 pieces) on CCTV from 1982 to 2009. They also find that obesity is mostly depicted as an individual problem regarding responsibility, causes and solutions. More recent work is seen in Jiang's (2019) analysis of 399 obesity-related news in two health-centred Chinese newspapers, i.e., 健康报 [Jiankang Bao] (literal translation, *Health Newspaper*) and 健康时报[Jiankang Shibao] (literal translation, *Health Timely Newspaper*) during the timeframe between 2003-2017. The findings reveal that the two newspapers prefer to take a neutral stance in introducing information about obesity-related seminars and conferences to function as public health pedagogic sites. Though stigmatisation of obesity is not noticeable in the news, individual behaviours still

dominate the causes of and solutions to obesity in the two newspapers, e.g., blame is assigned to the parents and school teachers who failed to provide healthy food for the children. A step further, Sun et al. (2021) find that obesity is generally depicted as a 'self-regulated epidemic' in Chinese newspapers. Their study finds significant differences between different newspapers: compared with commercial newspapers, government-funded newspapers mention societal drivers of obesity more frequently. A comparison study is done by Chang, Schulz, Jiao, & Liu (2021) on the ten years of news text (2009-2019) on obesity-related coverage in China's mainland, Hongkong and Taiwan. Their study finds Taiwan has the highest intensity of newspaper coverage of obesity. The obesity epidemic and personal afflictions are the most prominent themes of the newspapers in the three areas, delivering blaming discourse for the individuals with obesity.

Based on the above studies, we can make a preliminary conclusion that despite some consideration of social factors, representations of obesity in Chinese media largely focus on individual lifestyles or behaviour. Individual factors are continually stressed when considering the causes and the responsibilities of obesity. Compared with the diverse studies on obesity in the Western media (i.e., the four problems and discourses aforementioned), existing studies in the Chinese media stop at discussing obesity as a health issue (nevertheless, with implications of moral judgement), with no discourse analysis on the gender and political dimensions of obesity.

2.4 Summary: Open Issues in Obesity Discourse in Media

In this chapter, I have demonstrated how obesity is subject to various discourses in the media. Given the huge volume of relevant studies, I have not been able to address all discourses in detail, but they have offered insights into the representations of obesity in the media. These discourses point to the fact that obesity has extended from a physical signifier of one's bodily weight to a social signifier of a physically ill, morally failing, sexually unattractive and politically insignificant subject. Yet, still, there remain some open issues to be addressed:

1) First, in terms of the scope of the media, existent research is mainly limited to the Western media, either focusing on one country (especially the USA) or the comparison between the European countries (e.g., Britain vs. Germany by

Atanasova & Koteyko, 2017), leaving the Asian context largely underexplored. Obesity in the Chinese media has received little academic attention;

2) Second, the extant research has failed to explore the rich content of obesity discourses. According to Atanasova, Koteyko, & Gunter (2012), multi-dimensional studies on obesity discourses are called, which could include the analysis of journalistic news values, political leanings and style of media outlets, emotion-eliciting language, readers' comments (e.g., Brookes and Baker, 2021) and obesity-related news visuals. Likewise, Patterson & Johnston (2012) also call for advancing obesity scholarship by conceptualising 'obesity epidemic' as a 'hybrid' construction, interacting with biophysical, socioeconomic and cultural forces;

3) Third, obesity discourse in Chinese media, along with studies on them, stays at a 'superficial' level, e.g., explaining the harm of obesity and proposing some solutions. Superficial as they are, they have retained a strong moral component by blaming individuals with obesity. As people do the moral evaluation in culturally relevant ways, figuring out the moral discourse around obesity requires academic attention to explore the sociocultural factors (e.g., the media styles, the body-related ideology in the society, or the overall socio-cultural ecology) in the Chinese context.

To sum up, regarding the obesity issue, media coverage of obesity in the Western context is highlighted, while the media coverage of obesity in China, situated in its unique social-cultural contexts, remains ignored. The under-researched topic of obesity in Chinese media, more specifically, the lack of a systematic exploration of discursive strategies used to represent obesity in Chinese media, is what I want to address in this project. For this end, I move on to introduce my theoretical underpinning, i.e., metaphor, in Chapter 3.

Chapter 3: A General Introduction of Metaphor

3.1 Introduction

Metaphor is among the most popular concepts in Applied Linguistics today, but at the same time, and perhaps because of its popularity, it is also among the most contested and controversial, which can be seen in various approaches to metaphor studies. The diversity in metaphor scholarship has led to individual metaphor scholars 'exhibiting the strong tendency to focus on certain aspects of metaphors and adopt one perspective on metaphor use (e.g., cognitive or linguistic) while downplaying or ignoring others (e.g., social or cultural)' (Gibbs & Cameron, 2008: 65). It is justified for scholars to focus on the aspects that are most relevant for their research questions, but it is important for researchers to position themselves with the theoretical underpinning that best suits their goals. Thus, this chapter is not a complete review of metaphor literature. Rather, it is meant to review the metaphor theories most relevant for answering my research questions.

I identify three key issues in my metaphor analysis: the framing function of metaphor, the need for critical reflection on the metaphor uses, and the context-dependent nature of metaphor uses and their communicative functions. Based on the three issues, I identify three lines of studies that are most relevant for this project: Conceptual Metaphor Theory (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980), which lays the foundation for contemporary metaphor studies; Critical Metaphor Analysis (Charteris-Black, 2004), which critically reviews the communicative and ideological purposes of metaphors; and the Discourse Dynamics Approach (Cameron & Maslen, 2010), which helps to improve the rigour, reliability and explicitness of metaphor analysis through paying close attention to the dynamic communicative context of metaphors. The coming sections are devoted to introducing the three lines in order.

3.2 Conceptual Metaphor Theory

Conceptual Metaphor Theory (henceforth CMT) was proposed by Lakoff & Johnson (1980) and developed by Lakoff and colleagues (Lakoff, 1995; Lakoff, Espenson, Goldberg, & Schwartz, 1991; Lakoff, Johnson, & Sowa, 1999; Johnson, 1999). The ground-breaking book, i.e., *Metaphors We Live By* (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980), shifts

metaphor from a figure of speech to a figure of thought. While traditionally metaphor is understood as a comparison between two different (with certain aspects in common nevertheless) things, which at some level involves cognitive processing, the most revolutionary and remarkable message from CMT is that metaphor is primarily a matter of thought and secondarily a matter of language.

CMT differentiates two kinds of metaphors: linguistic metaphors, i.e., the linguistic expressions used metaphorically and conceptual metaphors, i.e., the conceptual patterns we rely on in life to think about the world. In detail, CMT explains a conceptual metaphor as CONCEPTUAL DOMAIN A IS CONCEPTUAL DOMAIN B (with the cognitive tradition, small capitals are used to indicate a conceptual mapping). A conceptual metaphor is understanding one domain of experience in terms of another. A key term in the definition is 'domain', which refers to any coherent organisation of human experience (Kövecses, 2010). A default direction of metaphorical conceptualisation is from the more tangible (thus concrete) to the less tangible (thus abstract) (e.g., LIFE IS A JOURNEY). In this way, we can draw on our knowledge about a more tangible domain like a journey which we can apply to understand the less tangible domain like life. There are similar examples in conceptual metaphors like ARGUMENT IS WAR, etc.

Within CMT, the relationship between linguistic and conceptual metaphors is like this: the linguistic metaphors (i.e., the way of talking) make the conceptual metaphors (i.e., the way of thinking) explicit. CMT deems metaphorical words people use in communication (i.e., linguistic metaphors) as 'mere surface' phenomena and the 'real business' of 'underlying' structures (i.e., the conceptual metaphors) are the 'hidden' realm of people's representations (Musolff & Zinken, 2009: 3). Later, Lakoff & Johnson developed a more complicated version of CMT by integrating, for example, Grady's (1997) theory of *primary metaphor* and Fauconnier & Lakoff's (2005) theory of *conceptual blending*. Among them, a key improvement in the new version is the insertion of Grady's (1997) decomposition between two conceptual metaphors: primary and complex metaphors. Primary metaphors derive directly from our common bodily experience and therefore are more likely to be universal (cross-cultural), while complex metaphors are combinations of primary metaphors and contextual-specific cultural beliefs and assumptions. For example, journey metaphors are complex forms of the primary metaphor 'PURPOSES ARE DESTINATIONS'. Thus, complex metaphors are more culture-specific. To some extent, this distinction between primary and complex

metaphors has helped to solve the question of metaphorical universality, a key criticism faced by CMT. However, as will be discussed later, CMT has received sharp criticism from various angles.

Later, apart from Lakoff and his colleagues, other scholars have developed (e.g., Gibbs, 1994, 2008; Kövecses, 2005, 2015), tested (e.g., Croft & Cruse, 2004; Thibodeau & Boroditsky, 2011), evaluated (e.g., Gibbs, 2011) and applied (e.g., Creed & Nacey, 2020; Hidalgo-Downing, Kraljevic Mujic, & Nuñez-Perucha, 2013) CMT in a variety of genres. More recently, Kövecses (2017) proposed his framework of a 'multi-level view of conceptual metaphor' where conceptual metaphors simultaneously involve conceptual structures on four levels of schematicity: the level of image schemas, the level of domains, the level of frames and the level of mental spaces. Such a multi-level view proposes metaphor is cross-dimensional, which has also been argued in this project.

To sum up, the overall focus, as well as the contribution of CMT, is adding a cognitive dimension to metaphor and thus lifts metaphor from the level of being a decorative device to a cognitive one (Deignan, 2005). According to CMT, we can gain insights into underlying conceptual representations by observing how people use metaphors. However, despite its wide and popular application, CMT has been under harsh criticism. As McGlone (2007: 122) concludes, 'its atmospheric influence notwithstanding, the [conceptual metaphor] view has not fared well theoretically or empirically', CMT has been subject to the following criticisms:

1) Firstly, methodologically, CMT is accused of studying metaphors based on lexical or intuitively plausible and decontextualised sentences but not attested linguistic data in a real context (e.g., the interview on Gibbs and Steen in Rasulić, 2017). For example, the studies have been largely based on introspection or eclectic collections of linguistic data. This problem has been largely solved by the increasing application of corpus tools (e.g., Deignan, 2005) and the conference series Researching and Applying Metaphor (RaAM). Another methodological problem is that CMT fails to explain how it can identify metaphors in natural language data, as its practice is restricted to native speakers' intuitive judgments about metaphor identification. For this problem, the Metaphor Identification procedure (MIP) (Pragglejaz Group, 2007) and the more recently developed MIPVU (Steen et al., 2010), to a large extent, help solidify the metaphor identification process. MIP and

MIPVU are explicit and reliable procedures for identifying metaphorically used words in texts. The identification will be covered in Chapter 5 and so will not be described here;

2) Secondly, there are doubts about how conventional and 'dead' metaphors achieve cross-domain mapping. Kövecses (2010: xi) argues that metaphors 'may have been alive and vigorous at some point but later have become commonplace with constant use that by now they have lost their vigour and have ceased to be metaphors at all'. For example, Steen (2013: 31-32) doubts that 'why would people have to re-enact the same mappings, […], over and over again if they have conventionalized metaphorical senses at their disposal that they can pull directly from their mental dictionaries when needed?' Holding a somewhat different view, Kövecses (2010: xi) includes conventional or dead metaphors in his conceptual metaphor analysis, commenting that 'what is deeply rooted, hardly noticed, and thus effortlessly used is most active in thought' and that metaphors 'may be highly conventional and effortlessly used, but it does not mean that they have lost their vigour in thought'. Bowdle & Gentner (2005) propose their hypothesis, i.e., the 'Career of Metaphor', which postulates a shift in the mapping mode from comparison to categorisation as metaphors become conventionalised. Thibodeau, Matlock, & Flusberg (2019) further add that the conventional or dead metaphors have become idiomatic that people have memorised their meanings without having to activate knowledge about the source domain;

3) Thirdly, CMT has been flawed as lacking pragmatic application, thus unable to answer questions like why people use particular metaphors for specific communicative purposes (Steen, 2008). Focusing on answering 'what metaphor is', CMT finds it challenging and dubious for it to answer 'what metaphor does'. For example, Cienki (2008) points out that CMT is concerned with metaphor as part of the system of linguistic knowledge or competence rather than the way metaphor is used in real communication. Kövecses (2015: xi) also challenges that CMT 'suffers, in general, from a lack of integrating context into its model of metaphorical meaning making'. A similar argument is also made by Ritchie (2006: 4) that 'metaphor appears not merely of surrounding words, but also of a particular communicative interchange, social situation and cultural settings'. A lot of times, metaphors are found to be induced by important ideological, cultural, and contextual factors

(Leezenberg, 2001). CMT has been found running difficulty in accounting for many unconventional and novel expressions in real communication in specific contexts. For example, Littlemore & Turner (2020) find that when people find themselves in emotionally challenging situations (like pregnancy loss), they often need to depart from conventional metaphorical scripts where CMT lacks its explanatory power;

4) Finally, as for the relationship between linguistic and conceptual metaphors, CMT generally focuses on the conceptual and downplays or ignores the linguistic level of metaphor analysis. As Cameron et al. (2009) point out, cognitive theory seriously downplays the influence of language on metaphor and the importance of the specifics of the language-using situation in which metaphor occurs. Cameron & Deignan (2006) argue that CMT inevitably ignores the possible explanatory power of an individual's previous experience with the language. Hence, there has been a call for more attention to the linguistic and discourse dimension in metaphor studies (Gonzálvez-García, Cervel, & Hernández, 2013). For example, Deignan & Potter (2004: 1232) support that CMT is not language-specific and should have explanatory power for languages other than English, which, however, remains under-investigated. Similarly, Zanotto, Cameron, & Cavalcanti (2008) also call for more studies on metaphor studies from an applied linguistic approach, giving due weight to language level in metaphor studies instead of only emphasising the cognitive level. More recently, Tay (2013: 3) argues the present metaphor studies landscape can be characterised as 'a renaissance' (from language to cognition and back).

Based on the above criticisms, here I would like to quote Cameron's (2016a: 28) disagreements on CMT, which summarise the key 'shortcomings' of CMT:

> What I cannot accept are the more grandiose claims: that we cannot think or speak without metaphor, when we clearly can and do; that metaphors are hard-wired into our brains in some way and available always and to everyone, rather than learnt alongside everything else social and cultural that we learn, including categories and language; and most pertinent here, that conceptual metaphors are fixed and invariant mappings across domains.

In this project, my acceptance of CMT, or the influence of CMT on my project, is seen in two main aspects: firstly, I accept linguistic metaphor (metaphor at the language level)

is related to conceptual metaphor (metaphor in the thought level), but pay attention to the word 'related'. I do not rule out the possibility of a certain linguistic metaphor pre-chosen for displaying a certain conceptual metaphor, but I do not accept that linguistic metaphors are mere 'downward' or 'uni-directional' manifestations of conceptual metaphors as proposed in CMT. Instead, I adopt a 'two-way interactional' view between linguistic metaphor and conceptual metaphor as held by the Discourse Dynamics Approach (Cameron & Deignan, 2006) (see more in section 3.5); Secondly, I deem metaphor as an important framing tool, which is particularly useful in health communication. My main objection to CMT is its claim of fixedness and invariance in metaphorical mapping, which ignores and downplays the contextual factors, especially the social-cultural issues involved in metaphor uses.

In a word, though CMT is an inspiration for us to look into the metaphorical representation of realities, the criticisms towards CMT have proved that CMT needs further development to strengthen its explanatory power. An increasing number of scholars argue that metaphor is inherently a discourse phenomenon (Cameron & Deignan, 2006) and more research on 'context-induced' metaphors is called for (Kövecses, 2010: 285). This leads to paying attention to 'metaphors as actions that are embedded in larger discursive activities' (Musolff & Zinken, 2009: 2), among which critical metaphor analysis is a useful avenue. I move on to explain critical metaphor analysis in the next section.

3.3 Critical Metaphor Analysis

To better understand metaphor, it is necessary to see what metaphor *does* or what people are doing when they use metaphors and why they are doing so. There has been an emergence of interest in exploring the does-dimension of metaphors. Critical metaphor analysis (henceforth CMA) is one of the most relevant, developed and productive strands in this academic endeavour.

CMA is built on the idea that unconscious intentions and ideologies underly the use of metaphor. It aims to reveal the metaphorical construction of social realities, especially regarding inequality, power, prejudice, etc. As its name implies, CMA combines metaphor with the perspective of critical discourse analysis (CDA) or critical discourse studies (CDS) (Wodak & Chilton, 2005; van Dijk, 1993). The two are well justified to be combined because of their closely-related natures. CDA aims to uncover the

interplay among text, discourse and socio-cultural practices, revealing how discourse constructs a certain version of reality legitimised over another. CDA is especially suitable for studying social inequality. It sees discourse as an embodiment of social practice and a tool to reveal the hidden beliefs and ideologies that construct exploitative relationships (Fairclough, 2013). As for metaphors, Lakoff & Chilton (1995: 56) recognise the ideological nature that metaphors 'define in significant part what one takes as reality'.

Scholars have recognised the close relationship between metaphors and CDA. For example, Hart (2008) points out that CDA has been concerned with ideological structures of discourse, and metaphor is such a structure. Analogously, Musolff (2012) argues that metaphor is a fundamental means of concept- and argument-building, which can add to CDA's account of meaning constitution in the social context. Metaphor has been proven to be an efficient ideological tool and discursive strategy to create positive or negative representations of different social groups, e.g., immigrants (Irawan, 2017); black middle class (Dimitris Kitis, Milani, & Levon, 2018) and I.S. women (Jackson, 2021).

The formal insertion of metaphor into CDA is proposed by Charteris-Black (2004) in his book *Corpus Approaches to Critical Metaphor Analysis* and his latter application of CMA in political discourse analysis (Charteris-Black, 2005; 2006). According to Charteris-Black (2004: 28), metaphor analysis should be a central component of CDA because 'metaphor is concerned with forming a coherent view of reality'. The 'critical' part of CMA is in identifying the propositions that underline the cognitive basis of metaphors and reveal the intentions of the writers/speakers (Charteris-Black, 2004: 11). Instead of metaphor uses, CMA prefers to use the concept of metaphor 'choices' or 'selections', which implies that there are other metaphors that could have been used to refer to the same entity but are given up or rejected for not fitting the writer/speaker's purpose or ideologies. Thus, the main value of CMA is that it enables us to critically review the subliminal role of metaphor in situations where we are unaware of the evaluation and framing functions of the metaphors (Charteris-Black, 2012a). CMA has been deemed as one of the contemporary approaches in critical discourse studies (see Koteyko, 2014).

To explore the ideologies communicated through the metaphor choices, Charteris-Black (2004: 2) proposes that 'metaphor can only be explained by considering the

interdependency of its semantic, pragmatic and cognitive dimensions', thus extending metaphor analysis to richer dimensions. CMA consists of its three-stage metaphor analysis procedure (Charteris-Black, 2004: 38): identification, interpretation and explanation. Metaphor identification refers to establishing whether linguistic expressions are used metaphorically (however, Charteris-Black did not fully operationalise it); Metaphor interpretation involves establishing a relationship between metaphors and the cognitive and pragmatic factors that determine them, or identifying conceptual metaphors (or conceptual keys in a higher level) in the discourse; Metaphor explanation involves the identification of the discourse functions of metaphor that permit us to establish their ideological and rhetorical motivations. The three-step approach has been widely adopted and proven insightful and useful for social representations of political and social issues and groups (e.g., Atanasova, 2018; Gabrielatos & Baker, 2008; Nartey, 2019).

A particularly noteworthy point of CMA is that it proposes gaining insight into the intentions of metaphor by identifying agency issues involved. For example, in the third stage, i.e., metaphor explanation, it is argued that 'explanations of metaphors involve identifying the social agency that is involved in their production and their social role in persuasion' (Charteris-Black, 2004: 39). CMA provides light into the strategic choices of metaphors by people, e.g., politicians use metaphors to express and strengthen their ideological viewpoints. For example, Charteris-Black (2005) found that Martin Luther King used conceptual metaphors primarily from source domains like LANDSCAPE and JOURNEY to argue for civil rights, while Winston Churchill used source domains of LIGHT, DARKNESS and JOURNEY to boost British citizens during the Second World War. Charteris-Black (2006) also identifies 'natural disasters' and 'container' metaphors in forming right-wing political legitimacy in the 2005 British election campaign. These studies prove metaphor has the discourse function of persuasion and the expressive potential for cognitive and emotional engagement, thus being a central strategy for legitimation in political speeches (Charteris-Black, 2005: 13). Along with a similar line, in an Asian context, Lee (2015) conducts a critical metaphor analysis on speeches delivered by the Singapore government. The study identifies and discusses the four most salient frames: CONTAINER, BUILDING, REMEMBERING, and MORALITY. The discussion reveals that the government seeks to preserve its hegemonic leadership by purposefully using metaphors as an agent organization.

More recently, based on the belief that metaphors are chosen presupposes that metaphors are purposeful, Charteris-Black (2012a) proposes and develops a more recent concept of 'purposeful metaphors', which add more explanatory power to CMA. Purposeful metaphors, proposed as an alternative to 'deliberate metaphor' (Steen, 2015), seek to shed light on the social or political motivations of metaphor choices. Among the meaning metaphors convey, the purpose of the metaphor often appears, which can be inferred from the attitude, evaluation or stance the metaphor delivers, thus providing discursive evidence of the motivations of metaphor choices or explaining why people use metaphors. People have different rhetorical intentions and expressive motivations when they use metaphors, even though they may not necessarily be fully conscious of their use of certain metaphors. Indeed, it is problematic to tell if a metaphor is used consciously or not, and it is hard to tell the dividing line between a conscious metaphor and a non-conscious one (or even whether there exists one). It thus makes more sense to argue for the purpose of metaphor uses. Charteris-Black (2012a) argues that the notion of 'purposeful metaphor' is suitable to explore metaphor at the level of discourse and communication to consider not only the cognitive process of metaphor but also the performance and effect of metaphor.

Moreover, the awareness of the purposefulness of metaphors can contribute to the awareness that metaphors reflect and reinforce social beliefs, especially when the beliefs relate to unequal social relationships, like in the context of health communication in this project. The application of CMA to health communication is growing (e.g., Atanasova & Koteyko, 2020). In this project, I use CMA's three-stage metaphor analysis model to help me to reveal step-by-step what motivates the use of metaphorical expressions and explore their functions in representing obesity.

Yet, in general, what CMA offers is an overall framework aiming to trigger more awareness of the intentions or purposefulness of metaphor choices. Methodological problems arise due to the difficulty in inferring purpose. For example, a reader with professional knowledge of news editorials in the Chinese context is more likely to be sensitive to the editorials' purposes than a non-expert. Besides, individuals living with obesity are more likely to be alert to the communication purpose of obesity-related blogs than individuals without experiencing obesity. There is a need for metaphor analysis methods suited to working at a discourse and communication level. A more delineated perspective on metaphor analysis is necessary. For this reason, I turn to the

metaphor-led discourse analysis within the Discourse Dynamics Approach (Cameron & Maslen, 2010) in the next section.

3.4 Discourse Dynamics Approach

As Taylor & Del Fante (2020) argue, metaphors play at both conceptual and discourse levels. Compared with the well-established CMT, which explores metaphor at the conceptual level, Discourse Dynamics Approach to Metaphor (henceforth DDA), which focuses on metaphor at the discourse level, receives less academic attention. Yet, DDA is now receiving growing attention and application in metaphor studies and has been proven useful and reliable in analysing discourses.

In general, DDA draws on and applies complexity theory, which sees human behaviour in complex adaptive systems to understand linguistic activities (Juszczyk, Konat, & Fabiszak, 2022). We can understand DDA by its two keywords, i.e., 'discourse' and 'dynamics'. For 'discourse', DDA deems discourse as language use in social interaction (Cameron, 2010). Different from CMT, which sees metaphor understanding as the ending, DDA is interested in metaphors at the discourse level, with metaphor understanding functioning as the beginning (the 'so-what', or what follows metaphor understanding) instead; For 'dynamics', metaphor is understood as resulting from the interaction as different participants in discourse respond to others and keep the discourse moving or flowing (ibid). Based on the two concepts, DDA sees 'metaphors occur in the flow of discourse and social interaction' (Cameron & Maslen, 2010: preface) or metaphor as a constantly changing discourse phenomenon. Based on the two key concepts, DDA holds that when we do metaphor analysis, it is necessary to 'keep the discourse context active' in that 'metaphor cannot be separated from its discourse context without becoming something different' (Cameron, 2010: 79). In the dynamic discourse, metaphors contribute to a discourse trajectory and metaphor analysis can be deemed as constructing a metaphor trajectory inside the discourse trajectory (Cameron, 2010).

DDA theoretically departs from CMT, and the fundamental difference between them is that in CMT, conceptual metaphors are pre-existing, while in DDA, metaphors are emergent and constructed in a discourse context. In Cameron's own words (2010: 77), the relationship between DDA and CMT is that the DDA 'is inspired and informed by conceptual metaphor theory, but rejects its formulation of metaphor in terms of highly

generalised and abstract conceptual domains that pre-exist actual uses of metaphors in language'. Therefore, DDA stresses more metaphors at the linguistic level instead of the conceptual level.

To differentiate itself from CMT, DDA uses 'topic domain' to replace 'conceptual domain' and 'vehicle' to replace 'lexical terms' (Cameron, 2003: 11). In DDA, linguistic metaphors are not seen as manifestations of conceptual metaphors (indeed, DDA is agnostic about the existence of conceptual metaphors). Instead, DDA sees linguistic metaphor as 'somehow anomalous, incongruent or "alien" in the ongoing discourse, but that can be made sense of through a transfer of meaning in the context (Cameron & Maslen, 2010:102). Based on this definition, metaphorical expressions 'must not only be semantically incongruent with the topic of the discourse at that point but also support a transfer of meaning so that sense can be made of the word or phrase in the context.' In this sense, according to DDA, when identifying linguistic metaphors, the differences in semantic domains are important, but what is more important is how the differences contribute to the development of the discourse and the ongoing development of the topics in the discourse.

Further, according to DDA, there are connecting influences from various dimensions whenever a linguistic metaphor appears. For example, Gibbs & Cameron (2008) list seven factors influencing the emergence of metaphors, e.g., enduring metaphorical concepts, previously understood metaphorical utterances, body movements and gestures, to name just a few. The study proves the complicated contextual factors at play in metaphor uses. Among the dynamic process of metaphor emergence, something stable can be gained and observed. This relates to the concept of systematic metaphors. According to Cameron (2010: 91), a systematic metaphor is 'not a single metaphor but an emergent grouping of closely related metaphors' and can be further deemed as 'temporary stabilisation' in the dynamic discourse. Through working across socio-cultural groups, systematic metaphors emerge from repeated instances of use in dialogue and interaction and reveal the metaphor users' ideas, attitudes and values. Systematic metaphors can be understood as 'ways of framing the ideas, attitudes, and values of discourse participants' (Cameron et al., 2010: 137)

As aforementioned, the main distinction between systematic and conceptual metaphors is that no priority is given to thought over language in systematic metaphors. Also, DDA claims that the emergent systematic metaphors *may* reflect patterns of

metaphorical thinking-and-talking for discourse participants. The word 'may' suggests that DDA tries to avoid over-generalisation and definite conclusions. In all, systematic metaphors can be understood as an emergent bundle of stabilities in discourse and thus is key for providing insight into what is behind the dynamic discourse. Moreover, due to their attention to contexts, another merit of DDA is that systematic metaphors allow for more context-sensitive metaphor analysis.

Another key concept to be noted is the *metaphorical scenario*. The notion is originally proposed by Musolff (2016: 30) to solve the inadequacy of the general notion of the conceptual domain. It refers to 'a discourse-based, culturally and historically mediated version of a source domain' (ibid). DDA understands metaphorical scenarios as metaphorical stories, which is important because of 'our cognitive tendency to construct explanatory stories of our experience' (Cameron, 2010: 11). Through stories, we can know the '"participants", "dramatic" story lines and default outcomes' in certain discourse communities (Musolff, 2016: 30). Different from systematic metaphor which is closer to particular discourse context, metaphorical scenarios can be understood as cross-contextual narratives at a grander level. Therefore, in this project, I see metaphorical scenarios as 'combined systematic metaphors', attained through combining different systematic metaphors and thus can be deemed grander metaphors in socially situated discourse (see my application of metaphorical scenario in Chapters 7, 8 and 9).

A final point I would like to note is that though DDA is conventionally developed by projects based on spoken discourse data, e.g., the reciliation talk (e.g., Cameron et al., 2009; Cameron & Seu, 2012), it is also found useful to work on written data (e.g., the acknowledgement in doctoral theses by Nacey, 2022). In this project, though my data (editorials and blogs) are formally written genres, they nevertheless present dialogue features because they have their putative reader and further communicative purposes (see similar studies by Tang, 2021). Online communication, especially blogs in Weibo, contains similar forms of spoken discourse (Fernback, 2003).

In conclusion, I employ DDA in this project for two reasons: first, theoretically, DDA's attention to the context of metaphor uses (as a revision of the major shortage and criticism of CMT); methodologically, DDA's relatively more transparent and reliable procedures in metaphor analysis. For the former, the due attention paid to context can help me reveal the contextual specialities in the Chinese context; For the latter, the

difficulty in inferring the purposes of metaphors makes it necessary to adopt a more rigid method in metaphor analysis. With its metaphor-led discourse analysis method (Cameron et al., 2009), specifically the employment of systematic metaphors and metaphorical scenarios, DDA can help me streamline my metaphor analysis process.

After reviewing the above three lines of approaches to metaphor analysis, as this project works on Chinese data, I now focus on reviewing existing studies on Chinese metaphors to consider language-specific issues.

3.5 Metaphor Research on the Chinese Language

Compared with English, the Chinese language has received less academic attention in metaphor scholarship. However, Chinese metaphor has undergone substantial developments in its geographical and socio-cultural approach, which can be divided into three stages: pre-metaphor, pre-contemporary and contemporary (my division). Admittedly, the division does not cover the whole picture, but it is sufficient to catch the gist of related work. I do not attempt to provide an exhaustive review of the first two stages. In detail, the first stage focuses on ancient Chinese philosophies. I explain the stage mainly based on the work of Feng (2002), i.e., 汉语比喻研究史 [History of Chinese Metaphor Studies]. The second stage focuses on early work in introducing CMT. I pay more attention to the third or the contemporary stage concerning how metaphors have been used in real contexts.

3.5.1 Metaphor Studies on Chinese in Pre-metaphor Stage

The pre-metaphor stage refers to when ancient Chinese scholars or thinkers did not make a clear distinction between metaphor and other figures of speech and when there was no concept of metaphor. Metaphors were implied by using words such as 譬 *pì*, 比 *bǐ*, 依 *yī*, 方 *fāng*, 举 *jǔ*, and 拟 *nǐ*, all meaning 'like' or 'be similar'. Among them, 比, *bǐ,* which means comparison is the closest to metaphor (cf. Yeh, 1987). However, there had been some philosophical thinking signalling some preliminary metaphor-related concepts. As early as in Spring and Autumn period (770-476 B.C.), 孔子, Confucius (551- 479 B.C.), generalised the law of metaphor as 能近取譬 [Use the things near you, or which you are familiar with to help you express yourself] (from *The Analects of Confucius*). The idea was popularly seen and expressed in 诗经, *The Classics of Poetry*,

the oldest existing collection of Chinese poetry, typically shown in poems like 手若柔荑，肤若凝脂 [The hands of the beauty are like the tender sprout of cogon grass; the skin of the beauty is like the solidified butter]. The first related definition of metaphor was made by 墨子, Mo Zi (around 435 B.C.), one of the most influential philosophers in the Warring state (475-221 B.C.): 辟也者，举他物而以明之也。[To make sense of something, we turn to something else which is alike] (from *Xiao Qu* by Mo Zi). Similarly, 惠子, Hui Zi (390-317 B.C.), a prominent politician and thinker, also argued that 夫说者，用以其所知喻其所不知，而使人知之 [Speakers explain something they do not know with something they already know, thereby making others understand their ideas] (from 說苑善说 [*Shuoyuan Shanshuo*] by 刘向, Liu Xiang in Han Dynasty). Similar ideas are also held by 荀子, Xun Zi (313-238 B.C.), another famous philosopher in his words 故比方之疑似而通 [If we compare one thing to another thing which is alike, then it seems that we can understand it] (from 正名[*Zheng Ming*] by Xun Zi). A good example of Xun Zi's idea can be seen in one of his proverbs, a famous saying in China: 君子，舟也，庶人者，水也，水能载舟，水能覆舟 [The ruler is a boat; the general public is water; water can carry the boat; water can overturn the boat]. All the preliminary thinking suggests that, similar to what Western scholars have found, ancient Chinese philosophers had noticed the nature of metaphor, i.e., metaphor is useful in explaining new things, and metaphor is about understanding one thing in terms of another.

Later, in Han Dynasty (206 B.C.-220 A.D), 刘安, Liu An (179B.C.-122 B.C.), the Wainan King and a poet, proposed the idea of 取偶, obtain metaphor ('the users of metaphor need to look for the appropriate similarities according to different objects to create a metaphor', cited from Cheng, 2009: 38). Later, 刘勰, Liu Xie (464-521), a famous literary critic in Liang Dynasty, systematically discussed 比喻 [analogy] in his work 《文心雕龙》, *The Literary Mind and the Craving of Dragons*, the first comprehensive work of literary criticism in Chinese. In the book, Liu Xie classified two categories of analogy, i.e., 比义 [using concrete things to describe abstract things] and 比类 [using one concrete thing to describe the appearance of another concrete thing]. Liu Xie stressed that 比类虽繁，以切为贵 [Despite various kinds of analogies, the most important principle is appropriateness]. Later, 陈骙, Chen Kui (1128—1203), a

scholar in Nan Song Dynasty, made a break-through in metaphor studies in Chinese by inventing the term, *yǐnyù,* which literally means 'hidden analogy' (the standard equivalent to *metaphor* in Western scholarship) and proposing the formula, i.e., 'A is B' (cited from Cheng, 2009: 38). Later, 朱熹, Zhu Xi (1130-1200), another famous thinker in Song Dynasty, proposed a concise and enduring definition of analogy, i.e., 比者, 以彼物比此物也 [Analogy is describing one thing in terms of another] (from 诗集传 [Poetry Collection]).

Overall, the pre-metaphor stage witnessed Chinese ancient philosophers' preoccupation with metaphor as a tool to help them deliver their ideas. Studies on metaphor in this stage have realised the analogical thinking to make comparisons between two things but stayed at a scattered and preliminary level, lacking clear classifications and explanations of how metaphor works. This is largely covered in metaphor studies in the pre-contemporary stage, which I will discuss below.

3.5.2 Metaphor Studies on Chinese in Pre-contemporary Stage

The pre-contemporary stage pays more attention to exploring the systematicity of metaphor and inserting it into the discipline of Rhetoric. One of the most important works in this stage is the work of 修辞学发凡(1932) *[Ideas on Rhetoric]* by Chen Wangdao (1891-1977). Chen (1932) proposed an umbrella term of 譬喻 [trope], the figure of speech describing one thing in terms of another. According to Chen, a trope consists of three elements, i.e., the topic (the subject, referring to what is described), the vehicle (the object, referring to what is used to describe the topic) and the linker (what is used to connect the topic and the vehicle). Based on the appearance, similarities and differences of the three elements, Chen further categorised three types of tropes: simile, metaphor and metonymy. While simile takes the form of 'A is like B', metaphor takes the form of 'A is B', and in metonymy, the topic (which is missing) is replaced by the vehicle. Examples below show the three types, i.e., simile, metaphor and metonymy, respectively (The examples are from Chen's *Ideas on Rhetorics*):

(1) 君子之德**如**风。(A gentleman's virtue is **like** the wind.)
(2) 君子之德**风**也。(A gentleman's virtue **is** the wind.)
(3) 先生之**风**，山高水长。(A gentleman's **wind** is as high as a mountain and as

long as a river.)

Chen (1932) further explained that the relation between simile, metaphor and metonymy gradually advances with simile at the base level, metaphor intermedia level and metonymy at the highest level. The higher a trope is, the more simplified its linguistic form will be and the more likely the object will replace the subject. Chen's work is the first systematic study of metaphors in Chinese and has laid a foundation for later studies on Chinese metaphors. Another important scholar of Chinese metaphor at this stage is 钱钟书 Qian Zhongshu (1910-1998), a renowned Chinese literary scholar and writer. Qian stressed the importance of comparing two different things so that tropes can be novel: 分得愈远，则合得愈出人意表，比喻就愈新颖 [The more distinct two things are, the more surprising their combination will be, and the more novel the trope will become]. In addition, Qian proposed that apart from the sensory value (i.e., visualising the topic) by using a trope, the emotional value, which involves evaluations of the topic in the trope, should also be accounted for. For example, the use of 玉肌雪肤 [jade and snow-like skin] in describing a beauty not only arouses the images of jade and snow but also suggests a positive attitude and good feelings towards the beauty (for more, see Feng, 1985).

Later, more Chinese scholars became interested in the grammatical structures of metaphors, which involved early work on identifying metaphors in Chinese. Yuan (1982) proposed a basic formula to define metaphor in Chinese: metaphorical sentence=subject (the topic) +verb (the linker) +object (the vehicle). Yuan identifies metaphor based on three types of linkers he classified:

The first type is called the 'explanation' type, in which a dash is used between the topic and the vehicle:

(4) 美丽的南海之花——鼓浪屿 (The beautiful flower of the south sea——the island of Gulangyu)

The second type is called the 'exclamation' type, where a comma is used to separate the topic and vehicle:

(5) 骆驼，你沙漠的船；你，有生命的山。(Camel, you are the boat in the desert; you are the mountain of life).

The third type is called the 'same position type', in which the topic and vehicle are placed next to each other without any linker:

(6) 刚出生的嫩芽梁生宝 (Liang Shengbao is a new sprout that just came out of birth.) (examples 4, 5 and 6 and their translations are cited from Cheng, 2009: 40-41)

The three types of linkers have provided more inclusive forms of metaphor in Chinese than the previous 'A is B' formula, yet they are by no means complete and suffer from a too-prescriptive view of the surface syntactic structure and punctuation of Chinese. Metaphor studies in this stage have begun to explore metaphor's structure and linguistic realisations. However, to a large extent, a metaphor was deemed a decorative tool in language use. Few studies have explored the cognitive dimension of metaphor, the major focus in the contemporary stage, which I will discuss in the next section.

3.5.3 Metaphor Studies on Chinese in the Contemporary Stage

The contemporary stage looks beyond *Rhetorics* by shifting attention from the syntactic forms of metaphors to the cognitive dimension of metaphors. Along with the influence of CMT, Chinese scholars try to check the feasibility of applying CMT to analyse Chinese and add cross-linguistic and cross-cultural perspectives of CMT. In this section, I review the contemporary work in the order of three lines: initial application of CMT to the Chinese metaphors; revision of CMT based on evidence from Chinese metaphors; wider application of CMT to Chinese in specific genres.

The first line is mainly seen in Ning Yu in his pioneering work taking a cognitive approach to studying Chinese metaphors, especially in his book *The Contemporary Theory of Metaphor: A perspective from Chinese* (Yu, 1998). In the book, Yu conducts cross-cultural and cross-linguistic work between Chinese and English, discussing the differences in emotional metaphors, time as space, and the event structure in the two languages. Some significant and interesting differences are found between metaphor uses in the two languages. For example, in terms of emotional metaphors, Yu finds that English and Chinese share the same generic-level conceptual metaphor, like ANGER IS HEAT. While English has chosen FIRE and FLUID metaphors, Chinese uses FIRE and GAS metaphors——a Chinese-specific phenomenon deriving from the medicine theory of *yin-yang* in Chinese culture. Both Chinese and English use UP, LIGHT, and

CONTAINER metaphors to express the concept of happiness (Yu, 1998:50). Later, Yu (2003a) looks into the 'GALLBLADDER IS CONTAINER OF COURAGE' and 'COURAGE IS QI (GASEOUS VITAL ENERGY) IN GALLBLADDER' metaphors in Chinese, arguing that an abstract concept (courage) is understood in part via a conceptual metaphor grounded in the body, but shaped by the culture-specific metaphorical understanding of an internal organ (gallbladder) in the body. Yu later looks into Chinese metaphorical uses of other body parts, including fingers and palms (Yu, 2000), face (Yu, 2001), hands (Yu, 2003b) and eyes (Yu, 2004), leading to the conclusion that body and culture are two important factors in metaphor usages and different cultural modes have different metaphorical expressions and interpretations (Yu, 2003). In his more recent research, Yu uses corpus methods, mainly from the Centre for Chinese Linguistics (CCL, Peking University), in his metaphor analysis. For example, Yu & Jia (2016) analyse the LIFE IS A SHOW metaphor in CCL, revealing that the SHOW metaphor has a salient subversion of LIFE IS AN OPERA in Chinese, which shows the cultural and linguistic specific realisations of the metaphor. Similar methods are also used in the most recent work by Yu & Huang (2019), comparing primary metaphors, i.e., DIFFICULTY AS WEIGHT and SOLIDITY, across English and Chinese.

Put succinctly, Yu's work is about the universality and variations of CMT, and the key finding is that metaphors are grounded in bodily experience but shaped by cultural understanding. That is to say, when a particular metaphor is said to be universal, it is likely to be universal conceptually rather than linguistically because specific socio-cultural modes in different languages may dictate different linguistic realisations (Yu, 1995). Such a view aligns with Kövecses's (2005) argument on culture-specific metaphors. Yu's work has laid a foundation for later studies on Chinese metaphors through the cognitive approach. For example, in a similar line, Wen & Yang (2016) investigate the systematicity and complexity of four IDEA metaphors, i.e., IDEAS ARE PEOPLE, IDEAS ARE PLANTS, IDEAS ARE OBJECTS, and IDEAS ARE FOOD in English and Chinese. Their research finds that English and Chinese speakers share similar cognitive mechanisms in using IDEA metaphors (for more studies on the similarities and differences between Chinese and English metaphors, see Link, 2013).

Based on the primary application of CMT to Chinese, the second line focuses on revising CMT based on evidence from Chinese metaphors. The major scholars are Kathleen Ahrens, Chu-Ren Huang and their colleagues in Hongkong and Taiwan.

Please note that their linguistic data are the Chinese in the areas of Hongkong and Taiwan, which are in the form of traditional Chinese characters and thus different from the simplified characters in this project. However, the differences are mainly in the writing systems, and it is justified to include their work in my discussion.

In the early studies, Ahrens (2002) puts forward the Conceptual Mapping (CM) Model, a processing model within CMT, which aims to make apparent the underlying reasons for the source-target domain pairings, i.e., the Mapping Principle. The Principle aims to answer why the target domain selects certain source domains and can be used to help predict the acceptability of the metaphors. For example, Ahrens (2002) analyses the conceptual metaphor IDEA IS BUILDING in Chinese. In this metaphor, Ahrens finds the linguistic expression relating to the concept of foundation, stability and construction were mapped, while concepts relating to the position of the building, windows and doors were not. Thus, Ahrens postulates that the target domain of IDEA uses the source domain of BUILDING to emphasise the concept of structure. In subsequent research, Chung, Ahrens, & Sung (2003) compare the STOCK MARKET AS OCEAN WATER metaphor in Chinese, English and Spanish, showing that although different languages share similar conceptual metaphors, they differ in what is mapped linguistically. While the Chinese metaphors seem to select the rises of tides to map onto the risks of the stock market, the English metaphors are more likely to stress on the calmness and safety of haven of the ocean and the Spanish metaphors see mappings of waves (*ola*), turbulence (*turbulencia*) and sea (*mar*).

For checking the Mapping Principles, methodologically, the second line requires researchers to have corpus skills to test the cognitive mappings in Chinese. For example, Chung, Ahrens, & Huang (2003) propose using two major databases, i.e., WordNet and SUMO (Suggested Upper Merged Ontology) nodes, to determine source domains of conceptual metaphors. Wordnet is a large-scale lexical knowledge base created at the Cognitive Science Laboratory of Princeton University in 1990. SUMO can be used to identify the source domains used in conceptual metaphors by identifying the relationships between metaphorical expressions and their corresponding ontological nodes Chung, Ahrens, & Huang, 2003; Chung, Ahrens, & Huang, 2005). Later, Ahrens, Chung, & Huang (2004) introduce a corpora-based operational definition for Mapping Principles by examining 2,000 random examples of 'economy' (*jīng jì*) in Mandarin Chinese from the Academia Sinica Balanced Corpus, proving SUMO can efficiently

detect the source domains. Their recent work combines Wordnet, SUMO, online dictionaries and collocational patterns in the source domain verification procedures (Ahrens & Jiang, 2020).

Based on the combined corpus skills, the studies explore metaphors' framing or ideological implications, especially in political discourse. For example, Lu & Ahrens (2008) look into BUILDING metaphors in Taiwan presidential speeches, finding that metaphors can function as different framing strategies, showing the manipulation of metaphors to appropriate ideological issues to each president's respective political advantage. Ahrens & Zeng (2017) explore the EDUCATION metaphors in China's Mainland and Hongkong. The study finds that the concept of education in policy addresses in China's mainland often relies on the domain of BUILDING, with a focus on 'structure' and 'foundation'. In contrast, Hong Kong policy addresses conceptualised education as a product that can be advertised. The study shows that politicians from different backgrounds and regions use different metaphors to present implicit ideologies. In all, the second line is more technically advanced, especially seen in its use of computational linguistics, i.e., the adoption of wordnet and SUMO (for a more thorough explanation of Chinese metaphors through the approach of computational linguistics, see Ahrens & Chung, 2019: 364).

The third line pays attention to how metaphors present a way of understanding, representing, and talking about a phenomenon in real communication contexts. Within this line, the research focuses on how metaphors affect real contexts. As this project works on discourse in China's official media, which takes certain features of political discourse, in the remaining section, I first review metaphor studies in Chinese political discourse and later shift my attention to metaphors used specifically in Chinese health discourse.

There has been an increasing amount of metaphor studies on the discourses of Chinese politicians. For example, Liu (2021) looks into the metaphors addressing the relationship between Chinese and Western cultures in Mao Zedong's speeches, finding that the speeches used eating food metaphor to set up a good vs. bad dichotomy inside Western culture, implying that only certain parts of Western culture should be (selectively) emulated. Jing-Schmidt & Peng (2017) examine metaphor choices in anti-corruption discourse in the Speeches of Xi Jinping in the *People's Daily*. They identified five general source domains: WAR, DISEASE, VERMIN, WEED, and

SLOVENRY. They find that both embodied experience and cultural modes are recruited as metaphorical vehicles or source domains for the strategic profiling of different aspects of corruption and anti-corruptions as the target domain. More specifically, their study compares the Chinese and English versions of the *People's Daily*, demonstrating the audience-specific employment of metaphor in communication involving target readers from different linguistic, cultural and epistemic backgrounds. Their studies have proven the cognitive and affective manipulative functions of metaphor in Chinese political discourse. Similarly, Cheng (2009) discusses how China's media use conceptual metaphors to criticise Taiwan's independence. The study examines nineteen concepts, for example, animals, colours, human bodies, Chinese martial arts, etc. The study has shed light on the Chinese's highly metaphorical writing style. Flowerdew & Leong (2007) consider the role of metaphors in the discursive construction of the notion of patriotism in postcolonial Hong Kong, finding that the metaphors fall into four dominant themes, i.e., family, war, the body and traitors. Liu & Wang (2020) explore the metaphors intended for offensive meaning and constructing national identities in Chinese diplomatic discourse. The metaphors mainly fall into four domains, i.e., PERSONIFICATION, PERSON, ANIMAL and PERFORMANCE.

