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## 客語歇後語語意之機制：隱喻與轉喻的觀點(1/2)

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**The Semantic Mechanisms of Hakka Two-part Allegorical Expressions:  
A Metaphoric and Metonymic Viewpoint (1/2)**  
(客語歇後語語意之機制：隱喻與轉喻的觀點 1/2)  
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**Abstract:**

The focus of the first year project is to establish a taxonomic framework to appropriately categorize Hakka two-part allegorical sayings. While displaying most of the idiomatic characteristics observed in English or Dutch idioms, two-part allegorical sayings are different such that they cannot be succinctly classified by the conceptual apparatus proposed by Geeraerts (1995, 2003). The criteria of classification require not only form-meaning mappings but also conceptual and phonological associations. Six types are hence identified: partially isomorphic with sound associations, partially isomorphic with conceptual associations, totally isomorphic with sound associations, totally isomorphic with conceptual associations, non-isomorphic with sound associations, and non-isomorphic with conceptual associations. Furthermore, although this discourse form demonstrates the prevalent Great Chain of being maintained by Lakoff and Turner (1989), it is claimed that specific local folk knowledge schemas need to be activated both for the linguistic choice of the surface forms and for the inferred derivations of this genre.

**Key words:** two-part allegorical sayings, total isomorphism, partial isomorphism, sound associations, conceptual associations, the Great Chain of being, folk knowledge schemas

**中文摘要：**

本計畫第一年的研究目的是提出客語歇後語的分類架構。歇後語具有一般成語或慣用語的特性：約定俗成性、固定性、隱喻性、格言性、非正式性、及情感性。本計畫經修改 Geeraerts (1995, 2003) 對西方成語或慣用語的分類特徵後，提出以下歇後語的六種類型：部分同構及語音機制、部分同構及語意機制、完全同構及語音機制、完全同構及語意機制、非同構及語音機制、非同構及語意機制。此外，本研究發現歇後語不但反映了 Lakoff and Turner (1989) 提出的普遍存在各文化的物種關係鏈，同時，屬於個別文化的知識結構操縱了歇後語的語言形式及語意衍生。

**關鍵字：**歇後語、完全同構、部分同構、語音機制、語意機制、物種關係鏈、個別文化的知識結構

**1. Introduction**

Contrary to the traditional view of idioms as unanalyzable, the cognitive view of idioms holds that most idiomatic expressions are analyzable with their meanings motivated by conceptual

mechanisms (Gibbs 1995, Kövecses and Szabó 1996, Nunberg et al. 1994, Geeraerts 1995, 2003, among others). Lakoff (1993), and Lakoff and Turner (1989) further advance that cognitive mechanisms such as metaphor, metonymy and the interactions of the two are highly involved in the interpretations of poems, fables, allegories, and proverbs. Several cognitive and psychological experiments conducted have also evidenced not only that idioms are compositional but also that conceptual links between idiomatic expressions and their figurative interpretations can be activated by speakers (Gibbs 1990, 1995). In fact, Geeraerts (1995, 2003) proposes a conceptual apparatus that examines idioms from both the paradigmatic dimension and the syntagmatic dimension. Based on his model of the two criteria—motivation and isomorphism—idioms can be classified into four types: isomorphic and motivated (e.g. *spill the beans*), isomorphic and nonmotivated (e.g. *face the music*), nonisomorphic and motivated (e.g. *wring one's hands*) and nonisomorphic and nonmotivated (e.g. *shoot the breeze*).<sup>1</sup>

Nevertheless, such a succinct four-way classification of idioms in English or Dutch, although partially covering some instances of two-part allegorical sayings, cannot appropriately categorize most of them. In general, a two-part allegorical saying contains two formulaic expressions, carries opaque figurative semantics that needs to be derived through conceptual mechanisms, and is often associated with evaluative connotations; therefore, it can in a sense be deemed as a genre of idioms (cf. Nunberg et al. 1994, Gibbs 1995, Kövecses and Szabó 1996). However, because their linguistic features are so distinctive that they cannot neatly fit into typical categories of idioms, an appropriate categorization of such a genre is an issue worth investigating. Moreover, since the emergence of such a genre is closely connected with the folk knowledge rooted in the culture, an examination of the elements that constitute the source domain is also a crucial issue for the understanding of such a linguistic form. This study aims to take up this task with a specific goal to structure a taxonomic framework for this special genre of idioms. Following introduction, section 2 presents Geeraert's (1995, 2003) model of classification of idioms. Section 3 then proposes the taxonomic framework for the classification of two-part allegorical sayings, highlighting specific features adherent to this genre. Section 4 explicates the major elements in the cultural models that are employed to portray two-part allegorical sayings. Finally, section 5 concludes the paper and points out future directions for interpretations of such a genre.

