

# Adjectivized Grammatical Metaphors in Daily Chinese Conversation

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**Abstract.** This paper investigates the phenomenon of adjectival grammatical metaphor in everyday Chinese conversation, with the aim of determining its development and its relation to vocabulary structure. The results show that the verb phrase is one of the main sources of adjectival grammatical metaphors. The combination of adjectival phrases and nouns is a form of 'verb phrase consists of verb + adjective', which is commonly used in conversation situations. Moreover, vocabulary structure and lexicality are the major factors that affect the expression of adjectival grammar metaphor and its developing mode.

## 1. Introduction

Grammatical metaphor is considered one of the most critical techniques for enhancing visual comprehension, as it provides a novel approach to interpreting grammar and semantics. While traditional linguists view it as a grammatical phenomenon, modern linguistics regard it as a form of syntax. Although adjectival grammatical metaphors may appear deceptively easy to employ, their utilization requires significant proficiency. Many adjectival grammatical metaphors can be found in some conversations. Some of these manifestations are apparent in conversations. Adjectival grammar metaphor is a kind of rhetoric, which has the characteristic expression and the semantic characteristic. It has many manifestations in daily speech. The research of adjective grammar metaphor can be traced back to Chen Hongzhang. From *Adjectives to Verbs: The Rhetorical Significance of Everyday Chinese Adjectival*. However, language studies, in general, tend to focus on the macro-level, as highlighted by JIAO and MENG [1].

This problem was brought up by Zhang Weihua in 1980's. He elaborated on this problem in his book *Modern Chinese Rhetoric*. At present, however, the research status of this problem is still relatively weak. Moreover, the definition of "adjectival" has been disputed. The author posits that "adjectival" serves as a rhetorical device that integrates time, space, and movement into a sentence, a common feature in everyday conversation. While some researchers regard it as a variant of the verb or as a "relation" between the verb and the adjective, this study's practical application may prove challenging. Firstly, it requires rhetorical skill. Secondly, in practice, it is a grammatical phenomenon that encompasses many words and phrases used in daily conversations. Lastly, its definition is not clear. A convincing argument can only be made through a thorough exploration of its grammatical and rhetorical implications [2].

## 2. Basic Concepts of Adjectival Grammatical Metaphors

In grammar metaphor research, grammar metaphor is the most important basis, and it has great explanation ability. Language is an ongoing process of interpreting and selecting itself. These words, phrases, sentences, etc., have been given new meanings and have influenced people. Therefore, it is inevitable for the phenomenon to appear in the language. According to modern linguistics, the grammatical structure itself is a process of constant selection and interpretation [3]. It is suggested that grammar metaphor is a kind of rhetoric method, which is based on the understanding of language, changing it to suit its environment or expressing its opinion, and thus has a powerful explanation. In the study of this phenomenon, certain aspects stand out as being more prevalent in the corpus, exhibiting common features that are noteworthy, yet still open to further investigation. This construct has found extensive use in modern Chinese contexts, particularly in daily conversation, owing to its expressive power and semantic characteristics, which are easily discernible through the lens of grammatical metaphor. Thus, these words and phrases can be analyzed and explained in depth from a number of perspectives [4]. Moreover, it is easy to associate grammar metaphors with the syntactic structure of a language by studying it from the perspective of language. This connection makes it possible to understand the relationship between structure and semantics in the context of the whole sentence.

Grammatical metaphor is a prominent linguistic phenomenon initially introduced by American linguist Robert Rosenberg (1962-1989). According to Rosenberg, language functions as a metaphor system, and grammatical metaphor, also known as language metaphor, constitutes a way of expressing meaning implicitly.

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Rosenberg further posits that "concepts and propositions are conceptually intelligible and propositions are acceptable." Nevertheless, when it comes to language structure, definitions can vary and often lack consistency, as they may not be present in a single sentence. Thus a 'word' can be understood as a conceptual form with a 'meaning'. The term "meaning" is a very wide and complicated concept, whether in terms of meaning or grammar. It is common for people to define a word based on what they believe to be the most appropriate expression of that meaning, which leads to what is known as vocabulary usage. For instance, "Good/Bad = Good" and "Good/Bad" are commonly used meanings [5]. Grammatical metaphor is actually an abstraction of a very specific and simple language phenomenon into an abstract and complicated one. Therefore, both the theory of grammar and rhetoric are regarded as the most important components of metaphor and rhetoric theory. However, unlike the concepts of "meaning" and "use", there is no clear, uniform and comprehensive definition of grammatical metaphor, so it is often difficult to define and analyze it. Moreover, the Chinese language also has a lot of adjectival grammatical metaphors. Since the combination of adjectives and nouns creates a somewhat more complex, universal and expressive vocabulary structure, from a grammar perspective, adjectivalised grammatical metaphors represent two or more combinations in a sentence with different meanings [6].