By comparison, there has been much less work on metaphors in health communication in the Chinese context. To date, I have only identified a handful of related studies. Dennis Tay is among the major metaphor scholars on mental health issues in China. For example, through quantitative metaphor usage patterns, Tay (2015) investigates metaphor uses in case study articles on a Chinese university counselling centre website. The study used chi-squared tests of independence to reveal associations among the articles. Later, Tay (2017) uses DDA to work on mental health discourse in Chinese and sheds light on the metaphor identification in the Chinese language in the health communication context. More recently, Tay (2021) explores how therapists and clients respond to each other's metaphors in the Chinese-speaking context. The study finds that therapists tend to explore and reject metaphors more than clients, while clients are more likely to repeat metaphors than therapists and are equally likely to extend metaphors. Pritzker (2003) has looked into the metaphors related to depression in Chinese traditional medicine, finding that people diagnosed with depression in China use both heart metaphor and brain metaphor to describe themselves around three conceptual metaphors: HEART or HEAD as CONTAINER; HEART or HEAD as ACTOR or ACTIVE

EXPERIENCER (agent of emotional or mental activity); HEART or HEAD as SELF or CENTRE of SELF.

Other studies, though not related to health communication, are also useful for this project. For example, Lu & Wang (2017) apply MIPVU to analyse Chinese data in three written registers: academic discourse, fiction and news. Their study proves that MIPVU can be reliably applied to linguistic metaphor identification in Chinese texts. The study also provides a good summary of existing studies on metaphor in Chinese, which according to the paper, fall into two lines: 'examination of cross-domain mappings underlying specific metaphorical linguistic expressions […] utilized lexical and ontological resources and corpus-driven methods to identify source domain or to determine mapping principles between source and target domain pairings' (Lu & Wang, 2017: 666). Their summary echoes my review of the previous two lines. Another study useful for this project is Han (2015), which looks into metaphors in Chinese entertainment news. Based on CMT and CMA, her study finds that Chinese online entertainment news uses the source domains of War, Martial arts, Fire and Wind to frame the target domains of Conflict, Celebrity and Popularity. These metaphors create drama by playfully exaggerating the scale and intensity of events and by emphasising interpersonal conflict.

3.6 Summary

This chapter has reviewed three lines of metaphor studies, i.e., conceptual metaphor theory (CMT), critical metaphor analysis (CMA) and discourse dynamics approach (DDA). I have explained why these lines are useful for me and how I draw on their useful parts in this project. I have also reviewed the three-stage of metaphor studies on the Chinese language, showing metaphor studies in Chinese, especially in the field of health communication, remain under-explored. To introduce the most relevant literature for this project, I now narrow my focus to consider metaphors in health communication in Chapter 4.

Chapter 4: Metaphor in Health Communication

4.1 Introduction

Based on the introduction of the metaphor theories in Chapter 3, this chapter narrows down on metaphor in health communication. The structure of this chapter is like this: I first give a general introduction to metaphorical framing in health communication, shedding light on what metaphorical framing is, how the framing works and why the framing is important (section 4.2). Later, I introduce two particularly popular metaphors in health communication, i.e., the Journey metaphor (section 4.3) and the War metaphor (section 4.4). A key point I stress in this stage is that there are no default or inherently 'good' or 'bad' metaphors, as the framing effects of metaphors are based on their real contexts. Following this, I review metaphors specifically focusing on obesity to see the 'status quo' of metaphorical representation of obesity (section 4.5). Based on the existing studies, I show the novelty of this project, especially the multi-level metaphor analysis model (section 4.6), which functions as the theoretical framework of this project. At last, I summarise this chapter (section 4.7).

4.2 Metaphorical Framing in Health Communication

Health communication, 'the study of messages that create meaning in relation to physical, mental, and social well-being' (Harrington, 2015:9), has received increasing attention from Applied Linguistic studies. In this project, taking a discourse analysis approach, I understand health communication as discursive practice in health or medicine-related context, through which health issues come to be known, understood, interpreted, and (un)accepted by society and, by extension, those with the health issues are evaluated among the general public as (un)healthy, (not) good, or (im)moral.

According to the WHO, health refers to unimpaired mental, physical and social well-being, which indeed is 'little more than a dream for most of the human race'(Gwyn, 2002: 7). In daily life, we are often citizens of 'kingdom of the sick' (Sontag, 1978: 3), with experience of not feeling well, mentally or physically. We tend to require meaningful explanations of our body changes when we have health issues. Language is a key tool in this practice, just as Atkins & Harvey (2010: 605) put that 'our experience of health and illness are not simply based in the biological "realities" of our bodies, but,

crucially, in the language we use to talk about them'. The way we use language to communicate about health issues is particularly influential on how we are likely to understand, interpret and experience the issues and how we will behave towards them.

Among our language uses, metaphor plays a crucial role in making sense of illness. Metaphors pervade health communication to the extent that there is a trend of 'metaphorisation of illness'(e.g., the health communication around Covid-19 is largely based on metaphor analysis, see Musolff, Breeze, Kondo, & Vilar-Lluch, 2022). One of the earliest and most classical works on metaphor in health communication is seen in Sontag's (1978) treatise on the punitive uses of War metaphors on cancer, tuberculosis and AIDS. In Sontag's view, the War metaphors can be understood as the symbolic social oppression of the illness and people with the illness, so the metaphors should not be used in health communication. Yet, despite Sontag's call, metaphor is widely (even unavoidably) used in health communication.

Later, a larger and more varied literature has broadly explored metaphor uses in health communication with two foci: personal 'lived experience' of illness; public communication about illness. The former body of study explores the use of metaphors in individuals' narratives on various health issues, e.g., cancer (e.g., Semino, Demjén, Hardie, Payne, & Rayson, 2018), diabetes (e.g., Youngson, Cole, Wilby, & Cox, 2015), depression (e.g., Charteris-Black, 2012b; Coll-Florit, Climent, Sanfilippo, & Hernández-Encuentra, 2021), AIDS (e.g., Loubser & Müller, 2011), dementia (e.g., Castaño, 2020), and pain (e.g., Bullo, 2021), etc. These studies prove that metaphor can function as a health message strategy (Occa, Carcioppolo, Morgan, & Anderson, 2020), aiding patients in better explaining what they are experiencing. Concerning the latter body of research focusing on how media, especially news reports, adopt metaphors to inform and influence public understanding of different health issues, studies have proven the influencing power of metaphors in talking about the issues among the public (e.g., Crawford, Brown, Nerlich, & Koteyko, 2008; Hanne & Hawken, 2007; Kothari, 2016; Peters, Dykes, Habermann, Ostgathe, & Heckel, 2019). For example, Koteyko, Brown, & Crawford (2008) examine the effects of using 'journey', 'war' and 'house' metaphors in the UK press coverage of avian influenza (H5N1) between 2005 and 2006, proving metaphors can facilitate understanding and also add an evaluation dimension to H5N1. There are also studies exploring the metaphor used in scientific communication

about various health issues, e.g., immunology (Hidalgo-Downing & Mujic, 2009) and cancer (Williams Camus, 2009).

The above studies have shown that metaphors have an evaluation function, which is usually delivered in an implicit and cumulative way, or as put by Deignan (2010) that metaphors can indirectly add an evaluative dimension to what is said. In health communication, a metaphor does not stop at providing propositional information about a certain health issue (what the illness is); it further discusses the illness and shapes the societal view on the issue (how the illness is and further how people with the illness are viewed and evaluated in society). Specifically, the choice of source domain highlights certain aspects of the target domain and hides others, constituting the 'framing' power of metaphors (e.g., Semino et al., 2018; Thibodeau et al., 2019). The word *choice* is important. Its implied meaning——that there are various options available and that the choice of certain metaphor rather than other metaphors, or that certain metaphors are favoured over others——captures the essence of metaphorical framing: metaphors may have the potential to determine what can be seen/unseen, facilitate different inferences and evaluations and finally in a significant part reorient people's thinking about an issue (Potts & Semino, 2019). For example, based on empirical experiments, Lee & Schwarz (2014) have found that one feels more pain when one thinks about the relationship as a unit (e.g., "we are made for each other") rather than a journey (e.g., "look at how far we have gone") when comes to the conflict in romantic relationships.

Thus, metaphor plays one or more of the functions of framing defined by Entman (1993): promote a particular problem (here health issues) definition, give a causal interpretation, convey moral evaluation and recommend treatment for the health issues. For example, the case of *Covid-19 is an enemy*, which is a popular frame during the global pandemic, depicts Covid as an invader (problem definition), which causes wars between humans and the virus, or the 'positive' and 'negative' cases (people who are and who are not diagnosed with the Covid) (causal interpretation and moral evaluation on the 'positive' cases), and thus a battle is called to end it (treatment recommendation).

Based on the framing effect of metaphors, it is important to note that the similarity between the source domain and target domain are not objectively given, but at least in some part created in the production and interpretation of the metaphors. Such 'made' similarities are the effects of metaphorical framing. In other words, metaphorical framing enables us to organise our ideas around a given topic and provide meaning to it,

or make it 'make sense', i.e., count as truthful/reliable, false/doubtful, or relevant/irrelevant (Musolff, 2017), or a shared interpretation of reality (Ardèvol-Abreu, 2015: 428). The result of the framing, i.e., a frame, according to Demjén & Semino (2020: 215), is defined as 'a portion of background knowledge that (i) relates to a particular aspect of the world, (ii) generates inferences and expectations in communication and action and (iii) tends to be associated with particular verbal expressions.'

In health communication, many scholars are interested in the framing effects of metaphor. In earlier studies, Hodgkin (1985) criticises the machine metaphor in that this metaphor attributes machine-like characteristics to living beings and suggests that patients are all identical and passive. Nerlich, Hamilton, & Rowe (2002) study the socio-cultural conceptualisation of foot and mouth disease in the UK in 2001, finding that War metaphors are not only cognitive but also cultural and social phenomena that function as part of stereotypical illness narratives in the UK context (e.g., a mass killing is naturalised in disease control for peaceful and bucolic landscapes). Wallis & Nerlich (2005) investigate the framing effects of the SARS AS A KILLER metaphor in 5 major UK media. Their study finds that local political concerns, media cultures and spatial factors influence the metaphor choice of the media and further the framing functions of metaphors. Semino et al. (2018) find that the 'battle' metaphor frames cancer as an enemy and the relationship between patients and cancer is antagonistic, while the 'journey' metaphor frames cancer as a road and does not imply an antagonistic relationship. Coll-Florit et al. (2021) find that depression among Catalan speakers is not only imposed by depression itself but also by contextual factors like stigma, lack of communication and repressive medical practice in society.

An important work to note about metaphorical framing is the integrated approach to metaphor and framing by Semino et al. (2018: 637). The approach pays attention to three levels, i.e., cognition, discourse and practice. The cognition level explores conceptual metaphors; the discourse level checks the use of metaphor to reflect and facilitate understanding of things and related concepts like identities, social relations, etc. The practice level focuses on the real effects or the positive or negative implications of metaphor uses. The practice level also aims to develop certain guidelines on metaphor uses. Based on the integrated approach, different metaphors frame different roles of individuals and their health issues, and relationships between them further

contribute to different patient agencies. They further put forward the concept of '(dis)empowerment', which refers to 'an increase or decrease in the degree of agency that the patient has, or perceives him/herself to have, as manifest in the metaphors and their co-text'. The concept of (dis)empowerment is a key concept in this project, as my metaphor analysis also tries to see how different metaphors have increased or decreased the agency of different stakeholders around obesity, especially individuals with obesity.

In sum, metaphors are key practices in 'creating' the realities of health/illness as they not only define what health/illness is but also convey attitudinal and evaluative orientations towards the health issues, along with different groups of people involved. To better explain metaphorical framing, in the coming sections, I focus on two of the most pervasive metaphors in health communication, i.e., the Journey metaphor and the War metaphor, as case studies to examine their framing functions.

4.3 Journey Metaphors in Health Communication

As a journey is a universal experience, the Journey metaphor is unsurprisingly one of the ubiquitous metaphors in human communication. According to CMT, a journey is a prototypical example of the *source-path-goal* image schema. This schema relates to our daily life experience: whenever we move, we need to start from someplace, travel across some distance with a certain speed and vehicle, meet certain difficulties, encounter certain people, and finally reach the end. The familiar knowledge of journeys makes Journey metaphors popular, conventional, or even clichéd, e.g., the expression of LIFE IS A JOURNEY.

Due to the popularity of the journey concepts, Journey metaphors have been found useful in various genres. For example, Charteris-Black (2007) finds that Journey metaphors encourage greater empathy with immigrants in right-wing political communication on immigrant policy in the British election campaign. Cibulskienė (2012) explores the popularity of the NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT IS A JOURNEY in the discourse of the Conservatives in Lithuania. The study finds that the metaphor presents a temporal character that different political time presents different journeys. Journey metaphors are also popularly used in business discourse (Milne, Kearins, & Walton, 2006) and education discourse (Cameron, 2003; Turner, 1997).

In health communication, as seen in numerous expressions like 'pathway to wellness' and 'step by step towards recovery', Journey metaphors are popularly used to frame physical and mental health. In physical health, Journey metaphors are frequently used by individuals to talk about their experience of illness, especially in the case of cancer and HIV. For example, Gibbs & Heather (2002) find that women with cancer frame cancer as an obstacle in life's journey, showing different aspects of the journey, e.g., the beginning and the ending, help to frame different aspects of the experience of cancer. In a similar vein, Gustafsson, Hommerberg, & Sandgren (2020) find that Journey metaphors are versatile coping strategies for patients living with advanced cancer. For example, there can be various journeys referring to different cancer-related topics, e.g., life with cancer is a journey, treatment is a journey, and the psychological experience is a journey. Hendricks, Demjén, Semino, & Boroditsky (2018) show Journey metaphors encouraging cancer patients to make peace with their situation. Specifically, the peaceful entailments of Journey metaphors make them a useful emotional tool in dealing with hard situations like cancer. Likewise, Kobia (2008) finds that the Journey metaphor brings hope to people living with HIV because it implies one does not die immediately and the journey could be long.

Journey metaphors have also been popularly used to communicate various mental health issues. For example, Magaña (2019) finds that Spanish-speaking patients frequently use traveller metaphors to reconceptualise depression, e.g., *me entra depresión*, which means 'I get depression' with a literal translation of 'depression enters me'. The study stresses that understanding the metaphors used by patients is important in doctor-patient interaction. Fullagar & O'Brien (2012) find that women patients draw on Journey metaphors, e.g., the journey of feeling alive, to describe their recovery from depression in Australia. Similarly, Campbell & Longhurst (2013) find that women are more likely to use the Journey metaphor to frame their experience of obsessive-compulsive disorder compared with men who prefer battle metaphors.

Overall, a common observation is that Journey metaphors generally offer positive elements, e.g., emotional peace that the illness is seen as a companion one travels within certain stages of life. However, Semino et al. (2017) also remind us that Journey metaphors are not by default positive as they can also be disempowering, e.g., the reluctant journey where the patients feel passivity and pessimism and have no control over the trip. Castaño (2020) also observes that Journey metaphors can be used to

express the powerlessness of patients diagnosed with dementia, especially their lack of control of their disease, e.g., *a journey of no return*, given the inevitable decline of the patients' physical and cognitive abilities. Coll-florit & Climent (2022), based on individual blogs of patients with cancer in Spain, also find Journey metaphors can be used negatively, e.g., the patients feel disempowered and frustrated when they see themselves moving backwards or losing their ways.

4.4 War Metaphors in Health Communication

War metaphors (sometimes referred to as 'Violence metaphors' or 'Military metaphors') are highly prevalent in health communication, e.g., *AIDS as a War*, *Cancer as a War*, and *Dementia as a War.* The popularity of War metaphors can be attributed to their functions in health communication. In earlier studies, Biberauer (1996) positively appraises the four functions of War metaphors in the AIDS context, i.e., structuring, illuminatory, compensatory and manipulative, arguing that War metaphors help to bring enlightening effects of AIDS. In more recent studies, Flusberg, Matlock, & Thibodeau (2018: 1) summarise two functions of War metaphors: 'a): they draw on basic and widely shared schematic knowledge that efficiently structures our ability to reason and communicate about many types of situations, and b) they reliably express an urgent, negatively valenced emotional tone that captures attention and motivates action.' Based on the findings, I summarise two key functions of War metaphors: epistemological simplicity and emotional intensity.

On the one hand, War metaphors can make complex issues or events simple: an enemy is defined, an alliance is built, and a war is declared. The simplicity has made War metaphors a powerful tool in mobilising collective efforts. When people think they understand their issues and are given a common enemy to fight against, they are more likely to participate in the actions. Such simplicity is powerful, but at the same time, it is risky because it could create reductive and discrete categories, e.g., 'winner', 'loser', 'hero', 'the coward', and 'traitor'. It further encourages or naturalises the 'sacrifice' of certain groups for 'bigger groups' (which may be intentionally defined) when there is a pressing need for 'success' at any cost. On the other hand, War metaphors intensify emotions, especially anxiety, fear, or anger, as primary emotional weapons to fight against the defined enemy. When the 'simplicity' and 'intensity' are combined, they make War metaphors especially powerful in health communication.

Historically, the use of war metaphors in health communication stems from the long-standing binary opposition between people and disease, usually understood as an exterior virus attacking or invading the bodies. For example, in earlier studies, Lipowski (1970) finds that 'illness as an enemy', which views disease as an invasion by inimical forces as a major coping strategy toward illness. Illness is dominantly deemed a 'foreign' virus that invades the 'domestic' body and further puts the body in jeopardy. In the Chinese context, similar ideas can be seen in traditional Chinese medicine, which sees the cause of illness as 外邪[external evil] or 邪气入体[evil gas enters into the body]. The daily activities of 养身[keeping the body, or taking care of the body] in Chinese culture are often described as 增强抵抗力[Improving the fighting competence, which refers to improving one's immunity] and 抵制外邪入侵[resisting the invasion of external evil].

However, War metaphors are doubted in contributing to a culture where 'failing' to control the illness is deemed 'unacceptable', leaving the individuals with the illness or the 'fighters' being judged as not fighting hard enough, especially when the War metaphors are elevated to the extent of 'militaristic' language. Such language is often deemed dubious and problematic (Parsi, 2016), especially since they reinforce a masculine rhetoric of disease or machismo themes in public health communication (Clarke & Robinson, 1999). Scholars also concern about the politicisation of health issues under War metaphors. For example, Hudson (2008) critically analyses the War metaphors in the Singapore government's campaign against SARS. The study argues that while the campaign uses War metaphors to introduce heroes and build national pride, the metaphors lead to increased surveillance, militarisation and further authoritarianism during the SARS crisis in Singapore. Chapman & Miller (2020) argue that the government utilises the wartime narratives during Covid-19 in the USA to justify policies that could harm vulnerable groups, e.g., African Americans.

Apart from politicisation, War metaphors are further criticised for being related to the 'split-self' effects they have made. Within War metaphors, the patients are called to fight against themselves, where there are different selves within one body, and some self needs to fight against other-selves. However, sometimes patients indeed have difficulty in telling the self and non-self, e.g., in health cases involving antibiotic-resistant bacteria and auto-immune diseases (Goatly, 2007: 50), where War metaphors are particularly not helpful. Thus, instead of a divided 'us-other' framework under the

War metaphors, recently, a symbiotic relationship, or a more harmonious relationship between one and one's illness, has been called upon (Walker, 2020). War metaphors are criticised to the extent that there is a trend among health practitioners that War metaphors should be avoided or not used, especially in the field of bioethics. For example, Nie, Rennie, Gilbertson, & Tucker (2016: 3) doubt militaristic metaphors are unnecessary and ethically unjustified, arguing that War metaphors are "ironic, unfortunate, and unnecessary" in HIV cure research. George, Whitehouse, & Whitehouse (2016) call for less use of War metaphors to end the 'War on Alzheimer'. War metaphors toward cancer, in particular, have received harsh criticism. For example, Parikh, Kirch, & Brawley (2015) call for moving beyond the War metaphor to advance a quality-of-life agenda for cancer patients. Malm (2016) doubts that military metaphors could lead to overdiagnosis and overtreatment of cancer cures for winning at any cost. The NHS Cancer Reform Strategy has avoided using War metaphors related to cancer in the UK (Semino et al., 2017).

In particular, communication around Covid-19 has brought extensive critical attitudes and evaluations toward War metaphors, as reflected in emerging studies proposing alternative metaphors to replace War metaphors. For example, the recent #reframecovid initiative has been carried out, calling for using other metaphors to replace War metaphors (Olza, Koller, Ibarretxe-Antuñano, Pérez-Sobrino, & Semino, 2021; Pérez-Sobrino, Semino, Ibarretxe-Antuñano, Koller, & Olza, 2022; Semino, 2021). The initiative argues that War metaphors are not productive in common efforts towards the pandemic, and the (ab)use of War metaphors should be replaced by other metaphors, e.g., *a face mask for a sail* or *acting like a hedgehog*. In the same line, Hanne (2022) acknowledges the inevitable use of War metaphors in the beginning period of the pandemic but shows concern that War metaphors lead to undesired effects, e.g., lacking empathy and ignoring the interdependence and connectedness of each other in a holistic world. Likewise, Sabucedo, Alzate, & Hur (2020) argue that War metaphors omit the factors of mutual care or empathy in health communication around Covid, and the metaphors harm democratic systems.

However, there are studies supporting the positive effects of War metaphors, especially their motivational effects. The centre view is that it is too simplistic to treat War metaphors as imposing a single and necessarily negative evaluation. Some counter-examples where the War metaphor brings positive effects are found. For example,

Stavraky (1968) finds that in a group of women who have cancer, women who are more hostile to cancer have the most favourable outcome. Hansen (2018) finds that War metaphors play both a positive and negative role in health communication around cancer. Specifically, war metaphors motivate and unite efforts for treatment and research on cancer, but the metaphors also position the incurable as losers. There are also studies proving the usefulness of War metaphors in talking about Covid-19. For example, based on speeches given by key political representatives (e.g., Boris Johnson and Donald Trump) on Covid-19, Castro Seixas (2021) cautions against the previous studies which deem War metaphors as inherently dangerous and damaging. The study finds that war metaphors can show compassion, concern and empathy, and the emphasis is placed on adaptation to hard times instead of fighting the virus. Cai, Jiang, & Tang (2022) find the campaign against Covid-19 in Chinese media has been referred to as a *people's war* (*rén mín zhàn zhēng*), a general war (*zǒng tǐ zhǎn*), which contributes to united efforts and effective control of the spread of Covid-19 in China. Similarly, Yang (2021) also finds that war metaphors help the Chinese media elicit collective efforts and set up national subjects in the fight against Covid.

Based on the above review on War metaphors and the previous section on Journey metaphors, an important note is that metaphorical framing is based on the specific context where metaphors are used. When analysing the framing function, it is necessary to explore the context and the detailed ways metaphors are used instead of presuming certain metaphors are 'good' (useful) or 'bad' (not useful).

4.5 Metaphor Focusing on Obesity

Compared with other health issues like cancer or HIV, obesity receives less academic attention from metaphor studies (although for more recent exceptions, see Cotter, Samos, & Swinglehurst, 2021). A possible reason for the scant scholarly attention could be that compared with cancer and HIV, obesity seems not that life-threatening or deadly in a short period (people can live for a sustainable time with obesity). Neither does obesity require a long and complicated diagnosis and treatment process. A lot of times, obesity is conveniently understood as the result of eating too much and exercising too little and thus is not deemed conceptually complicated or mysterious as cancer. Encouragingly, metaphors around obesity have not been completely ignored. The limited studies on metaphors around obesity are mainly observed in obesity coverage in

the English media, with most of them centring around three metaphors, i.e., Epidemic metaphor, Journey metaphor and War metaphor.

First, the Epidemic metaphor is one of the most prevalent yet controversial metaphors around obesity. However, this vein of studies does not carry out an in-depth linguistic analysis as most of them fall into sociological analysis on the phenomenon of the spreading of the term 'obesity epidemic' (e.g., Kumanyika, 2007; Mitchell & McTigue, 2007). A more in-depth linguistic analysis is done by Coltman-Patel (2020). Her study finds that the broadsheet and tabloid newspapers in the UK use the word *epidemic* to similar degrees, showing that the UK media generally deem obesity as an epidemic. The study also finds that *epidemic* is frequently and problematically used as a direct reference to obesity, which casts a stigma on individuals with obesity.

Second, though various Journey metaphors have been observed in titles of articles on obesity, e.g., "*PPARs and the complex journey to obesity*" (Evans et al., 2004), there remain limited studies conducting linguistic analysis on the Journey metaphors around obesity. A possible reason for the lack of studies could be that Journey metaphors are very conventional or nearly clichéd and thus may not be deemed novel to trigger academic interest. Another possible reason is that Journey metaphors are not insightful for some research questions. For example, Samos (2018: 119) discards Journey metaphors, arguing that Journey metaphors mainly describe the solutions to obesity rather than its causes, thus not being that relevant to her research which focuses on the aetiology of obesity. Among the very limited Journey metaphor studies around obesity, an especially valuable and useful study for this project is seen in Atanasova (2018), which explores the use of Journey metaphors in obesity blogs written by individuals and medical experts. Specifically, the study finds that Journey metaphors were used to present the authors as travellers in individual blogs and guides in professional blogs. The study finds Journey metaphors playing positive roles in the blogs: they challenge the dominant before-after weight loss narratives (as there are ups and downs in the process) and bring positive implications for doctor-patient communication. Another related study is Eikey & Reddy (2017) who explore how women with eating disorder use weight loss apps. They find that the participants refer to their eating disorders and subsequent app experience as a journey, which is related to different stages of their health journey and their reflection on the journey.

Third, by comparison, more studies are exploring the War metaphors related to obesity. Döring Metz, Ferrario, & Heintze (2009) find a high degree of conventional metaphors of WEIGHT REDUCTION IS A FIGHT in the counselling between the general practitioner and overweight patients in Germany. Likewise, De Brún, McKenzie, McCarthy, & McGloin (2012) find that War metaphors are mainly used as 'obesity descriptions' to understand what causes obesity and the solution to obesity in Irish media (1997-2009), which leads to the dramatisation of obesity science in the media. Noteworthy special work is done by Samos (2018) in comparing the metaphorical framing of obesity in three types of texts in the UK, i.e., news reports, government policy texts and personal accounts of people who self-define as obese. The three types of text reveal four semantic domains: war, epidemic, addiction and religion, showing obesity is a complex and multi-layered social issue (in order, the conceptual metaphors within the four domains are OBESITY IS A MILITARY OPPONENT, OBESITY IS A CONTAGIOUS DISEASE, OBESITY IS A RESULT OF ADDICTION, and BEING OBESE IS A SIN). The use of the metaphors jointly leads to the medicalisation of obesity and the stigmatisation of individuals with obesity in society. In detail, with the War metaphors, three conceptual metaphors are the most frequent: OBESITY IS A MILITARY OPPONENT; THE FOOD INDUSTRY IS A MILITARY OPPONENT; PUBLIC HEALTH BODIES ARE MILITARY OPPONENTS. These metaphors show obesity is a complex war with various stakeholders, e.g., the kids are easily attacked by the fast-food industries. In a later study, based on the same texts, Cotter et al. (2021) find War metaphors represent obesity as personal controllable, leading to an unsupportive social environment towards individuals with obesity.

Similarly, Coltman-Patel (2020) finds the British media use War metaphors mainly as a solution to obesity. In detail, they use a variety of war metaphors, e.g., *timebomb*, *tackle*, and the *war on obesity,* to contribute to the stigmatisation of obesity. In this way, individuals with obesity are posited as against the rest of society, which leads to the social marginalisation of the group. Similar media phenomena are also found by Atanasova & Koteyko (2020) based on British news articles on obesity. Their study finds that the articles, through their use of War metaphors, encourage stigma toward individuals with obesity, which in their view, is socially unproductive and unhelpful. In detail, their study argues that War metaphors have fulfilled two main framing functions: 1) problematising obesity prevalence and 2) conceptualising individual and societal-

level efforts to address obesity. A key finding of their study is that different from infectious diseases, which are caused by an external bacterium, in the case of obesity, the key role is in the individuals themselves, i.e., how they discipline their bodies. In this way, the patient and the enemy overlap, and the individuals are treated as the legitimate target of the war: they become enemies of themselves and society's efforts to fight against obesity.

Though not directly targeting obesity, Brookes and Baker (2021: 159) analyse metaphors related to the body in the representation of obesity in the UK media. Their study finds the body is either represented as a grammatical agent or a grammatical patient, contributing four main metaphorical representations of the body, i.e., *body as a sentient being*, *body as enemy*, *body as a machine/vehicle*, and *body as a computer*. These metaphors show the complex or sometimes confusing relations one has with their body, which takes different roles regarding the obesity issue. Based on this, we can get an initial sense that a key component in metaphors around obesity will be how the body is portrayed and the relationship one builds up with their body, and further, how the body is deemed and evaluated by others in society.

To sum up, metaphor literature on obesity is rather limited. Existing studies recognise the complex nature of obesity discourses, but the crucial role of metaphor in revealing such complexity remains under-explored. In this project, I hope to reveal the complexity through metaphor analysis, especially the multi-level metaphor analysis, which I move on to explain in the next section.

4.6 Novelty of this Project and the Multi-level Metaphor Analysis Model

The above review on metaphor scholarship sheds light on the role of metaphor in health communication. However, I aim to build upon existing work by shifting attention to the Chinese context and adopting new analytical and methodological perspectives. Based on existing studies, including the broader theoretical review in Chapter 3, I highlight the novelty of this project from the following aspects:

1) First, this project is original in its Chinese context. As will be described in the next chapter, my collected data (the editorials from the official media and the blogs from the social media) represents the first as well as the most recent dataset of its type

(although of relatively small size). It is important to note my data since major studies of media representation of obesity are based on English data or one type of dataset (either traditional media or social media).

2) Second, apart from the Chinese data, this project is also novel in its linguistic focus: most studies on obesity in media have focused on the content of the news (what is said about obesity); this project is based on systematic metaphor analysis on the use of metaphors (how things are said about obesity through metaphors). The 'how' part is an important novelty of this project as it can help to reveal the subtle discursive strategies involved in the representation work done by the media.

3) Within the linguistic focus and metaphor theories, I combine the merits of different approaches to metaphor studies and do not confine myself to a single approach in metaphor analysis. Existing research on Chinese metaphors overwhelmingly adopts CMT, limiting itself to proving the linguistic realisations of certain conceptual metaphors. The pragmatic or communicational functions of metaphor largely remain ignored. As I have explained in Chapter 3, CMT itself cannot be sufficient for the task, and it is thus necessary to draw on the theories of Critical metaphor analysis and Discourse Dynamic Approach to metaphor analysis.

Based on the above novelties, at this stage, I would like to introduce my multi-level analytical perspectives to explain how I approach and operate metaphor analysis in this project (see table 4.1).

Table 4.1 Multi-level Metaphor Analysis Model

Metaphor analysis steps	Analysis level	Theoretical and Methodological Perspective	Research questions answered
Metaphor identification (what: feature)	Language	MIP (Pragglejaz Group, 2007) and MIPVU (Steen, et al, 2010)	Questions 1, 2
Metaphor interpretation (how: frame)	Thought	Systematic metaphors + metaphorical scenarios (Cameron & Maslen, 2010)	
Metaphor explanation (why: function)	Communication	Context-based qualitative case studies	Question 3

As shown in Table 4.1, I combine Charteris-Black's (2004) three-stage metaphor analysis model (i.e., metaphor identification, metaphor explanation and metaphor interpretation) and Steen's (2013) three dimensions of metaphor analysis (i.e., language, thought and communication). The three steps focus on 'what', 'how' and 'why' dimensions, stretching to three 'f's of metaphor usages: feature, frame and function.

The model first sets out from the language level (the feature), answering the question of what metaphors have been used. The question will be answered through the Metaphor Identification Procedure (Pragglejaz Group, 2007) and its more recent version of MIPVU (Metaphor Identification Procedure, Vrije Universiteit, Steen et al., 2010). Secondly, the model moves on to the thought level (the frame), answering the question of how the metaphors potentially reveal the discourse participants' ideas, attitudes and evaluations of the topics emerging in the discourse. The question will be answered through systematic metaphors and metaphorical scenarios within the Discourse Dynamics Approach (Cameron & Maslen, 2010). Lastly, the model explores the communication level (the function), answering the question of why certain metaphors (the feature) are used for achieving certain conceptualisations (the frame), thus combining the previous two levels. The question will be answered through context-based qualitative case studies, which focus on the performance and effects of the metaphors in a detailed communication context, e.g., the intended readers, the news values, the goal of using the metaphors, and the wider social-cultural discourses.

Please note that the three levels are complementary rather than competing and exclusive, though different levels may be more or less pertinent for different research questions. Please also pay attention that the three levels are neither direct linear, i.e., from verbal to conceptual and further to pragmatic level. The three are interlocked in their sequence. But, for the ease of metaphor analysis, I would like to temporarily deem there is a trend for metaphors to be first presented in the verbal form, which gives expression to the ideas of the speakers, who aim to achieve certain communicative effects in their metaphor uses.

The model can be summarised in one interrogative sentence: What, how and with what functions are metaphors used? The question covers linguistic features, conceptual frames and communicative functions of metaphor uses. The three levels, i.e., identification, interpretation and explanation, are also in line with the description, interpretation and explanation of critical discourse analysis by Fairclough (1989). It is

also in line with Semino et al. (2018) with the integrated approach to metaphor and framing, which covers cognition, discourse and practice dimensions. The important point is that it is possible, by means of looking at the linguistic surface, to identify a level of a cognitive frame of a topic that becomes entrenched in discourse and which, further, due to their socio-cultural situatedness, takes effect in a real communication context.

To better illustrate the model, I would like to make two additional caveats:

1) I do not claim to be exhaustive in metaphor analysis in my model. According to the Discourse Dynamics Approach, metaphor is found to be across more varied dimensions, e.g., embodied (e.g., seen in gestures), semantic, and affective (Cameron & Deignan, 2006). Though these dimensions are certainly interesting for exploration, I decide to focus on the three levels which I deem most relevant for my research purposes;

2) I either claim whether the producers of my data, i.e., the editorials' writers or the bloggers, intended their specific words to express metaphorical meanings in any simple sense or whether the readers succeeded in interpreting the expressions metaphorically. In this sense, I adopt a product-oriented approach to analyse the outcome, the 'presented' features, frames and functions, which can be largely, if not all, obtained from the metaphorical 'status quo' in my data.

4.7 Summary

In this chapter, I have reviewed metaphorical framing in health communication. I then have examined two popular metaphors in health communication, i.e., Journey and War, as case studies to explain metaphorical framing effects depending on detailed contexts. I have tried to explain that the positive or negative use of the metaphors is dependent on their detailed contexts, and there are no default good or bad metaphors. I have also reviewed metaphors focusing on obesity, revealing the limited and under-investigated studies. At last, I have explained the novelty of this project, especially the multi-level metaphor model. Based on the model, I argue that metaphor carries linguistic features with cognitive frames, further with practical communication purposes.

Having begun to mention some of my data and analysis approaches, I now provide a detailed account of my data and methodology in Chapter 5.

Chapter 5: Corpus Construction and General Methodology

5.1 Introduction

In this chapter, I describe, explain and evaluate my data and methodology. As the need for sound and rigorous methodology in metaphor analysis has been continually called for (Kimmel, 2012), this project joins a growing body of studies reflecting the methodological issues in metaphor analysis. Readers of this chapter will see my methodological difficulties, adjustments and reflections. In a nutshell, in this project, I conducted metaphor analysis on a corpus of 160,000 Chinese characters (approx.), i.e., **C**orpus of **O**besity **D**iscourse in **C**hinese **M**edia (henceforth CODCM) which I built for this project. To better introduce my approach, I divide this chapter into three sections:

In section 5.2, I first give a brief overview of the media landscape in China, showing the differences between official and social media in China. Through this section, readers will be better informed of the unique media landscape in China and how that affects my data collection. In section 5.3, I explain the construction of my corpus, which I divide into two sub-corpora, i.e., CODCM-Daily from the *People's Daily* (section 5.3.1) and CODCM-Weibo from Weibo (section 5.3.2). I explain the methods I used to collect data from different mediums, including their sources, sampling criteria and sizes. I also introduce some software tools I used for building the corpus (section 5.3.3) and related copyright & research ethic issues (section 5.3.4). Section 5.4 focuses on the methods of metaphor analysis. I introduce how I identify and quantify obesity-related metaphors in my data (section 5.4.1). I also introduce how I applied and adjusted MIP and MIPVU to analyse my Chinese data. Later, I explain how I used Nvivo to code metaphor types manually (section 5.4.2). I conclude this chapter by setting out my methodologies' main strengths and limitations (section 5.5).

It is necessary to point out that this chapter *only* deals with the methodologies in constructing the corpus and identifying *linguistic* metaphors, i.e., the *language* level in my multi-level metaphor analysis model. For methods in the other two levels, i.e., metaphor interpretation (at the *thought* level) and metaphor explanation (at the *communication* level) which rely on the proposal and explanation of systematic metaphors and metaphorical scenarios, their methods involve different approaches and will be discussed in relevant chapters (chapters 6 to 9).

5.2 Media in China

Unlike Western media, media in China can be briefly divided into media directly run by the Communist Party of China (henceforth, CPC) and media indirectly regulated by the CPC. Traditionally, Chinese media, including national and provincial TV channels, newspapers, magazines and radios, are called the 'throat and tongue' of the CPC (Shirk, 2011: 5). Around the 1980s, to reduce its economic burden, the Chinese government gradually relinquished its regulation over the media by allowing the media to compete in the market. Since then, social and economic reform in China has dramatically changed the ecology of Chinese media. Currently, nearly all Chinese media are put into the market, albeit to different degrees. Official media like the *People's Daily*, despite being allowed to sell advertisements, largely remain as key apparatuses for the CPC's public information work, echoing and spreading the official voices, or the 主旋律 [main melody] in the specific socio-cultural context in China (Tang & Iyengar, 2011) (that is also why they are called official media).

By comparison, Chinese social media are heavily influenced by the market. Since QQ, China's biggest online instant messaging system, was introduced in 1998, social media channels like Weibo have mushroomed and attracted an increasing number of users in China. For example, more than 25% of Chinese people routinely use Weibo, and Weibo has 252 million daily active users in the first quarter of 2022[6]. Every day, millions of blog posts are produced, retweeted, exchanged, and commented on Weibo. As commercial advertising constitutes the main source of its profit, there is a trend of downplaying ideological influence on Weibo. Instead, a more populist and informal writing style is taken by Weibo to be more appealing and responsive to its users, mostly young netizens who actively consume and produce online information. As such, Weibo has become an energetic and vibrant online platform for its users to communicate about hot social issues in China.

Nevertheless, voices are arguing for few differences between social and official media, given the highly regulated media environment, especially the network review system in China (e.g., Sullivan, 2014). For example, Zeng, Chan, & Schäfer (2022) argue that Chinese social media need to maintain a close and harmonious relationship with the

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[6] *Weibo's daily active users Q1 2018-Q1 2022*. Retrived June 2022, from https://www.statista.com/statistics/1058070/china-sina-weibo-dau/.

official media, and they adopt almost identical approaches in framing social issues to that of the official media.

Yet, in this project, I still deem discourses in China's official media and social media to be of different genres. By *genre*, I use the term from Fairclough (1995: 14) that genre is 'a socially ratified way of using language in connection with a particular type of social activity'. The different degrees of commercialisation, governmental affiliations and political leanings of different media contribute to different linguistic styles and communicative purposes in Chinese media. In detail, language in China's official media can be deemed a 'hybridity' of institutional and political discourse (Wang, 2020). Discourses in the official media can be deemed as a special form of political discourses presented on the media platform. By comparison, language in Weibo is up-to-date and in vivo and can reflect the informal grassroots socio-linguistic activities (Shi & Jing-schmidt, 2020). Therefore, editorials and blogs form different discourse communities or groups of people who share texts and practices (Swales, 2016).

The distinct genres can help exemplify various constructs related to social events or topics. The same topic can be represented in different ways in different media. Therefore, I need to explore obesity-related discourse in official and social media to capture the important contextual and generic specialities. This is directly related to my data collection, which I will explain in the coming section.

5.3 Corpus Construction and Description

Given the different media types, it is necessary to consider the differences between official and social media in China. For the official media, I focus on the *People's Daily*; for social media, I turn to Weibo. This leads to the construction of two sub-corpora, i.e., the CODCM-Daily and the CODCM-Weibo, in this project. As they involve different methods of accessing and dealing with the data, I shall explain the decision-making process in constructing each corpus. I start by introducing the CODCM-Daily.

5.3.1 Construction and Description of CODCM-Daily

I collected obesity-related editorials from the *People's Daily*. The *Daily* was chosen because it is China's most widespread and influential state-owned medium with the largest circulation. It represents the quality and mainstream newspaper in the Chinese

context. For convenience, I turned to the *Daily*'s online archive[7] to collect the articles published on its website. Specifically, I looked for the obesity-related editorial in the *Daily*[8]. The reason for choosing editorials, or opinion pieces, on the one hand, was due to the overwhelming obesity-related news in the *Daily* (more than 80,000 pieces at the time of collection, i.e., August 2021, which was somewhat unmanageable for this PhD project) and on the other hand, the editorials intrinsically fell into a more persuasive and evaluative genre of opinion pieces where the journalists more overtly expressed their positions on social issues, making it easier for me to observe what aspects of obesity have been stressed or ignored by the *Daily*. I looked at editorials in the period of 2010-2020 (inclusive) so as only to explore the recent discourse.

I retrieved relevant editorials from the website with three keywords, i.e., 肥胖 [obesity], 超重[overweight], and 减肥[losing weight]. I used the keywords of 肥胖[obesity] and 超重[overweight] because they were more neutral labels available for the health issue compared with terms with more emotional implications like 臃肿[puffy] and 丰满 [plump]. The keyword of 减肥[losing-weight] was used because it could reveal anti-obesity discourse, which was useful for me to see the representation of obesity the other way around. At the time of collection (August 2020), the search turned out 232 articles containing 肥胖[obesity/fat], 128 containing 超重[overweight], and 411 containing 减肥[losing weight] (it was lucky that later in 2021 when I turned to the website again, some editorials' URLs became invalid and they were no longer available in the *Daily*'s website. Nevertheless, for good research practice, I show their URL links in the Appendix). Since the keywords were closely related to each other, there were some overlaps and duplicated files (some editorials repeatedly appear in the search results of the three keywords), so I manually removed the duplicate editorials.

Along with my close manual reading of the editorials, I adopted a general sampling criterion of relevance to select the editorials, i.e., they should be 'sufficiently' related to obesity. This way, editorials of 'slimming' governmental institutions or about pet obesity were excluded. I also excluded editorials that only slightly mention obesity without further discussing it. This especially applied to articles advertising slimming pills that mentioned obesity in a cursory way. Apart from those editorials which were

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[7] *The People's Daily*. Retrieved June 2021, from http://www.peopledaily.com.cn/
[8] *Editorials in the People's Daily*. Retrieved June 2021, from http://opinion.people.com.cn/

obviously unrelated to obesity and those which focused on obesity per se with strong relevance, on closer inspection, I found there were editorials of 'middle place' or 'grey area' on their relevance to obesity. For example, some articles discussed the general worsening physical health of the Chinese population, especially among teenagers. The articles explained the situation, listed obesity as evidence, and discussed ways to improve health. Though these articles were not strongly obesity-focused (as they also discussed other evidence of poor health, e.g., near-sightedness and high blood pressure), I decided to include them as they could help me know wider metaphorical framings of health and body, where obesity is usually situated.

For example, the editorial of 把"课间十分钟"还给孩子[Returning the "10-minute break" between classes to kids] from the *Daily*, discussed the lack of extracurricular activities among kids and listed childhood obesity as a result of it. Though the editorial was more about the physical condition of kids in general and did not exclusively focus on obesity (nevertheless, with explanations on the causes, harm of obesity and possible measures), I included it in my corpus. Exploring it and other similar editorials, for example, 体育，丰富心灵的重要载体 [Physical education, an important carrier for enriching the heart], which focused on introducing the benefits of doing sports, e.g., in losing weight, was helpful for me to explore how obesity, along with its closely related concepts like *body*, *sports*, and *exercise*, was framed in the *Daily*.

In the end, in line with the criteria, I obtained 98 obesity-related editorials (98,178 Chinese characters; the titles, the translations of the titles and the website links of the editorials can be found in the appendix). All the collected editorials were simplified Chinese. As I did not investigate diachronic changes, I did not collect an equal number of editorials in each year, but it is noted that the years 2014 and 2019 had the most editorials (14 pieces and 16 pieces, respectively), while the year 2018 had the least (2 pieces). In counting the size of the data, titles were counted. The headline and the lead of the editorials, which summarised the content or the key information of the editorials, usually appeared twice and were accordingly counted twice (note that this explains why the size of the corpus was shown as bigger than the one in my previous pilot study, see Huang & Bisiada, 2021 which only counted once). Some editorials were reprinted from news sources like *Beijing Daily* and *Guang Ming Daily*, but as they appeared in the *Daily*, I deemed they aligned with the *Daily*'s position towards obesity and included them.

Although the size of the CODCM-Daily is certainly not big and admittedly rather small, as Nelson (2010: 55) points out that 'small corpora can be very useful, providing they can offer a "balanced" and "representative" picture of a specified area of the language'. In this project, the benefit of focusing on a small corpus is that doing so enables a detailed examination of certain aspects of linguistic form, like the metaphor, in this project.

There is a special caveat to bear in mind in terms of the writers of the editorials. Due to institutional requirements, all collected editorials were written by journalists. The 98 editorials were written by 80 journalists (10 journalists who may have more expertise in reporting health-related issues had contributed to more than one editorial; every journalist contributed around 1,063 characters on average). As the journalists wrote following the policy lines, and their writings were checked by more authoritative editors (Huan, 2018) (some journalists even did not have their names shown as they were named as '光明网评论员' [commentator from *Guangming* Website] or just showed the website, e.g., '中国江苏网' [*Jiangsu Net*, China]), I do not pay attention to individual differences (e.g., journalists' individual preferences in using a certain metaphor) given the editorial practices in the *Daily*. Instead, I treat the editorials as a whole and explore the *Daily*'s overall framings of obesity. In this way, I analyse the collective 'institutional voice' delivered by the *Daily* instead of the individual voice of the journalists of the editorials.