## **2. Geeraerts' (1995, 2003) model of idioms**

In classifying kinds of figurative specialization in idioms, Geeraert (1995, 2003) proposes two criteria—*isomorphism* and *motivation*—to examine idioms from both paradigmatic and syntagmatic dimensions. *Isomorphism* refers to syntagmatic transparency whereby there is a correlative correspondence between the syntactic construction and its semantic structure. *Motivation*, on the other hand, is defined as paradigmatic transparency in which the semantic

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<sup>1</sup> In Geeraerts (1995, 2003), examples from Dutch are used to illustrate the four types of idioms.

extension that relates the original meaning of an idiom to its idiomatic meaning is observed. Based on this model, four types of idioms are given in Geeraert (1995, 2003):

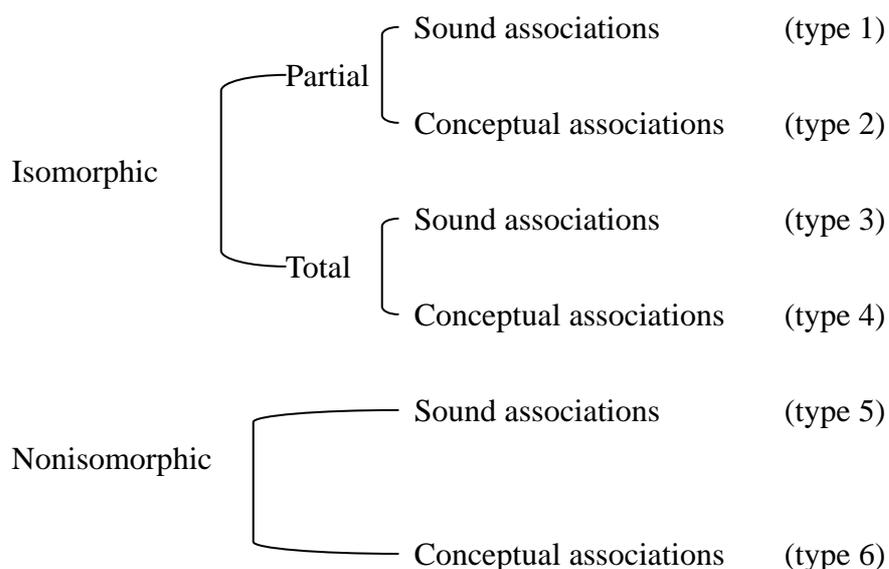
- (1) *de koe bij horens vatten*  
to take the cow by the horns >  
'to take the bull by the horns, to grasp the nettle'
- (2) *met spek schieten*  
to shoot with bacon >  
'to tell a tall story, to boast'
- (3) *met de handen in het haar zitten*  
to sit with one's hands in one's hair >  
'to be at one's wit's end, to be in trouble'
- (4) *als puntje bij paaltje komt*  
when point reaches pole >  
'when it comes to the crunch, when all is said and done'

Example in (1) is isomorphic and motivated with the cow metaphorically mapping to the whole problem and the horns metaphorically indicating the most problematic situation. Example in (2) is isomorphic—the telling corresponding to *spek* and the tall tales corresponding to *schieten*. However, it is not motivated since it is opaque why shooting with bacon should come to denote boasting. Example (3) is nevertheless metonymically motivated since it is easy to come up with an image about what a person could do when handling a difficult problem. Yet, it is not isomorphic due to lack of direct mapping between the literal meaning and the idiomatic one. Finally, example (4) is neither isomorphic nor motivated: first, no one-to-one correspondence can be detected between the syntactic structure and the semantic structure; second, it is unclear why a point reaching a pole is related to becoming serious.

Such a nice four-way classification of idioms works very well for Dutch and English idioms as maintained by Geeraert. However, when it comes to two-part allegorical sayings, the model requires modification. For one thing, if we stick to Geeraert's criteria for the moment, several observations can be noted. Most conspicuously, whereas all interpretations of two-part allegorical sayings are motivated from the literal meaning to the intended interpretation, only a few are isomorphic. Furthermore, some cases require not only more than one layer of derivations but also intricate interactions of metaphor and metonymy in order to derive the intended meanings. Others, although isomorphic, need to activate both semantic and phonological processes to get the associated meanings. Still others are not isomorphic but strongly motivated with the activation of both phonological and semantic mechanisms. For another, two-part allegorical sayings often deeply involve diversified local practices heavily embedded in a particular cultural model. Such a complex apparatus hence deserves a finer-grained examination. In the next section, a taxonomic framework is to be established to holistically structure such a unique genre.

