

THE HONG KONG POLYTECHNIC UNIVERSITY  
香港理工大學

Department of ENGLISH  
英文學系

## Frames of Reasoning: Metaphor, Politics, and Novel Expressions

Kathleen Ahrens  
Department of English  
The Hong Kong Polytechnic University

Research Centre for  
PCE Professional Communication in English

Opening Minds • Shaping the Future  
啟迪思維 • 成就未來

## Conceptual Metaphors Are Embedded In Our Language

- > More abstract concepts are understood in terms of more concrete concepts
- > Source domain – concrete concepts
- > Target domain – abstract concepts
- > Systematic correspondences between source and target domains

THE HONG KONG POLYTECHNIC UNIVERSITY  
香港理工大學

Department of ENGLISH  
英文學系

Opening Minds • Shaping the Future • 啟迪思維 • 成就未來

## Conceptual Metaphor Theory

Our most important abstract concepts (e.g., time, causation, mind, knowledge, love, morality, politics) are defined by metaphor, often by multiple inconsistent metaphors.

Metaphor is conceptual--a matter of thought and not merely a use of words.

Our reasoning and knowledge are built on these metaphors, which have their own internal logic and support inferences.

THE HONG KONG POLYTECHNIC UNIVERSITY  
香港理工大學

Department of ENGLISH  
英文學系

Opening Minds • Shaping the Future • 啟迪思維 • 成就未來

## Conceptual Metaphor Theory

Conceptual Metaphors	Image Metaphors
> Time is money	• Her waist is an hour glass
> Time is a location	• His arms are sticks
> Idea is building	
> Argument is war	

THE HONG KONG POLYTECHNIC UNIVERSITY  
香港理工大學

Department of ENGLISH  
英文學系

Opening Minds • Shaping the Future • 啟迪思維 • 成就未來

## TIME IS MONEY

- Time is a valuable commodity in Western culture
- A limited resource used to accomplish goals

THE HONG KONG POLYTECHNIC UNIVERSITY  
香港理工大學

METAPHOR LAB  
AMSTERDAM

VU  
UNIVERSITEIT  
AMSTERDAM

Faculty of  
Social Sciences

## TIME IS A LOCATION

I fear trouble **up ahead**.

There's going to be profit for us **down the road**.

THE HONG KONG POLYTECHNIC UNIVERSITY  
香港理工大學

Department of ENGLISH  
英文學系

Opening Minds • Shaping the Future • 啟迪思維 • 成就未來



We're *coming up on* Christmas.



We've *reached* the final week of the term.

## TIME IS A LOCATION

THE HONG KONG POLYTECHNIC UNIVERSITY  
香港理工大學

ENGLISH  
English Language Centre

Opening Minds • Shaping the Future • 啟迪思維 • 成就未來

## IDEA IS BUILDING



His novel lacks a discernible structure.





Building a working hypothesis can take a lot of effort in this field.

THE HONG KONG POLYTECHNIC UNIVERSITY  
香港理工大學

ENGLISH  
English Language Centre

Opening Minds • Shaping the Future • 啟迪思維 • 成就未來

## IDEA IS BUILDING

His theory lacks a solid foundation.

THE HONG KONG POLYTECHNIC UNIVERSITY  
香港理工大學

ENGLISH  
English Language Centre

Opening Minds • Shaping the Future • 啟迪思維 • 成就未來

## ARGUMENT IS WAR



- Your claims are indefensible.
- He attacked every weak point in my argument.

THE HONG KONG POLYTECHNIC UNIVERSITY  
香港理工大學

ENGLISH  
English Language Centre

Opening Minds • Shaping the Future • 啟迪思維 • 成就未來

## ARGUMENT IS WAR

- His criticisms were right on target.
- If you use that strategy, he'll wipe you out.



THE HONG KONG POLYTECHNIC UNIVERSITY  
香港理工大學

ENGLISH  
English Language Centre

Opening Minds • Shaping the Future • 啟迪思維 • 成就未來



### Examining TRADE Metaphors in State of the Union Addresses

Christian Burgers (Vrije) & Kathleen Ahrens (PolyU)

THE HONG KONG POLYTECHNIC UNIVERSITY  
香港理工大學

ENGLISH  
English Language Centre

Opening Minds • Shaping the Future  
啟迪思維 • 成就未來

## Economic metaphors

- Subtle differences in the use of economic metaphors between languages (Charteris-Black & Musoff 2003; Semino 2002; Wang, Runtsova, & Chen 2013) and genres (Skorczynska & Deignan 2006)
- Economic metaphors relatively similar and stable across languages (Arrese & Vara-Miguel 2016; Bratoz 2004; Negro 2016)
- Our study: Diachronic approach
- How does the metaphorical framing of one target concept in economic discourse ('trade') change over time?