5.3.2 Construction and Description of CODCM-Weibo

Zappavigna (2012) notes that social media offer new insights into social realities, thus calling for more academic attention. However, research methodologies in social media data are more complex. First and foremost, constructing the social media corpus is more complex due to the informal or even 'messy' linguistic data in social media, which brings a raft of methodological challenges. More attention is called to making transparent the move from tools to explanations in the social media data (Raghavan, 2014). In this section, I explain how I constructed CODCM-Weibo, and discuss the challenges I encountered and how I dealt with them.

For the source of the corpus, I used naturally occurring blogs from Weibo, the Chinese version of Twitter. Weibo offered authentic, abundant, and publicly available data for

me to collect. It was not possible for me to manually read and collect obesity-related blogs, given the huge number of blogs posted on Weibo. How to collect representative and sufficient obesity-related blogs was the first challenge I faced in constructing CODCM-Weibo.

For this challenge, like what I did in CODCM-Daily, I first used two keywords, i.e., 肥胖 [obesity] and 减肥 [losing weight], to help me collect the blogs. However, I found it time-consuming (it cost me nearly a day to collect only 26 blogs). I decided to use hashtags to help me collect the data. Like Twitter, hashtags are an important feature in Weibo, making content searchable and useful for me to locate obesity-related blogs. The importance of hashtags in communication on social media has been recognized, and several researchers have conducted systematic discourse studies on hashtags (e.g., Bisiada, 2021; Zappavigna, 2015).

Two hashtags, i.e., #肥胖#[9] [obesity] and #减肥#[10] [losing weight], were chosen because they were among the most popular obesity-centred hashtags in Weibo. At the time of collecting the data (August 2021), the hashtag #肥胖# [obesity] had received more than 53.6 million visits, and the hashtag #减肥# [losing weight] had got even as many as 9.3 billion visits. I used ScrapeStorm, a web-scraping tool, to help me collect relevant blogs. In detail, I copied the URLs of the hashtags to ScrapeStorm. The software allowed me to search for blogs containing the two hashtags over a specific period. The software has been used by Shi & Jing-schmidt (2020) in mining Weibo data and proved to be useful. I retrieved blogs from 1 January 2010 to 31 December 2020, consistent with the period in CODCM-Daily. Search control was set as 'original' to avoid duplicated items such as reposts and forwards. The software downloaded all searched results from Weibo and stored each blog in excel form.

When closely reading the blogs in excel, different from Koteyko & Atanasova (2018), I did not pay attention to whether the hashtag was used as part of the sentence or outside the syntactic structure of the blogs. In other words, I collected all the blogs, which included hashtags. At this stage, the second challenge came. Apart from their colossal numbers (over 5,000 blogs for each hashtag for each year), I found many 'not-relevant'

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[9] *#肥胖# [obesity]*. Retrieved August 2021, from
(https://s.weibo.com/weibo?q=%23%E8%82%A5%E8%83%96%23).

[10] *#减肥# [losing weight]*. Retrieved August 2021, from
(https://s.weibo.com/weibo?q=%23%E5%87%8F%E8%82%A5%23&Refer=SWeibo_box).

(see my criteria below) scraped blogs, which added big noises to my data. I manually read the scraped blogs and came up with the following criteria to discard the 'unqualified' blogs:

Firstly, I decided to focus on individual users instead of institutional blog accounts (including the government blog accounts) to make a clear contrast with the editorials. In the blogs, I am interested in the individual voice delivered by ordinary Internet users to see their personal experiences of obesity and whether their voices on obesity concur with the official voices in the *Daily*. This makes sense given the Chinese cultural factors, e.g., the face-saving or the collectivist culture could be a barrier for people to openly talk about their bodies and express their emotions towards their bodies. In such a cultural context, social media can offer a precious site for people to talk and discuss obesity issues. Weibo could be a suitable arena where so far silenced or depressed feelings around obesity can be 'voiced' by individuals living with obesity. The blogs can further function as personal narratives in health communication, helping to reveal the lived experience of health issues (see the narrative turn in health communication, e.g., Hinyard & Kreuter, 2007). Individual blogs are rich resources for understanding what living with obesity (or the fear of being obese) is like and how people show their authentic perceptions, emotions, and challenges toward obesity. In this way, individual blogs can complement or even challenge the public view on obesity.

Secondly, within individual blogs, I further omitted advertising blogs or promotional texts of weight-losing products or services, which in my observation, typically included meal replacement powder (e.g., blogs of dietitians), slimming pills (e.g., blogs of the sale staff), gymnasium (e.g., blogs of fitness instructors), advertisements of plastic surgery hospitals, etc. Such promotional blogs took big parts in the downloaded data. Even though they were certainly interesting, I discarded them because my interest was in the authentic voice around obesity by individuals instead of the commercial blogs, which tended to use exaggerated words towards obesity for their promotional goals;

Thirdly, I also excluded the scientific popularisation blogs or the introductory information of lectures around obesity by medical professionals or experts like nutritionists, and cardiologists, because their blogs, to a large extent, could be similar to the editorials in the *Daily*. Fourthly, I also deleted blogs that only 'objectively' posted figures of weights, daily eating, and exercise activities (e.g., calories in meals, time, and length of physical exercise, etc.) without expressing 'subjective' feelings, attitudes,

emotions or evaluations on the activities and experiences. Finally, I also deleted blogs that used the hashtags, yet did so without a clear relation between the blogs and the hashtags. For example, in the blog of 再见啦 2020#减肥# [goodbye 2020. #losing weight], even though the hashtag is used, the content before it does not seem to be related to obesity or without a discussion on obesity. I deem the blogger seems to use the hashtag for the sake of using it, and it is not that relevant to my analysis.

Based on the above criteria, a high percentage of 'unqualified' blogs were observed in the scraped results. I omitted them when I manually read the blogs. In the end, only 850 blogs from almost 100,000 scraped blogs were retained. Such a huge reduction of blogs was reasonable due to the pervasive advertisement spam in Weibo (Chen, Chen, Zhu, & Xiong, 2013). The remaining blogs were not large enough and did not fulfil my target. I thus supplemented and enlarged the blogs by turning to another two hashtags, i.e., #肥胖是什么感觉# [11][How does it feel to be fat] and #减肥成功是一种怎样的体验#[12] [How does it feel to lose weight successfully]. Although the two hashtags did not have the same popularity as the previous ones, as implied by their names, they were promising to reveal first-person accounts around the experience of being obese and losing weight or the lived experience of fat embodiment.

For the two hashtags, instead of using Scrapestrom (as it scraped many promotional blogs, which needed subsequent time-consuming 'cleaning'), I manually read the blogs on their web pages, copied and pasted the qualified blogs. I applied the same criteria in collecting the blogs around the two hashtags. In the end, I collected 32 blogs within #肥胖是什么感觉# [How does it feel to be fat] and 88 blogs within #减肥成功是一种怎样的体验# [How does it feel to lose weight successfully]. Until then, I found the size of the Weibo data closer to that of the CODCM-Daily and stopped searching for more blogs.

Solving the challenges of collecting the blogs, when I read the blogs I collected, the third challenge came. Like Twitter, blogs were published without spelling and

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[11] *肥胖是什么感觉# [How does it feel to be fat].* Retrieved August 2021, from (https://s.weibo.com/weibo/%23%E8%82%A5%E8%83%96%E6%98%AF%E4%BB%80%E4%B9%88%E6%84%9F%E8%A7%89%23).

[12] *减肥成功是一种怎样的体验# [How does it feel or experience to successfully lose weight].* Retrieved August 2021, from (https://s.weibo.com/weibo?q=%23%E5%87%8F%E8%82%A5%E6%88%90%E5%8A%9F%E6%98%AF%E6%80%8E%E6%A0%B7%E7%9A%84%E4%B8%80%E7%A7%8D%E4%BD%93%E9%AA%8C%23).

grammatical checking. I found the blog texts were susceptible to non-standard orthographic representation, seen in various informal or substandard language uses, e.g., 'improper' punctuations and sentences. These informal language uses brought entertaining effects. For example, homophones were popularly used to express humorous effects, e.g., the uses of 神马 (*shén mǎ*) [god horse], which stood for 什么 (*shí me*) [what] and 银(*yín*) [silver] for 人(*rén*) [people]. These informal words and phrases were frequently observed in my data.

The use of punctuation in the blogs was also noteworthy. Many blogs did not use punctuation in a grammatically 'correct' way. For example, #减肥#真的要减肥了。。。 [#losing weight#, really need to lose weight…], the three full stops at the end of the sentence could be understood as adding emotional implications to the blog. However, I would avoid claiming whether the bloggers 'intentionally' used the punctuation. I retained the original writing and kept their 'informal' language to preserve the authentic blogs.

However, though I tried to retain authentic blogs, I must acknowledge that I did some 'slight editions' on the blogs. First, from the perspective of ethical considerations of protecting the privacy and avoiding traceability of the blogs to the largest extent, I omitted any identifiable information of personal details (e.g., the geo-locations, the accounts which were mentioned, shown by @ in the blogs revealing network and communications between users). For the names mentioned in the blogs, I used XX to stand for the names. Second, I also eliminated metadata which included 'follower' and 'following' counts, hyperlinks, and follow-up comments.

While I was 'editing' the blogs, the fourth challenge occurred, i.e., the multimodal (mainly the visual) content in the blogs. Due to the different theories and methods involved in analysing verbal and visual metaphors, I decided to focus on the verbal content of the blogs, pitifully discarding the accompanying visual properties, e.g., selfies, stickers and pictures. This was a hard decision as the visual contents are interesting and are a significant feature in the social media data as well as in the field of health communication (e.g., Brookes, Harvey, & Mullan., 2018; Harvey, 2013; Putland, 2022). In the case of obesity, bloggers usually demonstrate their success (or failure) in losing weight through their before-after photos of themselves, which involve a large use of selfies. However, as I aimed to compare CODCM-Daily (which only has textual

content) and CODCM-Weibo, I decided to accept the necessary compromise in discarding the visual contents. Admittedly, the omission of the multimodal elements posed challenges in my data analysis, as sometimes they were important parts of the contextual information of the blogs. As such, I deleted blogs over-relying on visual resources, for example, blogs only with words like 'see the picture below' without any further verbal practices.

Moreover, though I tried to maintain emojis in my data, the fact that the ICTCLAS (the segmentation for the Chinese language used in this project, see explanation later) failed to read the emojis or *biaoqing* [facial expression] led me to delete the emojis in my segmented data. I must admit that emojis are an important feature in social media discourse (Parkwell, 2019) (e.g., the same verbal content followed by different emojis delivers different meanings). For the overall purpose of my metaphor analysis and the importance of the segmentation results of ICTCLAS as my analysis unit (especially for subsequent quantifications results to determine the importance of a given metaphor in different corpora), I deem discarding the emojis is, again, a necessary compromise.

After overcoming the challenges, finally, 966 blogs (61,693 characters, including the hashtags) were collected. Most blogs were simplified Chinese (with a very small number posted in traditional complex Chinese). Though I ideally aimed at collecting a larger data set, given the labour-intensive and time-consuming task of manually reading and selecting the blogs and the more qualitative approach of my data analysis, I deemed the size met the need of this project, or at the very least constituted a promising starting point.

It is important to note that Scrapestorm did not guarantee to yield all blogs containing the hashtags, also partly because the scraping process was conducted through my Weibo account (the Scrapestorm tool required me to log into my Weibo account before scraping), and some blogs were not accessible to non-followers (or 'strangers' in Weibo), so the collected blogs did not cover all the relevant blogs. In this case, the blogs I collected should be understood as a snapshot of obesity-related blogs from 1 January 2010 to 31 December 2020. As I did not aim to explore diachronic differences within the blogs, I did not collect an equal number of blogs each year, nor did I count the annual number of blogs as long as they fall within the timeframe. However, it is noteworthy that a larger number of collected blogs were posted on 31st December than at other time. It may be explained that bloggers were more likely to post obesity-related

blogs on the last day of a year, by which they could do their past-year summaries or make new-year resolutions. The year 2020 contributed the largest number of blogs. I guess the reason for that could be that the Weibo search engine, though it can reveal earlier data, tended to cover the newer blogs more widely or simply that bloggers deleted some of their older blogs. This may influence a certain part of my discussion (especially concerning the outbreak of Covid-19, which led to higher public health awareness and a higher rate of obesity during the national lockdowns and quarantines).

With a closer look, the 966 blogs were posted by around 940 bloggers; thus, my data cover diverse users, and no single individual skewed the data. For the individuals, due to the nature of the freely available Weibo platform, I cannot make precise demographic claims about the natures of the users (even though the Weibo platform shows the self-reported demographic information of the users), but as a platform for people to discuss hot social topics, Weibo is more likely to be accessed by young people who are keen on sharing information and ideas online. Neither did I investigate the number of followers the bloggers have or how many likes and comments their blogs received because popularity or the influence of the blogs were not within my criteria in collecting the data (though well-known people tend to have more followers and their blogs will be more widely circulated). What I am interested in and thus aim to explore in the blogs is the naturally-occurring blogs of ordinary people in their everyday life experiences of obesity.

The word limit of Weibo has been eliminated so that users can post as many words as they like. In my data, the shortest blog has four characters, i.e., 减肥好难 [Losing weight is very difficult], and the longest one has 666 characters taking the form of an essay explaining obesity and related ideas. The big difference in word length shows the diversity in the Weibo data. Though they are written in Chinese, some blogs have English or Japanese words (e.g., 'fighting', の). The blogs are either about personal stories of losing weight or their views and evaluations of obesity and the individuals with obesity, such as body shame or attitudes towards weight stigma.

Finally, at this stage, combining CODCM-Daily and CODCM-Weibo, the overview of my corpus can be seen in Table 5.1. Since the Chinese language uses a morpho-syllabic writing system and each character has its meaning, characters count the size of my corpus—the total corpus amounts to around 160,000 Chinese characters (i.e., 159,871). Though the size of CODCM is certainly not big and indeed is small, I deem it suffices

and constitutes an ideal size for this PhD project (Indeed, I would say the size is small for a corpus-based quantitative discourse analysis but rather big for manual qualitative discourse analysis). As I compiled the corpus myself, I am familiar with language uses as I can manually read the whole corpus. Such a manageable data size also fits into the Discourse Dynamics Approach for an in-depth metaphor-led discourse analysis (Cameron et al., 2009).

Table 5.1 Overview of the Corpus of Obesity Discourse in Chinese Media

	CODCM-Daily	CODCM-Weibo
Total Characters	98,178	61,693
No. of articles/blogs	98	966
Max. characters	2,634	666
Min. characters	149	4
Mean characters	1002	64

5.3.3 Software Used in the Corpus Construction

Along with the corpus construction, I used several types of software to help me construct and manage my corpus. As explained, the first type of software is the scraping tool, i.e., Scrapestorm, for retrieving data from *Weibo*. The second type of software is used for cleaning and managing the data. I used 文本整理器 [text cleaning tool] for the Chinese texts to tidy my data from the *Daily*. The cleaning helped to check the punctuations, the blank word space between Chinese characters, the paragraphing, the full or half angles, etc., in my data. The cleaned editorials were manually converted into plain text and named based on their date. For example, the filename 20110902 refers to the editorials published on the 2nd of September 2011. If more than one editorial is published on the same day, a '-2' will be added in the filename, e.g., 20110902-2. I retained the original language to limit my intervention on the data, and the cleaning tool was not applied to the blogs. As for the file name of the blogs, I just named them based on their posted time. That is to say, the earliest blog in my data, which was posted on 10: 47, 29th January 2010, was named 1 and the most recent blog, which was posted on 22: 26, 31st December 2020, in my data was named 966.

In terms of the plain text of the data, different from the English language, which is delimited by white spaces, the Chinese language has no natural word delimiters. I turn

to the Chinese Lexical Analysis System developed by the Institute of Computing Technology, Chinese Academy of Sciences (ICTCLAS), to demarcate lexical units (see the application of the tool by Huan, 2018). ICTCLAS achieves a precision of 97.58% and a recall of 99.94% in word segmentation (Zhang, Liu, Zhang, & Cheng, 2002). I further checked the segmentation results in case of any errors (especially in blogs with informal linguistic uses). The segmentation results are shown in my listed examples (due to the space limit, examples within the texts do not show their segmentations). They provide the lexical units for metaphor analysis in my data, which helps me do the quantification job in my metaphor analysis. In this way, if identified as metaphorically used, one segmented unit will be counted once in my quantification.

As for semantic tagging, though the use of W-matrix to automatically assign semantic tags to the English data proves to be useful (e.g., the cancer-related metaphor project by Semino et al., 2018), I gave up on applying it to my Chinese data because it is still under improvement and lack of reliable semantic taggers to the Chinese language (even though there are some initial applications, see Piao, Hu, & Rayson, 2015). W-matrix has also been found to be not always sensitive to the context in which a word occurs, which may lead to unproductive tags (Brookes & Baker, 2021: 92). Therefore, I manually coded and analysed the semantic tagging of the potential linguistic metaphors by myself assisted by the qualitative analysis tool of Nvivo (see more in section 4.4.3).

At this stage, it is necessary to explain my use of the term 'corpus' in this thesis to avoid misunderstandings. According to Stefanowitsch (2006:2), there are seven possible ways of identifying metaphors in a corpus: (i) manually searching; (ii) searching for metaphorical expressions from the source domains; (iii) searching for metaphorical expressions from the target domains; (iv) searching for the metaphorical expressions both from the source and target domains; (v) searching for 'markers of metaphors'; (vi) searching for a corpus annotated for semantic fields and (vii) extraction from a corpus annotated for conceptual mappings. Based on the seven ways, it makes sense to argue that there is no standard set of tools and procedures in corpus analysis. Instead, researchers choose what tools best fit their research goals.

In this project, I chose the first approach. I manually read my corpus and extracted all the obesity-related metaphorical expressions I encountered. The approach is feasible because of the manageable size of my data (the size of my data is similar to the pilot studies on samples that uses manual metaphor identification in some corpus-based

studies, e.g., Gustafsson et al., 2020). Therefore, in this way, 'corpus' in this project takes its original meaning of 'large collections of electronically stored, naturally occurring texts' (Baker, Gabrielatos, Khosravinik, Mcenery, & Wodak, 2008: 274). It is in this sense that I used the term 'corpus'. My metaphor analysis is thus more of the traditional hand-and-eye method. I deem conducting manual analysis at the text level better fits this project's goal, as Egbert & Schnur (2018: 159) that 'patterns in discourse are most meaningful and interpretable when analysed at the level of the text, not the corpus'. Such a case is even more relevant when analysing the Chinese language where more human qualitative endeavour is called upon when analysing the context-dependent and discourse-oriented Chinese language (Shei, 2019: preface). The above considerations have led me to take a manual approach in metaphor analysis.

Nevertheless, I acknowledge that using corpus tools, especially the different approaches, may provide different results to the discourse analysis (the application of corpus tools will be discussed in the suggestions for future studies in the Conclusion chapter).

5.3.4 Copy and Ethics Issues in the Corpus Construction

Copyright and ethics are important in the whole process of corpus construction and subsequent corpus analysis. For CODCM-Daily, I have checked the copyright laws in China. As stated in the latest Copyright Law of the People's Republic of China (provision 24)[13], there involves no infringement of copyrights by using published materials for private studies or research. In this case, no ethical approval is needed for building the corpus if the authors' name (s) and the intellectual materials' title are properly acknowledged (e.g., I have shown the necessary information in the appendix).

For CODCM-Weibo, attendant ethical issues when dealing with online data are more relevant. As a new form of language use, ethical practices when researching social media data are 'continually developing, and there is no current common consensus around best practice' (Baker & McEnery, 2015, p.247). The ethical practice of researching online data is a subject of debate, a thorny issue in research practice as there involve many regional, cultural, or platform differences. Facing 'more than one set of norms, values, principles and usual practices can be seen to legitimately apply to the issue(s) involved' (Markham & Elizabeth, 2012), ethical practices involved in analysing

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[13] 中华人民共和国著作权法 *[Copyright Law of the People's Republic of China]*. Retrieved June 2020, from https://www.ncac.gov.cn/chinacopyright/contents/12230/353795.shtml.

online data are more likely to be deemed as guidelines instead of code of practices, fixed rules, or panacea which can be applied for all. In this project, ethical issues should not stop researchers from conducting their investigations, given the importance of social media in modern life. Researchers should also be able to show their data to the reader to show transparency as a good research practice.

A key factor steering ethical concerns and decisions on online media data is whether the data are public or private (different from the editorials in the official media, which are undoubtedly public). At an earlier time, the dividing line between the public and the private is understood concerning access, i.e., technological settings for controlling who does or does not have access to the data. I checked the Weibo platform, especially the Terms of Services[14], which show that blogs posted on Weibo are public, and the scope of the publicity (e.g., access only to followers or all Weibo visitors with or without logging in) can be modified by the users themselves through the online settings offered to them. It is generally assumed that when bloggers post messages on Weibo, they know they are doing public self-exposure and that their words are publicly accessible. Indeed, the slogan of Weibo, i.e., 随时随地发现新鲜事 [find fresh things at any time and any place], encourages its users to share anything of their personal experiences in their daily life. The fact that I was not a follower of the bloggers in the data but could access their blogs shows that the blogs were made open by the bloggers themselves, who were indeed encouraged to do so by the platform. Therefore, in terms of access, the blogs, in theory, are public.

However, recently, there has been a shift toward reconceptualising the 'public' and the 'private' (Bolander & Locher, 2014). For example, Landert & Jucker (2011) argue that some online data can be public in terms of access but private in terms of content. The concept of 'private' is gradable and uncertain as it is subject to many factors (e.g., different individuals, cultures, or online platforms hold different interpretations of privacy). The Association of Internet Researchers (AoIR) working committee further states that people 'may operate in public spaces but maintain strong perceptions or expectations of privacy' (cited from Perez Vallejos et al., 2019: 96). All these make the line between the public and private inevitably ambiguous and lead to grey areas in the ethical practices.

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[14] https://www.weibo.com/signup/v5/protocol. Accessed June 2021.

The public vs. private issues are also noticed in the field of discourse analysis. Baker & McEnery (2015) argue that when social media users post some private or sensitive issues, they may not have realised the consequences of their actions when they sent certain tweets. Thus, anonymity should be applied. This is also in line with Semino et al. (2018: 49) that as long as anonymity is fully preserved, online public data can be used as research material without seeking consent from the contributors.

Relating to my project, the ethical concern in the Weibo data relies on ensuring that my research does not result in attention being paid to identifiable users and further no harm is caused to them, which does appear unlikely indeed. As the blogs were made open by the users themselves, harm or privacy may be less of an issue. Nevertheless, I have taken the following practices to adopt a user-centric approach (Perez Vallejos et al., 2019) for good research practice:

1) As aforementioned, during data collection, I only collected the linguistic parts of the posts and excluded other information like username, age, gender, location, or any special category data concerning health. Readers may doubt that obesity-related blogs may reveal some health information about the bloggers. For this point, the blogs collected are more about people's ideas of their or others' bodily weights instead of diagnoses in a strictly medical sense (e.g., those shown in medical case books or surgery documents). Collecting people's ideas on obesity is not supposed to harm them.

2) When quoting the blogs, I only show the linguistic parts of the blogs. I used XX to replace any potentially identifiable information, e.g., the usernames following @. All is to guarantee that when the research is published, none of the bloggers or their close groups (e.g., friends or followers on Weibo) can be identified (see the similar practice done by Lingetun, Fungbrant, Claesson, & Baggens (2017) on pregnant Swedish women's blogs on their experience of being pregnant and overweight).

3) Unlike the editorials, which I have offered their sources in the Appendix, the blogs are available upon request.

5.4 Analytical Approach

As summarised by Semino, Heywood, & Short (2004) in their work on cancer-related metaphors, metaphor analysts confront four major methodological problems: 1) the

identification of linguistic metaphors, i.e., distinguishing metaphorical expressions from non-metaphorical expressions; 2) the identification of tenor and vehicle in linguistic metaphors; 3) the extrapolation of conceptual metaphors from linguistic metaphors and 4) the extrapolation of conventional metaphors from the data. Their study further shows that different methodological decisions on the four problems lead to significantly different results and conclusions of metaphor analysis.

Similar problems are also encountered and observed in my metaphor analysis. In this section, I explain metaphor identification in my corpus (the methodological issues around metaphor interpretation and metaphor explanation will be answered in their relevant chapters). Identifying linguistic metaphors is not easy, and Chinese unique linguistic structures have added additional challenges. To clarify how I do the metaphor identification, I divided this part into two sections: in section 5.4.1, I introduce the general principles I adopt in identifying and quantifying linguistic metaphors; in section 5.4.2, I show how I use Nvivo to code metaphor types in my data.

5.4.1 Identifying and Quantifying Linguistic Metaphors

The unique writing system and structure of the Chinese language make the metaphor identification in Chinese a bit different from the identification in English. This section explains how I identified and quantified linguistic metaphors in Chinese data.

First, I used the well-established and widely applied Metaphor Identification Procedure (MIP) (Pragglejaz Group, 2007), along with its more recently refined version, i.e., MIPVU (Metaphor Identification Procedure, Vrije Universiteit, Steen et al., 2010) to identify metaphorical expressions in my data. The two procedures, however, are time-intensive, involving the close reading of entire texts to mark all instances of metaphor-related and non-metaphor-related lexical items within a given fragment of discourse. I do not aim to apply them to all my data as I am only interested in obesity-related discourses. Therefore, before applying the procedures, I delimited the scope of identification to save my time and energy. This is in line with Kimmel's (2012: 5) suggestion that in metaphor identification, 'a restriction to one or a small set of domains makes sense because the researcher wants to maintain a thematic focus'. Cameron & Maslen (2010: 111) also suggest analysts discard metaphors that may not be of much relevance in answering the research questions.

For this project, I restricted my scope of metaphor identification to topics related to obesity, generally including:

- individuals with obesity, e.g., 肥猪 [fat pigs], 肥肉 [fatty meat];

- the causes of obesity, which are usually seen in the description of lifestyle, especially the eating habits, e.g., 像猪一样吃 [eat like a pig];

- the consequences of obesity, e.g., 体重一路飙升 [the bodily weight is skyrocketing the way];

- measures or actions against obesity, especially in losing weight, e.g., 来一场腰围上的革命 [(Let's) have a revolution on the waistlines];

- the effects of the action, or what happens after one loses weight, e.g., 精神面貌焕然一新 [(one's) spiritual outlook takes a new look];

- in line with my criterion in data collection, I also explore some closely-related topics, e.g., body, bodily weight and health (e.g., 身体是革命的本钱 [Body is the capital for revolution]; 对身体进行投资 [invest on the body]).

Based on the above scope, if there were some cases where an expression was potentially a metaphorical expression but not related to any of the above topics, it was excluded from my analysis. For example, from the editorials, 整容行为是一条不归路 [Cosmetic surgery is a path of no return], even though 不归路 [a path of no return] fell into the Journey metaphor, it was not related to obesity and thus was not included into my analysis. Other studies have done the same, e.g., Santa Ana's (2002) research on racist metaphors in news reporting about Latinos in California excluded, e.g., orientational metaphors ('*the rate will soar*' etc.) that did not explicitly refer to the representation of the demographic group itself. This practice helped maintain a thematic focus for answering my research questions and relieved some of my workloads.

Once the scope of topics was decided upon, I started my identification of linguistic metaphors. First, I used the MIP, which aims to 'establish, for each lexical unit in a stretch of discourse, whether its use in a particular context can be described as metaphorical' (Pragglejaz Group, 2007: 2). The original MIP is described as below:

1. Read the entire text-discourse to establish a general understanding of the meaning.

2. Determine the lexical units in the text-discourse.

3. (a) For each lexical unit in the text, establish the meaning in context, that is, how it applies to an entity, relation or attribute in the situation evoked by the text (contextual meaning). Take into account what comes before and after the lexical unit.

(b) For each lexical unit, determine if it has a more basic contemporary meaning in other contexts than the one in the given context. For our purpose, basic meanings tend to be:

- More concrete [what they evoke is easier to imagine, see, hear, feel, smell and taste];

- Related to bodily action;

- More precise (as opposed to vague)

- Historically older.

(c) If the lexical unit has a more basic current-contemporary meaning in other contexts than the given context, decide whether the contextual meaning contrasts with the basic meaning but can be understood in comparison with it.

4. If yes, mark the lexical unit as metaphorical.

(Pragglejaz Group, 2007: 3)

Consider, for example, the use of 革命[revolution] in 腰围上的革命[a revolution on the waistlines]. I checked its meaning in 现代汉语词典 [Contemporary Chinese Dictionary] (the 7th edition). 革命, in this context, describes a fight to get rid of or remove surplus bodily fat as similar to its dictionary meaning of 被压迫阶级用暴力夺取政权，摧毁旧的腐朽的社会制度，建立新的进步的社会制度[the oppressed class seize power through violence, destroy the rotten social system and build up new and advanced social system], and its contextual meaning is more abstract than the literal meaning but can be understood through its literal meaning: losing weight is like violently destroying a rotten body and building up a new and better body. The use of 'revolution' also implies that losing weight is a painstaking and difficult process that may involve blood, sacrifice or even death when needed. Hence, the use of 革命 [revolution] is regarded as metaphorical in this context.

Though not all cases of metaphorical identification were as straightforward as the above example, the MIP procedure generally provided a good rule of thumb for identifying

linguistic metaphors in my data. MIP requires analysts to be explicit in their use of reference dictionaries, the unit of analysis, and a-priori exclusions. Here they are:

1) For the use of reference dictionaries, I used 现代汉语词典[Contemporary Chinese Dictionary] (henceforth, the Dictionary) as my reference dictionary. It is one of the most authoritative, comprehensive and much-venerated Chinese language dictionaries up to date (see an introduction of its 6th edition in Zhao, 2015). The Dictionary was used as a reference point to establish the basic meanings of potential metaphorical words or expressions in my data. Usually, the Dictionary only lists the basic meaning of words, yet, it is noteworthy that there are cases where the contextual meanings of certain words are also listed in the Dictionary. For example, the phrase 出路, with the literal translation as 'out path', in the Dictionary, both its basic meaning, i.e., 通向外面的道路 [a road leads to outside places] and contextual meaning, i.e., 生存或向前发展的途径; 前途 [the way of making a living or making progress; the forward-path, which refers to the future] are listed in the Dictionary. In this case, as the phrase a) contrasts with a more concrete 'basic' meaning, and b) can be understood by comparison with the basic meaning, I count the expression as metaphorical (see the similar practice done by Lu & Wang, 2017). In this case, when the Dictionary has included a 'metaphorical' usage of a certain word or phrase, as long as there are more basic meanings, which contrast but contribute to the metaphorical usage, I count it as metaphorically used and include it in my metaphor analysis. Similar examples can also be seen in the phrase 烙印, *lào yìn,* which is defined as 在牲畜或器物上烫的火印，作为标记，比喻不易磨灭的痕迹 [use fire to leave burned traces on livestock or items to mark them, which can be analogously referred to the traces that cannot be easily erased] in the Dictionary, both its basic and rhetorical meanings are presented. I also count it as a potential metaphorical expression;

2) For the unique linguistic expressions in Chinese, e.g., *chéngyǔ*, or fixed four-character expressions, e.g., 步人后尘 [walking after others' dust, which analogously refers to following or copying others] or yànyǔ, common colloquial proverbs, e.g., 三天打渔，两天晒网 [To fish for three days while drying the nets for two days, which describes someone easily gives up and lacks perseverance], these structures are in phrase-levels in Chinese, some of which may not be listed in the Dictionary.

In this way, I turned to 汉语成语词典 [The Chengyu Dictionary] (He, 2004) and the online dictionary resource 汉典[15] to establish the meaning of the expressions. Yet, the use of the resources in the CODCM-Weibo may not be sufficient given the new language used in the blogs, especially the new buzzwords whose meanings or usages are not likely to be included in the dictionaries (e.g., 油腻 [greasy or oily] in 油腻中年 [greasy middle-age], which refers to the middle-aged group men who are overweight and vulgar). In these cases, I had to use my understanding of the words based on their contextual meanings;

3) Generally, the criteria of MIP were applied at the phrase level (the demarcated parts by ICTCLAS). Due to the different linguistic structures in Chinese, some phrases are deemed as one segmented unit, e.g., the phrase 人是铁，饭是钢 [Man is iron; rice is steel. This phrase implies that man relies on rice to live) is deemed as one unit. This divergence from MIP is necessary when identifying metaphors at the discourse level. For quantification, the multi-character phrases, especially the unique structures in the Chinese language, are deemed as a single lexical unit and accordingly counted as one instance of metaphor in the data;

4) Though I adopted a broad approach in my metaphor inclusion and analysis, I set up several a-priori exclusions. First, I excluded the very fixed phrases like 生气 (produce gas) [be angry], 加油 (add petroleum) [come on or cheer up], and 小心 (small heart) [be careful] in my data. Though these words have metaphorical roots in their characters, when the characters are combined and seen as one, they are too conventional to reflect any cross-domain mappings of the users. Other studies have done the same, e.g., Tay (2015, 2017) excludes the term 东西 (which means a general 'thing' and comprises two characters with the respective basic meaning of 'east' and 'west') and 紧张 (which means 'anxiety' with two characters respectively means 'tightening' and 'expanding'). Tay (ibid) argues that Chinese native speakers are unlikely to consider these compounds as involving metaphorical meaning transfer. Similar examples in my data can also be seen in 马上(horse up) [right away] and 放松 (let/go loose) [relax], etc. For similar reasons, I also excluded expressions ending with 死(death) for its delexicalised trend and exclamation functions in

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[15] 汉典 *[Han Dian]*. Retrieved May 2020, from https://www.zdic.net/.

Chinese, e.g., 饿死了 [hungry to death, which refers to being very hungry]. In these examples, 死 [death] tends to be used for emotional effects instead of thinking the experiences as the experience of death (pay attention in the case where death is not used for exclamation function, it is counted as metaphorical);

5) Further, for similar reasons, I excluded some very conventional metaphors, like general metaphors (Lakoff & Turner, 2009: 52) such as PURPOSE AS DESTINATIONS, STATES ARE OCCASIONS, and EVENTS ARE ACTIONS, orientational and space metaphors. Thus, some highly conventional metaphors, like 热血 [hot blood, which refers to being passionate or full of energy], 大问题 [big questions], 时光飞逝 [time flies], even though, according to CMT, the use of hot, big, flies are metaphorical, they appear in almost every genre. I deem they are not very interesting for my analysis (see the similar practice by Semino et al., 2018);

6) Last, I focused on lexical words and thus excluded function words, e.g., prepositions, e.g., 为 [for], 了 [particle of completed action].

Based on the above principles, my approach to metaphor identification was further influenced and extended by some principles of MIPVU (Steen et al., 2010). MIPVU is useful in identifying linguistic metaphors in Chinese texts (Lu & Wang, 2017; Wang, Lu, Hsu, Lin, & Ai, 2019). Different from MIP, the criterion of historically older is discarded as the principles concerning concreteness, precision and relatedness to bodily action prove to be sufficient to identify whether the expressions are metaphors or not. Compared with MIP, MIPVU's main revision is seen in its broader scope of metaphors. According to Steen et al. (2010), MIPVU includes not only the indirect metaphors which involve a contrast between basic and contextual meanings, but also direct metaphors, such as simile and analogy. MIPVU also explores implicit metaphors in forms like substitution, ellipse or newly coined formations that can be potentially explained by understanding one thing in terms of another.

Above all, the a-priori exclusions and a broad scope of linguistic metaphors aligned with my position in this project that I would like to achieve a trade-off between the amount of my data and the detail of my analysis. I take a broad *operational* definition of metaphors: be the metaphors direct or indirect, explicit or implicit, I deem they are all ways of performing metaphors. Please pay attention that this definition is an *operational*

definition (different from the *theoretical* definition I introduced in Chapter 3). Accordingly, 'linguistic metaphors' in this project is operationalised as a myriad of ways of performing metaphors, which inclusively covers the following different ways or structure of performing metaphors:

- A is B, e.g., 肥胖是罪 [Obesity is a crime];

- Similes, or A is like B, e.g., 像一头猪 [look like a pig];

- metonymy, or the substitution of one thing with another based on the contiguity between the two things, e.g., 管住嘴 [control the mouth];

- (de)personification (human becomes inhuman and vice versa) (e.g., 一坨行走的肉 [a walking lump of meat (which refers to individuals with obesity)]; or 脂肪是健康杀手 [Fat is the killer of health]);

- hyperbole, e.g., 要么瘦，要么死 [to be thin or to be dead, or to lose weight or die] (note here that the use of death is different from the exclamation use).

Though MIPVU also requires coding on the markers (i.e., metaphor flags), e.g., 好像，若，恰似，打比方[like/as if], I did not code on them due to the tendency of Chinese towards paratactic constructions, which relies more on the semantic connection (compared with the hypotaxis trend in English which more relies on lexical and grammatical linking words) and makes it difficult (if not impossible) to identify the markers, which are often 'hidden' or 'embedded' in the Chinese language. For example, in the phrase 雪白[snow-white]. The proper translation should be 'as white as snow' rather than 'snow is white'. Chinese language frequently hides the linking words and makes it infeasible for this project to code the markers (for more on the paratactic style of Chinese, see Tse, 2010).

Although MIP and MIPVU have been under criticism for their drawbacks, especially in terms of practical applicability and analysis subjectivity (e.g., Coll-Florit & Climent, 2020), I have made serval revisions to make them more feasible for this project. Bearing the revisions in mind, I explain how I do manual identification and coding in the next section.

5.4.2 Manual Metaphor Coding

Though the above principles are clear and helpful, the application of the principles is far from straightforward. Krennmayr's (2013) discussion on metaphor identification offers a good starting point for my discussion. Krennmayr explains two major approaches in metaphor identification, i.e., the 'top-down' approach in which the 'researcher presumes the presence of a conceptual metaphor' and the 'bottom-up' approach with no specific conceptual metaphor presumed, and mappings derived from the linguistic expressions. Along with the Discourse Dynamic Approach, I adopt the 'bottom-up' approach because with a 'top-down' approach, researchers tend to presume a conceptual metaphor, do cherry-picking and find exactly the evidence for the conceptual metaphor they hold in mind (Cameron, 2003: 252). In this way, some interesting and valuable features will be ignored, and the identification result will turn out to be self-contained.

Based on the 'bottom-up' approach and the recursive and iterative identification process, I deem inter-coder reliability for the identification process is not a must for me due to the hermeneutical nature of the metaphor analysis (see the similar practice by Tay, 2019). Instead, I worked with another PhD candidate majoring in translation studies with training in Chinese metaphor analysis. We are familiar with MIP and MIPVU. We independently identified five editorials and 20 blogs (randomly selected) and then discussed cases of disagreement and inconsistency. Since we are both native Chinese speakers, we did not use tools for our manual annotation. We only used Word and different colour-highlighting effects within Word to help us identify.

During our discussion, there was one rule when we did not agree with each other: turn to the reference dictionaries when in doubt. For example, in the blog of #减肥成功是怎样的一种体验#是/真的/会/焕然一新！！！！[#How does it feel to lose weight successfully? (One) will really become new!!!!], the metaphoricity of the fix-structure, i.e., 焕然一新, which literally means 'new', poses questions for the two coders. The dictionary meaning of the term is 形容出现了崭新的面貌 [describing the appearance of a new look]. In the blog, the contextual meaning of the term can be understood as losing weight and successfully bringing a new look to a person. In this case, the contextual and dictionary meanings are consistent, and there seems to be no contrast between them. However, a closer look at the term, especially its uses in terms of what is described as 'new', something interesting can be observed. In the dictionary, an

example is given, i.e., 店面经过装饰，焕然一新 [The shop takes on a new look after decoration]. In the example, the term is used to describe a shop and no examples which use the term to describe people are listed in the dictionary. We later turned to the online corpus of CCL (Centre for Chinese Linguistics Peking University)[16]. The CCL corpus can be used to check the historical and current use of a metaphorical expression in Chinese.

Based on the search in CCL, it turned out that in the 830 examples, only around 15 examples use the term to describe people. The rare exceptions can be seen in the use of 精神面貌 [spiritual look] to describe people, for example, 他的精神面貌焕然一新 [His spiritual look is new]. Thus, we deemed there was a contrast in the semantic conventions of the term from describing objects to describing people. Based on these considerations, we finally decided to identify the term as metaphorically used. Another similar example is the expression of 原形毕露, which literally means 'showing the original shape'. Similarly, I checked the CCL and found the term is normally used for describing 'animals' and seldom for 'people'. I thus deemed it 'Dehumanisation' when the term was used to describe people in my corpus.

After the discussion and settling for agreements, I proceeded to code the remaining editorials and blogs myself manually. The manual coding necessitated a tool for manual annotation. I turned to Nvivo, a qualitative data analysis software, to help me do the coding. Nvivo can highlight the data in different colours, add comments, memos and further visualise the results. Nvivo has the advantage of allowing me to look for metaphor patterns in large volumes of data systematically. It streamlines metaphor tagging and systematises the work from grouping the identified metaphors to metaphor types.

I worked with Nvivo like this: I used the highlighting function of Nvivo to mark linguistic metaphors, and I used tags to assign these expressions to semantic domains (i.e., metaphor types) corresponding to their literal or basic meanings. Along with the bottom-up approach, I attained the metaphorical types of linguistic metaphors in a data-driven manner. Here came the question of the generality and specificity of the labels for the groupings. Any discussion on generality/specificity is a matter of risk, and there is no definite answer on how general/specific the labels should be. The Discourse

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[16] 北京大学中国语言学研究中心[Center for Chinese Linguistics, PKU]. Retrieved July 2021, from http://ccl.pku.edu.cn:8080/ccl_corpus/.

Dynamics Approach has taken an interpretive and recursive manner in building metaphor groupings and upholds that labels for grouping stay just sufficiently above the linguistic metaphors to include them all (Cameron, 2010: 119).

In my practice, I kept the groupings as close to the metaphorical expressions as possible while still abstract enough to get meaningful categories for subsequent analysis (Cameron et al., 2009). Expressions that shared the same tags (i.e., the metaphorical categories) were assigned to one metaphor type (nodes in Nvivo) in the data. For example, expressions like 奋斗[fight] and 抵抗[resist] were assigned to the metaphor type of War. Previous studies enlightened me on metaphors in health communication. For example, I turned to Semino et al.'s (2018: 84) titles of metaphor types. In cases where the metaphorical groupings were not previously mentioned in the major metaphor scholarship, I proposed the titles myself. A working procedure of Nvivo is shown in the screenshot below (see Figure 5.1).
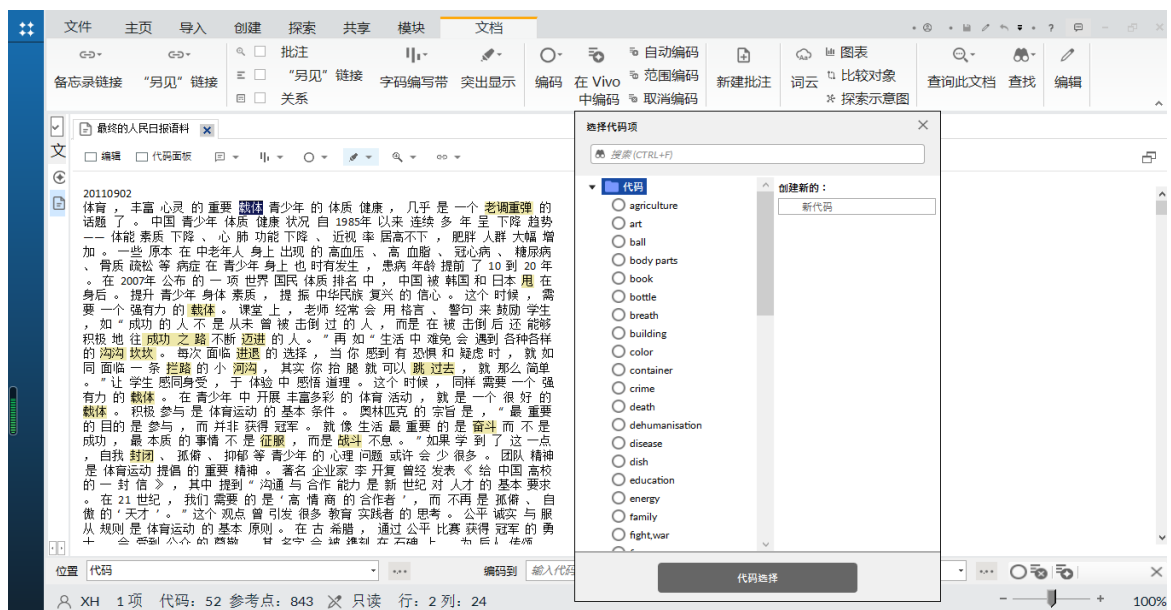
Figure 5.1 Screenshot of Manual Coding in Nvivo

Different from the bottom-up approach to identifying linguistic metaphors, the creation of the grouping is neither inductively bottom-up nor deductively top-down. It is an interactive and recursive process that keeps moving between evidence in the data and the bigger picture. Admittedly, the categorising process is hermeneutic, as Cameron et al. (2009) indicate that 'there is no right answer to the question of how to assign and label a particular metaphor.' Also, as Stefanowitsch (2006) points out, most studies

categorise metaphors based on more-or-less explicit commonsensical intuitions on the part of the scholars. This strategy may be problematic when the categories are not clear-cut. In my practice, whenever I found the types too big or too small, I revised the titles. For example, I encountered many 'pig' metaphors in my data and set the 'pig' type. Later I found other 'animal' metaphors, e.g., elephant or bear. I thus proposed 'animal' and put the metaphors under 'animal' types. Yet, later, I found other metaphors which put the human body under the fields of 'plant', like (tree) stump, hence I combined 'animal' and 'plant' and proposed 'dehumanisation' to include the types. This way helps me to avoid the proliferation of labels.

However, as pointed out by Charteris-Black (2016: 159), there is a common problem in the classification of metaphors, especially when 'two metaphor vehicles from different source domains are used to describe a single topic'. Thus, it is sometimes unclear how the metaphor can be classified or which source domain it should be allocated to. For this issue, I code the metaphors based on their orientations. For example, in 身体是革命的本钱 [Body is the capital for revolution] from my data, I coded it into War grouping as it stresses more the use of the body for revolution instead of stressing the 'capital'.