### 3. A taxonomic framework for two-part allegorical sayings

Approximately 1300 items from Hakka are examined for classification.<sup>2</sup> Out of the data, some of them are isomorphic—partially or totally—whereas most of them are non-isomorphic.<sup>3</sup> All of the two-part allegorical sayings, however, are motivated either through activation of various cognitive mechanisms and the interaction of them or through activation of phonological apparatus resulting in frame shifts in Barcelona’s (2003) sense.<sup>4</sup> Hence, cross classification of two-part allegorical sayings will give us the following types after subsuming Geeraert’s categorization model:



**Figure 1: types of two-part allegorical sayings**

The figure displays a holistic picture of types of two-part allegorical sayings. Six types are observed. Some of the data demonstrate partial mappings between their surface forms and their semantic structures whereas some of them illustrate total mappings. The meanings exhibited by both types are motivated either through sound associations (type 1 and type 3) or through conceptual mechanisms (type 2 and type 4). In addition to isomorphic cases, non-isomorphic examples can also be motivated either through sound associations (type 5) or through conceptual mechanisms (type 6). In what follows, each of the six types will be illustrated with examples. Section 3.1 discusses those that are isomorphic and section 3.2 examines those that are non-isomorphic.

<sup>2</sup> The Hakka data are taken from the following sources: *Kejia Shifu Hua* (Hakka Master’s Proverbs), *Kejiahua Yanyu Xiehouyu Xuanji* (Collections of Hakka Proverbs and Two-part Allegorical Sayings), *Kejia Yanyu Shiswei* (Selections of Hakka Proverbs and Sayings), *Miaolixian Keyu Yanyu Miyu Ji* (Collections of Miaoli Hakka Sayings and Riddles), and *Keyan Yibai Shou* (One-hundred Hakka Proverbs and Sayings).

<sup>3</sup> Out of the 1300 items in Hakka, 34% of them are isomorphic whereas 66% of them are non-isomorphic.

<sup>4</sup> Investigation into the derivations of the intended interpretation of such a genre is a follow-up project of this study.

### 3.1 Isomorphic two-part allegorical sayings

About 34% of the Hakka data exhibit isomorphic, with a partial or total mapping between the characters of the first part and those of the second part. Often a source-in-target or a target-in-source metonymy is invoked to highlight the characters that carry more pertinent information. A close one-on-one linking is observed for cases of total mapping whereas only a partial component of the compounded phrase in the target is mapped with the source for cases of partial mapping. Both sound associations and conceptual associations are observed in either partial isomorphic type or total isomorphic type. Each of the four types is illustrated with examples below.<sup>5</sup> First consider the following examples of type 1, partial isomorphic with sound associations:<sup>6</sup>

- (5) *cun<sup>11</sup>-tien<sup>24</sup> ge<sup>55</sup> go<sup>31</sup>-ien<sup>11</sup> -- yu<sup>11</sup> to<sup>11</sup> li<sup>11</sup> (yu<sup>11</sup>-to<sup>55</sup>-li<sup>24</sup>)*  
 spring NOM orchard exist peach plum make sense  
 ‘Orchards in spring—making sense’
- (6) *lan<sup>55</sup> fung<sup>11</sup>-ca<sup>24</sup> -- con<sup>55</sup> gau<sup>31</sup> (con<sup>55</sup>-gau<sup>31</sup>)*  
 broken windmill earn twine with some spared time to fool around  
 ‘A broken windmill—with some spared time to fool around’
- (7) *zu<sup>11</sup>-li<sup>55</sup>-teu<sup>11</sup> bong<sup>31</sup> ziu<sup>31</sup> -- sung<sup>11</sup> sat<sup>5</sup> (sung<sup>11</sup> sat<sup>5</sup>)*  
 pig’s tongue go together wine two tongues double loss  
 ‘(Eating) a pig’s tongue together with wine—double loss’

All the cases display partial isomorphism between the source and the target. In example (5), partial isomorphism between the source and the target is observed since on the surface only the orchard *go<sup>31</sup>-ien<sup>11</sup>* is mapped to full of peaches and plums *yu<sup>11</sup>to<sup>11</sup> li<sup>11</sup>*. The first component with the expression depicts a vivid image—an orchard in spring where peaches and plums grow abundantly. Such an image, however, does not correlate with the image projected by the second part without a very crucial apparatus—sound associations. In Hakka, *full of peaches and plums* [yu<sup>11</sup> to<sup>11</sup>li<sup>11</sup>] is pronounced closely to *making sense* [yu<sup>11</sup>-to<sup>55</sup>-li<sup>24</sup>]—with the same segmental combinations but different tone patterns. Due to the sound associations of the near homophones, two independent frames are linked together. A frame adjustment from an orchard frame to a frame of human’s comment is called for, resulting in frame shift in Barcelona’s sense (2003).<sup>7</sup> In example (6), *lan<sup>55</sup> fung<sup>11</sup>-ca<sup>24</sup>* ‘a broken windmill’ is mapped onto *gau<sup>31</sup>* ‘strangled’. Sound

<sup>5</sup> *Hanyu Pinyin* system is rendered for the romanization of the data. The tone diacritics indicated in the data follow the system used in *Taiwan Kejiahua Cidian* [Hakka Dictionary of Taiwan]. 5 is the highest, and 1 is the lowest. 24 is yinping, 31 is shangsheng, 55 is qusheng, 11 is yangping, 5 is yangri, and 2 is yinru. The following abbreviations are used for their corresponding grammatical functions: NEG, negation; NOM, nominalizer. The corresponding character versions of the examples are given in the appendix.