## Trade

- > Target term used since at least the 18<sup>th</sup> century
- > No semantic shift in target term



## Change (Burgers, 2016)

- > Fundamental change



Physical object →  
Living being  
(Fundamental  
Change)



Physical object →  
Physical object  
(Incremental  
Change)

## Research Questions (RQ)

- > RQ1: How does attention to the topic of trade vary over time? (Control)
- > RQ2: How does the use of specific trade metaphors vary over time? (Fundamental change)
- > RQ3: How does the meaning of trade metaphors change? (Incremental change)

## Method - Corpus

- > State of the Union (SOU) speeches
  - Mandated in the US Constitution
  - Between 1790-2014, in every year, at least one SOU speech held (with the exception of 1933)
  - Forty-two different US Presidents
  - 1,825,258 words



## Method - Procedure

- > Cases of 'trade'
  - 1,159 cases
  - Excluded proper nouns ("World Trade Center")
  - 1,121 cases for analysis<https://digital.lib.hkbu.edu.hk/corpus/>
- > Metaphor
  - Coded with MIPVU + historical dictionaries (Webster)
  - Source domains from previous studies
  - Intercoder reliability at least "substantial";  $\kappa > .60$  (Landis & Koch, 1977)

Year	Country	Corpus	President	Collection: 15 words before trade	Trade	Collection: 15 words after trade	Metaphoric or literal	Conceptual metaphor (8 words)	Metaphorical word
1945	USA	US - SCU	P. G. Roosevelt	... United States and everywhere else. To point the way to break up that system out	Trade	Agreement Act was passed based upon a policy of equality of treatment among nations and of...	Proper noun		
1992	USA	US - SCU	W. Bush	... we'll get more good American jobs within our own hemisphere through the North American Free	Trade	agreement and through the Enterprise for the American Initiative. But changes are here, and more...	Proper noun		
1993	USA	US - SCU	Clinton	... latest round of world trade talks and the successful completion of a North American Free	Trade	Agreement with appropriate safeguards for our workers and for the environment. At the same time...	Proper noun		
1790	USA	US - SCU	Washington	... will. Your attention seems to be not less due to that particular branch of our	Trade	which belongs to the Mediterranean. So many circumstances unite in rendering the growth rate of...	Metaphorical	TRADE IS PLANT/TREE	branch
1792	USA	US - SCU	Washington	... plan must be devised for promoting civilization among the friendly tribes and for carrying on	Trade	with them upon a scale equal to their wants and under regulations calculated to protect	Metaphorical	TRADE IS A PHYSICAL OBJECT	carrying on trade = object related to notion of equilibrium
1793	USA	US - SCU	Washington	... during the present session. Among these, that	Trade	most particular notice. The results of your	Metaphorical	PROTESTE FULGID	regulate
1793	USA	US - SCU	Washington	... the steps which have been taken toward the resolution of the law for opening a	Trade	with the Indians will likewise be presented for the information of Congress. Temperate discussion of...	Metaphor	TRADE IS CONTAINER	opening a trade
1793	USA	US - SCU	Washington	... the best information I have been able to obtain I would seem to fear	Trade	to the Mediterranean without a protecting force will always be insecure and our citizens exposed...	Metaphor	TRADE IS OBJECT	insecure
1796	USA	US - SCU	Washington	... deep regret I mention that circumstances of a very unfortunate nature have lately occurred. Our	Trade	has suffered and is suffering extensive injuries in the West Indies from the system and...	Metaphor	TRADE IS PERSON	VALUANCE: NEGATIVE (sad)

## Research Questions (RQ)

- > RQ1: How does attention to the topic of trade vary over time? (Control)
- > RQ2: How does the use of specific trade metaphors vary over time? (Fundamental change)
- > RQ3: How does the meaning of trade metaphors change? (Incremental change)

## Conclusion

- Success factors for longer use of metaphors:
  - Metaphors high in the concreteness dimension of physicality and low in the concreteness dimension of specificity are likeliest to be used over longer time periods
- Limitations:
  - Specific set of speeches
- What about change:
  - across different types of media?
  - across different languages?
  - across different cultures?