To maximise the reliability of my quantitative results, I independently conducted three rounds of coding. Table 5.2 shows the time and results of the three-round coding (the months are all in the year 2021, and the figures are the observed occurrences of all obesity-related linguistic metaphors in my corpus). Each round of coding is based on 'raw' data (the segmented data), thus making each round of coding " independent'. Each round of coding on one sub-corpus took about two weeks, and I did the three rounds with a certain time gap to further guarantee the 'independent' coding. I compared the results of the three rounds, checked inconsistencies where I have coded differently (both in terms of whether one term is metaphorical and the type it is coded), and finally settled down on my quantitative results (see final settled results in Chapter 6).

Table 5.2 Three Rounds of Manual Coding of Linguistic Metaphors

	CODCM-Daily	CODCM-Weibo
First round	857 (May)	691 (Oct)
Second round	895 (Oct)	675 (Nov)
Third round	867 (Dec)	685 (Dec)

The reasons are mainly seen in some very conventional expressions whose metaphoricity is a challenge in coding. For example, in my first-round coding on CODCM-Weibo, the phrase 王道 (the literal translation is *emperor path*) was first coded under Journey. Later I checked its meaning in the Dictionary, which refers to 我国古代政治哲学中指君主以仁义治天下的政策 [The policies in ancient China when the emperor used benevolence and uprightness to administer the country], which turns out to be unrelated to journey.

Above all, the coding procedure was far away from a smooth path. A final point I want to make is that though I cannot claim with certainty that I have exhaustively charted all the relevant metaphors in my data, the three-round codings and my reflection during the process have enabled me to 'settle down' on my findings and consist of a satisfactory starting point for subsequent analysis. In the metaphor analysis, I achieved a balance or trade-off between efficiency and exhaustiveness: I have identified metaphorical expressions within this time-sensitive project and also tried to retrieve the most (if not all) obesity-related metaphors in my corpus.

5.5 Summary

In this chapter, I introduced the media landscape in China and presented the rationale for focusing on two different types of media, i.e., the official media and social media. I later described in detail my methods in corpus construction and my approach to identifying and coding linguistic metaphors. In the process, I tried to improve the rigour of corpus construction and my metaphor identification to lay a solid foundation for my metaphor explanation and interpretation in the following chapters. To my knowledge, the corpus I built, i.e., CODCM, is the only obesity-focused corpus in the Chinese context. Small-sized as it is, it contributes to a necessary first step by establishing what has been said about obesity in Chinese media and in itself is an important step forward.

Having mentioned the strength of my methods, I also need to note some limitations. Below are some 'short-comings' in my methods:

First, the small size of my data makes any discussion of my data not exhaustive. Compared to the Lancaster obesity corpus (43,884 articles, 36,203,844 word corpus of the UK news articles about obesity published in ten newspapers between 2008 and 2017) by Gavin Brookes and Paul Baker (2021) and the Australian obesity corpus (over

26,000 articles, more than 16 million words, from 12 newspapers between 2008 and 2019) by Vanichkina & Bednarek (2022), my corpus only focused on two media, further with limited editorials and blogs. However, as I will present in my forthcoming chapters, even this rather small amount of data can shed useful insights into the representation of obesity in Chinese media.

Secondly, due to the small size of my corpus, I do not apply the corpus techniques. The issues here relate to the choice of corpus tools and the construction of reference corpus. After considering that most available corpus tools primarily work for the English language, especially in studying metaphors, I decided to identify metaphors in my corpus manually. As researchers, we often find we cannot do what we initially wanted to do. It is more practical to see what can be achieved within the time and resources available for our research.

Closely related to my reliance on manual analysis, a further point I would like to illustrate is the relationship between qualitative and quantitative analysis in my methodology. Hunston (2007) argues that 'any 'good' research in discourse inevitably has both quantitative and qualitative dimensions'. It is important to supplement quantitative phenomena with qualitative analysis and vice versa. The manageable size of my data gives my exploration a more qualitative and interpretive nature. In this way, quantitative analysis and results in my data are primarily used to support claims about dominant and distinctive metaphor types in my qualitative analysis. In other words, while quantitative figures are certainly important, they are not key contributions in this project. Bearing all these in mind, I now move on to present my findings in Chapter 6.

Chapter 6: Big-picture Findings

6.1 Introduction

From this chapter, I present the findings of my metaphor analysis. This chapter provides big-picture findings of the obesity-related metaphors in my corpus. I first present quantitative results of metaphor frequency (section 6.2) and metaphor types (section 6.3) in my corpus. As the results reveal a considerable number of metaphor types, I classify four tiers of metaphors of differing frequencies and analysis levels accordingly attributed to them (section 6.4). Some less-frequent metaphors give interesting hints, and I briefly discuss them as a 'lead-in' of my metaphor analysis (section 6.5). At last, I summarise and reflect on the general findings (section 6.6).

Beforehand, I would like to recall some basics of my data. As a reminder, the editorials and the blogs are of different genres, as I have explained in Chapter 5. The editorials articulate the official voice on obesity, while the blogs deliver individual voices on obesity. An initial hypothesis could be that for the editorials, which share ideological congruence with Chinese state discourse, its discourse on obesity is expected to deliver state-level perceptions of obesity, while the bloggers aim to let others acknowledge, understand or even feel their personal obesity-related experience. With these said, there seems to be a good reason to suspect that different communication purposes in the editorials and blogs would lead to different metaphor uses. A set of questions arise, e.g., will there be overlapping metaphors, i.e., metaphors appearing in both genres or particular metaphors, i.e., metaphors only used in the editorials or blogs? Will there be culturally contingent metaphors in the Chinese media, i.e., metaphors only used in the Chinese media, and culturally shared metaphors, i.e., metaphors used both in the Chinese and the Western media (based on my previous review of existing studies)? How are metaphors used differently for fulfilling different purposes in different genres in the Chinese context? Bearing these questions in mind, I start by presenting the quantitative results of my metaphor analysis.

6.2 Metaphor Frequency

Overall, the methods and coding procedures described in Chapter 5 resulted in the identification of 1,533 instances of obesity-related metaphors in my corpus. In table 6.1,

I show the instances of metaphor in the editorials (the CODCM-Daily) and the blogs (the CODCM-Weibo). Given their different sizes (CODCM-Daily is bigger than CODCM-Weibo), I provide both raw and normalised frequencies per 1,000 Chinese characters.

Table 6.1 Raw Frequencies and Normalised Frequencies of Instances of Obesity-related Metaphors in the Corpus

	No. of Chinese characters	Raw frequencies of obesity-related metaphors	Per 1,000 characters
CODCM-Daily	98,178	845	8.6
CODCM-Weibo	61,693	688	11.2
Overall	159,871	1,533	9.6

Overall, the obesity-related metaphors I identified occur 9.6 times per 1,000 characters in the whole corpus, which is certainly not frequent. The low frequency is primarily because I only explored the obesity-related metaphors based on my pre-defined identifying scope, as explained in Chapter 5. The frequency certainly would be higher if I identified all instances of metaphor in the corpus. Another possible reason is perhaps the language itself, as evidenced by Lu & Wang (2017), who find that metaphor density is significantly lower in Chinese than in English texts. It is noted that the blogs have higher frequencies of metaphor uses than the editorials (11.2 vs. 8.6). There are three major factors contributing to the higher metaphor frequency in the blogs, i.e., genre difference, news values and degree of emotional disclosure.

Firstly, the official attachment of the editorials makes them receive more regulation and supervision on their content, structure and style. These make the editorials tend to be more reserved in their rhetorical devices, including metaphors (for more on the editorial procedures in the *Daily*, see Wu, 1994). By comparison, in *Weibo*, individuals' relatively unedited and authentic voices are given more linguistic freedom to express their first-hand obesity-related needs, wants, and difficulties in an open atmosphere. The blogs enable a more sincere and transparent communication about the experience of obesity or losing weight and thus potentially contribute to more metaphor uses;

Secondly, news values play a role in deciding on the use of metaphors. News value generally refers to the principles guiding the selection process of what is to be included in the news or what makes the news 'newsworthiness' (Bednarek & Caple, 2017). Entertainment has become the most common news value on social media, with no exception in Weibo (Chan, Wu, Hao, Xi, & Jin, 2012). The entertainment goal could make the blogs use more metaphors to catch the readers' attention. While for the Chinese official media, propaganda remains the function of official media, which focuses on the news value of eliteness, e.g., the activities of political figures or celebrities. This also affects the use of metaphors in different media.

Thirdly, closely related to the genre difference is the emotional exposure. Demjén, Semino, & Koller (2016: 8) observed that the frequency of metaphorical expressions indicates the intensity of emotion that speakers feel towards the topic. Weibo users have a higher degree of emotional disclosure when talking about their authentic personal experiences of obesity. The online environment in *Weibo* fosters a sense of freedom to express one's emotions, which makes individuals inclined to use metaphors to express their feelings more openly about obesity. Similar observations are seen in the case of depression. For example, Coll-Florit et al. (2021) find that individuals tend to express their most intimate and authentic feelings in anonymous blogs.

Knowing the gross instances of metaphors, I move on to present how the metaphors fall into broad semantic fields in the next section.

6.3 Metaphor Types and Frequent Metaphors

Metaphor types refer to the broad semantic fields the linguistic metaphors fall into. Table 6.2 shows the full list of the cumulative metaphor types I have gained through my manual coding (in alphabetical order; unique metaphors in each corpus are presented underlined; to show all the metaphor types that occurred in the data, every single occurrence of metaphor is listed, even though some only appear one or two times).

Table 6.2 Metaphor Types in the Corpus

Corpus	Metaphor types
CODCM-Daily (41 types)	Agriculture, Art, Balloon (Ball), Book, Bottle, Breath, Building, Burden, Colour, Cloth, Container, Crime, Death, Dehumanisation, Devil, Disease, Education, Environment, Energy, Family, Fault, Fire, Force, Hardness, Historical figure, Journey, Kung Fu, Machine, Metal, Miracle, Money, Paper, Personification, Poison, Religion, Save, Sleep, Tag, Taste, War, Water
CODCM-Weibo (67 types)	Addiction, Age, Agriculture, Angel, Art, Balloon (Ball), Book, Bottle, Breath, Building, Cloth, Container, Crime, Danger, Darkness, Death, Dehumanisation, Devil, Dirt, Disease, Dream, Education, Emptiness, Energy, Experiment, Family, Fault, Fire, Flash, Force, Game, Gift, Hardness, Historical figure, Hurt, Journey, Kung Fu, Lie, Machine, Marriage, Metal, Miracle, Money, Oil, Pain, Paper, Personification, Photoshop, Plastic Surgery, Poison, Pregnancy, Reborn, Religion, Revenge, Reward, Rice, Save, Sleep, Softness, Stableness, Tag, Tailor, Taste, Time, War, Warmth, Water

As shown in table 6.2, the editorials and blogs use diverse metaphor types. They include those of which their readers may be assumed to have some experience, e.g., journey and building, and some that would particularly typical for Chinese people with the cultural background, e.g., Kung Fu, Chinese martial arts, and historical figures (e.g., *Yang Yuhuan*, the beloved consort of Emperor *Xuanzong* of Tang. She was known for having a larger figure which was deemed beautiful in the Tang Dynasty in China). There are also metaphors reflecting both Chinese and Western cultural representations, e.g., the Machine metaphor, which sees the body working as a machine and urges people to take care of their bodies in the way they care for pieces of machineries. Similar cross-cultural examples can also be seen in the Religion metaphors, e.g., the importance of faith in losing weight, the 'miracles' in losing weight successfully, and praying for 'god' (e.g., 苍天, which similarly means 'god' in Chinese) and Balloon metaphors which vividly describe one's weight gain as an inflatable balloon (ball).

A closer look at the metaphor types implies that obesity tends to be related to negative perceptions and emotions. For example, Crime and Pain metaphors could suggest that being obese or overweight is like committing a crime or that obesity makes people feel pain. Similar negative metaphors can also be seen in Poison and Lie, which could suggest that being overweight or obese is like being poisoned or that obesity is related

to the dishonesty of telling lies. Seen as a whole, the variety of the metaphor types echoes previous findings that the Chinese language has rich metaphor resources based on the rich Chinese culture (e.g., Yu, 1998; Cheng, 2009). It also implies that obesity, like other health issues, is a complicated topic likely to be described and discussed through metaphors.

A more in-depth comparison between the editorials and the blogs reveals that the blogs use more metaphor types than the editorials (67 vs. 41). It means the online communicative context in *Weibo* has witnessed more diversified metaphor uses than its official media counterpart, which again can be explained by the anonymous online context in *Weibo* which encourages more freedom in using metaphors. Upon closer inspection, we see considerable overlapping metaphor types (seen in un-underlined). 38 out of 41 metaphor types in the editorials are also used in the blogs, leaving only four types, i.e., Burden, Colour, Environment and Family metaphors only being used in the editorials. The four metaphors are used in infrequent ways (each type only occurs one or two times), leading us to conclude that nearly all metaphor types in the editorials are used in the blogs. This shows that the official and social media use the same metaphor resources to a large extent.

On the other hand, there are 30 metaphor types uniquely being used in the blogs (the underlined ones). Some of these metaphors are emotion-related, e.g., the Revenge, Pain, Reward, and Save metaphors which involve intense and complicated emotions (e.g., anger, fear and un/happiness); or about describing a certain environment, e.g., Emptiness, Darkness, and Dirt, all are unpleasant and confining environment to be in (e.g., describing the experience of obesity as being confined in empty, dark or dirty rooms), or about the new technologies, e.g., Photoshop and Plastic surgery (usually referring to people's physical changes after losing weight as if they have applied beauty filter through photoshop on their faces or undergoing plastic surgeries). These metaphors imply that the sources of metaphors in the blogs are more diverse and daily life-based. Other interesting metaphors also include, for example, the Addiction metaphor, e.g., 健身真的会上瘾 [Doing exercise can really be an addiction]; Oil metaphors, e.g., 太胖真的会很油腻 [Being fat really will make one greasy] and Pregnancy metaphors, e.g., 我这是几个月的肚子啦 [My belly is as big as I were pregnant for several months], to name just a few. These metaphors shed light on the

more informal, creative and personal experience-related metaphors in the blogs. As such, the blogs use more creative metaphors (note that this project focuses on systematic metaphor analysis and will not in-depth explore metaphorical creativity. For metaphorical creativity, see Hidalgo-Downing & Pérez-sobrino, 2022).

There are similarities and differences when comparing the metaphor types in my corpus with studies in Western media. For example, Journey and War metaphors are frequently used to represent obesity both in the Western media and in my corpus. Yet, the Disease metaphors do not take a high percentage in my corpus (only around 3.6% and 3.2%, respectively, in the editorials and blogs), which is different from the frequent use of Epidemic metaphors (e.g., 'obesity epidemic') in describing the obesity issue in the Western media (e.g., Boero, 2013).

Given the large variety of metaphor types in my corpus, I need to narrow the scope of subsequent metaphor analysis. I turn to the top ten metaphors in the editorials and blogs (see Figures 6.1 and 6.2).
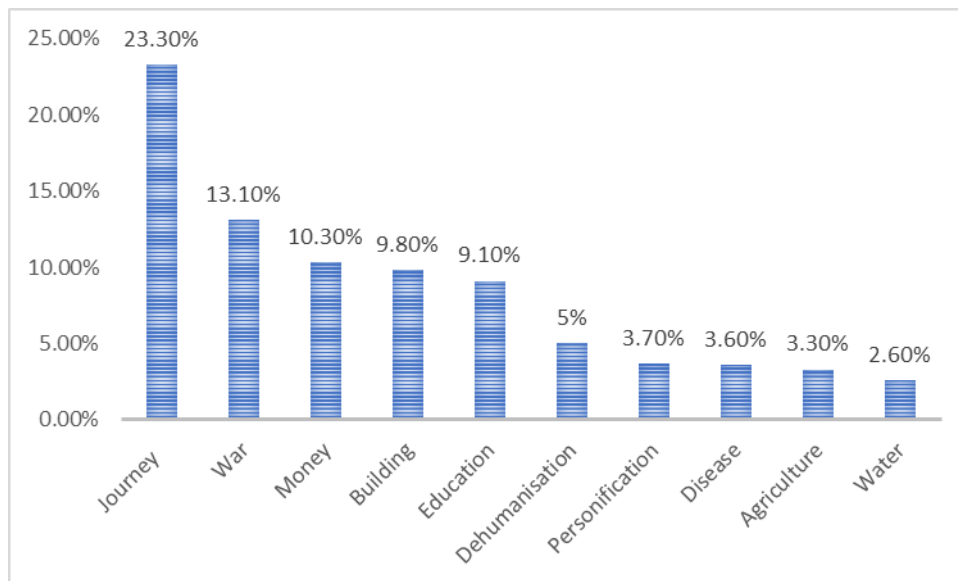
Figure 6.1 Top 10 Frequent Metaphor Types in CODCM-Daily
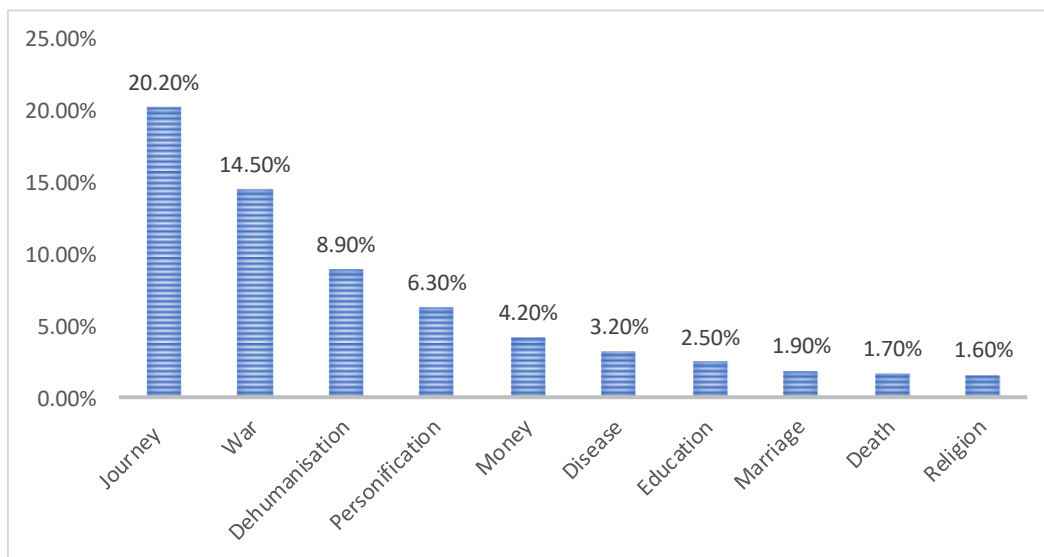
Figure 6.2 Top 10 Frequent Metaphor Types in CODCM-Weibo

Figure 6.1 and Figure 6.2 show the top ten metaphor types and their percentages among all the obesity-related metaphors in my data. For the editorials, the top ten metaphors occupy 83.8 % of all the metaphors used; in the blogs, the figure is around 65%. Such high percentages show that the top ten metaphors are very productive and contribute the most metaphors (many more than the remaining metaphor types, which occur very infrequently). Metaphors out of the top 10 are too infrequent to be meaningful. I thus turn to the top 10 metaphors in each corpus for subsequent analysis.

Within the top 10 metaphors, we see both shared and different metaphor types in the editorials and blogs. For example, two metaphors, i.e., Journey and War, are frequent in both the editorials and blogs. Journey metaphors are most frequently used in both genres (23.3% vs. 20.2%). War metaphors have a higher frequency in the blogs than in the editorials (14.5% vs. 13.1%). Another noticeable frequent metaphor is the Money metaphor, which is more frequently used in the editorials than the blogs (10.3% vs. 4.2%). There are also some less frequent metaphors shared in both corpora, but with different frequencies, e.g., Education metaphors are more frequent in the editorials than in the blogs (9.1% vs. 2.5%), but Personification metaphors are more frequent in the blogs (6.3% vs. 3.7%). Some types are observed in only one corpus within the scope of the top 10 metaphors, e.g., the Building metaphor and the Water metaphor in the editorials and the Marriage metaphor and Religion metaphor in the blogs.

With various metaphor types with different frequencies across the data, deciding what metaphors to focus on is a major task at this stage. In the next section, I discuss how I deal with the issue.

6.4 The Selection of Metaphors for Subsequent Analysis

This section explains how I selected metaphors for subsequent analysis. The key to selection is simple: whether the metaphors are characteristic of the data and whether they are relevant to answering my research questions. However, deciding on the characteristic level of certain metaphors is not a straightforward process. Partington (2006) notes that we can say a particular metaphor or group of metaphors is characteristic only if we have checked to see its frequency in other types of discourse. Ideally, such a principle should be applied to this project as well. However, given the lack of metaphor-annotated corpus available in the Chinese language (cf. Lu & Wang, 2017), such a principle is pitifully not applicable in this project.

I thus compare the frequencies of the top 10 metaphors in the two sub-corpora side-by-side, considering their frequency and the convenience for comparison (e.g., it is more feasible to focus on metaphors shared by the two media). I classify four tiers of metaphor types and attribute different levels of analysis to them (see table 6.3).

Table 6.3 Metaphors of Different Tiers Based on Frequencies

Tiers of metaphors	Metaphor types	Level of Analysis
The 1st tier: frequent metaphors in both media	Journey, War, Money	In-depth exploration: analysis of systematic metaphors and metaphorical scenarios in chapters 7, 8 and 9
The 2nd tier: less frequent metaphors in both media	Dehumanisation, Personification, Disease, Education	A general analysis in the latter part of this chapter
The 3rd tier: relatively frequent metaphors in a specific corpus	CODCM-Daily: Building	Referred to whenever necessary and relevant in qualitative analysis of other metaphors
	CODCM-Weibo: Marriage	

The 4th tier: less frequent metaphors in a specific corpus	CODCM-Daily: Agriculture, Water	No analysis in this project
	CODCM-Weibo: Death, Religion	

In Table 6.3, I have given due priority to metaphors of different levels based on their frequencies in the corpus. The following chapters will respectively focus on Journey, War and Money metaphors, given their high frequencies in both the editorials and blogs. The three metaphors will be subjected to detailed qualitative analysis in order to interpret and explain their representations of obesity. Here I would like to note more about Journey and War metaphors. Due to the sheer volume of metaphor scholarship on the two metaphors, scholars are now calling for research on metaphors that are not these two (especially the enormous uses of War metaphors in the health communication around Covid-19, e.g., Brenciol, 2020). Despite such a call, however, as I will show in the following chapters, conventional as Journey and War metaphors are, fine-grained analysis of their systematic metaphors and metaphorical scenarios emerging in the discourse would nevertheless bring us 'novel' findings and new inspirations, especially when they enter into the unique social and cultural Chinese context.

Before I turn to the three dominant metaphors in the rest of this chapter, I first take the less frequent metaphors for readers to gain an initial sense of how obesity is metaphorically represented in my corpus.

6.5 Less Frequent Metaphors

In this section, I briefly discuss the 2nd-tier metaphors, i.e., Dehumanisation, Personification, Disease, and Education. The third-tier metaphors, i.e., Building and Marriage, are referred to whenever they are relevant. In each case, I provide a general overview with some illustrative examples. Potential discourses emerge in the metaphors which deserve further discussion in subsequent chapters are notified and briefly explained wherever relevant. Through reading the less frequent metaphors, readers can get an impression or first 'flavour' of the metaphors in my corpus. From there, we can draw some preliminary conclusions on the metaphorical representations of obesity in Chinese media and the role of metaphors in representing obesity.

Beforehand, while I have explained in the Convention of this thesis, here, I would like to explain the translations of the examples in this section and the following chapters. The translations are done by myself. I am fully aware of the difficulty in the translation. I have tried to keep close to the original Chinese. I also add some explanations (inside the brackets) to make the translations more approachable for readers who do not know Chinese. Translations are done based on the whole context. Sometimes the overall context is not shown in the examples, which could make the extracts seem unrelated to the topic of obesity and thus confusing for the reader at first glance. However, I always make the context, especially the relation to the topic of obesity, clear in my analysis of the examples. Original writing, including the Chinese characters and punctuation, is retained in quotes from the editorials and blogs to present the reader the authentic data. Yet, in the translation, for ease of understanding, in the cases where the punctuations in the blogs are simply commas (which is indeed prevalent in colloquial communications in Chinese), in their translations, I make them separate sentences (end with a period) based on the context. Given the frequent omission of personal pronouns in the Chinese language, I also add the pronouns (inside the brackets) in the translations. In cases where the cohesion in the original Chinese is not explicit, I add the words, e.g., *because*, *so*, *if,* inside the brackets to make the translations more reader-friendly. As I did not collect the gender information on the bloggers, I use 'he' in a general way (which can also refer to 'she') for brevity.

6.5.1 Dehumanisation/Personification Metaphors

Dehumanisation and Personification metaphors refer human to non-human (e.g., animals, plants or objects), or vice versa, i.e., unhuman to human. I discuss them together in this section. I start with the Dehumanisation metaphors.

First, instead of describing obesity *per se*, both the editorials and blogs use Dehumanisation metaphors to depict individuals with obesity as not being human. In the editorials, this mainly applies to children, especially the way of nurturing (from this example onwards, I underline the relevant linguistic metaphorical expressions in each example):

Example 6.1
课间 自由 活动 变 " 圈养 " (20151106)

[Free activities between classes turn out to be "raising poultries in fences" (Students stay inside the classrooms during the inter-classes breaks, just as how poultries are kept inside fences).]

Example 6.2

父母 以 " 养猪 " 自诩 (20200826)

[Parents call their ways of feeding kids as if in the way of "feeding pigs".]

As seen in the above examples, the editorials are concerned with childhood obesity. Example 6.1 shows the concern that students are kept in 'fences like poultries' and they do not work out in outdoor activities and thus potentially develop obesity; In Example 6.2, a similar situation at home where kids are kept as animals (i.e., pigs) by their parents are also observed. Both metaphors represent the lack of agency of the kids, who are not provided enough time and space to do physical activities by their parents and teachers. The dehumanisation expressions might seem funny, but they are suggestive of treating kids as not human enough in a concerning tone.

On the other hand, in the blogs, similar scenarios of referring to large-size bodies as animals or non-humans are also seen, which use more diversified metaphors, e.g., 大象腿[*big elephant leg*, one's legs look like those of elephants], 猪腩肚 [*pork belly*, one's belly is fatty and looks like a pig belly], 水桶腰 [*water bucket waist*, one's waist size looks like a bucket], 游泳圈 [*swimming circle*, one's waist has fatty meat as if one was wearing a swimming circle] and 猪头脸 [*pig head face*, one's face looks like the face of a pig]. These pejorative expressions offer visual metaphors of a bulging belly or stomach resembling a bucket or a swimming circle. Despite the playful tone delivered through the metaphors, they suggest that the bloggers tend to describe obese or fatty body parts, especially the parts where bodily fat can be easily stored, e.g., faces and bellies, as body parts of animals, especially pigs, in an unpleasant way. By calling the body parts unhumanly, the blogs seem to treat the bodies as objects rather than as the parts of humans.

Particularly, referring to the body as 'pig', the animal which is generally featured as lazy and eating a lot, could lead to body shame. Some bloggers use 'pigs' to describe themselves in self-deprecatory terms, e.g., equating themselves as behaving like pigs or

unpleasantly looking like pigs. For example, one blogger wrote 真想撕烂我的猪嘴[(I) really want to tear apart my pig mouth], suggesting the self-blaming, self-hatred or self-demeaning mentality when one cannot curb their appetite. Pig labelling is also seen by Brookes and Baker (2021: 123) in the British press, which uses noun labels, e.g., *pigs*, *porkers*, and *lard-bucket,* to represent individuals with obesity and their bodies. Such a negative connotation of the animal metaphor is in line with Kövecses (2010) that animal metaphors usually convey the notion of objectionability and unpleasantness. This is in fact consistent with the interviews with individuals with obesity, who often feel they are not being treated as human beings (Toft, Hörberg, & Rasmussen, 2022).

However, at the same time, in the blogs, interestingly, there are noticeable counter-examples where the bloggers use pigs to call themselves in a somewhat positive way, turning to a 'performing-cuteness' discourse:

> *Example 6.3*
> 吃 那么 快乐 我 不能 与 开心 为 敌 # 猪猪 女孩 的 日常 ## 减肥 # (557)
> [Eating is so happy. I cannot <u>make an enemy of</u> happiness #daily life of <u>piggie girls</u>#]

As seen in Example 6.3, the female cuteness practice in self-calling *piggie girls* suggests that pig is not always used negatively. The *piggie girls* here can refer to the self-calling cuddle of the individual, suggesting the online identity work around cuteness in Weibo. Cuteness in Chinese is written as 可爱, *kě ài*, which literally means 'worth loving' or 'deserve to be loved' and usually refers to babyish cuteness. In China, acting cute, or 卖萌 [playing cuteness], has become popular and indeed a highly-regarded discourse strategy to win attention and incite care in online discourse (e.g., Qiu, 2013; Shi & Jing-schmidt, 2020), even in Chinese official media (e.g., Cheng & Lee, 2019; Wong et al., 2021; Xin, 2018). As cuteness is a culturally bound concept (different cultures have different understandings of what it means to be cute), I understand readers outside the Chinese context may find it challenging to see the 'cuteness'. In the blogs, the act of performing cute is for implying qualities of innocence, vulnerability and further attention, care and love-worthiness, which involves the subtle work of projecting an online persona, a popular feature of social media (e.g., the

impression management and maintenance in Facebook, Zhao et al., 2013). The online self-representation work is witnessed throughout the blogs and is discussed in more detail in following chapters wherever relevant.

According to Charteris-Black (2005: 41), personification refers to 'a linguistic figure in which an abstract and inanimate entity is described or referred to using a word or phrase that in other contexts would be used to describe a person'. Both the editorials and blogs use Personification metaphors to refer to the bodies, e.g., endowing the body with human features as an agentive entity. For example, the editorials call the readers to 与自己的身体"对话" [have conversations with your own body], treating the body as a conscious and agentive being who attempts to communicate with the person. In the editorials, the Personification metaphors are further extended to a country level, referring to the country, i.e., China, as a human:

Example 6.4
一个 肥胖 的 国家 ， 不仅 是 虚弱 的 ， 而且 是 危险 的 。(20130222)
[An obese country is not only weak, but also in danger.]

Example 6.5
儿童 绝对 是 国家 的 未来 ， 如果 不 加以 遏制 ， 中国 儿童 的 肥胖 可能 形成 未来 国家 的 " 臃肿 与 低效 " (20120601)
[Children are definitely the country's future, and if (childhood obesity is) left unchecked, childhood obesity in China may lead to a stout and inefficient country in the future.]

Example 6.6
每个 人 都 能 养成 健康 的 生活 方式 ， 才 能 提升 我们 这个 社会 的 健康 水位 ， 才 能 支撑 起 朝气蓬勃 的 健康 中国 。 (20190814)
[Only if everyone cultivates a healthy lifestyle can we raise the health level of our society and uphold a vibrant and healthy China.]

The above examples personalise China as a human whose physical health hinges upon its nationals. Examples 6.4 and 6.5 use pressing language (e.g., *weak*, *dangerous, stout, inefficient*) indicating the seriousness of an 'obese' China to convey a sense of

responsibility among the public, who are urged to take care of the personified China. Example 6.6 shows how personification interacts with a Building metaphor (i.e., 支撑 [uphold]), suggesting that improving the health of the Chinese people is like building a healthy China, a unified project among all Chinese society. It also implies that the whole country functions like a building and different groups function as specific parts of the building (e.g., the general public is deemed as the foundation of the building).

The important function of Personification metaphors can be connecting a developing China with a growing-up individual so that the way of rearing next-generation, e.g., being caring and gentle, becomes symbolically transformed into people's commitment and devotion to their nation. People are expected to feel a profound emotional attachment to the personalised nation, as shown in the following example:

Example 6.7
与 共和国 共同 成长 的 一代人 ， 永远 不 会 忘记 ， 由于 粮食 紧 缺 ， 饥 一 顿 、 饱 一 顿 ， 经常 食不果腹 的 艰辛 岁月 。 (20190912)

[The generation who grew up together with the Republic (here refers to the Republic of China) will never forget the hard and hungry days caused by a shortage of grains.]

Example 6.7 evokes strong emotional and nationalistic memories through the personification of the nation. It refers to the historical period, especially the hard time with food shortages during the early years after the foundation of new China (e.g., in the early 1950s). Unlike the Strict Father Model (Lakoff, 1995) commonly observed in the collectivist society, a peer relationship (e.g., *growing up together*) is set up between the country and its nationals. Talking about the country as a human, or a peer, can make people have a more caring mentality towards the humanised country and more ready to take up their responsibility in developing the nation.

By comparison, in Weibo, instead of seeing the country as a human, individuals tend to describe the causes of obesity, particularly high-calorie food or their indulgence in consuming food, as human:

Example 6.8

减肥 # 今天 有点 不 开 心 ， 晚上 我 么 太 控制 自己 于是乎 肉肉 和 饭饭 就 有 了 奸情 (252)

[# Weight Loss # I'm a little unhappy today. At night I do not control myself well, so <u>meat and rice have an adulterous affair </u>(I eat both meat and rice).]

Example 6.8 is interesting but confusing. The Personification metaphor conveys a chic, ludic, joking or even ridiculous discourse, i.e., failing to curb one's appetite is referred to as *an adulterous affair* between meat and rice. Further, the babyish pronunciations of 肉肉 [*ròu ròu*, *meat meat*, meat] and 饭饭 [*fàn fàn*, *rice rice*, rice], which are pronounced doubly and resemble the way when babies start learning the Chinese language) show the performing-cuteness discourse. However, the topic of *an adulterous affair* is certainly not for babies, thus presenting a dubious style, especially given that the explicit mention of sexualised topics remains taboo in Chinese culture. This echoes previous studies that Chinese social media sometimes use creative or even awkward language in online communication (Xia & Wang, 2022).

Personification metaphors are also presented in humorous and playful expressions, e.g., the bloggers refer to their experience of obesity as if having a 'romantic relationship', which ends up with a hard 'break-up' with snacks or 'pork' (the meat in one's body), 'who' are extreme 'loyalty' and reluctant to accept the 'break-up' (Examples 6.9 and 6.10). These suggest that the bloggers want to keep themselves 'light and fun': though they experience difficulties in losing weight, sometimes they prefer to express the difficulties in a funny and light-hearted way:

Example 6.9

零食 # 今天 开始 我们 要 <u>假装</u> <u>不 认识</u> 了 (87)

[#snack# From today on, we must <u>pretend we do not know each other</u>.]

Example 6.10

掐 指 一 算 ， 这么 多 年 一直 <u>守 在 我 身边</u> ， 永远 <u>不 离 不 弃</u> ， <u>如影随形</u> 的 ， 就 属 我 这 一 身 <u>五 花 三 层 的 膘</u> 了 ！ # 减肥 # (105)

[Pinching the fingers and counting, (I find that) for so many years, those who are always <u>staying by my side</u>, those who never <u>leave and abandon me</u>, those who <u>closely company me like my shadows</u>, are the <u>streaky meat in my body</u>.]

In the examples, the Personification metaphors put a positive and funny spin on the difficulty of losing weight. They potentially construct 'self-pitying' and 'acting-vulnerable' discourses, as seen in Example 6.10, that the 'streaky meat' in one's body is the only thing that retains along the vicissitudes of life. This suggests the difficulties in losing weight even with years of effort. Such humorous discourses provide some light relief in discussing obesity as a serious national-level issue in the editorials. The funny style and entertaining function of metaphors in Chinese media are also found by Han (2015) in researching the entertainment news in China.

Further, Personification metaphors are also seen in blogs like 按捺不住寂寞的嘴 [[I] cannot control my <u>lonely mouth</u>] and 肉肉啊，快离开我啊 [meat-meat (*ròu ròu*, pronouncing in a baby-way again), please <u>leave</u> me quickly], which personifies one's mouth as always seeking food to fulfil its 'loneliness' and the meat which sticks to one's body and is reluctant to 'leave'. A struggle for self-control can be witnessed here. In detail, a discourse of self-split (Demjén, 2011) emerges that there seem to be different or discrepant selves within one body, or one's bodily parts seem to be people who have their own thoughts, ideas and emotions. A self-other is set within the individuals who find it difficult to control themselves. In this sense, one seems to be not the agentive owner of one's body parts, e.g., the mind is full, but the mouth is hungry, or the mind is controlled, but the mouth is indulging. The relationship between one and one's body will be further discussed in Chapter 8 on War metaphors, where the self-split effects are most prominent.

Personification metaphors sometimes convey very negative evaluations of individuals with obesity, as shown in the following example, which personifies the beach:

Example 6.11
肥胖 # 虽然 见到 的 肥 佬 不在少数 ， 但是 今天 大 <u>密度</u> 的 见到 这些 <u>肥肉</u> 实 乃 恶 心 到 我 ⋯ 这 片 沙滩 估计 也 <u>更 愿意 被 辣 妹 踩 踏</u> 。 (328)

[# obesity# Although I have seen not-few fat guys before, today, seeing these <u>fat meats</u> in a large <u>density</u> is really disgusting to me... This beach is probably <u>more willing to be trampled by hot girls</u>.]

As shown in Example 6.11, individuals with obesity are called 肥佬 [fat guys]. Pay attention that the original Chinese character of 佬 *lǎo* means man or guy, but usually in a disrespectful way, e.g., 乡巴佬 [people from the countryside, who are usually deemed uneducated, ignorant and rude]. In the extract, individuals with obesity are negatively evaluated, seen in words like *disgusting*, and dehumanised as if they were objects, e.g., *a large density*. The extract also endows agency to the beach, 'who' prefers to 'be trampled' by 'hot girls' (girls with good body shapes, usually shown in bikinis). As this said, individuals with obesity are extremely disempowered to the extent that even the beach does not welcome them.

Further, the depersonification of individuals with obesity can also be seen in metaphors where the individuals are described as too large or too heavy for them to be described by appropriate classifiers in the Chinese language. The Chinese numeral classifier system is unique in the Chinese language (e.g., English and Spanish are non-classifier languages). For example, instead of being called 一个人 [one *gè* person] in Chinese, where people are exclusively classified as 个 *gè*, the individuals are described as 大只 [big *zhī*] or 一坨 [one *tuó*], where *zhī* and *tuó* are classifiers normally used for describing animals (e.g., 一只狗, one *zhī* dog) or solid clumps (e.g., 一坨土, one *tuó* soil) in Chinese. The application of non-human classifiers to individuals with obesity can pose de-personification and stigmatising effects.

Based on the Dehumanisation and Personification metaphors used in the editorials and blogs, at this stage, we can get a preliminary sense that obesity is represented differently in the editorials and blogs. In general, the orientation from 'representing obesity itself' in the *Daily* (nevertheless with unintended representations of various stakeholders around the obesity issue) to 'representing self', e.g., the performance of cuteness and the objectification of individuals with obesity in Weibo, is a key difference between the representation work done in the two corpora. I move on to discuss Disease metaphors.

6.5.2 Disease Metaphors

As obesity is generally referred to as a health issue, the use of Disease metaphors in my data is not surprising. This is not only because obesity is often discussed as a diachronic disease but also because in China, health awareness among the general public has improved, and people pay more attention to health and health-related issues, including obesity (Zeng, Li, Pan, Chen, & Pan, 2021).

Both the editorials and blogs employ medical terminologies to refer to obesity and discuss obesity in a medical way. Different from an obfuscated relationship between obesity and health problems in the UK policy document on obesity found by Brookes (2021a), the editorials use very clear words explaining the 'definite' results of bad health caused by obesity, especially among the vulnerable groups of children and teenagers:

Example 6.12
肥胖 已经 成为 影响 我国 青少年 健康 的 一 大 顽症 。(20140731)

[Obesity has become one of the <u>stubborn (intractable) diseases</u> that affect the health of teenagers in our country.]

Example 6.13
根据 需求 为 超重 肥胖 儿童 提供 个体化 的 营养 处方 和 运动 处方 等等 (20201028)

[Based on their needs, (we should) provide <u>prescriptions</u> both on nutrition and exercise tailored for children with overweight or obesity.]

One editorial also expresses their concern for the 'fat and sick' kids who are deemed unable to sing their 'song of youth', an Art metaphor here which refers to making good use of their youth:

Example 6.14
<u>青 春 之 歌</u> ， " 病 恹 " <u>躯体</u> 咋 能 唱 响 (20120223)

[How could the <u>"sick bodies"</u> sing loud <u>their songs of youth</u>?]

Apart from young people, older people are also called to be precautions against obesity as a disease:

Example 6.15

她 为 老年人 开 出 的 " 运动 处方 " 是 多 参加 集体 体育 锻炼 (20111215)

[The 'sports prescription' she has made for the old men is participating in more group exercise].

The above extracts show that obesity has been deemed a disease, and the actions for losing weight are called 'prescriptions' (e.g., nutrition and exercise mentioned in Example 6.15). Different from 'prescription' in English, which isn't necessarily only given by a pharmacist in a medical sense, the Chinese phrase 处方, *chù fāng*, specifically refers to the one doctors give to patients for treating certain illnesses. Such medical attention further extends to the white collars, another group deemed as 'potential patients' of obesity:

Example 6.16

别 让 " 过 劳 肥 " 的 我们 ， 再 患 上 " 过 懒 肥 " (20121128)

[Do not let us, who are (already) 'fat due to overwork', fall ill again and be 'fat due to laziness'.]

Example 6.17

" 过 劳 肥 " 不 该 成为 白领 职业病 (20170627-2)

["Fat due to overwork" should not become the occupational disease among the white collars.]

Example 6.18

肥胖 是 一 种 社会 病 (20120601)

[Obesity is a kind of social illness.]

As shown in the above extracts, different from the ambiguous disease status of obesity seen in Western media (Rich, Monaghan, & Aphramor, 2011), the editorials seem not to show much hesitation in using medical language to refer to obesity. For example,

gaining weight is called '*falling ill*' (example 6.16), a pathologising process to present obesity as a medical problem caused by over-work (e.g., the white-collars are fat mainly due to their heavy workload) or physical laziness. The examples also show that various groups, old and youth, could '*fall ill*' into obesity. In this sense, obesity has become a social illness (example 6.18). The editorials suggest that obesity is a preventable health issue that can be averted or solved, e.g., through necessary medical interventions among kids and changes in lifestyles among white collars. As major attention is paid to introducing the disease itself and the solutions to solve it, there seem not to be many empathic bonds with individuals with obesity in the editorials.

In the blogs, similar medical-related discourses are also seen, e.g., obesity is related to malnutrition (example 6.19). A special point in Weibo is that it stresses the seriousness of obesity in its medical status, e.g., it is infectious and thus more dangerous (example 6.20) and its increased susceptibility to other diseases (example 6.21). In this way, the blogs have depicted a graver picture of obesity as a disease:

Example 6.19
肥胖 是 一 种 营养 不良 性 的 疾病 (379)
[Obesity is a disease of mal-nutrition.]

Example 6.20
肥胖 是 会 传染 的 (666)
[Obesity is infectious.]

Example 6.21
肥胖 是 万病 的 根源 高血脂，高血压，高血糖 (671)
[Obesity is the root of thousands of illnesses, e.g., hyperlipidemia, high blood pressure, and high blood sugar.]

Taken together, the editorials and the blogs unanimously deem obesity as a disease. The editorials position obesity as more of an issue of specific vulnerable groups, e.g., kids, while the blogs stress the increased risks of other diseases caused by obesity. Further, different from the view that people with certain diseases are deemed 'victims' of the disease and then recipients of care, the 'disease status' of obesity in the editorials and

blogs seems to focus more on the harm that obesity causes for the bodies. It shows that Chinese media, be it the official or the social media, generally take medical scrutiny on obesity. It aligns with the medicalised discourse around obesity, as I have discussed in Chapter 2.

6.5.3 Education Metaphors

I refer to the general process of gaining knowledge as 'Education metaphors'. Education metaphors involve, for example, groups of people (e.g., students, teachers), the way of gaining knowledge (e.g., courses, homework) and the check of the education results (e.g., exams, tests). Education metaphors are not new, but they have received limited academic attention (e.g., see the limited research in Arrese, 2015; Bisiada, 2018). Education metaphors are seldom explored in health communication. An exception is seen in the recent work by Zhang, Lin, & Jin (2022), who look into the homework metaphors in China's online editorials in framing Covid-19. Their studies show that homework metaphors are deliberately used to call for more democratic and practical governance in disease control, but meanwhile, the metaphors are also used to represent the in-group and out-group identities with a frenzy of nationalism. In the case of obesity, Education metaphors are understandably used to call for the public to improve their dietary knowledge, especially regarding food choices and consumption.

In my corpus, both the editorials and blogs use Education metaphors to describe the challenge to solve obesity in the form that the public need to take an exam and make necessary efforts beforehand, e.g., doing homework or enrolling in courses to pass the exam. For example, the editorials mention that childhood obesity is a 难题, *nán tí*, [difficult question]. Pay attention here that the Chinese character of 题, *tí*, [question] at the semantic level is subtly different from its English translation of '*question*' (i.e., a matter requiring resolution or discussion). 题 more precisely refers to 题目[*tí mù*], the questions presented in the test papers by which students try to answer, gain scores and pass the test.

The editorials also describe solving the obesity issue as a 课题 *kè tí*, which refers to 研究或讨论的主要问题或亟待解决的重大事项[major issues of investigation or discussion; important and urgent issues waiting to be resolved]. Based on its definition, I translate it as an 'academic project' (even though the back-translation, i.e., 学术项目

is different from 课题). The use of 课题 has lifted obesity as a difficult question in the level calling for systematic academic research:

Example 6.22
如何 平衡 经济 发展 和 国民 健康 ， 都 是 需要 思考 和 直 面 的 课题 (20161007)

[How to balance economic development and national health is an <u>academic project</u> that (we) need to think about and face directly.]

Example 6.23
营造 崇尚 节约 、 杜绝 浪费 的 氛围 ， 成为 <u>建设 健康 中国</u> 的 紧迫 课题 (20200904)

[Building up the atmosphere of respecting thrift and getting rid of waste is an urgent <u>academic project</u> in <u>building</u> a <u>healthy China.</u>]

As seen in example 6.22, 'academic project' describes the difficulty in solving the obesity issue that it needs to seek and use expert and academic knowledge. It also suggests that such a project is difficult as the complicated factors involved, e.g., the balance between economic development and national health. Some interesting questions arise, e.g., who are the experts? Who are the students? And who are the examiners? Questions to these questions, however, cannot be clearly and easily observed in the editorials.