<sup>6</sup> About 60 items are classified as type 1, occupying 5% of the total data.

<sup>7</sup> Barcelona (2003: 86f) points out that frame overlap and frame blend are two types of frame interaction. The former occurs when two cognitive frames are connected by a shared conceptual substructure whereas the latter occurs when two unrelated frames are mingled into one.

associations are activated in this example as well. The target expresses how a broken windmill can have its wheel constantly strangled. The expression [con<sup>55</sup> gau<sup>31</sup>] ‘to have the wheels constantly twined’ is a homophone of [con<sup>55</sup> gau<sup>31</sup>] ‘to have some spared time to fool around’. Frame adjustment is triggered between two unrelated frames—one having to do with a windmill and the other having to do with a person’s reaction to a certain states-of-affair. In the same vein, example (7) delineates a partial mapping between zu<sup>11</sup>-li<sup>55</sup>-teu<sup>11</sup> ‘pig’s tongue’ and sat<sup>5</sup> ‘tongues’. The target expression sung<sup>11</sup>sat<sup>5</sup> ‘two tongues’ refers to the pig’s tongue and that of the person who is eating the pig’s tongue. Such an expression is phonologically associated with the expression *double loss* due to the same pronunciation in this Hakka dialect—[sung<sup>11</sup> sat<sup>5</sup>]. What is intriguing is that because of the sound association between sat<sup>5</sup> ‘tongue’ and sat<sup>5</sup> ‘loss’, *a pig’s tongue*, which should be pronounced as [zu<sup>11</sup> sat<sup>5</sup>], is never called that way by pork dealers. To diverge from such negative imagery of loss in business, a euphemistic expression zu<sup>11</sup>-li<sup>55</sup>-teu<sup>11</sup>, literally meaning ‘pig profit head’, is coined by them instead. The coinage of this expression with li<sup>55</sup> ‘profit’, completely antonymous of sat<sup>5</sup> ‘loss’, hence serves as a symbolism of converging to positive imagery of making a lot of profit by selling this particular part of a pig’s head.

Next, let’s turn to examples of type 2, partially isomorphic with conceptual associations between the source and the target:<sup>8</sup>

- (8) *cok<sup>5</sup> sui<sup>11</sup>-yi<sup>11</sup> giu<sup>55</sup> fo<sup>31</sup>-- ngia<sup>24</sup>-fo<sup>31</sup>-song<sup>55</sup>-siin<sup>24</sup>*  
 wear coir raincoat fight fire put fire onto body  
 ‘Trying to fight a fire with a coir raincoat on—asking for trouble.’
- (9) *lo<sup>31</sup>-fu<sup>31</sup> zia<sup>55</sup> zu<sup>11</sup>-yu<sup>24</sup> zia<sup>55</sup> mo<sup>11</sup> van<sup>11</sup>*  
 tiger borrow pig have borrow NEG return  
 ‘Tigers borrowing pigs—never returning what are borrowed’
- (10) *den<sup>24</sup>-zan<sup>31</sup> mo<sup>11</sup> yu<sup>11</sup> -- fi<sup>55</sup>- sim<sup>24</sup>*  
 oil lamp NEG oil burn wick  
 ‘An oil lamp without oil—requiring mental exertion’
- (11) *sak<sup>5</sup>-teu<sup>11</sup> dang<sup>31</sup> zung<sup>55</sup> coi<sup>55</sup>-- nan<sup>11</sup> sang<sup>24</sup> gin<sup>24</sup>*  
 stone top grow vegetable hard grow root  
 ‘Growing vegetables on the stone—hard to put down roots’
- (12) *siip<sup>5</sup>-ngi<sup>55</sup>-ngiet<sup>5</sup> gam<sup>11</sup>-za<sup>55</sup> -- liong<sup>31</sup> teu<sup>11</sup> tiam<sup>11</sup>*  
 December sugar cane two ends sweet  
 ‘Sugar cane stems in December—try to please both sides’

In all the five examples, partial mappings between the surface form and the semantic structure of the target component are observed. However, unlike those of type 1 which trigger sound associations, these cases exercise conceptual mechanisms to derive the intended meanings. In example (8), there is a causal relationship between the first component and the second—putting

<sup>8</sup> About 240 items are classified as type 2, holding 19% of the total Hakka data.

