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Book review

The Language of Crisis: Metaphors, Frames and Discourses, Mimi Huang and Lise-Lotte Holmgreen (Eds.). John Benjamins, Amsterdam/Philadelphia (2020). 309 pp., EUR 99.00 (e-Book), ISBN: 978902704967.

The Language of Crisis: Metaphors, frames and discourses is a collection of original research studies pertaining to an exploration of the functions, characteristic features and applications of metaphors and frames used in crisis-related discourse and communication. After a fairly long yet informative introduction by Mimi Huang, the book is divided into three main parts that address discourses of financial and organizational crisis (chapters 1–3), discourses of political conflicts (chapters 4–6), and discourses of personal crisis within the contexts of psychotherapy and counselling (chapters 7–10). The three parts represent the three respective types of crisis situations related to organizational, political and personal struggles. Contributed by a group of international scholars from across the globe, this publication constitutes an innovative and welcome addition to the fields of pragmatics, discourse analysis and crisis studies.

Apart from providing the aims of the volume and an overview of the individual chapters as they usually appear in an introductory chapter, Mimi Huang highlights the four central features of the book. They include the originality of the approaches taken in the studies and the ensuing research findings, the mindful treatment of linguistic data from a social constructionist perspective, the application of qualitative and quantitative methods to enhance research validity and reliability, and finally the use of authentic linguistic and extra-linguistic data in crisis discourses. The introduction also offers a detailed discussion of the new approach that combines discourse analysis and cognitive linguistics in studying crisis discourse with a primary focus on conceptual metaphors and frames. As an important prelude to the entire book, this introduction provides a very useful background for the other chapters in which various specific facets of crisis discourses within different contexts are explored.

Based on Conceptual Metaphor Theory (CMT) (Lakoff and Johnson, 1980), Chapter 1 explores how financial news media use metaphor and metonymy when reporting on a stock market crash in a financial crisis. O'Mara-Shimek argues that Right to Information (RTI) is an effective means to examine the use of metaphor in promoting the transparency and reliability of journalistic excellence. Inspired by the basic tenets of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) (Fairclough, 2010), the chapter also discusses the roles and responsibilities of news media organizations when they make ideologically informed decisions that have a significant impact on the public's perceptions and attitudes in times of market uncertainty. In Chapter 2, Soares da Silva offers a corpus-based comparison of metaphors of crisis and austerity in the Portuguese press during the two crucial periods of the 2008 global economic crisis and the subsequent Portuguese government's austerity policies in 2011–2013. Relying on a corpus of news and opinion articles, the study investigates how metaphors are conceptualized and exploited to serve ideological, emotional and moral purposes. The study makes use of the theoretical frameworks of cognitive linguistics and CDA and provides further empirical evidence that the crisis- and austerity-related metaphors are socially embodied. They are in fact manipulated to serve as a powerful conceptual and discourse strategy to frame economic, political and social issues in times of crisis. Guided by Fillmore's theory of framing (Fillmore, 1982) together with CMT and social media research, Chapter 3 moves on to analyze crises taking place in two high-profile organizations of a large Danish bank and a Danish restaurant chain. Posts and articles on the crises in social media were analyzed to explore the dynamics of public frames with shared cultural and social beliefs. Focusing on the framing power of metaphors in social media, Holmgreen argues that, by exploiting well-established experiential domains in social and cultural life, commentators in public social media may use frames to unite stakeholder groups to fight against some unacceptable organizational behavior for their own interests.

Part II consists of three chapters concerned with conflicts on the political landscape. Katarina Rasulic in Chapter 4 considers how new conceptual metaphors and frames function in Serbian political discourse concerning a territorial dispute crisis between Serbia and Kosovo. This corpus-aided study illustrates well the evaluative nature of conceptual metaphor and metonymy in a crisis-related political discourse, highlighting the ways in which metaphor and metonymy are used and abused to achieve the desired effect of maintaining inequality. Applying cognitive-linguistic theory and a triangulatory approach, combining corpus-linguistic methods with critical metaphor analysis, Chapter 5 investigates how the Arab revolutions have been conceptualized metaphorically in political speeches delivered by Western politicians from the USA and the

UK. Ullmann is able to identify a wide variety of metaphorical conceptualizations related to the Arab Spring, and she points out that selected entailments of different conceptual mappings reflect politicians' distinct political positions and attitudes. In Chapter 6, Kotzur examines the language use of the less powerful and often neglected social groups. The focus of the research is on the emotional appeal and persuasive power of metaphors in demonstration posters and short texts used by protesters against the railway modernization project *Stuttgart 21* in Germany. By analyzing the cross-domain conceptual mappings that protesters use to express their views about the project, Kotzur finds that metaphors in this context are used both to create and fuel conflict. This chapter represents a good example of CDA and critical metaphor studies from a cognitive linguistic perspective.