Sometimes, the lack of subject in Chinese sentences also makes it vague and challenging to understand the editorials, as shown in Example 6.24:

Example 6.24
防止 青少年 被 " 老年病 " 缠身 ， 需要 家庭 、 学校 和 社会 的 共同 关注 ， 亟待 <u>补 上 健康 课</u> (20190710)

[Preventing teenagers from being troubled by old-aged disease, (we) need the joint attention from family, schools and societies. (The teenagers?) are in urgent need of <u>making up for more health courses.</u>]

In Example 6.24, the subject of the latter sentence is somewhat difficult to decide as it is not sure who is called to take health courses (only the teenagers or other parties

involved, e.g., family, schools and societies). Yet, what is ensured here is that the obesity issue is deemed a result of a lack of health-related knowledge, so the obesity issue is the price for poor knowledge. Such a lack-of-health education scenario is more salient during Covid-19:

Example 6.25
新 冠 肺炎 疫情 还 是 给 人们 <u>上 了 一 堂 触目惊心 的 大 课</u> (20200430)

[The epidemic of Coronavirus has <u>taught people a big (as if touching one's eyes and shocking one's heart) lesson.</u>]

Example 6.25 indicates that Covid-19 has 'given a lesson' to the public, especially those with obesity who are deemed particularly lacking health knowledge. This extract also employs a Personification metaphor to present Covod as a teacher who teaches people about the bad result of being obese. Studies have found that among various health risks of Covid-19 severity, obesity is a major risk factor (Bhattacharya et al., 2021), and individuals with obesity are being particularly construed as dying from Covid-19 in fatalistic discourses (Brookes, 2021b).

Apart from the lack of health-related knowledge, the Education metaphors extend to the area of administration, i.e., it tests how competent the government is at monitoring and supervising the food market (providing healthy food to the public, especially kids) and thus is viewed culpable for childhood obesity:

Example 6.26
帮 " 乡村 胖墩墩 " 减肥 ， 既 是 一 道 <u>健康 知识 问答 题</u> ， 更 是 一 道 <u>监管 考题</u> (20160726)

[Helping fat kids in rural areas to lose weight is not merely <u>a question of health knowledge</u>. Moreover, it is also <u>a test on (government's) supervision</u>.]

In Example 6.26, the Education metaphors adopt a national-level perspective and assign different education tasks to different groups (e.g., the government in terms of administration and kids in terms of receiving health-knowledge education). Such a precept-style discourse rhymes with paternalism discourse, a dominant ideology in collectivist societies (Pellegrini, Scandura, & Jayaraman, 2010), with no exceptions in

the Chinese context (e.g., Ye & Thomas, 2020). In detail, the extract reflects a paternalistic discourse, especially the taking-care or parental mentality revealed in the Education metaphors, which stresses its responsibility in guiding, taking care of or protecting the public, who are usually assumed incompetent, e.g., do not know enough health knowledge. It is understandable that in developing countries like China, a strong government lead and support is key for public health, especially when different parties and social resources must be allocated and used.

The paternalistic discourse is also seen in Building metaphors, which, for example, when it comes to building a healthy China, refer to the health infrastructure where more work needs to be done in 顶层设计 [top-level design, which refers to the policies established by official institutions] and 底层建构 [base-level construct, which refers to the carry-out of the policies among the public]. Within such a holistic view, college students, given their key role in developing the nation, have been attached with special significance in the national building:

> *Example 6.27*
> 学校 体育 仍 是 教育 的 薄弱 环节 ， 如果 普通 大学生 的 体质 没有 明显 提升 ， 建设 人力 资源 强 国 就 无从 谈 起 (20120223)
> [Physical education in schools remains the weak link; if college students do not improve in their physics, there is no way to talk about constructing a human-resource-competent country.]

In the blogs, education metaphors are used to show the difficulty in answering the question of how to lose weight. Different from the editorials which call for more health education at a national level, in Weibo, the individuals themselves take part in the exams of losing weight. The difficulty in losing weight is described as 无解的减肥 [Obesity without answers], which implies that losing weight is like a mathematics question without answers or which is hard to be solved. Similar phrases are also seen in 超纲了 [surpassing the syllabus], which suggests that the knowledge to lose weight has not fallen into the scope of the syllabus (In the Chinese education system, every subject has its syllabus, which sets the scope of what is to be covered and taught within one subject and further to be tested). Those who failed in losing weight call themselves 反面 教材 [counter textbook (counter-example), who are usually deemed as bad examples and

thus should not be followed by others], and those who lose weight can proudly 晒出成绩单[show the score sheet], suggesting that they have performed well in the test of 'losing weight' which enables them to 'show off' their high scores attained in the tests. These expressions again show the humorous and funny style of referring to obesity. More interestingly, a self-supervision, self-examination and self-improvement discourse emerges in the Education metaphors, which can be linked to the responsibilisation of individuals around the obesity issue.

6.6 Summary

This chapter presents the big-picture findings of metaphor uses in my corpus. I have shown that both the editorials and blogs use diverse metaphor types to discuss obesity. By comparison, the blogs used more types of metaphors, also in a more frequent way, which can explain the more vibrant linguistic activities in social media. I divided the metaphor into four tiers based on their frequency in the corpus and thus laid the foundation for the remaining part of this thesis.

I also considered the less frequent metaphors. They offered important observations and shed light on some key discourses in the data, which I will return to in subsequent chapters. For example, in my data, Dehumanisation metaphors are used to negatively (in a general sense) represent individuals with obesity in the editorials, especially the problematic way of taking care of kids; while in the blogs, the Dehumanisation metaphors deliver stigmatising effects towards individuals with obesity, but can also contribute to the performing-cuteness discourses. In the editorials, the Personification metaphors describe the nation as human, while in the editorials, the reasons for gaining weight (e.g., over-appetite and high-fat food) are given human traits. I have also revealed that paternalism ideologies are prominent in the editorials, while personal online identity discourse and personal responsibility discourse in the blogs are more salient. These differences provide evidence for the different representations of obesity in different media.

Based on this springboard analysis, though not summative, a tentative conclusion of the big-picture findings could be that obesity is negatively represented in Chinese media. Both the official and social media seem to be uncomfortable with obesity, deeming it 'problematic' and 'bad', and something that must be dealt with. More importantly, we

can get a sense that coverage of obesity in Chinese media is largely ideology-motivated, albeit the ideologies differ across the media. As this chapter involves the general findings and the analysis is inevitably somewhat crude, attempting to provide more explanation of these ideologies is premature at this stage. I need a more in-depth analysis of the major metaphors to revisit my arguments and metaphor analysis.

In the following chapters on the dominant metaphors, I conduct a more refined analysis of more subtle and insidious issues, including, e.g., different stakeholders involved in the obesity issue, positions and evaluations towards the stakeholders and the ideologies that have been played out. Bearing these points in mind, I move on to explore Journey metaphors in Chapter 7.

Chapter 7: Journey Metaphors

7.1 Introduction

From this chapter, I turn to the dominant metaphors or the first-tier metaphors in my corpus. This chapter focuses on Journey metaphors, aiming to examine how Journey metaphors are used in the editorials and the blogs to represent obesity and the similarities and differences between them.

To begin with, in this project, I use 'journey' as a broad term to cover related concepts like 'movement' and 'motion'. Some analysts prefer to label it as Movement or Motion metaphors. For example, Charteris-Black (2012b) uses Movement metaphors to describe the experience of depression. As I have discussed in Chapter 4, the Journey metaphor is generally deemed useful and is preferred in health communication. There is no exception for the case of obesity. Though there are not many studies, journey expressions are adopted in describing obesity-related topics, e.g., the self-help books such as *When hungry, eat: How one woman's mission to lose weight became a journey of discovery* by Fedler (2010). In this chapter, I aim to answer the question of to what extent and how Journey metaphors are used in my corpus.

The structure of this chapter is like this: I first give a quantitative overview of the frequencies of different Journey metaphors in my corpus (section 7.2). By 'different Journey metaphors', I mean the specific journey groupings or 'mini-journeys', or the different dimensions of a journey, e.g., *direction* and *destinations*, which are realised in different linguistic expressions. The groupings are important findings because they inform the subsequent qualitative analysis phase in systematic journey metaphors. In section 7.3, I explain and demonstrate how I propose systematic metaphors in my corpus (please note that the explanation of how to propose systematic metaphors will only appear in this chapter, as Chapter 8 and Chapter 9 use the same approach).

Based on the proposed systematic metaphors, I discuss the systematic journey metaphors in the editorials (section 7.4) and the blogs (section 7.5), assisted by detailed context-based qualitative case studies. The qualitative case studies will see my major endeavour in explaining the systematic journey metaphors by drawing on broader social, cultural and historical discourses in China. I will show that the editorials and blogs use much more diversified Journey metaphors than have been noted in previous studies, and

they evoke different and unique journey scenarios in the Chinese context. Section 7.6 compares the journey scenarios emerging in the editorials and the blogs. At last, in section 7.7, I summarise the use of Journey metaphors in my corpus and also discuss their implications for the practice of health communication around the obesity issue in the Chinese context. However, a fuller treatment of these implications is reserved in Chapter 10, where I jointly look at and compare all the dominant metaphors in my corpus.

In this chapter, I organise my metaphor analysis in a bottom-up and inductive manner, i.e., from journey groupings to systematic journey metaphors and finally to journey scenarios. In this way, my analysis processes in the logic from the most scattered (i.e., individual metaphorical expressions) to the densest (metaphorical scenario) obesity discourse in my corpus (which is also adopted in Chapter 8 on War metaphor and Chapter 9 on Money metaphor). I hope such a progression is clear and friendly for the readers. Readers will see that when used on different media platforms, Journey metaphors have different framing effects, revealing different perceptions, views, attitudes and evaluations of obesity. Readers can further check that conventional as Journey metaphors are, they can be used in novel ways as creative framing devices in health communication.

7.2 Frequencies of Different Journey Metaphors

Journey metaphors are the most frequent type of metaphors I have identified in the editorials and blogs (197 instances and 139 instances in the CODCM-Daily and CODCM-Weibo), respectively, accounting for around 23.3% and 20.2% of all obesity-related metaphors in the data. The normalised frequencies for Journey metaphors are 2.01 and 2.25 per 1,000 characters in the editorials and blogs.

The high frequency of the Journey metaphor in my corpus is not surprising given the prominence of the metaphor in discussing various topics and in the Chinese context as well, e.g., in the famous Chinese poem of 路漫漫其修远兮，吾将上下而求索 [The road ahead is very far and long, I will go up and down to seek the way out] by Qu Yuan (BC.340-BC.278), a famous poet in Chinese history to describe his pursuit of truth. The popular conceptual metaphor of LIFE IS A JOURNEY in English is also seen in Chinese, e.g., 人生天地之间，若白驹之过隙，忽然而已 [The distance between heaven and

the earth is just like a gap for a white horse to pass through: life is just a sudden moment] by Chuang Tzu (BC.369-BC.286), one of the founders of Taoism, to describe the short journey of human life.

However, knowing the gross frequency is not enough. To not lose complexity and nuance, it is necessary to look closer at the different forms and functions of Journey metaphors and their linguistic realisations in my corpus. I thus divided Journey metaphors into more specific "lexical groupings" (represented in double quotation marks), which refer to words sharing similar semantic meanings related to specific aspects of a journey, e.g., "前进 [move forward]", which means the action of moving forward and accordingly is grouped into "direction". 'Journey' in this way functions as an umbrella term, and the groupings can be deemed as sub-terms describing 'mini-journeys'. These 'mini-journeys' are a useful basis for quantitative analysis as they provide a broad comparative view of different journeys in my corpus (see similar practices by Semino et al., 2018).

Categorising these groupings is not straightforward, and there are some ambiguities. I came up with the groupings based on my manual reading of the metaphors. I refer to their dictionary meanings when in doubt. For example, for the phrase of 迈进, I turn to the Contemporary Chinese Dictionary and find its meaning referring to 大踏步地前进 [step forwards with big steps]. In the beginning, I coded it as "speed", but later changed it into "way of movement" as the overall meaning emphasises more 'with big steps', even though it implies the possible fast speed. Another example is 飙升, *biāo shēng* [skyrocket]. I first categorised it as "direction" based on the character 升, *shēng*, [upward], but later I re-coded it as "speed" as the other character 飙, *biāo*, which originally means 'storm', is more oriented to describing the very rapid speed of movement.

Nevertheless, I need to acknowledge that the categorisation has inevitable ambiguities. I coded the lexical groupings generally based on their overall semantic orientations. I double-coded the mini-journeys to improve the accuracy (this practice also applies to War and Money metaphors in subsequent Chapters).

Based on the above methods, I manually classified the Journey metaphors in my corpus into seven groupings (see Table 7.1). Please pay attention that the groupings are by no means exhaustive, and there can be different naming (there could be groupings named

"run", "jump", or "hiking", which are named under "way of movement" in this chapter).
To avoid losing nuance as well as unnecessary details, I deem the seven groupings
below sufficient and insightful for this project.

Table 7.1 Different Journey Groupings in the Corpus

Groupings of journeys	Connotation	Selected Examples
Position	Describing one's place or location in the journey	落后[fall behind], 超过[pass],停滞 [stuck]
Path	Describing the route, orientation and road map of the journey	循环[cycle], 人生路[path of life], 成功之路[a road towards success]
Co-travellers	Describing companions in the journey and interactions among them	指导 [guide], 同行 [walking together], 携手[hand-in-hand]
Way of movement	Describing the specific way of moving	跋山涉水[trudge across mountains and rivers], 循序渐进[proceed step by step]
Direction	Describing one's direction and the differences with the planned (original) destination of the journey	进退[move forwards/backward], 偏差[deviation], 转身[turn around]
Obstacles	Describing the difficulties or hurdles which impede the motion of the journey	陷阱[pitfall], 迷障[maze], 走入误 区[get into wrong area]
Speed	Describing the fastness or slowness in moving along the journey	拖慢 [slow down], 飙升 [skyrocket], 一蹴而就 [reaching the destination with one step]

The journey groupings, in themselves, are interesting and important findings, given that
they express the framing effects or the highlighted and hidden aspects of journeys in my
corpus. A preliminary observation is that the mini-journeys cover various elements of a
journey or movement along a path in our common sense, including, for example, people
(i.e., "co-travellers"), direction (i.e., "direction"), speed (i.e., "speed"), difficulties along
the journey (i.e., "obstacles"), to name just a few.

Different from McEntee-Atalianis's (2013) work on Journey metaphors used by the
secretary of the International Maritime Organization, which use voyage metaphors (e.g.,
a safe voyage or *uncertain shipping*), Journey metaphors in my corpus do not rely much

on the specific vehicle of moving or travelling. Instead, a taken-for-granted walking journey or a journey on foot is the one most seen in my corpus. Even in the "way of movement", the metaphors are more about how people move their feet, e.g., 阔步 [wide steps], instead of climbing mountains, swimming through lakes or driving in a car.

Meanwhile, the appearance of "position" in my corpus is interesting and noteworthy. "Position" refers to "a place where someone or something is located" (Oxford English Dictionary). "Position" is usually implied through one's place by comparing with others' places, e.g., one is before or after others or close or far from others. In this sense, "position" is gained by comparison, and there seems to be no position without comparison. As such, "position" suggests a "me vs. others" comparing mentality of the travellers along the way, i.e., the travellers seem to pay attention to their own positions and others' positions to check their place in the journey. The importance of "position" is expected to contribute to different interaction models between "co-travellers" in my data.

Based on the seven groupings, I get the journey groupings with varying frequencies in the editorials and blogs (see figure 7.1). The frequencies are normalised per 1,000 Chinese characters.
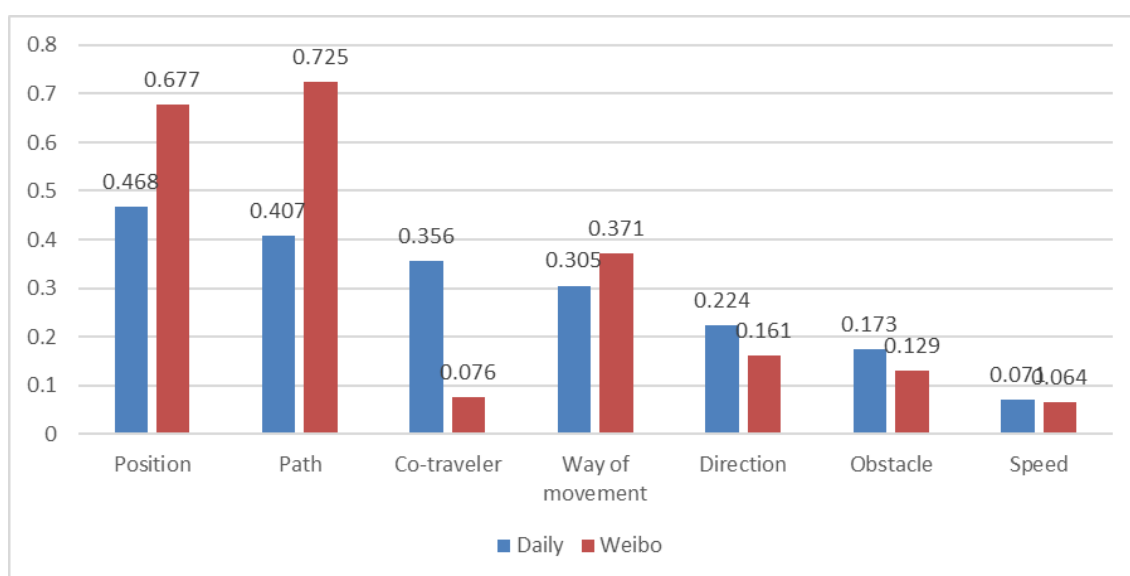

Figure 7.1 Frequencies per 1,000 Characters of the Different Journey Groupings in the Corpus

Figure 7.1 presents nuanced differences in using different mini-journeys in my corpus. Overall, the broad patterns of different groupings of journeys show the variety of mini-journeys in the editorials and blogs, which feature various representations of obesity. In

detail, some lexical groupings stand out as frequent in both the editorials and the blogs: "position" (the most frequent in the editorials and the second most frequent in the blogs) and "path" (the most frequent in the blogs and the second most frequent in the editorials). The blogs slightly more frequently use "way of movement" than the editorials (0.371 vs. 0.305). By comparison, bloggers' higher frequency in using 'path' is more marked (0.725 vs. 0.407).

Interestingly yet not surprisingly, "co-traveller" is very infrequent in Weibo (only 0.076), which might imply the sense of isolation of the bloggers as if they find no 'companions' along their journey of being obese or losing weight. On the contrary, the editorials much more frequently use "co-traveller" (the third most frequent grouping in the editorials). At last, "direction", "obstacle", and "speed" are all infrequently used in the editorials and the blogs, even though the editorials see slightly more frequent usage in all three groupings (e.g., 'speed' sees very similar infrequencies in the editorials and blogs, i.e., 0.071 vs. 0.064).

Based on the above similarities and differences, we can see that the editorials and blogs depict mini-journeys and evoke different journey scenarios when they use Journey metaphors to represent obesity. In other words, though they both talk about 'obesity-related journeys', the editorials and blogs imply different positions, paths, directions, and possible interactions between the co-travellers along their journeys. At this stage, a context-based qualitative analysis of individual groupings is a more appropriate means to attain a more valid and deeper interpretation of the mini-journeys. In the coming sections, I turn to such qualitative analyses in the form of systematic journey metaphors.

7.3 Systematic Journey Metaphors in the Corpus: An Overview

The above journey groupings are useful for a more nuanced explanation of the detailed use of Journey metaphors in my corpus. Based on the groupings, the next step is proposing systematic metaphors to examine their framing functions in the discourse. For convenience, I call systematic metaphors within Journey metaphors 'systematic journey metaphor' (accordingly, 'systematic war metaphor' in Chapter 8 and 'systematic money metaphor' in Chapter 9).

Though the mini-journeys realised in individual linguistic metaphors are insightful, what is more important is what lies behind the individual metaphors. It is necessary to

find patterns among them or group the individual linguistic metaphors into larger patterns of metaphor uses, that is, 'systematic metaphors'. Systematic metaphors can be understood as emerging patterns of metaphor use, which can identify connections between individual linguistic metaphors and, more importantly, shed light on the emerging themes in the discourse. As aforementioned in Chapter 5, MIP and MIPVU are only for identifying the linguistic manifestations of metaphors. Proposing systematic metaphors which are at the thought level involves other methodological considerations. There are three methodological caveats about how I propose systematic metaphors:

Firstly, I deem proposing systematic metaphors within the most frequent metaphor groupings is justified due to the metaphors' incremental or accumulative framing effects across the discourse. A similar view is also held by Taylor (2018: 2) that 'metaphor […] is evaluative and cumulative in nature'. The more frequent a metaphor is, the more it is likely to possess its cumulative effects and to play out its framing effects. In this way, based on the frequencies of different mini-journeys shown in the previous section, the proposal of systematic journey metaphor in the editorials falls into "position", "path" and "co-traveller"; for the blogs, on the other hand, it falls into "position", "path" and "way of movement". Focusing on the three most frequent groupings (six in total) offers the practical advantage that it helps me to concentrate on the key groupings and also saves my time and energy in the analysis;

Secondly, within the chosen groupings, the issue of what can be inferred about the cognitive structures from the scattered linguistic evidence is a thorny challenge (also the major criticism of CMT). Please pay attention to 'infer', which implies that what is happening conceptually among the discourse participants is not what the researchers can explore. Instead, we as researchers can only know the possible clues that may help us *infer* what the metaphors reveal about people's ideas through their use of metaphors. This leads to an important point I need to stress in the analysis of systematic metaphors. That is, systematic metaphor is not posited a priori but is chiefly motivated by the discourse and emerges along with the data, and more importantly, systematic metaphors *only* serve as evidence for the ideas, attitudes and values of discourse participants (instead of the definite ideas, attitudes and values). In this way, systematic metaphors are concerned with the real, dynamic language practices and avoid making assumptions about the participants' conceptualisations. Thus, it is perhaps worth reiterating that a systematic metaphor is *not* a conceptual one. They have profound theoretical differences,

particularly in their positions on cognitive activities in the discourse. To differentiate them, systematic metaphors are presented in small italic capitals, e.g., *LOSING WEIGHT IS XXX*);

Finally, I deem it is naturally and inevitably intuition-based for researchers to propose systematic metaphors based on the discourse's contextual factors (and the researchers' knowledge of the factors). In this sense, in this project, the systematic metaphors are inevitably subjective to my own interpretation and explanation, which require key research skills on the side of the researcher (me in this project). To reduce the gap between my observation and interpretation of the metaphors, proposing a systematic metaphor needs to involve careful context-specific reading, fine-grained interpretation of the co-text and context and skillfully gaining their gist. This means my interpretation and explanation should be aided by drawing on wider discourses around obesity at the societal level (instead of only staying within the corpus), such as considering the social, historical and political factors related to the metaphors in my data.

Based on the three caveats, here are examples from my data to explain how I propose systematic journey metaphors. For instance, several editorials discuss China's obesity issue by relating it to China's national development, especially regarding the distance between China and other countries. For example, one editorial mentions that 中国人均预期寿命…远落后于世界第一的日本 [The average life expectancy in China falls much behind Japan, which has the longest life expectancy in the world]. As shown in the extract, when mentioning the average life longevity of the Chinese people (for which obesity has led to early mortality), a journey where China falls behind Japan is depicted (on average, the Japanese people have low BMI and one of the longest life expectancies in the world). It implies that obesity has dragged China down in competing with Japan, though in 2010, China surpassed Japan as the second-largest economy in the world.

Further, when explaining the childhood obesity issue in China, in the editorials, the main factor is attributed to 落后的教育理念 [teaching belief which lags behind], which 'slows down' the development of kids. Thinking it from the perspective of China's national development, especially its gap with other developed countries and the importance of kids, or the next generation for the national development, further given the concern that childhood obesity is almost guaranteed to become adulthood obesity,

what all these metaphors have in common is that they seem to suggest a 'running race' journey where China is conscious of its position in the race and tries to get off its 'backward' position through improving the health status of its nationals. Based on all the considerations, these individual metaphors help me to propose a systematic metaphor as:

OBESITY SHOWS NATIONAL BACKWARDNESS

For more methodological takes on the proposal of systematic metaphors in this project, readers can refer to Huang & Bisiada (2021). Based on the methodological considerations, I propose the following systematic journey metaphors falling into the major groupings (see table 7.2).

Table 7.2 Systematic Journey Metaphors in the Corpus

CODCM-Daily
Position: *OBESITY SHOWS NATIONAL BACKWARDNESS*
Path: *LOSING WEIGHT IS NATIONAL PROGRESS*
Co-travellers: *GOVERNMENT IS THE GUIDE TO KEEP THE SAME GROUP*
CODCM-Weibo
Position: *WEIGHT IS DESCENT*
Path: *WEIGHT BOUNCES BACK ALONG THE WAY*
Way of movement: *LOSING WEIGHT IS AN INDIVIDUAL JOURNEY*

As indicated in table 7.2, in my corpus, Journey metaphors represent different aspects of obesity, e.g., obesity itself, weight loss, and the stakeholders, e.g., the government. There are considerable differences in the systematic journey metaphors between the editorials and the blogs. Based on these proposed systematic metaphors, I will conduct context-sensitive qualitative case studies in the coming sections to illustrate the systematic metaphors and their special framing effects in the Chinese context. I start with systematic journey metaphors in the editorials.

7.4 Systematic Journey Metaphors in CODCM-Daily

Seen as a whole, the systematic journey metaphors in the editorials are presented from a national perspective. What links the metaphors, or a shared line, is a common theme of creating national solidarity. More specifically, solidarity is constructed based on three aspects, i.e., national backwardness, national progress and the role of the government in

building a national community, which respectively fall into the groupings of "position", "path" and "co-traveller". I start by discussing "position".

7.4.1 *OBESITY SHOWS NATIONAL BACKWARDNESS*

As an emerging power, China is eager to redefine its position in the world. Such a position-awareness mentality is also reflected in the obesity discourses in the official media. In my data, the editorials relate obesity to national backwardness. Here come two questions: backwardness in terms of what? Backwardness compared with whom? For the first question, the answer can be reasonably found in China's national development or national strength; for the second question, the answer is self-evident: the outside of China, especially the developed countries in Western society. Despite China's enormous economic progress in the past decades, through which China has successfully shaken off its economic backwardness to some extent, the looming health crisis among the population is worrying and concerning the country (Visscher, 2012). As people are directly related to the strength and well-being of the country, a key question arises: can a rich country with weak people really be a great power (Huang, 2011)? The answer probably is 'no'. This explains why obesity, which embodies 'weak' or unhealthy people, is linked with national backwardness in the editorials.

The backwardness is mainly seen through the comparison between China and other countries, which expresses a competitive worldview where China likes to compare itself with other countries, e.g., in terms of national fitness:

> *Example 7.1*
> 在 2007 年 公布 的 一 项 世界 国民 体质 排名 中 ， 中国 被 韩国 和 日本 甩 在 身后 。(20110902)
>
> [In a ranking of the world's national fitness released in 2007, China <u>fell behind</u> South Korea and Japan.]

Even China's high incidence of diabetes (a major health concern closely related to obesity) is ironically and playfully described as 'walking in the forefront':

Example 7.2

糖尿病 的 发病率 在 短期 内 " 走 在 了 世界 前列 " ， 无论 是 肥 胖 还 是 糖尿病 ， 都 与 饮食 中 的 热量 过 高 有 直接 关系 。 (20130314)

[(China's) incidence of diabetes "<u>has walked in the forefront of the world</u>" in a short period. Both obesity and diabetes directly correlate with excess calories in the diet.]

In Example 7.2, the extract ironically depicts a 'race' between China and other countries where China 'catches up' and 'walks the forefront' in its incidence of diabetes. Consuming high-calorie food is subtly blamed. Such a 'catching-up' narrative is also witnessed in the food industry. The following extract describes China's food table as a sign of China's narrowed distance from 'international rails' in its food industry:

Example 7.3

随着 经济 的 发展 ， 中国 的 餐桌 已经 和 国际 <u>接轨</u> ， 高热 量 的 食物 、 饮料 逐渐 成 了 国人 餐桌 上 的 主 打 ， 肥胖 以及 与 肥胖 有关 的 各种 慢 性病 的 激增 就 是 后果 (20130314)

[Along with China's economic development, China's dining table has connected with <u>the international rails</u>. High-calorie food and beverages have gradually become the main dishes on country people's (Chinese people) dining tables. The rising rate of obesity and various chronic diseases related to obesity is the consequence of it.]

Example 7.3 depicts a 'rail way' scenario where China's dining table, which used to be disconnected or even isolated from the outside world (e.g., Chinese people could only eat the food that was domestically produced and sold in China), now has successfully 'connected with the global track'. This suggests that now a variety of food is available in China, and Chinese people can access foreign food, which possibly leads to the rising rate of obesity. Subtle blame on foreign food is delivered in the example.

Further, in Example 7.3, a sense of collective community is built through the phrase 国人 [country people] (this phrase has been frequently used in the editorials). Though translated as 'Chinese people', its literary translation is 'country people', which shows

the key role of 'country' in defining the general public in the Chinese context. It suggests the collectivism-oriented Chinese culture, where the notion of the country plays a key role in setting up a collective national identity (Wang & Chen, 2010).

Yet, based on the above examples, paradoxically, a sense of national pride and confidence can be associated with the rising obesity issue. This is expressed explicitly in another editorial which comments: 减肥成了幸福的烦恼 [Losing weight has become a happy annoyance]. It indicates that while obesity shows national backwardness, it at least has proven the happier life of the Chinese people that in the age of food shortage, it is very hard for one to become fat.

However, as also reflected in Example 7.3, the 'joining the railway' comes at the price of dietary changes, where the traditional preoccupation with cereal cop products, especially rice and noodles, is replaced by the Westernised food featured with high protein and energy-dense food. A subtle blaming discourse on the Western lifestyle, especially the negative aspect of Western dietary habits, especially the eating patterns of fast food in the United States:

> *Example 7.4*
> 这 一点 上 ， 中国 已经 在 <u>步 美国 的 后尘</u> 。 (20130314)
> [In this regard (which refers to the rising obesity rate), China is already <u>following the footsteps</u> of the United States.]

In this sense, different from the physical 'backwardness', another sense of backwardness which relies upon the conceptual level can be observed, i.e., China did not know how to take the right route for itself or how to tell the good or the bad aspects of Western lifestyle (it seemed to blindly follow the United States and now needed to pay the price for it).

Such backwardness on the conceptual level is best witnessed when it comes to the childhood obesity issue, where the major reason is attributed to the lagging-behind concept of education held by parents and teachers:

> *Example 7.5*
> 观念 的 <u>滞后</u> ， 不能 合理 的 调整 膳食 ， 而 物质 条件 不断 变 好 ， " 想 吃 啥 有 啥 " ， 农村 儿童 能 不 变 胖 么 ？(20170726)

[With the backward (educational) concept and failure to adjust the diet appropriately, and the material conditions continue to improve, "[kids] can eat whatever they want to eat", can rural children not become fat?]

Example 7.5 uses a rhetorical question to stress the 'easy answer' to childhood obesity in the rural area: the gap between the advanced 'material conditions' (the sufficient food supply) and the 'backward' concept in raising kids, especially among parents who spoil their kids that kids can *eat whatever they want*. Again, a sense of pride in China's food security and economic development achievement can be sensed here. However, we can also see a blaming discourse on parents, who are perceived as irresponsible in controlling their kids' food. The ambivalent mentality on food sufficiency or even over-sufficiency can shed light on the price at which China's economic development influences Chinese kids.

The 'lagging-behind' concept of education is further seen in kids' imbalance between academic and physical education. The intense pressure to succeed academically has made Chinese parents reduce the time their kids have in sports or other sports-related activities, which potentially leads to the rising rate of childhood obesity:

Example 7.6
还 需 家长 们 尽快 改变 过分 重视 智育 、 忽视 体育 的 落后 教育 理念 (20140319)

[Parents should change as soon as possible their lagging-behind educational faith, which overemphasises intellectual education and neglects physical education (on their kids).]

In the editorials, young people are also deemed 'backward', being called to 'get closer' to 'health' and 'science' to adjust their lifestyles:

Example 7.7
年轻人 对 健康 知识 掌握 得 越 多 ， 就 越 能 对 自己 的 健康 做出 明智 的 选择 ， 也 就 越 能 在 生活 方式 上 向 健康 和 科学 靠 拢 ， 以 维护 和 保障 自己 的 健康 (20191129)

[The more knowledge young people have on health, the more they can make wise choices about their health, and the more they can move closer to health and science in their lifestyles to maintain and protect their own health.]

Example 7.8

掌握 这些 健康 知识 ， 就 能够 走 出 很 多 生活 误区 ， 就 会 对 胡 吃 海 喝 或 长期 熬夜 保持 警觉 。 (20190814)

[By mastering health-related knowledge, (you) can walk out of many wrong areas in life. (You) will be alert to indulging in drinking and eating or staying up late for a long time.]

Examples 7.7 and 7.8 encourage positive lifestyle changes among young people. The blogs evoke a theme of 'health literacy', which refers to 'the degree to which individuals have the capacity to obtain, process, and understand basic health information and services needed to make appropriate health decisions' (cited from Marciano, Camerini, & Schulz, 2019: 1007). The low health literacy in China is calling for attention, as shown in the 'wrong areas' individuals fall into. This is evidenced by a national survey in 2019, finding only 19.7% of Chinese have basic health literacy[17].

What is interesting in the above extracts is that, different from relying on the government responsible for public health, as we observe in the editorials in the previous examples, the extracts call on individuals to improve their health literacy and assume responsibilities of their own. They are expected to require informed, disciplined and self-responsible food choices for their own health. In this sense, individuals are deemed and expected to be competent in taking responsibility for their own health. This is interestingly different from the paternalism discourse we have observed, which accepts and indeed is built upon the 'incompetence' of the individuals. The inconsistency of discourses within the editorials suggests competing ideologies around obesity in the Chinese context, which I will discuss in detail in Chapter 10.

Shifting the focus from kids and young people to a national level, a grand national scenario of 'forever on the way' is depicted in the editorial:

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[17] Publicity Department, The Chinese Government. Retrieved from March, 2022, from http://www.nhc.gov.cn/xcs/s3582/202004/df8d7c746e664ad783d1c1cf5ce849d5.shtml.

Example 7.9

虽然 全面 小康 在即 ， 但是 我们 面前 的 <u>道路</u> 并非 <u>笔直</u> <u>平坦</u> ， 具 有 新 的 历史 特点 的 伟大 <u>斗争</u> <u>永远 在 路上</u> (20190912)

[A comprehensive *xiǎokāng* ('well-off' society) is imminent, but the <u>road</u> ahead of us is not <u>straight and smooth</u>, and a great <u>struggle</u> with new historical characteristics will forever <u>be on the way</u>.]

Readers without cultural background may find it difficult to understand the example or be confused about how obesity relates to this extract. In this extract, the national health agenda of improving people's health, including controlling obesity among the population, is uplifted for arriving at the destination of *xiǎokāng*, a special term in Chinese which means 'relatively comfortable life' or the level of moderately prosperous, the socio-economic development target set by Deng Xiaoping, the pioneer of reform and opening-up policies for China (Wong, 1998). A scenario of 'forever on the way' is depicted, which suggests the movement from 'catching up' to 'forging ahead' and implies a forever 'advancing' China for achieving its national progress. Relating 'obesity' to the national goal of *xiǎokāng* reflects the importance the editorials have attached to obesity. This extract also occurs with a war metaphor, which calls the journey to reach *xiǎokāng* a 'great struggle'. The glorified role of the struggle will be discussed in more detail in Chapter 8 on the War metaphor.

Thus, within the "position", the health status of the Chinese people is seen as the signal of Chinese international position compared with other countries. China cares about its position in the world, especially how backward it is from other countries and how the distance can be narrowed. Obesity is despised because it implies that people are weak and deficient, which causes concern that China could be weak and backward. Losing weight in this sense has been lifted to the level of national progress, which I move on to explore in the next section.

7.4.2 *LOSING WEIGHT IS NATIONAL PROGRESS*

In response to the backwardness reflected by obesity, the opposite case, i.e., losing weight, is linked to shaking off the backwardness. A nationalist view can be seen from the national progress discourse around losing weight.

First, losing weight, especially among children, is related to the future path the country will be on. A 'national-stride' narrative is built by comparing present China with past China. There is a heroic mentality in the Chinese way of expressing the progress the country has made in its development, especially when in comparison with its old path of 'sick man of east Asia':

Example 7.10

运动 习惯 一定 要 从小 <u>建立</u> ， 绝不 能 <u>重 蹈</u> " 东 亚 病 夫 " 的 <u>老路</u> ！ (20140722)

[(For kids) the habit of exercise must be <u>built</u> from an early age, and never [should we] <u>re-step on the old path of the "sick man of East Asia"</u>!]

Example 7.10 refers to China's humiliating past. It refers to the Chinese history of being called 'sick man of east Asia', a degrading or even insulting title in China's modern history (Yang, 2020). This term has complicated meanings in the Chinese context. According to Hu (2013), there are two meanings of the 'sick man'. The first is in the biological sense, where the Chinese people were deemed physically weak; more importantly, it is a political metaphor representing a declining nation. The national traumatic lesson needs to be learned, remembered, and applied in present China. It explains why Example 7.10 calls the kids to 'build' their exercise habits from an early age: they should never put the country at risk of being back on the 'humiliating road'.

Further, a national-stride discourse is seen in people's changing views on food and nutrition:

Example 7.11

国民 营养 观念 正 由 " 温饱型 " 向 " 健康 型 " <u>跨越</u> 。 (20111031)

[Chinese people's nutrition concept is now <u>striding</u> from "subsistence type" to "healthy type".]

In example 7.11, the 'stride' from a 'subsistence type' to a 'healthy types' shows the progress of people's living standards in China. In the age of food shortage, Chinese people had to eat whatever they had, but now they pursue a healthy diet thanks to China's economic progress. The Journey metaphor thus promotes public confidence in

the country. Nationalistic discourses in a heroic narrative are frequently seen in the editorials, which are oriented towards arousing patriotic sentiment amongst its readers:

Example 7.12

从 " 中国 饭碗 " 看 发展 成就 从 饥饿 到 温饱 再 到 全面 小康 ， 伟大 的 历史 <u>跨越</u> ， <u>铸就</u> 了 人类 发展史 上 的 千秋 <u>圭碑</u> 。 (20190912)

[Seeing China's development and achievement from "<u>Chinese bowls</u>". From hunger to basic fulfilment of food and clothing to an all-around *xiǎokāng* (the moderately well-off society), the great historical <u>leap</u> has created a <u>monumental milestone</u> in the history of human development.]

Example 7.12, again, may be challenging for readers who do not know Chinese. In the example, 'Chinese bowls' can be seen as metonymy in referring to food security in China. The extract evokes strong emotions and nationalistic patriotism among the Chinese readers, showing China has progressed in its national development or has made a 'great historical leap'. In this way, the editorial uses the 'bowl' narrative as a vehicle for promoting patriotism. The following extract also shows the national stride scenario:

Example 7.13

让 人人 享有 健康 ， 是 实现 全面 小康 的 <u>必由之路</u> 。(20161124)

[Allowing everyone to enjoy health is the <u>route</u> that must be taken to achieve *xiǎokāng* (a comprehensive well-off society, or a society in which all people lead a fairly comfortable life)]

In summary, based on the above extracts, a national journey where obesity is lifted to the obstacle of national prosperity can be seen in the editorials. In detail, the national journey is a historical route where China was once on the old path of 'Sickman of east Asia', to the progress of being able to feed the people with food security to the concerns of the overabundance of food and the worry of the national health and possible coming-back historical humiliation. In this sense, obesity is by no means only about the physical bodies of the Chinese people but about the national body of China in its modernisation drive. The government plays an important role in such a national journey, which I will explore in the next section.

7.4.3 *GOVERNMENT IS THE GUIDE TO KEEPING THE SAME GROUP*

In the editorials, in terms of the "co-travellers", a special focus in the editorials is on the controlling role of government in terms of the national journey. More specifically, across the editorials emerge a guidance discourse, which stresses the need for the public to be guided by the government to understand obesity and later adopt actions towards obesity. Solidarity is fostered under common guidance, especially in terms of childhood obesity:

> *Example 7.14*
> 我们 一方面 ， 必须 加大 正确 的 儿童 营养 观 的 规划 力度 ， 科学 指导 家庭 儿童 喂养 计划 (20120701)
>
> [On the one hand, (we) must intensify the planning of the correct child nutrition concept and scientifically guide the family child feeding plan.]

Example 7.14 stresses the need for the parents to be guided to fulfil their responsibility in maintaining the healthy weight of their children. In the example, the use of 'correct' and 'scientifically' implies the status quo of the 'incorrect' and 'unscientific' child feeding, thus justifying the need for guidance. Although the personal noun is missing here (as I have added 'we'), given the official attachment of the editorials and the collective culture (which is heavily influenced by the government) in Chinese society, it can be reasonably understood that the collective actions are called by the government.

In the following extract, the need for guidance is further evidenced by the 'deviated' childhood obesity issue, which can only be 'corrected' by joint efforts of different parties:

> *Example 7.15*
> 只 有 观念 、 行为 、 法规 、 制度 的 " 合力 " ， 才 能 纠偏 我们 的 儿童 肥胖 问题 (20120701)
>
> [Only through the "joint force" of ideas, behaviours, laws and systems can we correct the route of our childhood obesity problem.]

As seen in Example 7.15, the childhood obesity problem is called 'our' problem, suggesting a common responsibility of the issue, which is thus called to be solved by turning to different resources. Under the government's guidance, stakeholders are assigned different responsibilities for reducing the obesity risk. In particular, the role of government itself is to issue policies to guide the public:

Example 7.16

强制性 的 措施 应该 出台 ， 至少 要 从 政策 的 层面 <u>引导</u> 国 人 的 健康 消费 (20130314)

[Compulsory measures should be introduced, at least from the policy level, to <u>guide</u> Chinese people's consumption (of food).]

Example 7.16 stressed the urgency of guiding people's consumption of food. Again, individuals are deemed as citizen-consumers in their health behaviours, suggesting the self-responsibility discourse around obesity in the editorials. The coexistence between a guiding government and the public as free consumers in the Chinese context is interesting. The guiding discourse is hand in hand with the neoliberal discourse, and the seemingly contradictory discourses co-exist harmoniously, as I have noted previously.

As shown in the above examples, readers perhaps have noticed the frequent uses of collective 'we' and 'our', which aim to invoke a shared agency and collective identity in dealing with and responding to obesity. Through using 'we', both the author and the reader are included and jointly addressed. As I have explained, given the special genre of the official media in China, the author can be generally seen as the official or the government. Thus, though not directly referring to the government, the collective use of 'we' in the above extracts can be reasonably understood as the general public led by the government in their contexts. The interpersonal address simulating dialogue (we) builds a collective 'us', or a bigger 'we', along with the pressing language (e.g., '*must*', '*intensify*', the use of lexical words stressing the seriousness of the situation) as a communal coping strategy towards obesity.

Further, as can be seen in the above extracts, the major work of the Journey metaphors, as seen in "guide" and "correct the route", aims at building a feeling of togetherness, fostering solidarity through establishing the authority or 'expert role' of the governments in terms of the obesity issue. It echoes with Charteris-Black (2005: 47)

that Journey metaphors are valuable to political communication in that the metaphor permits the politician "to present himself as a 'guide', his policies as 'maps' and go bring himself 'nearer' to the audience by constructing them as 'fellow travelling companions'. I deem these are good descriptions of the role of Journey metaphors in the editorials.

The expert role or the guiding capacity of government is also tested. The health status of the public is a test of the 'management fitness' of the government, especially in terms of whether the government is good at managing the resources to take care of people's health:

Example 7.17
我们 要 分类 指导 ， 从 娃娃 抓起 ， 扎扎实实 提高 竞技 体育 水平 (20140217)
[Starting with kids, we need to do a tailored guide and solidly improve the level of competitive sports.]

Example 7.18
各区 疾 控 中心 将 对 肥胖 率 增长 迅速 的 学校 开展 分级 警示 和 重点 监督 管理 ， 指导 学校 将 肥胖 防 控 工作 落实 到 班级 (20170712)
[The Centre of Disease Control in each district will carry out graded warnings and key supervision and management for schools with rapidly increasing obesity rates and guide schools to implement obesity prevention and control work in classes.]

In Example 7.17, 'tailored guide' implies different types of guiding work. This is taken more in Example 7.18, where stakeholders are assigned different work. A hierarchy, or top-down dissemination from the district to school and finally to the classes, can be seen in the different levels of stakeholders, reflected in their attributed work and detailed responsibility in the 'guiding'. Again, Journey metaphors are co-used with War metaphors, as if the government guides different stakeholders on how to win a fight.

The editorials also call for a collective movement among the whole nation and aim to keep everyone on the journey:

Example 7.19

让 我们 共同 约定：健康 <u>路上</u>，你 我 <u>同 行</u>，<u>一个 也 不能 少</u>。(20161124)

[Let's agree: you and I <u>walk together</u> on the <u>road towards health</u>, and <u>no one can be left behind</u>].

In the editorials, the government is portrayed as the leader in the national journey to keep the same group. The whole society is unified to ensure joint efforts are made for the collective journey with no one left behind. This, again, reflects a collective discourse around obesity in the editorials.

7.5 Systematic Journey Metaphors in CODCM-Weibo

In this section, I explore the systematic journey metaphors in the blogs. Compared with the editorials, the blogs see less national narrative; instead, they focus more on individual experiences of obesity and losing weight, especially how obesity has influenced their life. I start with the 'descent' effects of weight.

7.5.1 *WEIGHT IS DESCENT*

First, gaining weight is represented as 'falling', or descent in the blogs. The 'descent' may be explained from a gravity point of view (people with more weight have larger gravity). However, in the blogs, what is more relevant is the additional burden the individuals carry in their social life, which leads them to be stuck in low positions or places in their life:

Example 7.20

是 ， 我 承认 我 <u>堕落</u> 了 ， 但 我 之前 也 是 瘦 的 呀 ！ ！ ！ 我 变成 如今 这样 也 是 有 原因 的 呀 ！ ！ ！ 从 今天 起 微 博 打 卡 减肥 ， 不 瘦 下来 我 吃 屎 ！ ！ ！ (907)

[Yes, I admit I've <u>fallen</u>, but I used to be thin, too! ! ! There is a reason why I am what I am today! ! ! From today, I will 'clock in' on Weibo to lose weight. If I don't lose weight, I will eat shit! ! !]

Example 7.20 is particularly disempowering and sobering. In the extract, the use of 承认[admit] suggests that the individual previously pretended to 'hide' his gained weight,

but now he could not conceal it and has to 'confess' it. It is true that compared with other stigmatised issues such as mental illness, obesity is visible and cannot be easily hidden from others. In the extract, gaining weight is called a 堕落[falling], which usually refers to 'going bad, <u>falling from virtue</u> or <u>sinking in depravity</u>' in Chinese. The blogger's current size is unfavourably contrasted with a previous 'thin' self, implying the previous thin self 'stands higher' than the present fat self. This has shared something with the 'Good is Up' and 'Bad is down' in CMT. A self-blaming discourse can be seen in that the blogger even curses or swears themselves to 'eat shit' if falling in losing weight. Readers can also feel the blogger's self-despise from the frequent use of exclamation marks. The extract also suggests the lack of empathy towards people with obesity as no attention has been paid to why the blogger became fat. People seem only to pay attention to the larger body and cast it as a 'falling' of the individual.