fire on the body because of trying to fight a fire wearing a coir raincoat whose material is easily burned by fire. Partial isomorphism is shown by *giu<sup>55</sup> fo<sup>31</sup>* ‘fight a fire’ and *ngia<sup>24</sup>-fo<sup>31</sup>-song<sup>55</sup>-siin<sup>24</sup>* ‘put fire on the body’. The intended meaning of this item is conceptually motivated. It is easy to imagine a situation in which a person who tries to fight a fire when wearing an easily-burned coir raincoat is asking for trouble for himself. A physical action of a person is employed to metaphorically comment on his behavior. Next, example (9) indicates partial isomorphism whereby *zia<sup>55</sup>* ‘borrow’ occurs in both the source and the target. In this case, an animal’s behavior is used to metaphorically evaluate a person’s behavior. Since a tiger is carnivorous and fierce by nature, there is no chance that a borrowed pig by a tiger will be returned. Hence, such a saying is used to remark on a person who never returns what are borrowed.

In addition to humans and animals, plants, complex objects or natural objects are utilized as the source. In example (10), an attribute of an oil lamp is portrayed—*den<sup>24</sup>-zan<sup>31</sup>mo<sup>11</sup>yu<sup>11</sup>* ‘an oil lamp without oil’. Since the wick of an oil lamp serves to suck up oil so that the lamp can burn, an oil lamp without oil will have to burn its own wick. A wick that is in the middle of a lamp is analogically compared to the heart of a person that is also located in the center of his body. Hence *burning the wick* can be conceptually projected onto an image of *burning a person’s heart*, which then leads to the intended meaning ‘requiring mental exertion’. Example (11) illustrates another causal relationship between the source and the target. In this case, the domain of plants is employed, *sak<sup>5</sup>-teu<sup>11</sup>dang<sup>31</sup>zung<sup>55</sup>coi<sup>55</sup>* ‘growing vegetables on the stone’. Folk knowledge tells us that it is highly unlikely for vegetables to grow roots when they are planted on the stone. Without deep roots, vegetables will not grow strong. Likewise, if a person finds hard to put down roots somewhere, he does not fit in; hence he does not feel the place to be home and to have relationships between the people there. Finally, example (12) illustrates a case whereby the essential biological nature of a plant is engaged in the source domain: *siip<sup>5</sup>-ngi<sup>55</sup>-ngiet<sup>5</sup>gam<sup>11</sup>-za<sup>55</sup>* ‘sugar cane in December’. Folk knowledge tells us that sugar cane is extraordinarily sweet in December when the stems are to be harvested. Such an attribute is used to characterize a person who is not trustworthy since he tends to sweet talk both sides in order to please them.

Whereas the above examples involve only partial mapping between the surface form and the semantic structure, the following examples to be discussed demonstrate total isomorphism. Type 3 with total isomorphism and sound associations will be presented first:<sup>9</sup>

(13) *fo<sup>31</sup> seu<sup>24</sup> zu<sup>24</sup>-teu<sup>11</sup> --- suk<sup>5</sup> mian<sup>55</sup> (suk<sup>5</sup>-mian<sup>55</sup>)*  
 fire burn pig’s head cooked face (looking familiar)  
 ‘Burning a pig’s head—looking familiar’

(14) *mak<sup>5</sup>-gon<sup>31</sup> coi<sup>11</sup> seu<sup>24</sup>-e<sup>31</sup> -- seu<sup>31</sup> hi<sup>55</sup> (seu<sup>31</sup> hi<sup>55</sup>)*  
 straw blow bamboo vertical flute small air (stingy)  
 ‘Playing a bamboo vertical flute with a straw—being stingy’

<sup>9</sup> Around 90 items belong to this type, occupying 7% of the data.

- (15) *bak*<sup>5</sup>-*gung*<sup>24</sup> *teu*<sup>31</sup> *tai*<sup>55</sup> *hi*<sup>55</sup> -- *siin*<sup>11</sup>-*hi*<sup>55</sup> (*siin*<sup>11</sup>- *hi*<sup>55</sup>)  
 God of Earth let out big breath divine atmosphere (very proud)  
 ‘God of Earth letting out strong breath—being very proud’