The grammatical adjectival phenomenon is associated with the change in the form of the language, and it is also associated with the structure. Although the adjectival grammatical metaphor is a common phenomenon in conversation, it has also attracted a lot of researchers' attention. Some researchers, for instance, believe that adjectival grammatical metaphor is a special kind of grammar structure. Other researchers have argued that "adjectival grammatical metaphors occur when verb phrases are compounded with nouns", and that "this form is a new form of linguistic expression made by compounding verb phrases and nouns" [7]. Other scholars contend that "the semantic structure of verb phrase → noun + adjective" is a prevalent phenomenon, observed in various forms of Chinese, including adjectivalized and adverbialized constructions. However, these observations fail to provide a comprehensive explanation of the phenomenon discussed in the preceding sections, and do not offer a detailed analysis of adjectival grammatical metaphor.

### **3. Language Structure Theory**

The theory of language structure is a crucial aspect of linguistics, seeking to investigate language phenomena from multiple perspectives and furnish a theoretical framework for their analysis. The present study centers on the theory of metaphor [8]. Metaphor represents a means of describing the essence of a given object, entity, or behavior, by drawing a comparison with another, similar object or entity. It is worth noting that while anything, thought, or behavior may be metaphorical in nature, it need not corre-

spond precisely to an objective object. It can also be regarded as a conceptual aggregate consisting of a number of abstract concepts..... " Metaphor is not only objective and universal but also has subjectivity, i.e., abstract meaning or image, which has certain significance and value in metaphor. "When you use it to describe something or an idea, it means that you have taken on a 'form' or 'category'." Therefore, metaphor is a kind of thinking process whose core content is abstract. It is a kind of thinking activity that turns a particular object into a kind of idea or image, so as to reflect its essence. "When one uses a particular concept as a universal concept, this is the form that is adopted. When they are used in conjunction with a particular idea, they form such a form ". "This paper describes the relation of 'form', 'category' and 'thought' in metaphor theory [9].

### **4. The Distinction between Lexicalisation and Lexicalized Metaphors**

Nouns and adjectives are the basic words of the language, and they are different from each other. Lexicalisation is the transformation of a verb phrase into a noun. An adjective, for instance, indicates a higher degree and a larger amount. A noun refers to a higher rank or quality, position, rank, or quality. The verb phrase has the function of indicating action. Nouns can indicate the content or object of an action, and their attributes and functions are related to the cognitive activity of the human being. The verb phrase is a language unit in the sentence, and the noun is an independent syntactic unit in the sentence, as opposed to one another [10]. Nouns mean a class of objects and phenomena and their properties, i. e., the properties of objects and phenomena. Adjectives are the properties of objects or phenomena, that is to say, their functions, meanings, or attributes. Nouns and adjectives are distinct grammatical categories, albeit interconnected. While nouns refer to objects or entities, adjectives modify or qualify them. Nouns may sometimes function adverbially to indicate time, as in the case of temporal adverbs denoting elapsed time since an event occurred. In contrast, verb phrases embody more dynamic qualities than adverbial metaphors, as they typically entail the combination of a verb, an adverb, and an adjective.

Adjectives can be classified in a variety of ways, but they all have one thing in common: they are all verbs [11]. First of all, it is necessary to make clear that these nominalization acts do not have any adjectival or other forms because they have no meaning and no form. Secondly, it is important to emphasize that there must be no confusion between 'adjective' and 'verb'. Again, there are two kinds of adjectival forms: those that indicate the type of action, like "He did well" and "He did it very seriously". The second type indicates the status of the action. Furthermore, both types of adjectives can be defined as meaningful, having a form (or form) and satisfying a functional need.