Similarly, one blogger calls the desired number of weight the 'bottom line' which needs to be kept in his life:

> *Example 7.21*
> 把 体 重 保 持 在 想 要 的 数 字 ， 是 我 生 活 的 <u>底 线</u> 。 当 我 生 活 一 团 糟 的 时 候 ， 我 会 摸 着 马 甲 线 ， 告 诉 自 己 ， 还 没 有 到 最 差 的 地 步 ！ (770)
>
> [Keeping my weight at the desired number is the <u>bottom line</u> of my life. When my life is a mess, I'll touch my abdominal muscles and tell myself it's not the worst yet!]

Considering the fact that only being thin does not bring one the abdominal muscles (abs), or one needs to be slim but at the same time strong with defined muscles to have the abs, Example 7.21 fuses with the fitness lifestyle in China. As seen in the extract, the muscle functions as a 'bottom line', signalling that life has not 'fallen' to the worst situation. In this sense, the muscle is not simply a symbol of one's body shape but a test of one's life or self-perception of what kind of life one is living now. People sense that the uncertainty in life can (at least) find its certainty in the readily visible body, which, however, at the same time, can make one's weight gain visible and hard to conceal, as seen in Example 7.20.

Therefore, the controlled bodily weight is seen as a sign that one is on the right track in life, carrying the hope that they are not 'falling', which is also seen in the following example:

Example 7.22

我 从头到尾 都 不 胖 但是 自己 感觉 自己 还 有 <u>提升</u> 的 空间 就 一 直 <u>在 努力 变 瘦 的 路上</u> (720)

[I have not been fat from the beginning, but I still have room to <u>upgrade</u> myself, so I've always been <u>on the journey of losing weight</u>.]

Example 7.22 equates losing weight with 'upgrading' oneself. The blog seems to suggest that losing weight affects not only where one is at present but can predict where one will become in the future. It also shows people within the normal weight range still express dissatisfaction with their weight.

The fear of 'falling' is seen in the following blog, which relates men's heavier bodies to 'go downhill':

Example 7.23

男性 从 25 岁 开始 ， 身体 就 要 <u>走 下 坡 路</u> 了 。 真 的 不能 否认 岁月 除了 是 把 <u>杀 猪 刀</u> ， 还是 一 把 <u>猪 饲料</u> (791)

[Men's bodies start to <u>go downhill</u> at the age of 25. It cannot be denied that years are not only a <u>pig-killing knife</u> but also a <u>pig's feeding stuff.</u>]

Example 7.23 compares men's lower social status to becoming a 'pig', and the passing of time is referred to as the process of 'feeding pigs'. The funny metaphors describe the common weight gain along with ageing (there is a popular view that metabolism slows after age 25, and it is easier for people to gain weight after 25). According to the extract, men 'go downhill' with their large body sizes. Please note that instead of stressing the difficult path of 'going uphill' for English speakers, 'going uphill' in Chinese takes a positive meaning, metaphorically referring to one gaining higher social positions and more social resources. Accordingly, 'go downhill' in Chinese refers to the loss of social resources and competitiveness. Given the age-related process in which people develop obesity, Example 7.23 seems to be hostile to ageing and the declining physical health

brought by ageing, delivering an anti-ageing discourse where age has been deemed a discriminant in individual upward social mobility.

Further, one blogger describes the feeling of losing weight as 'uplifting a new level' in one's life:

Example 7.24

减肥 成功 的 体验 就 是 感觉 人生 又 <u>上 了 一个 档次</u> ！(717)

[The experience of losing weight successfully is to feel that life <u>has been uplifted to a new level</u>!]

In Example 7.24, losing weight is depicted as especially rewarding for its function in 'uplift one's life' or having a better life standard. Losing weight is attached to the hope for a 'higher' life. The hope is also shown in the following extract, where losing weight is assigned the function of 'surpassing' the ordinary self:

Example 7.25

减肥 # 人 之所以 平凡 ， 在于 无法 <u>超越</u> 自己 。 (437)

[# Weight Loss # People are ordinary because they cannot <u>surpass</u> themselves.]

In Example 7.25, being overweight is equalled with being ordinary. The extract reflects an earnest wish for shaking off the ordinariness, which can be related to the ideology of elitism, or 'a person's orientation or making a claim to exclusivity, superiority, and/or distinctiveness on the grounds of status, knowledge, […], or any other quality warranting the speaker/author to take a higher moral, aesthetic, intellectual, material, or any other form of standing in relation to another subject (individual or group)' (Jaworski & Thurlow, 2009: 196). The pursuit of being elite or extraordinary reflects the quest for exceptionalism, or an 'optimal human being' (Lupton, 2016). This proves a highly aspirational culture in Chinese society where individuals are targeting to be better versions of themselves.

However, as observed from the above examples, the case that people's upward mobility is reduced to a single factor – their bodily weight will lead to feelings of shame (of being ordinary), anxiety (of not surpassing oneself) and inadequacy (of not getting better selves). In this sense, the vertical view of life can disempower people with obesity.

To sum up, in the blogs, a heavier body has been deemed a symbol of descent, an obstacle to one's aspiration and mobility. Losing weight is related to the 'upward' elevation, which, however, is challenging, especially due to the 'bounce back', which I will explain in the coming section.

7.5.2 WEIGHT BOUNCES BACK ALONG THE WAY

Many bloggers call their weight 'bounce back' to describe their 'route' in losing weight. 'Bounce-back' is a vivid metaphor to describe the hard-to-control fluctuating weight, short-lived weight loss and fast weight regain, which resembles the movement of a spring. It describes the phenomenon that one, say, successfully losing weight one day ends in getting back the weight (or even more weight) the other day, as shown in the following extract:

Example 7.26

结果 超 反弹 ， 现在 喝 凉水 都 会长 肉 ， 郁闷 呀 。 (149)

[The result is that the weight bounces back a lot, and now drinking cold water will make (my) flesh grow. (I am) so depressed.]

Example 7.26 describes the frustrating experience of weight regains, e.g., gaining weight even for drinking water. The emotional feelings of frustration convey a sense of helplessness, but it allows the individuals to express a key aspect of his experience of losing weight nevertheless, which is also seen in the following extract:

Example 7.27

与 肥胖 作 斗争 是 最 浪费 时间 及 精力 的 ， 节食 肯定 没用 ， 一 旦 停止 节食 ， 体重 立刻 反弹 回来 (633)

[Fighting obesity is the biggest waste of time and energy. Dieting is definitely useless. Once you stop dieting, the weight will bounce back immediately.]

Example 7.27 combines a War metaphor to suggest the discouraging process of dieting. The extract implies the difficulties in finding the right route for losing weight. Some blogger even calls losing weight a continual or even 'forever going-on' journey, for which there seems to be no ending point:

Example 7.28

我 觉得 减肥 没有 成功 可言 就是 要 一直 减下 去 不然 就 会 <u>反弹</u> 胖 。 减肥 永远 是 <u>进行 时</u>(748)

[I don't think there is anything called 'successful weight loss'. [You] have to keep losing weight. Otherwise, your weight will <u>bounce back</u>. Losing weight is forever <u>on the way</u>.]

If we think about the miss of 'destination' in the journey of losing weight, the Journey metaphor seems to have disempowering effects. Due to the bounce-back, individuals can experience negative emotions such as dejection and lack of encouragement. What makes the bounce-back more intolerable is that it puts one's relationship insecure, as seen in the following extract:

Example 7.29

千万 不要 <u>反弹</u> 老天爷 ， 我 要 拴 住 男朋友 (854)

[Don't <u>bounce back</u>. My god, I need to hitch my boyfriend.]

In Example 7.29, the blogger prays the weight does not bounce back in order to 'hitch' the boyfriend. This suggests that one (here more likely to be a woman) can only keep her love by keeping her weight, or a stable weight means a stable relationship. In this way, obesity is not only about one's physical body. It stretches to one's marriage prospects. As such, individuals are disempowered as their romantic experience is bound by how thin they are and how they are likely to keep their partners. The seemingly uncontrollable weight and the forever-going-on journey in losing weight, as seen in Example 7.28, imply a constant worry of losing the boyfriend once the bodily weight is out of control.

The romantic relationship discourse can be seen in the Marriage metaphors, e.g., ＃减肥成功是怎样的一种体验#是可以得到爱情的体验！！ [# How does it feel to lose weight successfully#(it is) the experience of being able to get a romantic relationship!!], which relates the obesity issue to the issue of the qualification of getting a romantic relationship. Obesity is represented as an obstacle to one's romantic relationship. The threat to the relationship posed by the bounce-back is also seen in the following example:

Example 7.30

世界 上 最 <u>反复</u> 的 事 ， 是 爱情 还 是 ＃ 减肥 ＃ ？ (25)

[Is the most <u>repeated thing</u> in the world love or # weight loss # ?]

Example 7.30 creatively compares the frequency of romantic love with that of losing weight. The example implies that one has to undergo various break-ups, as the journey to true love is never smooth, as put by Shakespeare. A similar situation is witnessed in losing weight in that one needs to repeat losing weight many times due to the bouncing back. Cumulatively, the bouncing-back scenario disempowers individuals to lose weight, especially since the journey is often lonely without many companions, which I will explain in the next section.

7.5.3 LOSING WEIGHT IS AN INDIVIDUAL JOURNEY

Finally, different from the editorials which depict a collective journey, in the blogs, the route of losing weight is depicted as an individual journey without many companions along the way, as shown in the following extracts:

Example 7.31

只要 做到 睡 前 三 小时 不 吃 任何 东西 就 向 ＃ 减肥 ＃ <u>迈出 了 一 大步</u> (31)

[As long as (you) don't eat anything three hours before bedtime, (you) will take a big step towards #weight loss#]

Example 7.32

＃ 减肥 ＃ …自己 选择 的 <u>路 跪着 也 要 把 它 走 完</u> 。(422)

[#Losing weight…(since you) have chosen <u>the road</u>, you have to walk it <u>even though all on your knees</u>]

The above extracts show the difficulties in losing weight, which calls for persistence and a strong heart from the side of the travellers, e.g., moving in the way even with one's knees. Example 7.31 refers to curbing appetite as a 'big step', suggesting the difficulty in self-controlling. Example 7.32 depicts a self-responsibility discourse that one needs to take up the results of his own choices, no matter how difficult. It suggests that obesity depends on personal choice, and thus it is one's responsibility.

Such an individual journey leads to the destination of 'beauty', which allures and motivates individuals to keep 'going':

Example 7.33

减肥 就 像 一 场 旅行 千万 不要 中途 下车 不然 你 根本 不 知道 终 点 的 你 有 多 美 (858)

[Losing weight is <u>like a journey</u>. Don't <u>get off</u> the bus halfway, or you won't know how beautiful you are at the <u>destination.</u>]

In Example 7.33, a bus-journey scenario is depicted, where the individuals are encouraged to stay on the 'bus' (i.e., keep losing weight) to witness their beauty at the end of their journey. Given the frequent lack of motivation in the losing-weight experience, the bus scenario has positive implications in encouraging one to hold hope and have sufficient motivation. A special focus on losing weight is on improving one's physical appearance. In this way, becoming beautiful is the main reward mechanism for motivating individuals to lose weight. The importance of physical attractiveness through losing weight will be discussed in more detail in Chapter 8 on the War metaphor and Chapter 9 on the Money metaphor.

Further, the theme of sustainable moving and not giving up also emerges in other blogs:

Example 7.34

体重 回 到 三 年 前 。 很 庆幸 中途 没有 放弃 。 告诉 自己 还 要 继续 坚持 努力 哦 (877)

[The weight is <u>back</u> to what it was three years ago. I'm glad I didn't give up <u>halfway</u>. (I) Tell myself to keep working hard.]

Example 7.35

这 几 天 跑步 越来越 累 了 。 果然 运动 要 循循 渐进 呀 # 减肥 # (202)

[Running these days is getting more and more tiring. Sure enough, exercise should be done in a <u>step-by-step way</u> # losing weight #]

Example 7.36

\# 减肥 \# <u>一 步 一 步</u> 努力 ， 一点一点 <u>奋斗</u> ， 我 相信 ， 我 确 定 。 加油 。(203)

[\# Weight Loss \# Work hard <u>step by step</u> and <u>fight bit by bit</u>. I believe. I am sure. Come on.]

In Example 7.34, the blogger expresses a sense of 'self-recovery' achieved by the weight loss (as if the blogger recovered himself three years ago). A nostalgic discourse can be sensed here to express the blogger's positive experience in losing weight. Example 7.35 stresses the step-by-step manner of losing weight. In Example 7.36, the journey of step-by-step move-forward is described as fighting. A discourse of self-encouragement is seen in the blogs, implying the challenges in losing weight where one sometimes can move very slowly and thus calls for sustainable progress. The metaphors express a desire and a persistent effort to lose weight, presenting the individuals as determined and positive.

Though generally, the blogs are different from editorials in their styles, very occasionally, there are mix-genre cases where the blogs present the style of editorials, as shown in the following example:

Example 7.37

以 瘦 为 核心 ， 以 健康 为 原则 ， 以 饿 为 重点 ， 以 废 零食 、 废 主食 为 基本 要求 ， 以 只 吃 蔬 果 、 低 热量 食品 为 着力 点 ， <u>深入</u> 进行 我 的 <u>减肥 道路 路线</u> ， <u>引导</u> 我们 树立 最终 理 想 ， 树立 属于 我们 的 旗帜 ！ \# 减肥 \#（86）

[With thinness as the core, health as the principle, hunger as the focus, discarding snacks and staple food as the basic requirements and only eating fruits and vegetables and low-calorie food as the focus, I will carry out my <u>weight loss road route in-depth</u>, and <u>guide</u> us to establish the ultimate ideal. Set up our flag! \# lose weight \#]

Example 7.37 is challenging for readers who are unfamiliar with Chinese political discourse. The extract is an adaptation of policy documents in the Chinese political discourse. It uses the style of Chinese bureaucratic jargon (e.g., *set up the flag*), which is

usually for talking about serious political matters. The blog delivers humorous effects by applying the official style to the topic of losing weight.

7.6 Journey Scenarios in the *Daily* and *Weibo*

As illustrated above, different systematic journey metaphors in the editorials and blogs perform different functions in representing obesity. Cumulatively, they contribute to different Journey scenarios. Journey metaphors in editorials and blogs form a manifold of journey scenarios. Based on the previous analysis of the systematic journey metaphors, two factors are especially relevant for the journey scenarios in my corpus: 1) What kind of metaphorical journeys are involved; 2) What kind of relationships among the 'travellers' are presented in the journeys?

For the first factor, different journeys are evoked in the editorials and blogs: a national catching-up scenario and a vertical journey of individual life trajectories. On the one hand, the national catch-up scenario is a key theme in China's official narrative. As early as in the era of Mao Zedong, the founder of the People's Republic of China, the slogan of 赶英超美 [catching up with Britain and passing the United States] was formally proposed in the 1957 Moscow Conference, given China's international political environment in that time (see Schoenhals, 1986). Mao set China's tone on the modernisation path, featured with a national race between China and the developed countries. The backwardness embedded in obesity is seen even more relevant when considering China's 'century of humiliation' (Metcalf, 2020), especially when it is related to the humiliating title of 'Sickman of east Asia' and the slogan of 落后就要挨打 [The Backward Will Be Beaten], the biggest lesson China has learned in its semi-colonial modern history. This explains why obesity is despised and deemed problematic in the editorials through a national view.

On the other hand, the national catching-up scenario is mapped to the individual level, where the public also tries to climb up in their social mobility. People believe their controlled bodily weight can give them the hope of 'getting higher' in their life trajectories. This explains why obesity is deemed a descent in the blogs. This is understandable when we consider the available sources for one to 'move upwards'. When everything in life seems to be predetermined, e.g., the social-political status one

is born with, over which one has little control, the body becomes the rare site where people can control (or at the least the opportunity to control).

Second, in terms of the co-travellers relations and interactions, we can see different companions in the journeys. There is a nationalist discourse in the editorials, seen in the group journey carrying a guiding role of government. The guiding position of the government in the Chinese context is also seen in previous studies. For example, Sun & Chen (2018) explore journey metaphors used by Chinese university presidents. Their study shows that the journey metaphors are dominantly used to refer to the Chinese Communist Party as the guide in the national journey. While in the blogs, unlike the original life trajectory that a 'trajectory of development from the past to the anticipated future' (Block, 2020: 13) in a historical view, the trajectory in my data takes more of a vertical sense where individuals are climbing up in their class mobility. Instead of interactions between the travellers as commonly guided by the government as shown in the editorials, it is the individual solo journey, or how they compare with their previous selves or expect on their future socially 'higher' and better selves, that is salient in the blogs. Further, insetad of cooperation, competition among the co-travellers (e.g., the elitism discourse) can be sensed in the blogs, which will be more salient in the War metaphors in Chapter 8.

When seen jointly, we can see the two scenarios are indeed coherent and consistent. Both the editorials and blogs heavily rely on a racing discourse to which obesity is attached, even though the racing competition is on different 'tracks': national-level races in the editorials and individual-level 'climbing-up' in the blogs. The intensified 'racing' discourse can be viewed as the outcome of China's modernisation drive where the nation and its population are put into a 'race track'. Put another way, when the country focuses on passing other countries, such a competitive view is mapped into the public and brings up a racing culture in the society.

7.7 Summary

This chapter has given the first detailed explanation of a single major metaphor—The journey metaphor. I start by presenting overall occurrences of Journey metaphors and frequencies of different mini-journeys in my corpus. I show that editorials and blogs use Journey metaphors with similar frequencies. I also show how the editorials and blogs

adopt different mini-groupings related to obesity. For example, both the editorials and blogs frequently use "positions". My subsequent proposal and analysis of the systematic journey metaphor highlighted different representations of obesity in different media.

In the editorials, a national journey within a health agenda comes salient. By comparison, obesity has been represented as an obstacle to one's upward social mobility in the blogs. In detail, the journey framing of obesity in the editorials fits the familiar experiences and patterns rooted in China's historical path and development route. By comparison, more personalised language (e.g., the use of the language of emotional exposure) to talk about personal issues, e.g., marriage and personal transformation, are witnessed in the blogs. Throughout my analysis, I have considered how the Journey metaphors have shaped the official concepts of obesity and individual experience of losing weight. I have shown that Journey metaphors, in some cases, can encourage persistence, giving individuals the agency to encourage themselves to carry on, while the bounce-back scenario could breed frustration given the hard-to-be-controlled weight. These observations suggest that while the Journey metaphor has been deemed conventional and usually a preferred metaphor in health communication, the reality of how the metaphor is used in the Chinese context shows it can be used in innovative and more complicated ways. We can see how the Journeys in different media are influenced by the ideologies in the society, especially the nationalistic discourse in the editorials and the personal social mobility discourse in the blogs.

Of course, the single Journey metaphors cannot provide a comprehensive account of the representation of obesity in my corpus. As I have mentioned some concepts related to War (e.g., the competition discourse as shown in the blogs) and the co-use of the Journey metaphor and War metaphor in the corpus, I now explore War metaphors in Chapter 8.

Chapter 8: War Metaphors

8.1 Introduction

In the previous chapter on Journey metaphors, I have shown Journey metaphors and War metaphors are sometimes used together in my corpus. As I have discussed in Chapter 4, War metaphors are the major alternative to Journey metaphors in health communication. In this chapter, I focus on War metaphors to explore how they represent obesity in the editorials and blogs.

In this project, I take a broad approach and regard War metaphors as any metaphorical expression whose literal meanings suggest scenarios in which two opposite sides are in a state of armed conflict, involving violence between them and leading to physical or mental harm, e.g., wound, suffering, pain, sacrifice, or death. In this project, war metaphors can thus be deemed as the umbrella term of other related terms, e.g., Battle, Violence, Fight and Conflict metaphors used in other studies (e.g., Hauser & Schwarz, 2020 use Battle metaphor to refer to cancer treatment and prevention).

War metaphors are often used hand in hand with and compared with Journey metaphors. Though not related to obesity, the following words from Guy Winch in a 2017 TED talk on how to fix a broken heart caused by a breakup is an interesting comparison between the two metaphors (bold words for emphasis)[18]:

> *Getting over heartbreak is not a **journey**. It is a **fight**, and your reason is your **strongest weapon**. There is no breakup explanation that's going to feel satisfying. No rationale can take away the **pain** you feel […] put the question to **rest**, because you need that closure to **resist** the addiction.*

In the above extracts, Guy prefers calling 'getting over heartbreak' a fight rather than a journey. The war-related linguistic expressions like *fight*, *weapon*, *pain*, *rest*, and *resist* imply key features of wars, e.g., two opposite forces, using certain weapons and targeting at a quick result, e.g., win or lose. In contrast with the normally deemed disempowering effects of War metaphors and empowering effects of Journey metaphors, Guy's words uphold an opposite picture: Journey metaphors suggest passively waiting for the changes along with time, which can hold one back with the 'addiction' to figure

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[18] *Guy Winch, 2017*. Retrived June, 2022, from
https://www.ted.com/talks/guy_winch_how_to_fix_a_broken_heart?language=en.

out the reasons of the breakup; while War metaphors are more motivating and call for fighting spirit and prompt actions in a more tough and rational way. Though heartbreak is certainly different from obesity (nevertheless, there could be similarities in terms of the emotional hit individuals could experience, e.g., low self-esteem or even depression), the war solution to heartbreak makes us reflect on the often taken-for-granted negative effects of War metaphors.

As I have discussed in Chapter 4, existing studies generally argue that Journey metaphors are more suitable than War metaphors in health communication, especially in the case of cancer (e.g., Grant & Hundley, 2008). The major criticism towards War metaphors is that they may stifle the patients' agency as they are seen as 'losers' or 'defeated' if they do not recover or get better from the illness. There is, however, little systematic evidence to date of how often and in what ways War metaphors are used around obesity, a context very different from cancer, especially in terms of aetiology and treatment. For example, while the cancer cell is 'invading' the body, in the case of obesity, more efforts are called in self-constraint in changing one's lifestyle. This raises a need for us to check whether any evidence can be found in my data to show that War metaphors are neither useful nor appropriate for describing and discussing obesity.

Also significant here is the Chinese context, which adds more complexity to the picture. Concomitant with China's long-time involvement in wars in its recent history, e.g., the anti-Japanese war (1937–1945) and civil war (1946–1949), War metaphors have figured prominently and associated different meanings in public communication in China. The propensity to present War metaphors in a gloried way with heroic narratives is well observed in Chinese discourse, e.g., 英勇战士 [brave warriors], 艰苦拼搏 [hard fighting], 顽强不屈 [indomitable and never yield]. For example, Sing Bik Ngai, Yao, & Gill Singh (2022) find the *People's Daily* frequently uses 'fight bravely' and 'anti-pandemic battle' in a heroic way in its reports on Covid-19. Further, national agendas are often expressed in war-related expressions, especially the expression of 攻坚战 ['tackling the fore', or tough battles, which are usually associated with an intense short-term burst of energy and aggressive activities, and which normally predict good results of winning the war], e.g., 脱贫攻坚战[tough battles against poverty], 长江保护修复攻坚战 [tough battles for the protection and restoration of the Yangtze River], etc. The use of "battle" in Chinese takes more positive implications, hence is different from its use in

English. For example, Semino et al. (2018) find that the "battle" towards cancer usually anticipates a negative outcome and disempowerment of patients with cancer. As such, War metaphors have acquired different connotations and ideological attachments in the Chinese context, which are expected to be observed in War metaphors around the obesity issue in my corpus.

Given the special health issue obesity is associated with, as well as the special ideological attachments of War metaphors in the Chinese context, it is hypothesised that War metaphors in the Chinese context may represent obesity in a different way from what they have done in the Western context. To check this hypothesis, similar to what I have done in the previous chapter, I first present the frequencies of different War metaphors or mini-wars in my corpus (section 8.2). Later, in section 8.3, I propose the systematic war metaphors falling into the dominant War groupings. Based on that, sections 8.4 and 8.5 discuss the systematic war metaphors in the editorials and the blogs. Later, section 8.6 compares and discusses different war scenarios evoked in the data, drawing on greater societal discourse in China. Section 8.7 summarises and reflects the chapter.

8.2 Frequencies of Different War Metaphors

In total, I have identified 111 occurrences and 100 occurrences of War metaphors in the editorials and blogs, which respectively account for around 13.1% and 14.5% of all obesity-related metaphors therein. The normalised frequencies for the War metaphors are around 1.13 and 1.62 per 1,000 characters in the editorials and blogs.

The higher frequency of War metaphors in the blogs is not surprising, which can be potentially explained by the genre, especially the emotional disclosure differences between the blogs and the editorials. In the blogs, individuals talk about their own bodies, and thus they are more likely to turn to emotion-loaded metaphors like War metaphors to describe their first-hand experience of obesity, e.g., motivating themselves in the fighting, giving vent to negative emotions around the difficulties in losing weight.

To better check the different uses of War metaphors in the corpus, like what I did for the Journey metaphors, I look closer at the different and specific War metaphors or mini-wars in my corpus. Based on my manual coding, I get the following eight war groupings in my corpus (see table 8.1).

Table 8.1 Different War Groupings in the Corpus

Groupings of wars	Connotation	Selected Examples
Enemy	Describing the antagonistic parties or aggressors in the war	敌人 [enemy]], 天敌 [natural enemy]
Win/lose	Describing the result of the war	战胜[defeat], 投降[surrender], 和解[compromise]
Danger	Describing the potential harm or risk to someone in the war	警惕[be vigilant (against)], 危险信号[dangerous signal]
Weapon	Describing the tools used in the war	武器 [weapon], 神器 [magical weapon]
Battle	Describing the hard struggle or fighting in the war	斗争[struggle], 大作战[big battle]
Fighting competence	Describing the ability or competence in fighting	不堪一击 [cannot withstand a single blow], 溃不成军 [troops which are utterly routed]
War strategy	Describing the strategies or plans for winning the war	逆袭 [counter-attack], 长久之计 [long-term plans]
Warrior	Describing the fighters or soldiers in the war	战士 [soldier], 战友 [comrade-in-arms]

As shown in Table 8.1, my corpus has diverse war groupings. A general gaze of the groupings can see that they cover different stages of a war, e.g., before the war ("danger"), during the war ("enemy", "weapon", "battle", "fighting competence", "war strategies", and "warriors") and after the war ("win/lose"). A closer look reveals that though "weapon" has been noted, there seems to be no detailed information on the weapons (e.g., guns, swords) used. It is also noticeable that among the groupings, there is no "warzone", or "battleground", suggesting the site where the 'war' takes place is not obvious in my data. However, as an illness is often concerned with the conquering and occupying external viruses on the internal bodies, the lack of a "warzone" seems questionable and will be checked later.

Based on the mini-wars, I move on to get the war groupings with varying frequencies in the editorials and blogs. Again, the frequencies are normalised per 1,000 Chinese characters (see figure 8.1).
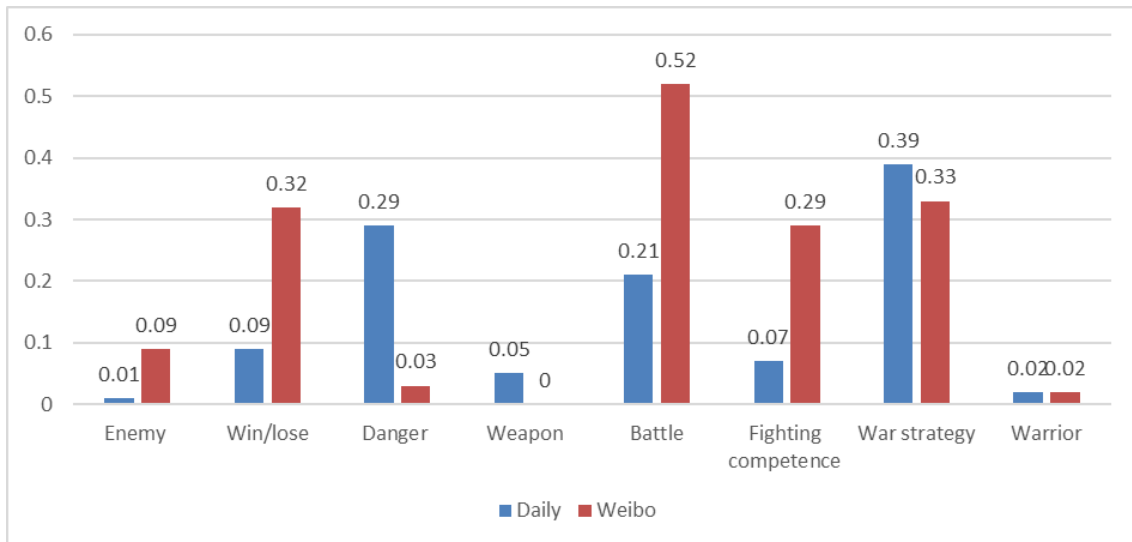
Figure 8.1 Frequencies per 1,000 Characters of the Different War Groupings in the Corpus

As indicated in figure 8.1, there are notable differences in the use of War metaphors in the editorials and blogs. The blogs more frequently turn to "enemy" and "win/lose" than the editorials (0.09 vs. 0.01 and 0.32 vs. 0.09, respectively), which might suggest that the bloggers see clearer their "enemies" in the war and care more about whether themselves win the war or not. However, the editorials much more frequently use "danger" than blogs (0.29 vs. 0.03), implying the editorials deliver a more acute sense of insecurity or risk caused by obesity. "Weapon" receives little attention that only the editorials very infrequently use it (0.05%), and there is no "weapon" found in the blogs, which is interesting yet not surprising. When compared with other health issues like cancer or dementia, obesity normally does not rely on sophisticated medical technologies or pharmaceutical drugs, which are usually deemed weapons in the treatment. "War strategy" are frequent in both the editorials and blogs (0.39 vs. 0.33). The blogs' higher frequency of "battle" is marked (0.52 vs. 0.21), suggesting more battles individuals have encountered relating to obesity. "Fighting competence" is also more frequently used in the blogs but much less in the editorials (0.07 vs. 0.29). Surprisingly, both the editorials and the blogs seldom refer to "warrior" (0.02). The low frequency of "warrior" seems to suggest that the editorials and blogs pay little attention to the soldiers in the war. However, as will be shown in my subsequent analysis, some groupings (e.g., "warrior") are not frequently mentioned does not mean they are not referred to, but that they are embedded in the context to the extent of being taken for granted.

To gain a deeper understanding of the War metaphors in my data and testify above hypothesis, I turn to systematic war metaphors in my corpus in the next section.

8.3 Systematic War Metaphors in the Corpus: An Overview

Based on the frequencies of different war groupings, the proposal of systematic war metaphors falls into the most frequent mini-wars. In this way, in the editorials, they fall into "war strategy", "danger," and "battle"; for the blogs, the metaphors fall into "battle", "war strategies" and "win/lose". As I have explained the methods of how I propose systematic metaphors in Chapter 7, in this chapter, I do not repeat the methodologies here. In a word, the proposal of systematic metaphors is based on a qualitative reading of the metaphorical expressions in the data and interpreting the expressions by drawing on wider social-cultural discourses. In this line, I propose the following systematic war metaphors in my corpus (seen in Table 8.2).

Table 8.2 Systematic War Metaphors in the Corpus

CODCM-Daily
War strategy: *GOVERNMENT IS THE MILITARY COMMANDER TO IMPROVE NATIONAL HEALTH*
Danger: *OBESITY BRINGS DANGER TO THE NATION*
Battle: *LOSING WEIGHT IS A BATTLE ACROSS BORDERS*
CODCM-Weibo
Battle: *LOSING WEIGHT IS A BATTLE AGAINST ONESELF*
War strategy: *TOUGH-LOVE TOWARDS ONESELF IS NECESSARY FOR LOSING WEIGHT*
Win/lose: *INDIVIDUALS WITH OBESITY ARE LOSERS*

As presented in Table 8.2, different mini-wars stressing different aspects of wars related to obesity are represented in my corpus. In the coming sections, I begin with the systematic war metaphors in editorials.

8.4 Systematic War Metaphors in CODCM-Daily

In this section, I present the systematic war metaphors in the editorials. I show how the War metaphors depict a national war against obesity and frame the government as the military leader. The national wars highlight the danger brought by obesity and call for hard fighting among the whole society. In this way, the use of War metaphors for

representing obesity is different from that found in the Western media, especially in their highlighted nationhood in the editorials. Nationhood is primarily seen in the commanding role of the government, which I discuss below.

8.4.1 *GOVERNMENT IS THE MILITARY COMMANDER*

Similar to being attributed with the guiding role within Journey metaphors, the editorials use War metaphors to present the government as leading or commanding the public as a military commander. The commanding role has multifaceted responsibilities, which are primarily seen in the government's determination and competence in mobilising national efforts in various campaigns for losing weight:

> *Example 8.1*
>
> 民众 也 需要 一 次 " 全民 总动员 " ， 了解 如何 正确 选择 食 品 、 摄取 营养 、 保障 健康 。(20131113)
>
> [The public also needs a "national mobilisation" to learn how to choose the right food, ingest nutrition and safeguard (their) health.]

In Example 8.1, a mobilisation around 'choosing food' and 'ingesting nutrition' is called among the public. The mobilisation projects a war scenario that transforms the readers into soldiers and frames their food-related knowledge as 'safeguarding' their health. The mobilisation can galvanise people to take more initiative in caring for their own bodies. While the example does not explicitly refer to the government as the mobiliser, the official underpinning of the editorials can help us to see that such mobilising work is highly possible to be done by the government (which will be testified in coming examples).

Also, in Example 8.1, the focus on maintaining health through food and nutrition suggests a trend of medicalised and neoliberal discourses around obesity in the editorials. Neoliberal ideologies normally empower the public to respect their own agency towards their own lifestyles, e.g., how to choose food. Yet, in this example, the mobilisation seems to imply that the general public does not know how to 'collect food', nor 'ingest nutrition', which could be interpreted as disempowering the individuals in the other way. The subtle co-existence of the empowering and disempowering effects in the editorials has been observed in the previous chapter. It reveals different

performances and effects of neoliberal ideologies in the Chinese media, which will be discussed in detail in Chapter 9.

Apart from functioning as the mobiliser, another way where the government sets up its 'commander' role is seen in how it sets up the 'strategic goals' and 'war agendas':

Example 8.2
在 国务院办公厅 近日 印发 的 《 体育 强 国 建设 纲要 》 中 ， 更是 把 " 青少年 体育 服务 体系 更加 健全 ， 身体 素养 显著 提升 ， 健 康 状况 明显 改善 " 写入 战略 目标 (20190918)

[In the "Outline for <u>Building</u> a Powerful Sports Country" issued by the General Office of the State Council recently, "making the sports service system more complete to improve the physical literacy and health of teenagers" are listed as <u>strategic goals</u>.]

Example 8.3
六一 儿童节 之际 ， 新闻 关注 " 中国 城乡 肥胖 儿童 均 增多 " 这 一 关乎 " 国家 战略 " 的 问题 (20120601)

[On Children's Day, June 1st, the news focuses on "the increase of obese children in both urban and rural areas of China", an issue which is related to "<u>national war strategies</u>".]

Example 8.4
今后 十 年 到 二十 年 ， 是 改善 国民 营养 健康 的 关键 战略 时 期 。 (20130222)

[The next ten to twenty years will be a critical <u>war strategic</u> period for improving national nutrition and health.]

In the above extracts, improving national health (which includes the control of the obesity rate) is lifted to the level of 'national war strategies'. The use of 战略, *zhàn luè*, [war strategy] stresses the government as the general in the war, who sets war-time plans to achieve certain results (e.g., the improved nutrition of the public within a certain period) and sets milestones for the war.

Yet, it seems that what these strategies are for is not explained in the editorials. In other words, the editorials call for improving national health as war itself instead of mentioning higher goals behind the strategies. This echoes my previous observations that social campaigns in China are often presented in the 'war' framework, which has become a routine media practice in China, especially in the official media.

Further, the 'commander' role is seen in the government's practice of assigning or attributing roles to other stakeholders in the war and enrol them in collective preventive measures in fighting against obesity:

Example 8.5
担任 社会 <u>主力军</u> 角色 的 成年人 超重 和 肥胖 均 呈 回升 趋势 (20111215)
[Overweight and obesity are on the rise among adults, who are the <u>major army force</u> in society.]

Example 8.6
我们 能 把 健康 教育 的 <u>战线</u> 提前 到 孩子 (20121115)
[We can advance the <u>front line</u> of health education to children.]

In Examples 8.5 and 8.6, the editorials position the general public as the troops. Different groups are assigned different roles, i.e., the adults have been attributed the role of the main force and the kids the pre-army, preparing for their future army roles through receiving health education. The positioning discourse reflects the government paternalism discourse in the editorials, which I also mentioned in Chapter 7 on Journey metaphors. Paternalism generally perceives the incompetence of individuals in favour of governmental policies, which aims to promote citizens' welfare in the end (Grand & New, 2015). It justifies the commanding role of the government given the yet-to-be-competent public.

Above all, through using War metaphors, especially through positioning the government as the military commander, the editorials convey the government's efforts and determination to solve the obesity problem, thus attributing competence to the government, creating its authority in the obesity issue and meanwhile informing the public of the danger of obesity. In the next section, I discuss the "danger" dimension of obesity.

8.4.2 *OBESITY BRINGS DANGER TO THE NATION*

Obesity has been closely related to risk discourse, which is observed in the British media (Brookes, 2021b). The same situation is witnessed in the editorials. A risk and insecurity discourse around obesity is constantly highlighted in the editorials. The weakening obese bodies of the young generations, in particular, are deemed as 敲响警钟 [ringing the alarm], which sends a note of caution to the public:

Example 8.7

今天 新闻 中 " 北京 超 半数 初中 男生 不 会 做 引 体 向上 " 向 国人 敲响 了 警钟 　(20131224)

[Today's news that "over half of the boys in junior high school in Beijing cannot do pull-ups" rings the alarm to the Chinese people.]

Example 8.8

悬殊 的 比分 ， 再次 敲响 警钟 ， 提示 每 一个 教育者 和 家长 重 审 自己 的 教育 理念 。（20111027)

[The big gap in the score rang the alarm again, prompting every educator and parent to re-examine their educational concepts.]

Example 8.9

北京 一 所 大学 学生 军训 ， 军训 前 几 天 不少 学生 晕倒 ， 军训 变成 " 警 " 训 (20130129)

[A university in Beijing had military training. Many students fainted in the beginning days of the training. The military training became a "warn" training.]

In Example 8.7, the editorial uses alarmist reporting, especially the '*ringing the alarm*', to deliver a warning discourse around obesity. The 'alarm' has encoded imaginary or potential dangers, telling the readers the worsening health status of Chinese boys could potentially put the country in danger. The extract also suggests that the public does not well notice such a danger, e.g., teachers and parents are not aware of the seriousness of the issues, so they are urged to check their way of education.

In Example 8.8, the score refers to a football match between pupils from China and Russia, where the latter won the match with a large advantage. The football dream in China (Sullivan, Chadwick, & Gow, 2019) delivers not only a match but also relates to building the national strength of China. The editorial envisions a worrying prospect for China, given the status quo of the worsening physical health of kids and college students, as shown in Example 8.9.

In this way, the editorials create emotional resonance with the readers and invoke a sense of urgency in saving the kids and securing the country. Different preventive measures are called to take, especially in the education context:

Example 8.10
今年 下半年 至 明年 ， 北京市 将 在 各区 县 启动 中小学校 肥胖 <u>警示</u> 与 分级 管理 试点 （20160712）

[From the second half of this year to next year, Beijing will launch a pilot program of obesity <u>warning</u> and graded management in primary and secondary schools in various districts and counties.]

Example 8.11
各区 疾 控 中心 将 对 肥胖 率 增长 迅速 的 学校 开展 分级 <u>警示</u> 和 重点 监督 管理 ， 指导 学校 将 肥胖 <u>防 控</u> 工作 落实 到 班级 ， 责 任 细化 到 每 位 教师 。 （20160712）

[The Disease Control Centre in each district will carry out graded <u>warnings</u> and key supervision and management for schools with rapidly increasing obesity rates, instruct schools to implement obesity <u>prevention and control</u> work in classes, and assign responsibilities to each teacher.]

The above examples show a 'warning' about obesity has been sent to governments and educators. Example 8.11 depicts a hierarchy of responsibilities toward obesity. Again, teachers, as well as parents, are particularly 'blamed' for childhood obesity:

Example 8.12
家庭 和 学校 缺乏 健康 教育 理念 ， 对 孩子 饮食 不 加 节制 和 规 范 ， 从而 为 一些 <u>富贵病</u> 袭扰 孩子 埋 下 <u>隐患</u> （20120223）

[Families and schools lack the awareness of health education, and do not control and regulate children's diet, thus <u>laying hidden dangers</u> for some rich diseases to <u>attack and harass</u> children.]

In Example 8.12, obesity is called 'rich disease', which refers to the disease more frequently seen among the rich. The editorial sends a critical tone towards the 'irresponsible' teachers and parents that they put the kids in danger and are 'attacked' by obesity. In this way, by stressing the shared danger, the War metaphor helps set up a collective agency of the public in fighting against obesity in China. Given the danger brought by obesity, losing weight is framed as a battle across borders, which I will explain in the next section.

8.4.3 LOSING WEIGHT IS A BATTLE ACROSS BORDERS

As aforementioned, obesity is deemed dangerous for many aspects, e.g., kids' health, the football match dream, and national strength. Echoing the multiple dangers, losing weight is framed as a battle across borders. By 'across borders', it means the fight against obesity does not only stay at the site of the body. At the same time, the battle also extends to other areas and thus makes the battle of losing weight simultaneously a battle in other areas, as shown in the following example:

Example 8.13

这种 状况 既 是 对 我国 国民 素质 和 健康 的 巨大 <u>威胁</u> ， 也 是 对 公费 医疗 体系 和 医疗 保险 事业 的 <u>严峻 挑战</u> (20111031)

[This situation (here refers to the higher obesity rate among the population) is not only a huge <u>threat</u> to our people's *sùzhì* (quality) and health but also <u>a serious challenge</u> to the public medical system and medical insurance.]

Example 8.13 highlights the threat of obesity in various fields (e.g., people's health and the medical system and insurance). In particular, the example mentions Chinese people's *sùzhì* [quality]. Though glossed as quality, *sùzhì* is a complex concept related to other concepts of *civilisation* and *progress*. It has developed a discourse on producing ideal citizenships in China (Jacka, 2009). Example 8.13 suggests that obesity has lowered the qualities of the people, which at first can be seen at the individual levels, but later could lead to unqualified citizenships in China. Improving *sùzhì* of the

population has become a major concern in contemporary China, which has been witnessed in various *sùzhì* discourses in China, e.g.,身心素质 [Physical and mental quality], 综合素质 [Comprehensive quality]. Again, *sùzhì* discourse can be linked to neoliberalism in the Chinese context (Kipnis, 2007), especially the neoliberal government beliefs played out in the Chinese context, which I will explain in detail in Chapter 9.

The editorial also relates losing weight as a fight against Covid-19, as shown in the following extracts:

Example 8.14

如果 新 冠 肺炎 <u>卷土重来</u> ， 中国 的 患者 中 大量 的 超重 者 和 肥 胖 者 将 更 多 地 成为 重症 者 和 不幸 死亡 。 同时 ， 中国 还 有 高血压 患者 超过 2亿 人 、 糖尿病 患者 9700万 ， 这些 群体 都 是 新 冠 肺炎 最 容易 <u>攻击</u> 的 对象 。 （20200430）

[If Covid-19 <u>sweeps back</u>, many overweight and obese patients in China will become seriously ill and tragically die. At the same time, there are more than 200 million people with hypertension and 97 million with diabetes in China. These groups are the most vulnerable <u>targets</u> of the new coronary pneumonia.]

Example 8.15

把 锻炼 补 回来 ， 把 萎缩 的 肌肉 充实 起来， 把 强健 的 体魄 找 回 来， 如此 才 能 <u>抵御</u> ，<u>抗御</u> 和 <u>击败</u> 可能 反复 发作 的 新冠肺炎 以及 其他 疾病。 （20200430）

[Make up for exercise, flesh out the atrophied muscles, get the strong bodies back, only in this way can we <u>defend</u>, <u>resist</u> and <u>defeat</u> the recurring COVID-19 and other diseases.]

Examples 8.14 and 8.15 relate the fighting against obesity to the fighting against Covid-19. In this way, the editorials show that losing weight is an effort to fight against Covid. This makes the fight against obesity more relevant in the epidemic background. Similar discourse is also seen in the British media, where it is called to 'lose weight and save the NHS' (Brookes, 2021b).

Again, childhood obesity calls for multiple parties to take part in the battle, which involves efforts from different stakeholders:

Example 8.16

这 正 如 世界 卫生 组织 总 干事 陈冯富珍 所 说 ： " 儿童 肥胖 是 整个 社会 的 过错 ， 而 不 是 孩子 们 的 过错 。 " 健康 不 是 卫 生 部门 的 " <u>独角戏</u> " ， 而是 跨 部门 的 " <u>联合 演出</u> " 。只 有 来 一 场 " 社会 <u>总动员</u> " ， 形成 政府 、 机构 、 个人 共同 发 力 的 治理 格局 ， 才 能 <u>赢得</u> 最终 <u>胜利</u> 。(20161124)

[This is just like what Margaret Chan, director-general of the World Health Organization, said: "Childhood obesity is the fault of the whole society, not the children." Health is not a "<u>solo show</u>" by the health sector but a "<u>joint performance</u>" across departments. Only when there is a "<u>social mobilisation</u>", which can form a joint force between government, institutions and individuals, can the final <u>victory</u> be <u>won.</u>]

In Example 8.16, a united battle scenario combining the forces of government, institutions, and individuals is built, suggesting that one party's effort is not enough to win the war. The War metaphor is co-used with an Entertainment metaphor (i.e., *solo show*, *joint performance*), which shows the collective problem of childhood obesity shared by the whole society and thus can only be won by joint efforts.

In sum, linking all the systematic war metaphors in the editorials are China's awareness of the latent danger brought by obesity and convincing the public to have confidence in winning war under the commander of the government, but meanwhile, remain cautious and alert of the danger of obesity and be cooperative and ready to take part in the hard fighting. In the editorials, obesity is not only about physical bodies. Wider ideological discourses surrounding the government's role in taking care of national health, the importance of one's body for national security, and the interaction among them are brought into play.

8.5 Systematic War Metaphors in CODCM-Weibo

In this section, I present the systematic war metaphors in the blogs. As I will show in this section, different from the editorials which focus on wars at a national level, what is

salient in the blogs are the wars at the individual level, particularly in terms of three factors, i.e., hard battles, war strategy and the loser identity of individuals with obesity. I start from the hard battles of losing weight.