All the three examples delineate a very clear mapping between the first component and the second. Example (13) activates whole-for-part metonymy from *zu*<sup>24</sup>-*teu*<sup>11</sup> ‘pig’s head’ to *mian*<sup>55</sup> ‘face’ and cause-for-effect metonymy from *fo*<sup>31</sup>*seu*<sup>24</sup> ‘fire burn’ to *suk*<sup>5</sup> ‘cooked’. In example (14), *mak*<sup>5</sup>-*gon*<sup>31</sup> ‘straw’ is to *seu*<sup>31</sup> ‘small’ and *coi*<sup>11</sup>*seu*<sup>24</sup>-*e*<sup>31</sup> ‘blow a vertical bamboo flute’ is to *hi*<sup>55</sup> ‘air’ metonymically. Similarly, in (15), *bak*<sup>5</sup>-*gung*<sup>24</sup> ‘God of Earth’ is to *siin*<sup>11</sup> ‘divine’, and *teu*<sup>31</sup>*tai*<sup>55</sup>*hi*<sup>55</sup> ‘let out big breath’ is to *hi*<sup>55</sup> ‘atmosphere’ metonymically. All three examples illustrate frame shifts due to sound associations of homophones. In example (13), the frame of cooking a pig’s head is adjusted to that of familiarity of humans—[*suk*<sup>5</sup> *mian*<sup>55</sup>] ‘cooked face’ pronounced the same as [*suk*<sup>5</sup>-*mian*<sup>55</sup>] ‘looking familiar’. In example (14), the frame of playing a vertical bamboo flute is shifted into the remark on a person’s excessive carefulness about his money: [*seu*<sup>31</sup> *hi*<sup>55</sup>] ‘small air’ pronounced the same as [*seu*<sup>31</sup>*hi*<sup>55</sup>] ‘stingy’. Likewise, in example (15), the frame of God of Earth is transposed into the evaluation of a person’s attitude—[*siin*<sup>11</sup> *hi*<sup>55</sup>] ‘divine atmosphere’ articulated the same as [*siin*<sup>11</sup> *hi*<sup>55</sup>] ‘being very proud’. In general, two independently unrelated frames are being linked due to the activation of sound associations.

Still some examples, although displaying total mapping, trigger conceptual associations for the intended meaning from the second component. The following cases illustrate type 4:<sup>10</sup>

- (16) *den*<sup>24</sup>-*co*<sup>31</sup> *da*<sup>31</sup>-*giet*<sup>2</sup> -- *sim*<sup>24</sup> *m*<sup>11</sup> *koi*<sup>24</sup>  
 rush knotted knot NEG untied  
 ‘Knotted rushes—unhappy or depressed’
- (17) *su*<sup>24</sup>-*doi*<sup>24</sup>-*du*<sup>31</sup> *ge*<sup>55</sup> *zu*<sup>55</sup>-*cung*<sup>11</sup> -- *ngau*<sup>24</sup>-*vun*<sup>11</sup>-*ziok*<sup>2</sup>-*sii*<sup>55</sup>  
 books-piles-inside NOM worms bite texts chew words  
 ‘Worms in piles of books—paying excessive attention to wording’
- (18) *bun*<sup>55</sup>-*gong*<sup>24</sup>-*du*<sup>31</sup> *ge*<sup>31</sup> *sak*<sup>5</sup>-*teu*<sup>11</sup> -- *yu*<sup>55</sup>-*cu*<sup>55</sup>-*yu*<sup>55</sup>-*ngang*<sup>55</sup>  
 manure pit inside NOM stone both smelly and hard  
 ‘A stone inside a manure pit—extremely unpleasant and stubborn’

In all the three examples, a one-on-one mapping of the surface form and the semantic structure is observed metonymically—*den*<sup>24</sup>-*co*<sup>31</sup> ‘rush’ to *sim*<sup>24</sup> ‘knot’ and *da*<sup>31</sup>-*giet*<sup>2</sup> ‘knotted’ to *m*<sup>11</sup> *koi*<sup>24</sup> ‘not untied’ in (16); *zu*<sup>55</sup>-*cung*<sup>11</sup> ‘worms’ to *ngau*<sup>24</sup> *ziok*<sup>2</sup> ‘bite and chew’ and *su*<sup>24</sup>-*doi*<sup>24</sup>-*du*<sup>31</sup> ‘piles of books’ to *vun*<sup>11</sup> *sii*<sup>55</sup> ‘texts and words’ in (17); *sak*<sup>5</sup>-*teu*<sup>11</sup> ‘a stone’ to *ngang*<sup>55</sup> ‘hard’ and *bun*<sup>55</sup>-*gong*<sup>24</sup>-*du*<sup>31</sup> ‘inside a manure pit’ to *cu*<sup>55</sup> ‘smelly’ in (18). The intended idiomatic meanings can be conceptually inferred from the second components. Knotted rushes, which are tied and twisted together, are employed to depict an unhappy person with a wrung heart in (16). In (17), a

<sup>10</sup> There are around 40 items that belong to this type, taking up 3% of the data.

person who pays excessive attention to wording is analogized as a worm buried inside piles of books that bites and chews the books. In the same manner, in (18), the attributes associated with a stone inside a manure pit are used to delineate a person’s character of being very unpleasant and stubborn.