#### 4.1. Case Study

"Mum always taught me to cook." From this, it can be seen that one of the basic features of adjectivalised grammatical metaphorical expressions is the substitution of a particular event by another event under certain conditions. For example, the phrase "Mum used to say to me 'you need to learn to cook for yourself'" is an adjectivalised grammatical metaphor because it is used to replace a particular event. Here we look at another example: "He is very lazy and hardly does any housework," "He also doesn't like to clean and often leaves the house very dirty." "He doesn't bathe every day." We can see from the above example that the noun adjectives in this example are "lazy", "sloppy", etc., and that these noun. These noun adjectives are replaced by another verb (the verb for "clean") under certain conditions. Also in a conversation: she says: "He is lazy." "He hardly does any housework." If she simply substitutes this noun adjective for the verb, then the conversation expresses the metaphor of someone being lazy; if she substitutes the verb for the noun word, then the conversation expresses the metaphor of someone being lazy. Again in this example we can see two expressions: when asked why someone would not do his chores, he says, "Because he is lazy." When we ask why someone would not take a bath, he says, "Because he doesn't like to clean." Both expressions then can be expressed in the metaphorical form of comparing a person to a lazy person. Another example, also in the context of a conversation where two verbs (a noun adjective and a verbal noun) together replace an event (verbal adjective + verb/noun) for a metaphorical expression, shows that etymological grammatical metaphors can be indeterminate, vague, abstract and metaphorical in character in language. Here too we can see the difference between the expressions of this grammatical metaphor and the semantic metaphor. Adjectivized grammatical metaphors are created by using an adjective to modify a noun or a verb, which results in a metaphorical description of an object or situation. These metaphors are often used to add emphasis and vividness to a conversation. For example, when describing a person who is very tall, a Chinese speaker might use the phrase "高高的" (gāo gāo de), which refers to "very tall." This phrase uses the adjective "高" (gāo), meaning "tall," to describe the person, creating a metaphorical image of a towering figure.

Adjectivized metaphors are not limited to describing physical attributes. They can also be used to describe emotions, feelings, and situations. For example, a Chinese speaker might describe a difficult situation as being "棘手的" (jí shǒu de), which means "tricky" or "thorny." This phrase uses the adjective "棘手" (jí shǒu), suggesting "prickly" or "thorny," to describe the situation, creating a metaphorical image of a difficult and challenging problem.

One of the most common uses of adjectivized metaphors in everyday Chinese conversation is to describe food. Chinese cuisine is known for its rich variety of flavors, and adjectivized metaphors are often used to describe the taste of food. For example, a Chinese speaker might describe a dish as being "酸酸甜甜的" (suān suān tián tián de), which means "sour and sweet." This phrase uses the adjectives "酸" (suān) to express the meaning

"sour," and "甜" (tián) expresses "sweet," to describe the taste of the dish, creating a metaphorical image of a complex and satisfying flavor.

Adjectivized metaphors can also be used to describe people's character traits. For example, a Chinese speaker might describe someone as being "心灵手巧" (xīn líng shǒu qiǎo), which means "clever and skillful." This phrase uses the adjectives "心灵" (xīn líng) for "mindful" or "soulful," and "手巧" (shǒu qiǎo) for expressing "skillful with one's hands," to describe the person, creating a metaphorical image of a creative and capable individual.

#### 5. Conclusion

To conclude, adjectival grammatical metaphors are commonly found in both spoken and written Chinese. Verb phrases are the most important source of adjectivization, followed by adjective-modified ones. Adjectival grammatical metaphor is a prominent feature in discourse. The word structure, vocabulary type, vocabulary, and usage frequency all have an impact on adjectival structure. It is found that the usage of verb phrases in daily conversation and in written Chinese is widespread and widespread. First of all, there are two kinds of verb phrases: verb phrases (for example, verb + noun, verb + noun, or both) based on the semantic type of the word. The other type is adjectival modifiers (e.g., verb plus noun or the latter with). Secondly, with the change of the grammar function from modification to complement, a great deal of lexical metaphors have appeared in everyday conversation and written Chinese: for example, "modification" and "modification of noun" and "modification". Third, there are a lot of lexical metaphors in daily Chinese conversation, which are composed of verb phrases, adjectives, and forms of both (or both). Fourth, the reason why this kind of lexical metaphor appears in the specific context of everyday Chinese conversation is because that it is more likely to reflect the trends in the Chinese vocabulary system and its evolution.

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