8.5.1 *LOSING WEIGHT IS A BATTLE AGAINST ONESELF*

In the blogs, the "Battle" grouping is the most frequent. More specifically, this grouping frames the individual experience of losing weight as a battle against oneself. It is in line with previous studies that individuals with obesity are always put into the position of fighting against themselves (Grannell, le Roux, & McGillicuddy, 2021). The battle against obesity is inside oneself or against one's own body. War metaphors are often used to express the difficulty in making one's body comply with one's reason, as seen in the following extracts:

Example 8.17

86Day：自我 斗争 ！ # 跑步 是 一 件 很 热血 的 事 ## 跑 到 着迷 ## 减肥 # (360)

[86Day: <u>fighting against oneself</u>! # Running is very passionate ## Running till being obsessed ## Losing weight #.]

Example 8.18

我 全身 所有 的 细胞 都 在 抵抗 着 健身房 的 门 # 减肥 啊 减肥 # (308)

[All the cells in my body are <u>resisting</u> the door of the gym # lose weight ah lose weight #.]

Many examples in the blogs, such as Example 8.17 and Example 8.18 here, call physical exercise for losing weight, e.g., running and going to the gym, a battle against oneself. In Example 8.17, the blogger deems running as fighting against oneself, which one later can feel passionate about and further be obsessed with, but only if one can 'conquer' running first. This is even taken further in Example 8.18, in which a specific extended war scenario where one's cells 'resist' the gym door suggests the hard determination and self-discipline called for one to exercise in gyms. In the examples, the scenario of fighting against oneself is vivid, and the individuals are positioned in a

warrior role to fight against themselves. The War metaphors here can be associated with a sense of self-encouragement which motivates the individuals to take up their warrior roles or participate in exercises more actively.

Yet, in other cases, when the reality is that one does not take the warrior role and does not fight against themselves, he is cast as defeated, ugly, or even a 'traitor' of his youth, as shown in the following example:

Example 8.19

今天 不 减 明天 总 要 减 的 ， 晚 减 一 天 就 多 丑 一 天 ， 你 可 真 行 ， 宁愿 委屈 一 柜子 衣服 、 辜负 你 大 好 青春 也 不 愿意 委屈 你 的 嘴 。 (841)

[If you don't lose weight today, you will always need to lose weight tomorrow. You will be ugly one more day if you lose one day later. You are awesome. You would rather feel sorry for a cabinet of clothes and betray your wonderful youth than be sorry for your mouth.]

Example 8.19 reveals another picture that implies a fight between one's mouth, especially how one deals with the 'tensions' between different parties, e.g., clothing, youth and mouth. The ironic tone here is obvious as it blames individuals who give priority to the mouth (i.e., yielding to the appetite and indulging in eating high-calorie food) would end in feeling 'sorry' for their clothes (i.e., being too fat to fit into) and further betray their youth.

The use of 'betray' is interesting, which gives agency to youth and deems one is disloyal to the youth if one has a large body. An implied equation is set up between youth and thinness. In this way, the War metaphors lead to the blaming effects and reveal heightened anxiety about physical ageing in China. Obesity has been deemed as evidence of visible ageing, decaying, and out-of-control bodies. The anti-ageing discourse is also discussed previously in the Journey metaphors.

Further, the longing for maintaining socially acceptable and normal bodily weight triggers grand expectation of losing weight, which is called 'self-reliance' and 'self-empowerment', as shown in the following example:

Example 8.20

\# 减肥 \# 女人 一辈子 至少 要 有 一 次 自立 自强 的 减肥 大 作战 ，
同时 也 是 生活 方式 改造 大 作战 。(228)

[# Weight Loss # A woman, in her whole life, must have a battle for weight loss at least once for her self-reliance and self-empowerment, and it is also a <u>battle</u> in lifestyle transformation.]

In Example 8.20, losing weight has been positioned as a must-have for women. Though the War metaphor appears to encourage women to lose weight, it paradoxically amplifies the weight anxiety and indeed poses disempowering effects, suggesting that women with obesity are neither self-independent nor self-empowered. Such a case is even more acute when losing weight is related to women's 'dignity':

Example 8.21

\# 减肥 \#\# 产 后 瘦 身 \# 态度 决定 一切 ， 实力 <u>扞卫</u> 尊严 ！ 人 要
<u>经得起 诱惑 耐 得 住 寂寞</u> (405)

[# Weight Loss ## Postpartum Slimming # Attitude is everything. (I will try my best) to <u>defend</u> (my) dignity! People have to <u>resist temptation and loneliness.</u>]

Example 8.21 lifts whether a woman can lose weight after birth-giving up on the 'defence' of her dignity. The extract suggests that women with obesity do not have dignity. They fail to defend their dignity due to their weak will. Similar fighting for dignity is also witnessed among men:

Example 8.22

大多 女孩子 一辈子 都 在 跟 自己 的 体重 做 <u>斗争</u> 男孩子 也 为 了
自己 更 有 安全感 而 不断 努力 。 。 。 (710)

[Most girls <u>fight</u> with their weight all their lives, and boys also work hard to make themselves feel more secure. . .]

In Example 8.22, the blogs show how obesity or the concern of becoming obese affects one's emotions and perceptions of themselves. Obesity not only stays in one's body. It is a critical measurement of one's youth and dignity, related to other concepts, e.g., a sense of security, as shown in Example 8.22. In this way, we can see the blogs nourish

the value of self-help that one needs to secure oneself, and losing weight is a key component of the efforts.

To make a tentative conclusion, we can see losing weight is deemed as a fight against oneself in the blogs. In this sense, the self has become the enemy in the war. It perhaps explains that though 'Enemy' does not frequently appear in the groupings, it does not mean it is unimportant. On the contrary, it is self-evident and, to some extent, has been inserted in the texts. Since losing weight is a fight against oneself, in the blogs, being tough towards oneself is proposed as a useful fighting strategy, which I explain in the next section.

8.5.2 *TOUGH LOVE TOWARDS ONESELF IS NECESSARY FOR LOSING WEIGHT*

Usually referring to parenting (parents regulate their kids for the goodness of the kids, see Jensen, 2012), tough love towards oneself refers to concepts of self-discipline, self-regulation and self-training. The tough-love discourse has also been noted in the British media's coverage of obesity, especially in terms of good parenting. For example, parents are urged to should show 'tough love' to stop their children from eating sugar (Brookes and Baker, 2021). In the blogs, tough love highlights that one needs to be tough towards themselves to defeat obesity, as shown in the following example:

Example 8.23

对 自 己 越 <u>狠</u> ， 这 世界 就 会 对 你 越 宽容 ...# 减肥 # 真 的 要 一 次 到位 ， 那么 多 次 ， <u>屡 败 屡 战 屡 战 屡 败</u> ， 早晚 神经衰 弱 ！ <u>狠</u> 一 次 ， 以后 就 剩下 爱 自己 了 ！ (17)

[The more <u>ruthless</u> you are to yourself, the more tolerant the world will be to you... # Weight Loss # really has to be achieved at one time. (If) for many times with <u>repeated defeats</u>, sooner or later (I will have) neurasthenia! Be <u>ruthless</u> just once, then all that's left is to love myself!]

In Example 8.23, the blogger repeatedly calls for being 'ruthless' to himself to signal his determination to lose weight. The example depicts an interesting scenario that the premise for one to love themself is that, one needs to be tough to himself to lose weight at first. This is potentially disempowering in that it suggests that people with obesity do

not deserve to be nicely treated by themselves. The blogger seems to have experienced repeated defeats (see the frequent bounce-back of weights mentioned in Chapter 7) and has come to see being tough to oneself can bring a 'tolerant' world. This suggests that people face a 'cruel' world when they have obesity. In this way, tough love does not mean being tough for the sake of it, but the goal of self-caring and self-love and winning the 'love from the world' in the end. The blogger stresses the 'one-time' process of losing weight, suggesting he prefers to lose weight in a quick-fix way.

Differently, a slower calendar scenario that seems to consider the long-term process of losing weight is seen in another blog:

Example 8.24

瘦 身 就 像 是 <u>日历</u> 每 坚持 一 天 就 有 新 的 今天 撕 到 最后 页 时 就 是 你 身材 惊 艳 的 那 一 天 # 减肥 ## <u>减肥 大 作战</u> # (558)

[Losing weight is like a <u>calendar</u>. Every day you stick to it, there is a new one. Today, when you get to the last page, it will be the day when your body is surprisingly amazing. # weight loss ## <u>A Big Battle in Weight Loss</u> #.]

Example 8.24 stresses persistence in losing weight can bring one an 'amazing' body, which is supposedly attainable if one is tough enough towards himself through daily efforts. In this sense, the persistence discourse can motivate individuals to keep fighting. The use of 惊艳 [surprisingly amazing] suggests the beauty with surprise, empowering the bloggers and keeping them hoping for their yet-to-come beauties. In this way, losing weight and becoming beautiful have become routine expectations of everyday life. The extract again shows the importance of physical appearance in society, as discussed in previous examples.

However, different from the self-encouraging discourse in Example 8.24, a self-despise discourse could be more prominent in blogs. The following extract is an extreme example of self-reported low self-esteem:

Example 8.25

因为 胖 ， 烦恼 过 很多 很多 次 。 做 事情 也 没 有 信心 。 我 感 觉 它 已经 影响 我 的 生活 了 。 我 现在 似乎 变成 了 <u>人 不 人 鬼 不 鬼</u> 的 样子 。 算是 自己 <u>拯救</u> 自己 一 次 。 为了 <u>争 一口气</u> 。 我

不 信 我 就 这 副 摸 样 了 。 这次 一定 要 <u>拼</u> 了 。 <u>拼 上 性命</u> ，
也 要 瘦 下来 。 我 还 不 信 ， 我 难道 就 这 副 样子 了 ? (41)

[I have been annoyed by obesity many, many times. (I) do things without confidence. I feel it (obesity) has affected my life. I seem to have become a <u>man, yet not man; a ghost, yet not ghost</u>. It's like <u>saving myself</u> once. (I need) <u>to fight for a breath</u>. I don't believe that I just look like this. (I) must <u>fight</u> this time, even <u>fight with my life</u> to be thin. I don't believe I will just end up looking like this?]

Example 8.25 is an especially distressing scenario of how individuals suffer from the self-denial brought about by obesity. The extract typifies frankness as the blogger shares how obesity has tortured him. The example refers to the hard and frustrating emotional experience of being unacknowledged due to obesity. The blogger shows his intensive self-dissatisfaction and self-despise, especially seen in the phrase of 人不人，鬼不鬼 [man, yet not man; ghost, yet not ghost]. The phrase here can be generally understood as neither a man nor a ghost, suggesting that obesity could demolish the humanity of the individuals or that they are not deemed as qualified to be 'humane' if they are obese. In this sense, obesity has led to different versions of self (a human version, a non-human, or an in-between version, as shown in the example). The blogger suggests that obesity has deprived him of the 'breath', and he would rather fight his life to become thin. The extract shows losing weight can make one more 'alive', to have free 'breath', and end in a 'different appearance', which again shows the importance of the physical appearance the blogger attaches importance with.

A similar scenario of desperate fighting for one's life is also seen in the following example:

Example 8.26
我 要 不 瘦 下来 ， 我 都 想 去 <u>死</u> ， 自己 啊 对不起 自己 ， 瘦瘦瘦 ，
我 要 瘦 到 2 位数 ， <u>全副 武装</u> 跑步 去 ...... (103)

[If I cannot be thin, I would like to <u>die</u>. I'm sorry for myself. Thin, thin, thin. I want to lose weight to 2 digits (under 100 *jins,* or 50 kgs). I'm <u>fully armed</u> to run...]

It is interesting to observe that though death in China remains a highly sensitive topic, death is frequently used in talking about how individuals suffer from obesity. In

Example 8.26, the blogger mentions he would rather die than be fat. In this way, he tries to keep their fighting spirit in losing weight.

In particular, the fight against oneself aims at a 逆袭[counterattack], as seen in the following example:

Example 8.27

减肥 135 斤 到 98 斤 的 逆 袭 史 ！ 终于 熬 过 了 那段 糟糕 的 日 子 ， 一定 不要 辜负 自己 ， 因为 所有 的 不 开 心 都 是 自己 造成 的 (683)

[The counterattack history of losing weight from 135 to 98 *jins* (one *jin* is a half kilo, which is from 67.5 kilos to 49 kilos)! Finally (I) got through those bad days; don't let yourself down because all the unhappiness is caused by yourself.]

逆 袭 [counterattack] is a recently popular term in Chinese, which is originally introduced in Japanese, i.e., 勢いを転じて逆に相手を攻撃すること[to turn around and attack the opponent]. The phrase implies winning in an adversary environment and an unexpected winning (similar to the 'blackhorse' in English). Using the counterattack discourse, the bloggers seem to imply that initially they were in disadvantageous positions, yet they finally overcame and won. While there are no scientific studies on the phrase of 逆袭 up to date, the counterattack scenarios here appear to have positive and empowering effects on the individuals: they suggest one hopes for a better self, the determination to change oneself despite one's disadvantageous positions and also express a sense of self-agency.

Another notable point in Example 8.27 is that happiness is deemed a task one must work on through a 'counterattack'. The blogger seems to suggest that individuals are culpable for their own unhappiness or the unhappiness felt by individuals with obesity is self-inflicted. A hidden equation is also implied here that being overweight is being unhappy. Similarly, one can only know how 'excellent' they are only if they lose weight, as shown in the following example:

Example 8.28

减肥 成功 是 怎样 的 一 种 体验 # 大概 就 是 衣服 从 xxl 直接 到 x，女孩子 一定 要 努力 逼 自己 一 把 ， 不然 都 不 知道 自己 有 多 优秀 # <u>逆 袭</u> 减肥 # (818)

[# What kind of experience is losing weight successfully# It is perhaps the experience that the clothes sizes go directly from XXL to X. Girls must work hard to force themselves. Otherwise, they will never know how excellent they are # <u>Counterattack</u> Weight Loss #]

Example 8.28 focuses on girls' successful experience of losing weight. In detail, the change in one's cloth size implies the changes in body size, which also makes the tough love a source of pride, proving how 'excellent' girls are after losing weight. In this way, the change of cloth size is used to animate the fantasies of the future and to anchor the 'thin body' as a guarantee for a successful life evidenced in the 'excellent' body. A similar situation is also seen in the following example:

Example 8.29

终究 还 是 下定决心 ， 虽然 一直 犹豫 不定 ， 还 是 做 了 ， 你们 要 支持 我 哈 # 减肥 # ， 要 <u>逆 袭</u> 了 ， 哈哈哈 哈哈哈 哈哈哈 ！ (454)

[After all, I still made up my mind. Although I was hesitant, I still did it. You have to support me. # Weight Loss # (I am) going to <u>counterattack</u>, ha ha ha ha ha ha ha ha ha ha ha ha ha ha ha ha ha ha ha ha ha ha ha ha ha ha ha!]

In Example 8.29, the many uses of *ha* (the expression of laughing in Chinese) add humorous effects to the blog. The blogger aims to show his determination to lose weight and the hope he holds toward the 'counterattack'. The counter-attack is also listed as a result of self-transformation, which is seen in the following example:

Example 8.30

减肥 成功 是 怎样 的 一 种 体验 # 不 就 是 <u>逆 袭</u> 吗 ？ 人家 都 说 减肥 成功 等于 <u>成功 整容</u>

[# What kind of experience is it to lose weight successfully # Isn't it just a <u>counterattack</u>? People say that losing weight is equal to <u>successful plastic surgery.</u>]

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In example 8.30, the detailed result of the counterattack is seen in the change of one's physical appearance as if doing successful plastic surgery. Again, this shows the importance of appearance for individuals, and the major motivation for losing weight seems to be the change in one's appearance.

To sum up, the blogs reflect that the bloggers are uncertain of how others perceive them (especially their physical appearance) based on their physical weight. Their bodies have become a site that they can work on (have a project on) to construct and negotiate their individual and social identities. The examples show self-acceptance and social acceptance are closely related. In many cases, individuals with obesity have neither self-acceptance nor social acceptance, especially when considering their loser identities in society, which I will explain in the next section.

8.5.3 INDIVIDUALS WITH OBESITY ARE LOSERS

As shown in the blogs, weight stigma has led to exclusion in many critical domains of life for individuals with obesity, who have been attributed the role of losers. Worse, individuals with obesity are not only deemed as failing in their body but also in their social life, e.g., the opportunity of getting romantic partners and respect from others, as I will show in this section.

As evidenced in previous examples, physical appearance is the one that most concerns individuals with obesity. This is understandable as their losers' roles begin with their physical appearance. Individuals with obesity are generally deemed unattractive and are further rejected and discriminated against, which can be seen in the following extract:

Example 8.31

减肥 大 作战 ## 减肥 #　这 只是 做 为 胖子 的 我 的 心声 ， 我 不 会 感谢 嘲笑 和 讥讽 过 我 的 人 ， 我 也 不 憎恨 嘲笑 讥讽 过 我 的 人 因为 我 一直 在 努力 从来 没有 停止 过 因为 现实 的 生活 告诉 了 我 除了 有 能力 你 还 应该 有 颜 值 没有 颜 值 你 永远 走 不 到 别人 前面 永远 是 走 到 哪 被 人 嘲笑 到 哪 的 人们 口中 叫 着 的 胖子 …

[## A Big Battle in Weight Loss ## Weight Loss# This is just my voice as a fat man. I will neither thank nor hate those who laughed at or ridiculed me because I have been working hard without stopping. Because real life has told me that in

addition to being capable, you should also have face value (good looks). You will never get ahead of others without face value (good looks). Wherever you go, you will simply be laughed at and called 'the fat'...]

In Example 8.31, the blogger shows his striving and unyielding attitude in throwing away his title of being called a 胖子 [the fat]. According to the example, being a fat man is devastating, as even one's capability cannot compensate for one's failure in losing weight. The downplaying of one's capability and the stress on bodily weight pose disempowering effects on individuals with obesity. A noteworthy term in the example is 颜值, which literally refers to 'face value', which can be understood as good looks, or how good-looking one is. The phrase implies that what is beautiful is good and, further, what is valuable. In this extract, body size seems to be the only attribute defining beauty. Obesity is equated with being ugly and further being worthless. The importance of physical appearance, or being good-looking through losing weight, is salient in the blogs and will be discussed in detail in Chapter 9 on the Money metaphor, especially the self-promotion discourse.

The discriminatory experience caused by being called 'the fat' could deter people from considering taking agency in their life, especially if they think they are fat and ugly since they were born and thus were born as a 'loser' or deemed to be a loser based on their bodies. The importance of being beautiful and the pressure to be good-looking is also seen in the following example:

Example 8.32
减肥 # 那么 多 成功 的 人 那么 多 失败 的 人 我 一定 回 成功 过 年 回家 必须 漂漂亮亮 的 （289）
[# Weight Loss # There are so many many successful people and so many losers. I will definitely succeed. (I) must look fabulous when I get back home for the New Year.]

Example 8.32 shows an appearance pressure to present the 'best look' in front of one's family and friends at a family reunion on China's New Year's Eve. The blog seems to convey that becoming beautiful becomes a task one must fulfil to succeed. The importance of one's appearance reflects the lookism culture in Chinese society. The

lookism culture has been observed in other studies. For example, Lotti (2018) has found that Chinese media is full of lookism discourse which equals being beautiful as being good, and which should be aspired by the whole society, especially among women. It is thus important to bear in mind that losing weight is not only about fighting against lazy bodies but also about meeting the socially required standard of beauty. This further relates to the 'discourse of normality', which deems being beautiful (here specifically refers to being thin) as normal. In the blogs, losing weight appears to become the yardstick by which people measure how beautiful they are. However, it also implies very exclusive beauty ideals that one can only be deemed beautiful if one is thin.

Further, losing weight is deemed as not only winning at the physical level but also in life in a general sense, where the body has become the evidence, especially for women, as seen in the following example:

Example 8.33

所有的 赘 肉 都 是 你 向 生活 妥协 的 痕迹 作为 一个 女人 可以 没 有 背景 但 一定 要 有 背影 # 减肥 成功 是 怎样 的 一 种 体验 ## 大 长 腿 ## 腰 # (851)

[All the fat meat (in your body) is the trace of your <u>compromise</u> to life. As a woman, you can have no good (family) background, but you must have a slim back. # What kind of experience is it to lose weight successfully ## long legs ## waist #.]

Example 8.33 uses the pronoun 'you' to set up a conversation with the reader, particularly the female readers. The extract expresses a very normative view on women's bodies that women need to have beautiful backs (here can be understood as the slim body shape women have when seen from the back, especially the legs which need to be long and the waist which need to be thin). The admonish words like '*have to*', '*must*' and the body parts words like *legs* and *waist* express the very normative success criteria for women. Women with obesity are deemed defeated and become less-women in life. This aligns with Eckert & McConnell-Ginet (2003) that gender has become an achievement that people need to work hard to fulfil social or cultural understanding of the gender roles, as having a beautiful 'back' as shown in Example 8.33. However, this again reinforces the very narrow definition of beauty for women.

While the main trend we found in the blogs was calling the individuals with obesity losers in a negative way, there were also cases where the loser role of the individuals was doubted, as shown in the following extract:

Example 8.34

＃ 肥胖 ＃ 女 人 的 美丽 来源于 魅力 ， 魅力 来源于 知识 ！ 丰富 自 己 ， 展示 自己 才 能 <u>赢 得</u> 更 多 的 关注 ！ 虽然 我 没有 <u>魔鬼 的 身材</u> ， 但是 ， 我 有 <u>天使 的 心灵</u> ， 一样 可以 <u>赢 得 真 爱</u> ！ （8）

[# Obesity # A woman's beauty comes from charm, and charm comes from the knowledge! Enrich yourself and show yourself to <u>win</u> more attention! Although I don't have a <u>devil's body</u>, I have an <u>angel's heart</u>. I can still <u>win true love</u>!]

In Example 8.34, the blogger criticises the lookism culture and proposes women without perfect shape can also 'win' true love. The blogger suggests that being overweight and being attractive can be compatible. The struggle between 'inner beauty' and 'outer beauty' in the Chinese context has received academic attention. For example, Ma (2022) has found the inner beauty discourse, however, can not simply be deemed as women's empowerment as inner beauty is also shaped by sociocultural factors. Indeed, as Example 8.34 suggests, the call to have an 'angel's heart to win love can reveal the socially expected criteria ascribed to women (e.g., being caring and tender).

To sum up, in the blogs, War metaphors function as a legitimate strategy that one needs to fight hard towards himself, which brings good results in the end, especially in terms of shedding off the title of 'losers' in society and winning in important aspects of life. Individuals, especially women, are charged with the responsibility to be thin and beautiful and, from doing so, to reap social benefits, for example, to win love.

8.6 War Scenarios in the *Daily* and Weibo

Based on the above analysis of systematic War metaphors, different war scenarios emerge in the editorials and the blogs. Unlike Journey metaphors that stress the interaction between the stakeholders involved, War metaphors do not emphasise much alliance or co-combatant in the war. Instead, there are two key factors in the war

scenarios: 1) What kind of metaphorical war is involved; 2) What are the results of winning/losing the war?

For the first question, both the editorials and blogs pay attention to the importance of bodies or health. In the editorials, War metaphors depict a national-defending war to protect China's safety in the international arena. While for the blogs, War metaphors set up a war with oneself for not being losers. For the second question, both media stress the bad or doomed results of losing the fight against obesity. For the editorials, the highlighted national risks put the country in danger, while in the blogs, it relates to social acceptance (e.g., winning a stable interpersonal relationship), which relates to self-acceptance or how one internalises the social criteria. Thus the results of losing the war against obesity are different, as the editorials stress national-level success while the blogs suggest individual success on the societal level. Nevertheless, they both share doomed results and suggest that one must spare no effort to win the war.

When generally considering the war scenarios around obesity, I think there are three major problems with War metaphors: 1) War metaphors stress the need (and the possibility) to eliminate obesity in a swift action, ignoring the fact that losing weight usually is time-consuming; 2) War metaphors background the possibilities of living with obesity, or the possibility of co-existence between people and obesity; 3) War metaphors make the body of the obese individuals as the enemy, and in this way, obese individuals are encouraged to fight against their own bodies and dare not to do self-care in that any sense of self-care is deemed not 'being tough' enough towards the enemies and thus against the goal of losing weight. War metaphors could potentially make individuals with obesity not deserve both social care and self-care.

Another potential danger of the War metaphors that needs to be noted is that they may lead to the loss of compassion in the obesity context as the aim will be focused on beating the enemy instead of soothing the ill, which further leads to the lack of empathy towards individuals with obesity. The calling for empathy towards individuals with obesity will be discussed in more detail in Chapter 10.

Relating to previous studies, War metaphors in my corpus are in line with Atanasova & Koteyko (2020), who find that War metaphors have the conceptual weakness that in the absence of an external agent to be fought, the enemy easily becomes the self. A similar view is also argued by Bray & Bednarek (2021) in their report and suggestions on the

obesity coverage in Australian media, where they explicitly point out that we should avoid combative language like "wars on obesity", "fight obesity", which position people with obesity as adversaries of others.

Upon such a weakness, relating to my discussion above, a step further, I argue there exists an 'all-in-one' effect of War metaphor in the case of obesity in my data. By 'all-in-one', I mean where the individuals with obesity are framed as the weapon, the enemy, the soldier, the battlefield, etc. Put another way, there is an overlap among the key factors of war, i.e., who are fighting against (the enemy), who is fighting (the warrior), with what tools people are fighting (the weapons), and the strategies used for winning the war (war strategies), as well as where the war is based upon (the battlefield). In detail, individuals with obesity are fighting against themselves on the battlefield, which is their not-well-performing bodies, and the strategies are being tough towards their own bodies. The effect perhaps could explain the lack of "weapon" and "battlefield" in the corpus: the individuals themselves are deemed as the "weapons," and the "battlefield" is also their own bodies. These assumptions seemed to be presented in a taken-for-granted way and thus were not pointed out explicitly in my corpus.

The 'all-in-one' effect makes War metaphors powerful (being extremely effective) yet could also be dreadful (one part fails, then the whole collapse). It can also lead to ambiguity of who to fight, against whom and where to start the war, etc. When we use War metaphors surrounding obesity, such subtitles need to be considered. While we can confirm that War metaphors would bring some self-despise to individuals in their process of losing weight, it would also be misguided if we ignore the motivating function (e.g., one part wins, then the whole wins) of War metaphors, given that some War metaphors appear to bring individuals with toughness and persistence, and also give an expression of personal determination and the fighting spirit. War metaphors also help in constructing and negotiating new identities for people whose sense of themselves has been upset by obesity. For example, they can 'counterattack' and become a new self at the social level. War metaphors thus seem to have the advantages mentioned by Guy Winch on getting over a break-up in actively pursuing a change in one's life.

These empowering effects are more salient in the Chinese context, where War metaphors have been a routine or effective form of propaganda calling for national collective efforts and solidarity. The long-term war history in modern Chinese history

has made war metaphors and their relevant language handy in Chinese discourses effective in mobilising collective actions and efforts, given the collective war memory among Chinese nationals. For example, Zhang & Cheung (2022) find that Chinese newspapers prefer turning to the news value of "Positivity' to describe the favourable outcomes in fighting epidemics. Compatible with this idea is the essay of Chambers (2016), which argues that when we use metaphors, the key is not on the nature of metaphors themselves, but their uses in certain social contexts, which deliver their context-unique framing effects. For example, in my corpus, War metaphors in the blogs are effective in encouraging one to do self-empowerment, while they can also be disempowering, e.g., the tough love towards oneself could lead to restricted food intake, purging, or over-exercising, which would lead to adverse health effects.

8.7 Conclusion

In this chapter, I have explained how obesity is represented within War metaphors in my data. I have shown that war metaphors are used in various empowering and disempowering ways to express both inspiring and discouraging emotions. Overall, we can see a quite complex picture that War metaphors are context-sensitive to represent different aspects of obesity in the editorials and blogs. In more detail, I have found through War metaphors, representations of obesity interact with notions of national security and personal success.

A crucial aspect of War metaphors that leads to their particularly empowering and disempowering effects is the overwhelming 'all-in-one' framing effects they have. In other words, within War metaphors, individuals with obesity are simultaneously represented as the enemies, the weapons, the battlefield, etc., in their wars against obesity. In this way, individuals with obesity are cast multiple roles simultaneously in the war. Such an effect is deemed as a 'conceptual weakness' of War metaphors, according to Atanasova & Koteyko (2020). However, in this chapter, I discuss such a 'weakness' based on the Chinese context, pointing out that the framing effects make the War metaphor especially powerful, meanwhile complicated, the outcome and effects of which cannot be simply coded as 'strength' or 'weakness'. In this way, this project is in line with Semino et al. (2018) on the context-based empowering and disempowering effects of metaphors.

Different from the consistent framing in the editorials, the blogs sometimes witness inconsistent framings regarding War metaphors. For example, the editorials use War metaphors in setting up collective national efforts in an empowering way. While War metaphors in blogs sometimes have disempowering effects in breeding self-split effects, War metaphors at the same time can offer motivations for some bloggers. Yet, what is shared in the editorials and blogs is the call for individuals to manage their bodies to make their bodies as well as themselves more valuable, which is related to the Money metaphor that I am going to explore in Chapter 9.

Chapter 9: Money Metaphors

9.1 Introduction

In this final analytical chapter, I shift my attention to the last dominant metaphor in my corpus, i.e., Money metaphors. In the previous chapters, I discussed Journey and War metaphors, whose prevalences are not surprising as they are conventional metaphors and are popularly used in health communication (see my discussion in Chapter 4). By comparison, the frequent use of the Money metaphor in my corpus is somewhat surprising, especially given the fact that China, as a socialist country, is traditionally understood as the opposite of a capitalist system and thus should not attach as much importance to economic profits as the capitalist system does. Yet, with China's transition from a planned economy to a market economy, along with China's transformation into a globalised economy and society, the market logic has entered China's healthcare system and expanded into people's daily life. In this sense, the use of the Money metaphor in my data is understandable. Yet, it triggers us to reflect on the concept of 'money' in the Chinese context and how 'money' as a metaphor enters and resonates with the obesity discourse in the Chinese media against the backdrop of the marketisation drive of the country's economy. Such an understanding is important as it can offer answers for some understanding questions in previous chapters, e.g., the over-pressure of being 'good-looking' in physical appearance, as discussed in previous chapters.

To begin with, in this thesis, I deem the Money metaphor as any expression related to economic profits, incomes, earnings or losses, and the related business activities, e.g., commercial investment, business promotion and competition. The Money metaphor has been explored in the context of health communication. For example, Rees, Knight, & Wilkinson (2007) analyse Money metaphors used in the doctor-patient relationship. Their study finds that the use of Money metaphors suggests consumerism in healthcare, which sees doctors as providing services to the 'customer' patients. Similar trends are also witnessed in the doctor-patient relationship in China (Tang & Guan, 2018). However, the Money metaphor does not stop at reflecting consumerism in healthcare. Instead, money is complicated as it is often intertwined with many other concepts like social class, social resources, poverty, etc. Readers of this chapter can see how Money metaphors relate to some important discourses that have been mentioned in previous

chapters, particularly the neoliberal values and the objectification of bodies, and thus offer a more profound understanding of the Journey and War metaphors discussed previously.

Similar to what I have done in the previous chapters, the structure of this chapter is like this: I first present the frequencies of different money metaphors in my corpus (section 9.2). Later, I propose that systematic money metaphors fall into the dominant money groupings (section 9.3). Based on that, sections 9.4 and 9.5 discuss the systematic money metaphors in the editorials and the blogs. Later, section 9.6 compares and discusses different money scenarios evoked in the data. Section 9.7 summarises and reflects on this chapter.

9.2 Frequencies of Different Money Metaphors

In total, I have identified 87 occurrences and 29 occurrences of Money metaphors in the editorials and blogs, which respectively account for around 10.3% and 4.2% of all obesity-related metaphors in the respective corpus. The normalised frequencies for the Money metaphors are around 0.89 and 0.47 per 1,000 characters in the editorials and blogs.

The higher frequency of Money metaphors in the editorials in the official media, rather than the more commercialised social media, is confusing. As I have introduced in Chapter 5 on the media landscape in China, while the official media in China has been affected by the market forces, their role as official media for spreading political views and tones has not changed. The more commercialised social media logically should use more Money metaphors. However, as we have observed in the previous chapters, the editorials occasionally reflect neoliberal views that count on the nation's loss caused by obesity and argue for individuals' responsibility in the obesity issue. As this said, the use of Money metaphors in the editorials is indeed not surprising.

At this stage, an overall understanding of the Money metaphor is insufficient. A more careful look at the detailed money scenarios in the corpus is necessary for us to figure out why there is a higher frequency of Money metaphors in the editorials. I turn to the specific Money metaphors in my corpus. Based on my manual coding, I get the following four money groupings in my corpus (see table 9.1).

Table 9.1 Different Money Groupings in the Corpus

Groupings of money	Connotation	Selected Examples
wealth	Describing the possessions of money, or which can be expected for gaining wealth	财富 [wealth], 资源[resource]
goods	Describing the commercial merchandise which can be sold or bought	专利[patent], 产品[product]
enterprises	Describing business, company, or business plans	减肥大业 [the enterprise of losing weight], 身材管理 [management of body shape]
cost	Describing the payment or price one needs to pay and the results of the business transaction	划不来[can not pay off]， 损失 [loss]

As can be seen in Table 9.1, compared with Journey and War metaphors, Money metaphors have fewer money groupings. Yet, the groupings are insightful as they touch upon the core elements of business activities, e.g., selling certain "goods" or running certain "enterprises" to attain "wealth", otherwise paying some "cost". Figure 9.1 shows the frequency of different money grouping in my data.
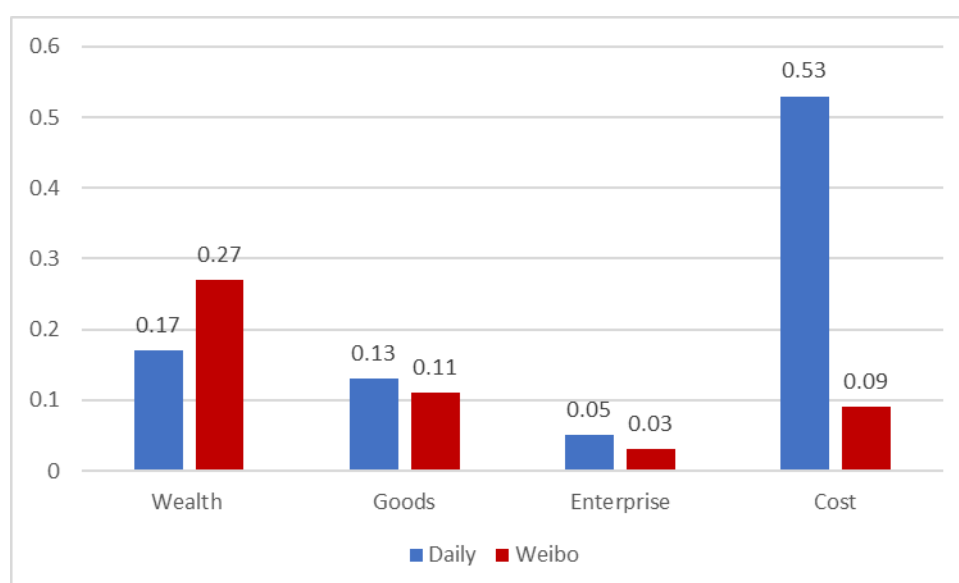
Figure 9.1 Frequencies per 1,000 Characters of the Different Money Groupings in the Corpus

Figure 9.1 shows the different uses of Money metaphors in the editorials and blogs. A notable difference is that the editorials more frequently turn to "Cost" than the blogs (0.53 vs. 0.09). By comparison, the blogs use "Wealth" more frequently than the editorials. Both the editorials and blogs use "Goods" and "Enterprise" in similar infrequent ways (respectively 0.13 vs. 0.11 and 0.05 vs. 0.03). To figure out the connotations of the money-groupings and the implications of their different frequencies in my corpus, I discuss the systematic money metaphors in my corpus in the next section.

9.3 Systematic Money Metaphors in the Corpus: An Overview

Based on the frequencies of different money-groupings, the systematic money metaphor in the CODCM-Daily falls into "Cost" and "Wealth", and in CODCM-Weibo to "Wealth" and Goods". Based on qualitative context analysis, along with the similar practices I have done in the previous chapters on Journey and War metaphors, I propose the following systematic money metaphors in my corpus (as shown in Table 9.2).

Table 9.2 Systematic Money Metaphors in the Corpus

CODCM-Daily
Cost: *OBESITY IS A NATIONAL ECONOMIC BURDEN*
Wealth: *LOSING WEIGHT IS A NATIONAL INVESTMENT*
CODCM-Weibo
Wealth: *OBESITY IS A SYMBOL OF POVERTY*
Goods: *LOSING WEIGHT IS NECESSARY FOR SELF-PROMOTION*

As can be seen in Table 9.2, the editorials mainly discuss the economic prospects of the country under the obesity issue, while the blogs stress how obesity has influenced personal economic well-being. In the coming sections, I will explain the systematic money metaphors with qualitative case studies.

9.4 Systematic Money Metaphors in CODCM-Daily

In this section, I show how market logic has entered the official voices in the health issue around obesity in the editorials, evidenced by the systematic money metaphors that emerged in the corpus. Through this section, readers will see how, in a broader sense, China has adopted new forms of neoliberal governing brought by the market

reforms in its healthcare system and how the neoliberal governing faith has influenced the official view on obesity in the editorials.

9.4.1 *OBESITY IS A NATIONAL ECONOMIC BURDEN*

First and foremost, in the editorials, given the illness status of obesity as aforementioned in previous chapters, obesity is taking a heavy toll on economic activity, especially given the loss of human resources for economic activities. In this sense, obesity is a national economic burden and brings loss to national wealth, as shown in the following examples:

Example 9.1

我国 2005 年 GDP 总额 为 18 万 亿 元 人民币 ， 因 营养 不良 受到 的 <u>损失</u> 可 达 5400 亿 元 。（20111031）

[Our country's total GDP in 2005 was 18 trillion yuan (around 2 trillion euros), and the <u>loss</u> due to malnutrition reached 540 billion yuan (around 60 billion euros).]

Example 9.2

慢 病 极大 地 <u>消耗</u> 着 各国 有限 的 公共 卫生 资源 ， 成为 有些 国 家 财政 <u>困窘</u> 的 因素 之一 。 （20130110）

[Chronic diseases have greatly <u>consumed</u> the limited public health resources of various countries and have become one of the factors of <u>financial embarrassment</u> in some countries .]

Example 9.1 counts the loss of human resources due to malnutrition (obesity was deemed a result of malnutrition and was listed as an example in the editorial). Example 9.2 points out that chronic diseases (again, obesity is deemed one type) cost public health, leading to the financial insecurity of countries. In particular, the bad health of college students is deemed as a big economic loss for the country, as seen in the following examples:

Example 9.3

因为 国家 为 培养 一个 大学生 <u>付出 很 大 代价</u> ， 一个 大学生 几十 年 下来 ， 知识 会 不断 增长 ， 为 祖国 作 贡献 的 能力 也 随之 不

断 增加 ， 但 如果 身体 不好 ， 一切 都 等于 零 ， 对于 国家 而言 就 是 一 种 损失 （20131118）

[Because the country pays a great price for cultivating a college student, a college student's knowledge will continue to increase over the decades, and the ability to contribute to the motherland will also continue to increase, but if the health is not good, everything is equal to zero. It is a loss for the country]

Example 9.3 stresses the human resource crisis among college students caused by obesity. The extract explicitly positions college students as investments made by the country. With this logic, obesity becomes a burden for the country to benefit from its investments.

Closely related to obesity is food waste in China, which also leads to the country's loss:

Example 9.4

就 拿 现在 我国 一 年 的 餐饮 食物 浪费 量 来看 ， 相当 于 丢弃 了 3000 万 到 5000 万 人 一 年 的 口粮 。 与此同时 ， 这 意味着 耕地 资源 、 水资源 、 能源 以及 各种 生产资料 和 劳动力 的 浪费 ， 这 是 多么 可怕 的 一 笔 账 啊 ！ (20170606-2)

[(If we) take the amount of food wasted in our country in a year as an example, it is equivalent to discarding the rations of 30 million to 50 million people for a year. At the same time, this means the waste of arable land resources, water resources, energy, and various means of production and labour. What a horrifying debt!]

Though Example 9.4 does not explicitly refer to obesity, the example counts on food waste, which implicitly blames the individuals with obesity as wasting food and causing food waste and further national loss. In some cases, the editorials also speak from the individual level to point out the cost of poor health for individuals:

Example 9.5

运动 不足 付出 的 " 成本 " ， 最终 还 是 由 自己 的 身体 、 生活 以 更 大 代价 偿还 (20140801)

[Your own body and life will ultimately repay the "cost" of lack of exercise at a greater price.]

Example 9.5 urges individuals to take sufficient exercise and warns the body and even life will pay for the lack of exercise. This shows a considerably worrying tone of the harms of lacking exercise. The editorials also directly call heath as 'expensive':

Example 9.6

健康 很 贵 ， 不要 浪费 。

[(because) Health is very <u>expensive</u>, (we) should not <u>waste</u> it.]

In a tentative conclusion, the editorials stress the economic loss caused by obesity for both the nation and individuals. It treats health as a commodity that needs to be well taken off, further a capital for the nation. It can be observed that the editorials seem to speak both from the country and the nation, as if in the manner of 'for all's goodness'. As obesity is an economic burden, losing weight becomes an economic investment to shake off the burden, which I will discuss below.

9.4.2 *LOSING WEIGHT IS A NATIONAL INVESTMENT*

First, losing weight is an essential part of health promotion, the 'process of enabling people to exert control over the determinants of health and thereby improve their health' (cited from Lobstein, 2006: 75). The promotion is deemed as the most 'economic' way in improving the national health:

Example 9.7

从 长远 看 ， 加强 健康 教育 ， 提高 全民 健康 素养 ， 倡导 健康 文明 的 生活 方式 ， 是 提高 全民 健康 水平 最 根本 、 最 <u>经济</u> 、 最 有效 的 措施 之一 。 (20161124)

[In the long run, strengthening health education, improving the health literacy of the whole people, and advocating a healthy and civilised way of life are one of the most fundamental, <u>economical,</u> and effective measures to improve the health of the whole people.]

Example 9.8

这样 看来 ， 对于 国家 而言 ， 最 <u>经济</u> 的 做法 是 ： 投入 更 多 经 费 创造 条件 ， 鼓励 民众 进行 体育 活动 ， 防范 并 降低 运动 不足 引发 的 疾病 风险 。(20140801)

[In this way, for the country, the most <u>economical</u> approach is to invest more funds to create conditions for people to engage in physical activity. (It can help) to prevent and reduce the risk of diseases caused by insufficient exercise.]

Examples 9.7 and 9.8 show the neoliberal governing faith, where individuals are called to improve their own qualities and health. When individuals take responsibility for themselves, the nation can benefit from the self-autonomy of the individuals (that is why it is called 'economic'). It suggests that compared with previous paternalistic governing, where the government needs to use resources to take care of the 'unmatured kids', the personal-responsibility pattern can share some economic burden of the nation.

In this sense, the editorials seem to build up national entrepreneurship where the country is run in a business model that counts on the country's gains and losses. As shown in the following example, paying attention to obesity is deemed as a business activity in the stock market:

Example 9.9
像 关心 <u>股市</u> 一样 关心 国民 身高 体重(20150701)
[Care about the height and weight of the people like (you) care about the <u>stock market</u>.]

Further, physical exercise is deemed as a form of 'work' for creating economic values:
Example 9.10
锻炼 " <u>复工</u> " 也 是 当务之急 (20200430)
[The "<u>returning to work</u>" of exercise is also a top priority.]

The context of Example 9.10 is in the 'back-to-normal life' after the national lockdowns in China in early 2020. The extract urges the public to re-pick up their exercise, which was disturbed during the lockdown. Calling 'doing physical exercise' work seems to imply that strengthening physical health can create economic benefits and should be treated as a form of a job.

To sum up, the above examples show that editorials use the business model to count on the economic gains and losses of individuals for the country. Obesity is deemed to bring loss for the country, and losing weight is deemed an investment for the nation. Seen together, they express the national entrepreneurship model held in the editorials.

9.5 Systematic Money Metaphors in CODCM-Weibo

Different from the editorials that stress people's health as the national capital, the personal economic benefit brought by losing weight is highlighted in the blogs. In this section, I will show that the blogs are oriented toward individuals who are called to seek wealth and promote themselves to reap economic benefits.

9.5.1 *OBESITY IS A SYMBOL OF POVERTY*

The despise of poverty and the close relatedness of obesity to poverty have made obesity carry more social implications in the Chinese context. If one is thin enough, they are deemed as having the potential of having money or at least the hope of becoming rich in the future based on their well-managed and well-behaved bodies. The expansion of physical illness to social illness is well observed in the following example:

Example 9.11

胖子 是 没有 前途 （ 钱 途 ） 的 ！ 再 有 本事 心地 再 好 ， 也 只 是 个 好 胖子 (271)

[Fat people have no forward path (future) (money path)! No matter how capable and good-hearted, (he) is just a good fat man.]

In Example 9.11, individuals with obesity are predicted to be poor. The extract humorously co-uses two phrases with the same Chinese pronunciations, i.e., 前途 and 钱途 (both pronunciations are *qián tú*). The shared word 途 *tú* refers to 'path'. 前, *qián*, means forwards, and 前途 literally refers to 'forward path', which means 'future' in Chinese. The other phrase 钱途 literally means 'money path', which can be understood as one's way of making money. The extract explicitly calls the individuals with obesity 'the poor', with no promising future even though he could be a good man. This shows a very ironic stance attribution in predicting the poor future of individuals with obesity. It also implies that being rich is more important than being capable and nice, which suggests the money-worship discourse in the blog.

However, poverty is a complex concept, especially in the Chinese context. People want their bodily weight controlled and their life anxieties allayed, and their capacity for becoming rich and successful people proved and evidenced in their well-functioning bodies. Otherwise, people are in debt and need to 'pay off their debts' through exercise:

Example 9.12

前 两 天 我 到 50kg 了 ， 发现 没有 任何 事 有 起色 ， 于是 我 开 始 懈怠 放纵 ， 不过 我 此刻 已经 在 跑步 机 <u>还债</u> 了 (670)

[I reached 50kg two days ago and found nothing improved, so I started to slack off and indulge, but I am already <u>paying off my debt</u> on the treadmill.]