### 3.2 Non-isomorphic two-part allegorical sayings

Whereas approximately 34% of the Hakka data show isomorphic mapping between the surface form in the first part and the semantic structure in the second part, the other 66% or so of the data demonstrate non-isomorphism. In other words, the composite nature of the linguistic form in the first part does not syntagmatically correlate with the complexity of the semantic structure of the second part. However, in terms of the transition from the literal meaning to the idiomatic meaning, non-isomorphic cases show two subtypes—type 5 with sound associations and type 6 with conceptual associations. Let’s come to type 5 with the following examples:<sup>11</sup>

- (19) *siip<sup>5</sup>-ngi<sup>55</sup>-ngiet<sup>5</sup>    gie<sup>55</sup>-coi<sup>55</sup>    --    song<sup>24</sup>    sim<sup>24</sup>    (song<sup>24</sup>-sim<sup>24</sup>)*  
 December                      Chinese mustard    grow    center stalks    sad  
 ‘Chinese mustard in December—feeling sad’
- (20) *sam<sup>11</sup>-ngiet<sup>5</sup>            to<sup>11</sup>-fa<sup>11</sup>    --    do<sup>11</sup>    cia<sup>55</sup>    (do<sup>11</sup>    cia<sup>55</sup>)*  
 March                              peach blossom    most    wither    thanks a lot  
 ‘Peach blossom in March—thanks a lot’
- (21) *pang<sup>-11</sup>dang<sup>31</sup> ge<sup>55</sup>    lo<sup>31</sup>-cu<sup>31</sup>    --    mo<sup>11</sup>    ji<sup>24</sup>    (mo<sup>-11</sup>ji<sup>24</sup>)*  
 attic top    NOM    mice                      NEG    crowded    penniless  
 ‘Mice on the attic—penniless’

In all the three examples, the correlation between the surface structure and the semantic structure cannot be detected. It is the global chunk as a whole that gives the intended meaning, and cultural knowledge needs to be activated for the interpretations of their meanings. In addition, frame adjustment also needs to be brought forth for the derivation of the idiomatic meanings. Both examples (19) and (20) involve the natural features of particular plants in particular seasons. Chinese mustard grows in the winter. In December the leaves are blooming and the center stalks are growing stronger, ready for harvest. Likewise, peach flowers bloom in February and until March, they begin to wither. Both of the biological traits of the plants are used to describe human affairs through sound associations of homophones. In example (19), [song<sup>24</sup> sim<sup>24</sup>] ‘grow center stalks’ is articulated the same as [song<sup>-24</sup> sim<sup>24</sup>] ‘sad’; in example (20), [do<sup>11</sup> cia<sup>55</sup>] ‘most (of the peach flowers) wither’ is pronounced the same as [do<sup>-11</sup> cia<sup>55</sup>] ‘thanks a lot’. In example (21), since there is plenty of space on the attic, mice will not feel crowded on it. What is most appealing about this example is that a code switch from a language to another is triggered here—[mo<sup>11</sup> ji<sup>24</sup>]

<sup>11</sup> About 50 items belong to type 5, taking up 4% of the data.

‘not crowded’ in Hakka is a homophone of [mo<sup>11</sup> ji<sup>24</sup>] ‘penniless’ in Taiwanese Southern Min.<sup>12</sup> The frame is shifted from an animal domain to a human domain with the assistance of sound associations between two languages.

Other than sounds, conceptual mechanisms are also triggered for the derivations of the idiomatic meanings. That will lead us to the last type, type 6, which includes non-isomorphic cases with conceptual associations. Examine the following examples:<sup>13</sup>

- (22) *zuk<sup>2</sup> bien<sup>11</sup> ge<sup>55</sup> ap<sup>2</sup>-e<sup>31</sup> -- mo<sup>11</sup> sim<sup>11</sup> gon<sup>24</sup>*  
 bamboo weave NOM duck NEG heart liver  
 ‘A bamboo-woven duck—heartless’
- (23) *liuk<sup>2</sup>-ngiet<sup>5</sup> gie<sup>55</sup> coi<sup>55</sup> -- ga<sup>31</sup> yu<sup>11</sup> sim<sup>24</sup>*  
 June Chinese mustard pretend have center stalks  
 ‘Chinese mustard in June—pretended sympathy’
- (24) *zok<sup>2</sup> heu<sup>11</sup> ngip<sup>5</sup> san<sup>24</sup> -- dien<sup>24</sup>-do<sup>31</sup> zo<sup>55</sup>*  
 bring monkey into mountain reverse do  
 ‘Bringing monkeys into the mountain—putting the cart before the horse’
- (25) *nei<sup>11</sup> bak<sup>5</sup>-gung<sup>11</sup> go<sup>55</sup> ho<sup>11</sup> -- zii<sup>55</sup>-siin<sup>11</sup>- nan<sup>11</sup>- bo<sup>11</sup>*  
 earth God of Earth cross river self body hard protect  
 ‘Earth-made Earth of God crossing the river—unable even to protect oneself’