## Profession Specific Corpora

## Research Centre for Professional Communication in English

THE HONG KONG POLYTECHNIC UNIVERSITY  
香港理工大學

Opening Minds • Shaping the Future • 啟迪思維 • 成就未來

## RCPE Professional Communication in English

RCPE Professional-specific Corpora

Click here to select a profession-specific corpus

Back to Front Page

The collection of RCPE profession-specific corpora is developed by the Research Centre for Professional Communication in English (RCPE) of The Hong Kong Polytechnic University. It contains real-life texts, discourses and genres collected from different professional communities and contexts in Hong Kong. It also contains two corpora of research/journal articles published in high impact journals of up to 39 disciplines. Professionals, researchers, teachers, students and other language users can leverage these language resources to enhance their language proficiency and professional communicative competences.

Click here for the list of publications by users of RCPE Professional-specific Corpora.

If there are questions, please contact our Project Associate Mr. Amos Yung (amos.yung[at]polyu.edu.hk).

Choose the profession-specific corpora that you wish to search:

Professional Communication Corpora - English	Corpus/Genre	Part of speech	Speech-act
• Hong Kong Corpus of Spoken English	CorpusGramOnline	Part-of-speech	
• Hong Kong Corpus of Surveying and Construction Engineering	CorpusGramOnline	Part-of-speech	
• Hong Kong Engineering Corpus	CorpusGramOnline	Part-of-speech	
• Hong Kong Financial Services Corpus	CorpusGramOnline	Part-of-speech	
• Hong Kong Corpus of Corporate Governance Reports	CorpusGramOnline	Part-of-speech	
• Hong Kong Corpus of Corruption Prevention	CorpusGramOnline	Part-of-speech	

<http://rcpce.engl.polyu.edu.hk>



## RCPCE Profession-specific Corpora

### Professional Communication English Corpora

1. Hong Kong Corpus of Spoken English	1.0m words
2. Hong Kong Corpus of Surveying and Construction Engineering	5.7m words
3. Hong Kong Engineering Corpus	9.2m words
4. Hong Kong Financial Services Corpus	7.3m words
5. Hong Kong Policy Address Corpus	0.3m words
6. Hong Kong Corpus of Corporate Governance Reports	1.0m words
7. Hong Kong Corpus of Corruption Prevention	0.5m words
8. Corpus of Research Articles 2007	5.6m words
9. Corpus of Journal Articles 2014	6.0m words

 THE HONG KONG POLYTECHNIC UNIVERSITY  
 ENGLISH  
 Opening Minds • Shaping the Future • 啟發思維 • 成就未來

## RCPCE Profession-specific Corpora

### Political and Governmental Addresses Corpora

- Addresses by the Hong Kong Governors and the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region Chief Executives
- Speeches by the Republic of China (Taiwan) Presidents
- Reports on the work of the government by the Premier of the State Council, People's Republic of China
- Hong Kong Budget Corpus
- 香港總督及香港特別行政區行政長官施政報告
- 中華民國總統演說
- 國務院總理政府工作報告

 THE HONG KONG POLYTECHNIC UNIVERSITY  
 ENGLISH  
 Opening Minds • Shaping the Future • 啟發思維 • 成就未來

## Hong Kong Financial Services Corpus

The HKFSC is compiled for users to learn more about the language of the financial services industry, in particular the study of the patterns of use of specific words and phrases.

The HKFSC corpus searches display only short segments of texts (12 words either side of the word(s) being studied), and therefore the complete texts contained in the HKFSC are not available to the user to either read in their entirety or to download.

 THE HONG KONG POLYTECHNIC UNIVERSITY  
 ENGLISH  
 Opening Minds • Shaping the Future • 啟發思維 • 成就未來

## Hong Kong Financial Services Corpus

- Annual Report (1,274,981 words)
- Bank Service Charges (20,545 words)
- Brochure (12,348 words)
- Circular (401,262 words)
- Codes (24,600 words)
- Corporate Announcement (88,281 words)
- Factsheet (14,528 words)
- Fund Description (17,707 words)
- Fund Report (69,616 words)
- General Meeting (27,701 words)
- Guidelines (131,522 words)
- Insurance Policy (16,258 words)
- Insurance Product Description (103,478 words)
- Interim Report (605,273 words)
- Investment Product Description (340,029 words)
- Media Release (889,963 words)
- Model Agreement (7,005 words)
- Ordinance (384,950 words)
- Principle (1,441 words)
- Procedures (1,171 words)
- Prospectus (1,959,667 words)
- Results Announcement (321,542 words)
- Rules (5,611 words)
- Speech (610,194 words)
- Standards (12,488 words)