As obesity is deemed as a symbol of poverty, the other way around, being thin is deemed as a symbol of richness, as shown in the following examples:

Example 9.13

当 你 瘦 下来 的 时候 会 比 <u>中 500W</u> 还 开 心 。（29）

[When you lose weight, you will be happier than <u>winning a lottery of 5 million</u>.]

Example 9.14

瘦子 是 一 种 天赋 ， 就 像 生 下来 是 <u>富 二 代</u> 一样 。(911)

[Being thin is a present by god. It is just like some people are <u>born rich</u>].

The above examples show the economic benefits gained from losing weight. The direct relation between obesity and poverty suggests the motivation one wants to shake off poverty through losing weight, which is necessary for self-promotion. I move on to explain the self-promotion discourse in the next section.

9.5.2 *LOSING WEIGHT IS NECESSARY FOR SELF-PROMOTION*

In a marketised society, people are called to do self-promotion. According to Fairclough (2000: 163), marketisation is 'the extension of market modes of operation to new areas of social life'. Similarly, Mautner (2010:1) puts that the market exchange is no longer simply a process but an all-encompassing social principle that leaves its imprint in language. Marketisation metaphors have been popularly witnessed in the blogs, as shown in the following examples:

Example 9.15

肥胖 # 婚后 ， 请 做好 <u>" 瘦 后 "</u> 服务 ⋯ 不 要 让 人 有 <u>退货</u> 的 欲望 。 （396）

[# Obesity # After marriage, please do a good job of "post-slimming" (after-sale) service... Don't let people have the desire to return the goods.]

Example 9.15 is interesting. In Chinese, the character 瘦, *shòu*, refers to "thin", which is the same pronunciation of the character 售, *shòu*, which means 'sell' in Chinese. This example depicts marriage as 'buying goods', and individuals who gain weight after marriage face the risk of being 'returned' after the 'sale', implying the objectification of individuals. Though the blog does not explicitly refer to women, given the marriage market in the patriarchal Chinese society, women face a higher risk of being 'returned' after marriage.

Thus, body management under neoliberal principles has become a vehicle for self-promotion. A discourse of self-as-product is observed in the blogs. Individuals are positioned as entrepreneurial agents to promote themselves, especially given China's highly competitive cultural background, where individuals are uncertain of their place in the market competition. They have to brand themselves based on their physical possessions. One can reap economic advantage from being thin, as the blog below mentions that being thin and (thus good-looking) can function as a way of making a living:

Example 9.16

饿 吗 ？饿 就 照 照镜子 ， 瘦子 为什么 吃 得 少 ？因为 好看 可以 当 饭 吃 。(843)

[Are you hungry? If you are, look in the mirror. Why do skinny people eat little? That is because being good-looking can be one's rice (the bread of living).]

Example 9.16 uses a rhetorical question to stress the importance of being thin, which is related to whether one has 'rice' to eat. Given the fact that rice is the major grain in China, as bread in Western countries, the extract has lifted the importance of being thin to whether one can fulfil his basic life needs. Being thin is unquestionably equated with being good-looking, which has been witnessed in the Gendered discourse around obesity I have explained in Chapter 2.

A similar scenario of beauty as a resource, or female beauty as a commodification, is also seen in the following example:

Example 9.17

<u>美貌 资源</u> 这个 东西 是 女孩子 先 天 的 优势 ， 既然 是 优势 为什么 不 好好 利用 ， 尝 点 甜头 ？ 没 必要 什么 都 非 要 自己 死 扛 死 磕 祝 大家 都 能 修炼 成 迷人 的 小 妖精 # <u>减肥 大 作战</u> ## (848)

[The <u>beauty resource</u> is a girl's innate advantage. Since it is an advantage, why not use it well and taste the sweetness? There is no need to do everything by yourself. I wish you all the best of luck and become a charming little goblin (alluring woman) # <u>A Big Battle in Weight Loss</u> #]

Example 9.18 reinforces the objectification of feminine beauty in society, which can be used as a tool for one to get social benefits. In Example 9.17, losing weight and becoming beautiful has become a resource, an 'innate advantage' of women to make life easier. The extract seems to convey that being or looking beautiful has become a task one must work on, which especially becomes obligatory for women. Previous studies, for example, Ayo (2012) observes that 身材管理 [management on bodies] has become popular in China, which calls for people to work on bodies for economic benefits. This is also in line with Zheng, Ni, & Luo (2019), who observe women's self-objectification in Chinese social media.

Further, some blogs call for individuals engaging in a self-branding process to prove the 'high prices' they are worthy of, as shown in the following example:

Example 9.18

你 连 买 个 水果 ， 都 要 挑 好看 的 ， 新鲜 的 ！ 为 什么 对 自 己 ， 不 抓紧 <u>保养</u> 呢 ? # 保养 ## 肥胖 ## 减肥 ## 健康 # (678)

[Even when you buy fruit, you prefer to choose the good-looking and fresh ones! Why don't you take the time to <u>maintain</u> yourself? #maintenance##obesity##weightloss##health#]

In example 9.18, the blog uses a rhetorical question to persuade individuals to 'maintain' themselves or keep their 'good-looking' and 'freshness'. 'Maintenance' suggests that the body has become a place to care for to ensure its 'market' and keep its 'price'.

There are cases where individuals with obesity are encouraged as they are called 'potential stocks', which in a certain sense has motivating effects on losing weight:

> *Example 9.19*
>
> 胖子 都 是 潜力 股 (421)
>
> [Fat people are potential stocks (diamonds in the rough).]

To sum up, the above examples suggest that bodies seem to be commodified, and one has the responsibility to brand or promote the body as a commodity and, further, take advantage of the commodity. As the body is a site for branding, thus investment is needed and, indeed, a must for economic benefits. However, the marketisation of bodies is a contentious issue. It adds additional stigma to individuals with obesity as their bodies are deemed not to have a market and are hard to promote.

9.6 Money Scenarios in the *Daily* and Weibo

Money metaphors can sharpen our insights into Chinese society. Based on the above analysis, we can see that Money metaphors are used differently in the editorials and blogs. They contribute to different money scenarios that concern different economic models around obesity. In detail, the 'health economy' emerges in the editorials, while the 'beauty economy' is prominent in the blogs.

For the health economy, people's health is deemed an important asset for the country. The country wants to elevate its status in global competition through its healthy citizens. Unlike the blogs saturated with consumerism, there is an interesting coexistence and interaction between paternalism and consumerism in the editorials. In other words, though the editorials still adopt the paternalistic way of taking up the responsibilities in public health, consumerism discourses where the public is deemed independent individuals who are supposed to take care of their own health are also witnessed in the editorials. This echoes my previous observation of the co-existence of different governing faiths competing with each other in the editorials.

For the beauty economy, the blogs stress being good-looking can bring economic benefits. Different from Xu & Feiner (2007: 308), who see the beauty economy as 'activities like beauty pageants that are typically commercialized and localized festivities that put beautiful women on parade, as well as the accompanying range of

advertisements,' in this project, beauty economy in my data more refers to the use of beauty (achieved through losing weight specifically) as a way of improving one's 'market price'. Compared with something largely beyond individual control, such as the social class one was born with, one's physical appearance was framed as being determined by personal control in the blogs. Previous studies have found that being good-looking has become capital in China (Dippner, 2018), an essential component of personal value at the societal level. Bodywork has been called upon by the public, who are attributed the competition ethos to monitor their appearance, produce their 'best' selves, and reap the best profits from their best bodies. This can be related to neoliberal beauty politics in modern society (Craig, 2021), where beauty has become a 'task' for the public.

Both economies express the neoliberalism trend in the Chinese context, which indeed is a very complex concept in the Chinese context. Neoliberalism has become 'hegemonic as a mode of discourse' (Harvey, 2005: 3). In a strict sense, China is not a neoliberal state based on its economical structure. However, in China, along with the more important role individuals take in their health, the government is witnessing its declining role in the health initiative of individuals. The government's role is shifted to supporting individuals in their individual health 'enterprises'. However, the historical 'inertia' of the collective culture and the paternalism in the political discourse contribute to a mixed form of both an 'incompetent' and 'competent' public with both an 'intervening' and 'retreating' government in terms of health issues in the Chinese context. Perhaps this is why we sometimes witness the somewhat contradictory 'empowering' and 'disempowering' discourses on individuals in the editorials. When we see the editorials and blogs together, we see that Money metaphors express the expectation of ideal citizenship in my corpus. In the editorials, citizens are expected to take care of themselves and reduce the economic burden on the country; in the blogs, beauty has become a necessary achievement that individuals must pursue their best selves in the social market.

Also closely related to the economic issue is the social class issue. Social class is key when we discuss obesity, as Brookes and Baker (2021) have revealed the social class connotations of obesity in the English media. These studies have proven that whenever we discuss health issues, economic factors are necessary for us to consider. Class is highly relevant in today's Chinese society and has become more intellectually

interesting and challenging within China's marketisation and modernisation process (Goodman, 2014). In terms of obesity, Zheng et al. (2022) find socioeconomic status is negatively associated with obesity. In detail, high education level and income are associated with a lower risk of obesity in the Chinese context. Indeed, as I have briefly discussed in Chapter 2 on the politicalised discourse of obesity, the incidence of obesity and weight stigma is mainly seen in socially disadvantageous groups. This is also reflected in the blogs where being good-looking is key to gaining economic benefits.

However, we also need to note that the Money metaphors used around obesity imply socioeconomic disparities. There is an expansion of the scope of illness when obesity is a body illness related to social illness such as poverty. In China, obesity is now despised by individuals not only because of its unpleasing look but perhaps also because of its implications for the social illness of poverty. People living with obesity are deemed incompetent and will likely be judged as poor or will-be-poor. This relates to another popular phrase, i.e., 世界上只有一种病，就是穷病 [There is only one kind of illness in the world, that is poverty]. Economic disparity is the root of health equality and social disparity. When people are worried about their daily expenses, e.g., where the next meals come from, they are less likely to think about eating healthily. When quantities are not met, it is hard or even a luxury for people to pursue the quality. This is even more relevant given the wealth disparity in Chinese society.

However, when we talk about poverty, another note we need to consider is that poverty, in some cases, is the subjective feeling gained through comparison. It reveals an uncomfortable reality in our life: comparing material resources defines an individual's wealth vis-a-vis others. In more bland words, it is not that the individuals have less; instead, it is because others have more that makes one feel poor. In the case of obesity, it is often the situation that one is not fat themselves, but others are thin, which makes them feel they are obese or fat and further the lack of opportunities to gain economic benefits based on their bodies. The blogs on body dissatisfaction among people with normal weight have proved this. Again, it shows the aspirational and competitional view widely held in Chinese society, which is deeply stretched into the field of the body.

9.7 Conclusions

This chapter has explored the use of Money metaphors in my corpus. This chapter is interesting and significant as up-to-date scholarly attention on Money metaphors in the

Chinese context is rather limited. In this chapter, I have shown how the editorials frame obesity as a national economic burden and call for individuals to take care of their own bodies to bring economic benefits to the country. On the other hand, in the blogs, obesity is closely related to poverty and losing weight is deemed necessary for one to do self-promotion. I have explained the self-objectification discourse in the blogs. Combining the editorials and blogs, I argue that they reflect the neoliberal discourses in China, which in its unique form (the combination of paternalism and neoliberalism), has led to the dual economic significances of body, i.e., for the country's economic benefits on the one hand and personal wealth on the other hand. They jointedly reflect the calling for ideal citizens in China.

Bearing the representations of obesity in the dominant Journey, War and Money metaphors, I move on to the conclusion chapter to have a joint review of the representations of obesity in my corpus.

Chapter 10: Discussion, Conclusion and Future Studies

10.1 Introduction

The previous chapters on the dominant metaphors, i.e., Journey, War and Money, have revealed the diversity and complexity of representations of obesity in my corpus. As I have analysed the three dominant metaphors in terms of their systematic metaphors, in this final chapter, I would like to continue with my discussions from a more comprehensive level by jointly looking at the three metaphors in the hope of making the analysis more rounded and giving it greater depth.

In this final chapter, I would like to address two aims. First, I try to summarise what this project finds and indicates about the metaphorical representations of obesity in Chinese media; Second, I reflect on the major merits and limitations of this thesis and directions for future studies.

For the first aim, a summary is by no way an easy task. When summarising, along with reflecting on our research, it is important to see what the research has done for the groups of people involved, or 'when we do metaphor analysis, it is important to think about the groups who are affected by the metaphors and try to answer questions for them' (Charteris-Black, personal contact, CADAAD conference, 2022). For the obesity issue, the groups most affected by the metaphors are unquestionably individuals with obesity. From the point of view of the individuals, I guess two questions of particular interest, which most trouble them and also which they are most earnest to get the answers to are: 1) What is behind obesity?; 2) Who should be responsible for obesity? The first question is about the issues the individuals are facing, and the second is whether they should take responsibility for them. In the following sections, I summarise this project by answering the questions.

10.2 What is Behind Obesity?

As argued by Schon (1997) that 'the essential difficulties in social policy have more to do with problem setting than with problem solving, more to do with ways in which we frame the purposes to be achieved than with the selection of optimal means for achieving them', the primary question we need to bear in mind when doing discourse analysis around obesity is 'how do we set the problem of obesity?'. However, in this

project, I feel reluctant to call obesity a 'problem' as I want to reduce weight stigma in the Chinese context. Yet, I cannot ignore that obesity has been deemed problematic in my corpus. Thus, perhaps a more sensible question here is 'what is behind obesity?' or what has been co-constructed with obesity?

To answer this question, based on the analysis of the dominant metaphors, i.e., Journey, War and Money, here I take a wider perspective on the systematic metaphors in my corpus (see table 10.1) to have an overview of the various definitions and interpretations of obesity in my data.

Table 10.1 Summary of Systematic Metaphors in the Corpus

CODCM-Daily	**Systematic metaphors**
Journey metaphors	*OBESITY SHOWS NATIONAL BACKWARDNESS* *LOSING WEIGHT IS NATIONAL PROGRESS* *GOVERNMENT IS THE GUIDE TO KEEPING THE SAME GROUP*
War metaphors	*GOVERNMENT IS THE MILITARY COMMANDER IN IMPROVING NATIONAL HEALTH* *OBESITY BRINGS DANGER TO THE NATION* *LOSING WEIGHT IS A BATTLE ACROSS BORDERS*
Money metaphors	*OBESITY IS A NATIONAL ECONOMIC BURDEN* *LOSING WEIGHT IS A NATIONAL INVESTMENT*
CODCM-Weibo	**Systematic metaphors**
Journey metaphors	*WEIGHT IS DESCENT* *WEIGHT BOUNCES BACK ALONG THE WAY* *LOSING WEIGHT IS AN INDIVIDUAL JOURNEY*
War metaphors	*LOSING WEIGHT IS A BATTLE AGAINST ONESELF* *TOUGH LOVE TOWARDS ONESELF IS NECESSARY FOR LOSING WEIGHT* *INDIVIDUALS WITH OBESITY ARE LOSERS*
Money metaphors	*OBESITY IS A SYMBOL OF POVERTY* *LOSING WEIGHT IS NECESSARY FOR SELF-PROMOTION*

Table 10.1 provides an integrative overview of the systematic metaphors in my corpus. The table shows the versatility of the Journey, War and Money metaphors, which enable the editorials and blogs to represent obesity in distinct ways. In detail, the editorials deliver state-orchestrated voices of obesity, for example, as shown in the repeated occurrences of "national" (e.g., "national backwardness", "national progress", "national health") in the systematic metaphors used in CODCM-Daily. What unifies the use of metaphors in the editorials is constructing a metaphorical scenario of the national body, which aims for national health, strength and wealth (for more on the collective stance towards obesity in the editorials, see Huang, forthcoming). On the other hand, in the blogs, it is the individual bodies that are highlighted more, which on the other hand, aim for personal success and wealth, which further relates to social and self-acceptance.

Based on Table 10.1, I have also proved that metaphors can be genre-specific, i.e., the same metaphor, when used in different genres, can serve different framing effects for different communicative goals. For example, I have shown that when used in editorials, metaphors have a propaganda function in the form of ideological instruction, while in the blogs, they function more as a personal narrative to express personal experiences of obesity. More generally, if CODCM-Daily works more on understanding 'obesity', the CODCM-Weibo witnesses more efforts in understanding 'oneself', or the 'abnormal' self with an 'abnormal' body that is struggling for social acceptance and significance.

Though it seems there are more differences than similarities in the systematic metaphors, it is also important for us to keep in mind the similarities between the editorials and blogs in their representations of obesity in the overall Chinese context. Obesity has become a key issue in both the public and private realms. Both the editorials and blogs seem to agree that obesity is 'problematic', and they similarly share blaming discourse towards individuals with obesity, albeit based on different reasons and to different extents. In detail, in the editorials, individuals with obesity are shamed for weakening the country's competitiveness and further bringing it into danger, while in the blogs, individuals with obesity are shamed for being irresponsible towards themselves and are further positioned as losers. By comparison, shaming in the editorials is presented more subtly, perhaps because the official medium draws on wider social factors related to obesity than the blogs which see obesity more as an individual issue.

When we go further, we can see that based on the question of 'what is behind obesity', a more relevant question here is 'what is a body'. My analysis over the previous chapters

has shown obesity cannot just be the over-accumulation of bodily fat. Instead, it is about social determinants surrounding it, about how society sees and defines bodies in an increasingly complex world. It is thus *perceptions* of bodies that underpin and also motivate the representations of obesity. In detail, two pairs of perceptions of bodies occur in my corpus: individual bodies vs. collective bodies; real bodies vs. fantastic bodies.

For the individual bodies or collective bodies, the collectivist culture in China affects the understanding and interpretation of the body and health-related issues perceived in society. People may distinguish, reject or even stigmatise the groups who endanger the collective or group health. From a sociological perspective, illness or underperforming bodies are treated as 'deviant'; individuals with illness are further deemed as failing to fulfil their social or institutional expectations (Parsons, 1951). As adherence to conformity is well entrenched in Chinese society, people with obesity are under even higher social pressure.

Further, according to Confucianism, which is still vibrant in current China, 身体发肤，受之父母，不敢毁伤，孝之始也 [Our bodies, including hair and skin, are received from our parents, and we dare not to injure or wound them. This is the beginning of filial piety.] In the Chinese context, the body is not individual as it is given by the parents. This makes individuals with obesity under the suspicion of being 'not filial' to their parents and further blamed in society. Yet, it also contributes to collective responsibilities toward obesity and further collective solutions to solve obesity (e.g., the stress on the role of families and schools in dealing with childhood obesity). While on the other hand, individualism, especially the neoliberalism discourse, which is also prominent in my corpus, has encouraged individuals to see bodies as their own. They are called to manage their own bodies and are further persuaded that they have the tools and agency to manage them. In this way, obesity has become an individual responsibility, which is deemed controllable as long as one controls himself.

For real bodies vs. fantastic bodies, another picture of how the body is important in modern society is presented in my corpus. Real bodies refer to people's status-quo bodies or the bodies where people are 'living in', while fantastic bodies express the aspirations and ideals people hold towards their bodies and, further, how they can use the fantastic body to control how they are perceived by others. In the editorials, a fantastic body hinging upon strength ideals is witnessed. Specifically, a fantastic body

embodying China's prosperity and strength is expected of its citizens, who are strong and thus provide evidence of the country's strengthened national power. More importantly, the strong body of its citizens can also help guarantee and sustain a strong country in the future.

On the other hand, in Weibo, the blogs give voice to the wish that the body should remain forever flourishing and supremely beautiful. With a step further, a fantastic body is attached to higher social mobility and personal success. However, the fantastic body may cause unrealistic and distorted views of people's real bodies, especially when the fantastic body is hardly obtainable due to the media's prescriptive norms of thinness. Particularly in the blogs, fantastic bodies are deemed promising to bring one a successful life, which can breed body dissatisfaction. Unnecessary body dissatisfaction can breed body anxiety in a disempowering way. As evidenced in my corpus, the pursuit of the fantastic body is more acute among females, who want to become cute, lovely and, at best, alluring. The pressure for women to appear thin and beautiful has been intensified more than ever. This is also seen in previous studies, e.g., 'normative discontent' has been coined by psychologists to explain the idea that it is normal for a female to be unhappy with their weight (Spettigue & Henderson, 2004).

In all, metaphors in my corpus have shown the entangled relations between different body discourses in China. The particular Chinese context weighs on people's responsibilities towards their bodies or how people are struggling with different body discourses. To explain the differences in the media representations of obesity, it is possible to consider how bodies are related to responsibilities in the Chinese context, which I will discuss in the next section.

10.3 Who Should be Responsible for Obesity?

To begin with, we need to acknowledge the social structural facet of health when we discuss any responsibilities in health. In this project, a key controversy regarding obesity is: Whose responsibility is obesity? Individuals, families, society, or the government? Or combined responsibilities of the groups?

In the editorials, an important part of the responsibility resides in the groups where one is located, such as families and schools. Occasionally, the local government is blamed for failing to 'guide' the parents and teachers. Different from Western media, which

also mentions the responsibility of food manufacturers (e.g., Brookes and Baker, 2021), I hardly encountered them in my corpus. On the other hand, more explicit manifestations of personal responsibility discourse were found in the blogs. This could be related to the neoliberal discourse in social media. However, attention should also be paid to the neoliberal governing discourses observed in the editorials, as proved by the frequent use of Money metaphors. This, I argued, can reflect the unique performance of neoliberal beliefs around the obesity issue in a transforming China. In all, neoliberal perspectives are witnessed across the media, which seem to call for the development of ideal citizenship around the obesity issue in China.

Particular attention should be paid to the neoliberal ideas regarding obesity when we do any responsibility attribution. There is long-standing criticism towards neoliberalism in health communication (e.g., Brookes, Harvey, & Mullany, 2016). Based on my analysis, one of the main problems of the neoliberal understanding of the obesity issue is that it aspires to put every individual into the existing social system without thinking about the positions and resources of individuals in society. The individual responsibility discourse around obesity under the neoliberal framework obscures socio-economic inequalities. It ignores the inequality of individuals in terms of class, social status and access to social support. It is important to understand that under the rosy picture where it seems everyone is living in an affluent and happy way, especially through the 'filter images' in social media, there are invisible groups living in socially disadvantageous positions. Not everyone enjoys the same capacity of self-determination in their life, and people are disproportionately affected by their context. For example, limited economic freedom reduces people's mobility and their affordance of life-work balance. Some people do not have time to cook for themselves or simply cannot afford the expensive fresh and healthy food and thus have no choice but to eat processed and high-calorie food. In fact, in Chapter 9, I discussed how obesity had become a symbol of poverty or embodied the limited resource one has in managing his body. In this sense, my findings in my corpus share the same position with Brookes and Baker (2021) that the shaming discourse towards obesity is unhelpful, unkind and unlikely to do good for individuals with obesity.

Yet, it needs to be pointed out that not all the data in my corpus frame obesity as a problem. Occasionally, there are some counter-discourses in my data, arguing the unfair treatment of people with obesity, even some fat pride. For example, there are blogs like

我肥我快乐 [I am fat and I am happy] and 胖也很可爱 [Being fat is also very cute]. However, given their very infrequent occurrences in my corpus, we can conclude that obesity is dominantly represented negatively in my corpus. Mentioning the counter-discourses, in the next section, I move on to discuss changing the metaphors.

10.4 Changing the Metaphors

Changing metaphors in the healthcare domain has recently been called for. For example, Checkland et al. (2020) suggest using 'the service map' metaphor to replace the 'care pathway' metaphors in healthcare, arguing that the former is more conscious of the effects of metaphor. Given the stigmatised obesity, we must think about ways to communicate destigmatising beliefs and attitudes around the obesity issue by changing the metaphors we use toward obesity. In my metaphor analysis in the previous chapters, I have also demonstrated the potential empowering and disempowering effects of metaphors and the need for further changing the representations of obesity.

With all the findings of this project in mind, what can be done to change the media discourse around obesity in the Chinese context? Which metaphors are more constructive? Maybe it is hard to give a definite or at least straightforward answer based on the findings of this thesis. Nevertheless, a general principle for answering the questions is that: what makes differences is not the types of metaphors used, but the kind of systematic metaphors and metaphorical scenarios evoked and the wider social-cultural discourses further associated with the scenarios. This especially applies to the Chinese context when health issues hold different social meanings.

I thus recommend plural or mixed metaphors used around obesity to deliver non-stigmatising alternatives. The key lies in being context-sensitive and individual-empathetic. I would like to stress empathy towards people living with obesity. This is related to the empathy use of metaphor (Cameron, 2016b). Empathy is about 'standing in others' shoes and thinking in others' brains' or experiencing another's emotions while simultaneously being aware that the emotions are not one's own (Rogers, 1980). The lack of empathy can cause the public to see obesity only as an individual responsibility, blame them, and deem them as deserving of their big bodies and further pay for that.

Thus, a key motivation for changing the metaphors is that more empathy should be provided for people living with obesity, given that they cannot control their lives sometimes, especially when we think about the social factors involved in the obesity issue. Metaphors used to label or categorise them affect how they will deem themselves and how they will further get along with their bodies. Hence, we need to be more sensitive in our way of using language towards them, being aware of the impact of language on them, for example, for new moms suffering from their delivery pain and who have no time to do a life-sport balance with their newborn babies. For those particular groups of individuals, criticising them is unproductive for their life and, on the contrary, will lead to lower self-esteem, a sense of helplessness and self-loathing.

Overall, language is an important tool to mitigate the obesity stigma in society. Bray & Bednarek (2021) have reviewed the reporting of obesity-related obesity in the English media, and they suggest that we should 'strive for nuance and balance' in the framing of obesity and avoid using problematic language toward obesity.

10.5 Merits and Limitations of This Project and Future Studies

Though I have reflected on the limitations of my methodology in Chapter 5, here, by reflecting on the overall theory and methodology of this thesis, I deem this project has the following merits and limitations.

First, I have to acknowledge the limitations of my data which was conveniently based on what I could collect in the *Daily* and Weibo. Especially my mono-modal data (only textual data) only focus on text and discard the multimodal issues. Exploring multimodal data will certainly deliver a fuller picture of obesity. Future studies can look into the visual semiotic choices made by the discourses. Also, specifically for my Weibo data, it is a limitation that I do not look into the interaction, for example, the construction of online communities among different bloggers. I would also like to call a research sample with maximum variation to be constructed in future studies to tackle bigger groups of people, for example, including a balanced ratio of male and female, also in terms of age, education, economic status as well as geographic locations, etc. Future studies can also conduct interviews and surveys on individuals with obesity to collect more 'authentic' voices on the lived-experience of obesity.

Secondly, though I mentioned it occasionally, I did not in detail explain the interactions between the metaphors in my data. For example, how different metaphors are combined and mixed and jointly represent obesity. Future studies can look into mixed metaphors. The study also does not explore the diachronic changes in the data, which can be conducted in future studies. Another aspect I did *not* cover in this project is the creativity of metaphors. Future studies can look into the recontexulisations of the metaphors, especially in social media to check their creativity. Nevertheless, we have witnessed more novel and creative metaphors in the blogs though there was not enough space to discuss them.

These limitations withstanding, this thesis provides a novel discussion on the less-explored obesity discourse in the Chinese context. In sum, the project has made three major contributions. First, this project raises awareness of the representing effects of metaphors. Secondly, this project reveals how different media in China represent obesity differently. Thirdly, this project showcases how the method of a multi-level metaphor analysis approach, which uses different methodological and theoretical underpinnings of metaphor studies, can be applied to the Chinese media discourse and is also expected to be useful for future studies. While I have not adopted corpus skills, I could quantify my findings, where appropriate and compare the quantification results between the editorials and blogs. I am reasonably confident that my findings have revealed the latest representations of obesity in the Chinese media, if not the whole representation.

Apart from the directions mentioned above, future studies can conduct cross-cultural and cross-linguistic comparisons. The Chinese-based data could limit the transferability of this project. Caution is thus advised when interpreting my arguments. It is very important if we want to avoid generalisations and stereotypes, which are still very common when talking about China from outside the Chinese context. We need to use a more eclectic view when we see a country as big as China with various discourses, as I have shown in my analysis.

Finally, my insider status as a native Chinese speaker may be a double-edged sword for my metaphor analysis. On the one hand, my background knowledge of the Chinese context has helped me analyse my data, yet my familiarity with the background knowledge may hinder me from 'thinking outside the box' or being not sensitive enough to catch some conventional metaphorical expressions in Chinese. Yet, I deem

the insider knowledge has helped me see how obesity has been represented in my data. Additional subjectiveness is seen in my personal experience of a 'not-thin-enough' woman in the Chinese context. There may be a certain degree of over-interpretation where I may utilise my experience when analysing the data. Yet I think the personal experience will make me more sensitive to the language used and, indeed, is helpful for me not to lose sight of the metaphorical clues and their hidden and unspoken implications. This experience is aligned with Baker (2018: 285) that once researchers identify some 'misrepresentations' around a group or a topic, which can further be linked to 'real-world consequences', it is understandable for the researcher to feel something in their research.

Readers of this thesis can judge how far I go in analysing the metaphors and their framing effects on obesity. Analysing the data made me aware of the actual linguistic practice around obesity in Chinese media and, more specifically, of my stance on the obesity issue. Inevitably, some representations of obesity with which I am more sympathetic could be more highlighted, while others I did not pay that much attention to could receive less discussion. It is with full awareness of the merits and limitations of my stance that I analyse the discourse in my corpus. I hope this project will inspire more studies of obesity or health discourse in the Chinese context, which can complement this study.

10.6 Final Reflection and Concluding Remarks

Overall, this PhD project showcases the capacity of metaphor analysis for understanding obesity and critically reflects on how more sensitive use of metaphors can help achieve better health communication effects and results around obesity in the Chinese context.

A final reflection I need to note relates to the extent to which I am critical towards the shaming discourse on obesity in my corpus. It is important to note that the editorials and blogs should not take the whole responsibility for creating weight stigma in society. It is true that media provide perhaps one of the most dominant vehicles for disseminating popular ideas of body size and obesity in our life. However, they are also affected by the largely accepted and well-established shaming discourse around obesity in society. This is especially the case for the bloggers. When the bloggers negatively represent obesity and the individuals with obesity (often themselves), they are reinforcing the weight

stigma which remains socially acceptable in China. The responsibility of creating, sharing and reinforcing shaming discourse towards obesity resides not only in the media, but more fundamentally in the society, of which we are all members, and thus we all have our due responsibilities in reducing the weight stigma.

To sum up, from obesity, we can see a changing China, with different bodies, different people, and different ways of seeing and evaluating bodies and people. Obesity reflects contemporary China, a bewildering, but more importantly, an intriguing place with many more things to explore. I wish to end on a positive note. With greater awareness of the obesity stigma and the jointed responsibilities we as social members share in reducing the stigma, greater possibilities for a more tolerant and empathic society toward people's bodies will come. Just as argued by Lupton (2013: preface), body shape is given meaning by 'complex and shifting systems of ideas, practices, emotions, material objects and interpersonal relationships'. The Chinese context, which is of huge transformations, has embedded many new meanings around bodies that wait for more academic attention in the future.

PUBLICATIONS DURING THE PHD

Xiang Huang & Mario Bisiada. 2021. Is obesity just a health issue? Metaphorical framings of obesity in the People's Daily. CADAAD Journal, 13(2). 18−40;

Xiang Huang. (2022). Metaphor, Stance and Obesity in the People's Daily (2010-2020). In: STANCE, INTER/SUBJECTIVITY AND IDENTITY IN DISCOURSE. Marín-Arrese, J,. Hidalgo-Downing, L., & Zamorano-Mansilla, J.D. (eds) (2022). Peter Lang. Accepted/in press

Xiang Huang. (2022). Book review: Brookes, G. & Baker, P. (2021) Obesity in the News: Language and Representation in the Press. Cambridge University Press. Journal of Corpora and Discourse Studies, 1(1): 26-29.

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Appendix

Editorials in the *People's Daily*

Article title	File name	Author(s)	Sources	Word/character
1. 体育，丰富心灵的重要载体	20110902	赵婀娜	http://opinion.people.com.cn/GB/15571588.html	1,144
2. 输得起的球赛，输不起的未来	20111027	李强	http://opinion.people.com.cn/GB/16033118.html	1,152
3. 应着手谋划国民营养计划	20111031	吴睿鸫	http://opinion.people.com.cn/GB/159301/16054130.html	825
4. 南京国民体质监测结果昨公布 小孩胖了 老人体质下降	20111215	中国江苏网	http://opinion.people.com.cn/GB/159301/16611325.html	1,842
5. "控重令"是对职工权利的"短斤少两"	20120130	徐志翔	http://opinion.people.com.cn/GB/159301/16965562.html	781
6. "长胖变瘦要罚款"是哪门子规定	20120205	刘楚汉	http://opinion.people.com.cn/GB/159301/16980846.html	641
7. 新鲜感一过，最"牛"课间操还"牛"吗？	20120215	毛开云	http://opinion.people.com.cn/GB/159301/17121483.html	1,073
8. 青春之歌，"病恹"躯体咋能唱响？	20120223	丛晓波	http://opinion.people.com.cn/GB/159301/17201463.html	1,027
9. 中国城乡小胖墩的罪与罚	20120601	胡小武	http://opinion.people.com.cn/GB/159301/18055635.html	1,119
10. 讲胖瘦什么的最土了	20121017	质数	http://opinion.people.com.cn/GB/n/2012/1017/c159301-19290896.html	575
11. 吃零食的孩子需健康教育	20121115	佟彤	http://opinion.people.com.cn/GB/n/2012/1115/c159301-19583268.html	888
12. 青春少女自残式减肥，谁是幕后黑手	20121116	李职贤	http://opinion.people.com.cn/GB/n/2012/1116/c1003-19603115.html	977
13. 都市白领，"过劳肥"别再"过懒肥"	20121128	李铭、张玥	http://opinion.people.com.cn/GB/n/2012/1128/c159301-19722343.html	903
14. 读懂"缺编30多万体育老师"的潜台词	20121203	邓海建	http://opinion.people.com.cn/GB/n/2012/1203/c159301-19771615.html	1,216
15. 将肥胖率纳入优秀班主任考核太雷人	20121216	梁好	http://opinion.people.com.cn/GB/n/2012/1216/c159301-19911044.html	724
16. 以发展促进健	20130110	洪延青	http://opinion.people.com.cn/G	985

康公平			B/n/2013/0110/c1003-20153208.html	
17. 对学生体质持续下降不能只是忧虑	20130129	叶祝颐	http://opinion.people.com.cn/GB/n/2013/0129/c159301-20352742.html	1,489
18. 来一场"腰围上的革命"	20130222	白剑峰	http://opinion.people.com.cn/GB/n/2013/0222/c1003-20564479.html	1,289
19. "青少年昂首挺胸"工程值得期待	20130307	耿银平	http://opinion.people.com.cn/GB/n/2013/0307/c1003-20705416.html	815
20. 从纽约限制碳酸饮料说起	20130314	佟彤	http://opinion.people.com.cn/n/2013/0314/c1003-20788145.html	780
21. 别指望"禁食秀"养成节食意识	20131004	光明网评论员	http://opinion.people.com.cn/n/2013/1004/c1003-23104699.html	975
22. 身体不能承受之"重	20131113	王佳可	http://opinion.people.com.cn/n/2013/1113/c1003-23520995.html	1,022
23. 体育应是大学必修课	20131118	佟彤	http://opinion.people.com.cn/n/2013/1118/c159301-23568552.html	1,020
24. "胖子减肥"的规定透着员工健康至上理念	20131209	郭文斌	http://opinion.people.com.cn/n/2013/1209/c159301-23787235.html	976
25. 男生不会引体向上带来的警示	20131224	庾春云	http://opinion.people.com.cn/n/2013/1224/c1003-23929621.html	928
26. 娃娃们需要更多的体育课	20140217	侯江	http://opinion.people.com.cn/n/2014/0217/c1003-24382868.html	932
27. 过节暴食暴饮折射"舌尖理性"的匮乏	20140217-2	郭云凯	http://opinion.people.com.cn/n/2014/0217/c1003-24381312.html	798
28. 如何吃得更健康？国家行动重在引导与干预饮食习惯	20140219	云无心	http://opinion.people.com.cn/n/2014/0219/c1003-24403237.html	1,331
29. 居民食物营养结构亟须调整	20140226	王东阳	http://opinion.people.com.cn/n/2014/0226/c1003-24466290.html	1,082
30. 当薯片成为小学"违禁品"	20140228	白阳	http://opinion.people.com.cn/n/2014/0228/c1003-24489659.html	995
31. 增强全民体质刻不容缓	20140307	陈科峰	http://opinion.people.com.cn/n/2014/0307/c1003-24563948.html	856
32. 减少小胖墩必须制度兜底	20140319	纪鹏	http://opinion.people.com.cn/n/2014/0319/c1003-24680567.html	886
33. 从小播下运动	20140605	李长云	http://opinion.people.com.cn/n/	717

			/2014/0605/c1003-25107546.html	
34. 运动习惯应该从小建立	20140722	侯江	http://opinion.people.com.cn/n/2014/0722/c159301-25318955.html	760
35. "外表配不上中国女人"的中国男儿当克己	20140728	佟彤	http://opinion.people.com.cn/n/2014/0728/c1003-25353912.html	1,035
36. 劳其筋骨也是教育任务	20140731	佟彤	http://opinion.people.com.cn/bai/0731/c1003-25376901.html	906
37. 算算运动不足的成本	20140801	吴键	http://opinion.people.com.cn/n/2014/0801/c1003-25382873.html	890
38. 还有多少减肥胶囊在夺命？	20140819	范德洲	http://opinion.people.com.cn/n/2014/0819/c159301-25493619.html	799
39. 体重计进学校是好事	20140922	佟彤	http://opinion.people.com.cn/n/2014/0922/c1003-25707073.html	1,013
40. 军人体重关乎战场上的"生死"	20150215	蓝鹰	http://opinion.people.com.cn/n/2015/0215/c1003-26569614.html	1,174
41. 航空公司以胖瘦论英雄实在不地道	20150326	徐刚	http://opinion.people.com.cn/n/2015/0326/c1003-26754820.html	873
42. 用现金奖励大学生减肥并不靠谱	20150516	叶建明	http://opinion.people.com.cn/n/2015/0516/c159301-27010562.html	674
43. "有奖减肥"呼唤提高体育服务	20150516-2	纪鹏	http://opinion.people.com.cn/n/2015/0516/c159301-27009473.html	559
44. 别让"反手炫腹"幽你一默	20150612	高亚洲	http://opinion.people.com.cn/n/2015/0612/c1003-27146065.html	902
45. 禁用反式脂肪值得未雨绸缪	20150618	佟彤	http://opinion.people.com.cn/n/2015/0618/c159301-27172626.html	1,003
46. 像关心股市一样关心国民身高体重	20150701	毛建国	http://opinion.people.com.cn/n/2015/0701/c159301-27233845.html	1,101
47. "大众减肥"从减贫开始	20150729	王晓波	http://opinion.people.com.cn/n/2015/0729/c1003-27376041.html	1,007
48. "微胖界"是吃货给自己的安慰	20150731	指间沙	http://opinion.people.com.cn/n/2015/0731/c1003-27391224.html	1,161
49. 体育之美贵在坚持	20150829	雅婉	http://opinion.people.com.cn/n/2015/0829/c159301-27530209.html	863
50. 与身体和解	20151012	郁晶陶	http://opinion.people.com.cn/n/2015/1012/c159301-27688313.html	775

51. 把"课间十分钟"还给孩子	20151106	李红梅	http://opinion.people.com.cn/n/2015/1106/c1003-27783029.html	2,634
52. 以瘦为美的审美愈走畸形	20151211	明硕勋	http://opinion.people.com.cn/n/2015/1211/c159301-27917848.html	942
53. 揭示美的多样性	20160217	张慧中	http://opinion.people.com.cn/n1/2016/0217/c1003-28130631.html	1,200
54. 不就是"A4腰"吗，不必太较真	20160324	吴迪	http://opinion.people.com.cn/n1/2016/0324/c1003-28223328.html	796
55. "三无"整形大师"生意兴隆"，谁惯的？	20160415	木子	http://opinion.people.com.cn/n1/2016/0415/c1003-28280010.html	1,369
56. 满足学生需求的"奇葩课"当然受追捧	20160525	毛旭松	http://opinion.people.com.cn/n1/2016/0525/c1003-28377758.html	935
57. "运动减脂课"是因人施教的典范	20160526	张娜	http://opinion.people.com.cn/n1/2016/0526/c1003-28382140.html	883
58. 补齐中小学健康管理短板	20160712	周继坚	http://opinion.people.com.cn/n1/2016/0712/c1003-28546493.html	904
59. 警惕农村胖墩背后的伪劣食品"下乡"	20160726	薛家明	http://opinion.people.com.cn/n1/2016/0726/c1003-28586256.html	909
60. 有健康意识更要有健康行动	20161007	叶健	http://opinion.people.com.cn/n1/2016/1007/c1003-28758379.html	620
61. 健康路上，一个都不能少	20161124	白剑峰	http://opinion.people.com.cn/n1/2016/1124/c1003-28891460.html	1,361
62. 规范减肥市场需三张处方	20161228	丁慎毅	http://opinion.people.com.cn/n1/2016/1228/c1003-28983491.html	871
63. 健身又到新春规划时	20170204	唐天奕	http://opinion.people.com.cn/n1/2017/0204/c1003-29057644.html	780
64. 爱孩子，请从体育开始	20170601	董洪亮	http://opinion.people.com.cn/n1/2017/0601/c1003-29310192.html	1,332
65. 辟谷减肥就是"想法把你饿瘦"	20170606	罗志华	http://opinion.people.com.cn/n1/2017/0606/c1003-29320210.html	803
66. "光盘行动"与我们息息相关	20170606-2	徐志军	http://opinion.people.com.cn/n1/2017/0606/c1003-29319469.html	718
67. 白领多发"过劳肥"该怎么破？	20170627	蒋萌	http://opinion.people.com.cn/n1/2017/0627/c1003-29366454.html	534
68. "过劳肥"不该成为白领职	20170627-2	练洪洋	http://opinion.people.com.cn/n1/2017/0627/c1003-	1,374

				业病				http://opinion.people.com.cn/n1/2017/0705/c1003-29364884.html	

	标题	日期	作者	链接	字数
69.	肥胖更隐秘的问题是被歧视和心理压抑	20170705	张田勘	http://opinion.people.com.cn/n1/2017/0705/c1003-29383315.html	1,102
70.	"三无"减肥	20170803	林亦辰	http://opinion.people.com.cn/n1/2017/0803/c1003-29445824.html	149
71.	积极废人，年轻人立了 Flag 就要把它扶稳	20180509	林俊鹏	http://opinion.people.com.cn/n1/2018/0509/c1003-29973297.html	1,354
72.	家长们注意了！小胖子越来越多	20180530	赵清源	http://opinion.people.com.cn/n1/2018/0530/c1003-30021913.html	935
73.	新年许个健身愿	20190124	程晨	http://opinion.people.com.cn/n1/2019/0124/c1003-30588833.html	833
74.	下一千次决心不如行动一次	20190222	连海平	http://opinion.people.com.cn/n1/2019/0222/c1003-30896216.html	698
75.	减肥之路为什么常半途而废	20190402	徐南溪	http://opinion.people.com.cn/n1/2019/0402/c1003-31008614.html	581
76.	代吃代喝——好玩就足够，认真你就输了	20190411	范娜娜	http://opinion.people.com.cn/n1/2019/0411/c1003-31023816.html	1,121
77.	青少年患"老年病"不是小问题	20190710	王恩奎	http://opinion.people.com.cn/n1/2019/0710/c1003-31224117.html	749
78.	别把代餐品错当"减肥神药"	20190807	梓铭	http://opinion.people.com.cn/n1/2019/0807/c1003-31280810.html	657
79.	提升孩子体质家长别拖后腿	20190808	谭敏	http://opinion.people.com.cn/n1/2019/0808/c1003-31282929.html	687
80.	每个人是自己健康第一责任人（人民时评）——共建共享我们的"健康中国"	20190814	宋红梅	http://opinion.people.com.cn/n1/2019/0814/c1003-31293363.html	1,421
81.	以健康素养促进"主动健康"	20190815	白剑峰	http://opinion.people.com.cn/n1/2019/0815/c1003-31295942.html	1,354
82.	"催吐减肥"是捷径还是险途？	20190820	蒋萌	http://opinion.people.com.cn/n1/2019/0820/c119388-31306820.html	1,182
83.	建设体育强国当从青少年始	20190904	谭敏	http://opinion.people.com.cn/n1/2019/0904/c1003-31335099.html	1,205
84.	从"中国饭碗"看发展成	20190912	王瑞生	http://opinion.people.com.cn/n1/2019/0912/c1003-31350007.html	1,473

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85. 体育强国，从开足体育课始	20190918	唐天奕	http://opinion.people.com.cn/n1/2019/0918/c1003-31358483.html	1,267
86. 别让孩子"过劳肥"	20191125	张焱	http://opinion.people.com.cn/n1/2019/1125/c1003-31471846.html	1,125
87. 做个健康中国人其实并不难	20191129	张田勘	http://opinion.people.com.cn/n1/2019/1129/c1003-31480467.html	1192
88. "代餐热"，盲目跟风要不得	20191220	李海蒙	http://opinion.people.com.cn/n1/2019/1220/c1003-31515119.htm	678
89. 锻炼"复工"也是当务之急	20200430	张田勘	http://opinion.people.com.cn/n1/2020/0430/c1003-31693803.html	1,245
90. 健康很贵 不要浪费	20200711	孙小二	http://opinion.people.com.cn/n1/2020/0711/c1003-31779493.html	600
91. 非法"网红"减肥药何以屡禁不止	20200722	罗志华	http://opinion.people.com.cn/n1/2020/0722/c1003-31792670.html	1110
92. 把三岁娃喂到70斤岂止是监护不当	20200826	史洪举	http://opinion.people.com.cn/n1/2020/0826/c1003-31836886.html	869
93. 珍惜每一粒粮食	20200904	白剑峰	http://opinion.people.com.cn/n1/2020/0904/c1003-31848683.html	1387
94. 以科学素养支撑健康体魄	20200909	李红梅	http://opinion.people.com.cn/n1/2020/0909/c1003-31854300.html	1172
95. 北青报：遏制代餐食品乱象亟须监管跟进	20200915	郑桂灵	http://opinion.people.com.cn/n1/2020/0915/c1003-31861223.html	1146
96. 厉行节约大有可为（走出健康管理的误区）	20201020	白弈非	http://opinion.people.com.cn/n1/2020/1020/c1003-31897952.html	1303
97. 防控"小胖墩"需要多方合力	20201028	郑桂灵	http://opinion.people.com.cn/n1/2020/1028/c1003-31908639.html	1199
98. 齐抓共管防控青少年儿童肥胖	20201214	马冠生 陆颖理 谢朝辉	http://opinion.people.com.cn/n1/2020/1214/c1003-31964823.html	1161
Total				98,178

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