The last part of the volume features four more chapters that examine counseling and narrative discourses of personal crises when individual health and well-being are under threat. Chapter 7 presents an interesting case of applying cognitive linguistic discoveries on metaphor to psychotherapy practice. Using metaphor as a transformative tool, the study explores the transformative power of metaphor in “talking cure” practices to face personal crises in an attempt to foster change. In the study, Ferrari makes use of an innovative “M” psychometric test to measure and account for the transformative power of metaphor-based and metaphor-driven counseling experienced by both counselors and clients. The chapter ends by calling for an interdisciplinary collaboration between counselors, psychotherapists, discourse analysts and neuroscientists for a more productive completion of the research project. Chapter 8 also looks at the use of metaphors in psychotherapy and counseling. But in this case, Tay presents a quantitative study of metaphor using as data 29.5 h of Chinese psychotherapy talk over multiple sessions. Drawing on the technique of log-linear analysis, Tay focuses on the relationships between speakers (therapists or clients), functions (functions of metaphor), targets (topics of metaphor), and phase (occurrence of metaphor along the treatment span), attempting to identify and interpret the interactions of these variables. Factor plots as a data visualization tool are also introduced to highlight the nature of metaphor co-construction in personal crisis discourse.

In Chapter 9, attention is shifted to narrative data related to the individual's perception of their health conditions. More specifically, the chapter analyzes the self-reflective narratives written by six breast cancer survivors, focusing on their transitional experiences from diagnosis to survivorship. Mimi Huang develops an original concept of “narrative modulation” as an analytical model for the study in which narrative modulators function by metaphors, frames, image schemas and psychosocial coping strategies in patients' life stories. This innovative concept of narrative modulation adopted in the study proves valuable in helping to provide a holistic and contextualized understanding of patient health conditions which is certainly important for clinicians and healthcare professionals to administer an effective and individually centered treatment of patients in their transition from health crisis to survivorship. Rounding out Part III, the final chapter by Knapton describes three case studies with data collected from semi-structured interviews with women with obsessive-compulsive disorder (OCD). Employing image schemas from cognitive linguistics together with some approaches to illness narratives, the study aims to explore the relationships between the conceptualizations of the body and the OCD onset. The analysis of all three narratives indicates that women's experiences of OCD can be attributed to their unwanted bodily changes, pointing to an alternative framing of OCD with an embodied and contextualized perspective.

Discussing the conceptualization of the word “crisis” in the West, Mimi Huang expounds the meaning of the word in the Chinese culture, emphasizing the dynamic nature of a crisis recognized as “a crucial point amid said dangerous moment” (p. 3). It is interesting to note that this view of crisis echoes the prevalent general understanding of the word “crisis” in current Chinese daily discourse. The word crisis in Chinese is composed of two characters with the first literally meaning “danger or disaster” and the second “opportunity.” As such, a crisis in Chinese culture means a dangerous moment or period, but if it is handled properly and effectively, it can turn into an opportunity for positive and important change. In the present increasingly competitive and fast-changing world, crises of different kind abound. The chapters in this volume offer a shining example of how crisis can be studied from a cognitive linguistic and discursive perspective, constituting a timely addition to the growing literature in discourse analysis, cognitive linguistics and crisis studies.

At the outset of the book, Mimi Huang claims that this collection of research papers aims to explore “the discursive and cognitive features, patterns, effects and functions that collectively constitute crisis-related discourse” (p.1). With original findings, innovative analytical models and empirical evidence, this edited volume certainly succeeds in helping fill a research gap by advancing our understanding of crisis-related discourses within organizational, political and personal contexts. Specifically, the studies presented in the book showcase the roles metaphors and frames play in crisis discourse from a contextualized, embodied and agent-centered perspective. It seems certain that the book will have a fresh appeal not only to academics like linguists of different persuasions but also to clinicians and healthcare professionals in general. At this juncture, I must say that I am positively impressed and fascinated too by the studies presented in the book in which theories are put into practice for the well-being of people and social advancement.

In terms of organization, the overall structure of the text is highly effective. The chapters follow a clear organizational template (abstracts, theory or approach, data analysis, findings and discussion). This is particularly useful for readers to compare and contrast different studies in order to increase their understanding. Overall, this book is inspirational, and it should serve as an excellent reference for students, teachers and researchers in the areas of cognitive linguistics, pragmatics, discourse analysis and crisis studies.

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Wenjun Zhang is Professor of English and Pragmatics at Jinhua Polytechnic, Zhejiang Province, China. She pursued her education in China, the UK, and the USA. She has published more than thirty papers in a number of Chinese and international journals, focusing on applied linguistics, pragmatics and intercultural communication studies. Her main research interests include pragmatics, sociolinguistics, online language teaching, and English for vocational purposes.

Wenjun Zhang
Jinhua Polytechnic, Jinhua 321007, China
E-mail address: zhangwenjun.1976@163.com