 THE HONG KONG POLYTECHNIC UNIVERSITY  
 ENGLISH  
 Opening Minds • Shaping the Future • 啟發思維 • 成就未來

## Online corpora search functions

### Hong Kong Financial Services Corpus (Advanced Searches)

You can search for two or three words in combination, e.g. **financial institutions** (search wordphrase one), **banks** (search wordphrase two) and **profit** (search wordphrase three).

- Spoken** - This function allows you to test the search in terms of the distance between the search items. For example, a search for "bank" and "profit" with a span of 2 means that only instances with up to two intervening words are displayed. (e.g. "Bank recorded an **profit**".)
- Collocation** - A feature can be used to calculate the significance of the association of two words. A score of 2.0 or more indicates a significant association. This function only works for two wordphrase searches and a span needs to be specified.
- Sort type** - The instances can be sorted automatically based on the word immediately to the left or the right of the centred word. If you select "left context", the instances in that word is sorted based on that position relative to the centred word.

Enter search wordphrase one:  Search wordphrase two:

Search wordphrase three:  Span:



Calculate score (requires span): ☐ YES ☒ NO ☐ Sort type:  Sort right ☒ Sort left

Print Collocations: ☐ No list ☒ List by number of instances ☐

Select corpora or subcorpora:

[ Return to Main Search Page ]

Easy to use interfaces for visitors to search for authentic language usage examples of different professions in the RCPCE Profession-specific Corpora

 THE HONG KONG POLYTECHNIC UNIVERSITY  
 ENGLISH  
 Opening Minds • Shaping the Future • 啟發思維 • 成就未來

## Online corpora search functions

There are 10 instances of **laundry**

- tenants seeking, gardening, repair and maintenance, **laundry** and business centre services are also provided to the
- ture maintenance; architectural information; clothes **laundry**; construction of business booths and shops; repair of
- customers. Ms. Apple Kong General Manager, Sunshine **laundry** Convenience Store Co. Ltd., Q8 How can you make su
- Hong Kong Ms. Apple Kong General Manager, Sunshine **laundry** Convenience Store Co. Ltd. ? Price Comparison betw
- tion Co., to our customers for many years. For the **laundry** industry, the latest energy efficient electric clot
- lent and environmentally friendly equipment to the **laundry** industry? Yes, CLP has been actively promoting energy
- oilting paste; cleanser; liquid shampoo; starch for **laundry** purpose; spice; cedar wood; shoe shine; toothpaste 17
- cent months, CLP has helped four major players in the **laundry** sector successfully adopt these products. This is an
- ner Revenue Club house income 988 1,534 1,150 99 448 **laundry** service income 135 131 154 186 01 1,123 1,065 1,304 20
- ng chemicals 1700045 21/01/2002 20/01/2012 3 soap, **laundry** starch, cleaning solution, shoe shine, abrasive, cosine

**More searches**



**Equal to:** Find more instances of a word or phrase

**Starts with:** Search for words beginning with your search item (e.g. **structure**, search output: **structural, structured** etc)

**Ends with:** Search for words ending with your search item (e.g. **structure**, search output: **infrastructure**)

**Contains:** Search for words containing your search item (e.g. **structure**, search output: **restructuring**)

equal to  SEARCH

 THE HONG KONG POLYTECHNIC UNIVERSITY  
 ENGLISH  
 Opening Minds • Shaping the Future • 啟發思維 • 成就未來



*RCE* Research Centre for  
Professional Communication in English

**Change in Metaphorical Framing: Metaphors of TRADE in 225 Years of State of the Union  
Addresses (1790–2014)**

**APPLIED LINGUISTICS:** <https://doi.org/10.1093/applin/amv055>

**Christian Burgers**  
Department of Communication Science  
Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam

 Grant #275-89-020  
Netherlands Organisation for Scientific Research Grant # 040-11-604

**Kathleen Ahrens**  
Department of English  
Hong Kong Polytechnic University

 大學教育資助委員會  
University Grants Committee GRF #1210014

 THE HONG KONG  
POLYTECHNIC UNIVERSITY  
香港理工大學



 Opening Minds • Shaping the Future • 啟迪思維 • 塑造未來