In the four cases, the idiomatic meanings of the second parts need to be interpreted globally. The idiomaticity can be derived conceptually however. In example (22), *zuk<sup>2</sup> bien<sup>11</sup> ge<sup>55</sup> ap<sup>2</sup>-e<sup>31</sup>* ‘a duck woven from bamboo’ does not have internal organs but only the structured shape. The literal description of such a hand-crafted complex object as without heart and liver is metaphorically utilized to portray a person’s character of being heartless or ruthless. Example (23) contains the plant *gie<sup>55</sup> coi<sup>55</sup>* ‘Chinese mustard’, but this time it is Chinese mustard in June. Folk knowledge tells us that such a plant grows in the winter; if the center stalks grow in June, they must not be real. Therefore, the literal depiction of a plant of pretending to have a sprout is analogized to delineate a person’s pretended sympathy. Example (24) shows an action-result relationship between the two components. Hakka ancestors used to live in mountainous areas, which are the habitats of monkeys. To experience a more civilized life, they needed to come down the mountain to the town where more chances could be explored both for doing business and for acquiring an education. In this case, monkeys are used to refer to mountainous people, who often strive to get out of the mountain to obtain a better life. Hence, from Hakka people’s common sense knowledge, someone who brings monkeys into the mountain is doing something in a reverse order—taking people back into a less developed place. Such a saying is therefore used to remark on a person who does things in a wrong order—namely putting the cart before the horse, as well indicated by the English idiom. Lastly, example (25) contains *bak<sup>5</sup>-gung<sup>11</sup>* ‘God of Earth’,

<sup>12</sup> *Penniless* is pronounced as [mo<sup>11</sup> cien<sup>11</sup>] instead in Hakka.

<sup>13</sup> Type 6 includes the largest chunk of the data—around 800 items—taking up 62% of the total data.

whose statue is made of earth instead of stone or metal. God of Earth, the most often worshipped god by Hakka, is believed by them to be the protector of their lands and crops. But in this example, the god is made of earth that dissolves in the river. Hence, this saying, *nei<sup>11</sup> bak<sup>5</sup>-gung<sup>11</sup>* ‘earth-made God of Earth’ is used to insinuate the incompetence of a person, who cannot even protect himself, let alone protect others. This example of God of Earth will round up the explication of the 6 types of two-part allegorical sayings. The examples brought forth are highly involved with the local cultural models as have been implied through the discussion. In the next section, the main elements employed in the source domain are to be investigated into with respect to the Hakka cultural models.

#### 4. The knowledge schemas

As mentioned several times in the previous section, frame adjustment occurs if the intended meaning of a two-part allegorical saying is to be successfully inferred. Now the question arises is: what are the pertinent frames of idealized cognitive models (ICMs), following Lakoff (1987), that serve as the foundation for the activation of the cognitive mechanisms for such a wealthy array of data to begin with? Specifically the resolution of this issue lies in the exploration of the cultural models behind such a linguistic form (Lakoff 1987, Lakoff and Turner 1989). The first component of a typical two-part allegorical saying often evokes a vivid image of a source domain based on objects or events surrounding folks’ daily life experience. Yet, the intended meaning of the second component often evokes human features or human behavior to tease, to mock, or to instruct.

What is represented by two-part allegorical sayings correlates with what is discussed about proverbs in Lakoff and Turner (1989). In particular, they point out a cultural model that is composed of the Nature of Things and the Great Chain. The chain consists of a vertical hierarchical ranking of forms of being—humans, animals, plants, complex objects and natural physical things. In accordance, a scale of the features that delineate these forms of being is formulated since the inherent features of forms of being result in their behavior and functions. As Lakoff and Turner maintain, the comprehension of language, especially of opaque linguistic forms like proverbs, strongly depends on such an unconscious cultural knowledge. Take the proverb “Big thunder little rain” illustrated in Lakoff and Turner (1989:174f) for example. The surface form depicts a natural event with two sub-events, thundering and raining. Although the surface form does not say anything about humans, it is to be comprehended as a comment about a person given the fact that proverbs contain matters about human life in general. Such an inference of the intended meaning of a proverb lies heavily on the hearer’s cultural knowledge and the GENERIC IS SPECIFIC metaphor, as argued by them.

Indeed, two-part allegorical sayings offer speakers ways of understanding the intricate faculties of human beings through other forms of being. In a two-part allegorical saying, the first component depicts a vivid and concrete image of things or states-of-affairs, and the second part characterizes either the attributes of the things or the result / manner of the situations. Like the answer of a riddle, which is deeply embedded in the linguistic expressions, the targeted meaning

of a two-part allegorical saying needs to be drawn by an inference from the speakers. Such an inference requires the evocation of knowledge schemas profoundly grounded in the cultural models. In general, the ICMs induced by the first form involve things or states-of-affairs. Things depicted by the first part, conforming to the basic or extended Great Chain pattern in Lakoff and Turner (1989), come from domains ranging from animals or plants to complex objects or natural physical things. Often, the inherent features or their essential attributes are metonymically highlighted to represent particular features or attributes of human beings. Whereas the data exhibit various forms of being as indicated by the Great Chain, exactly what specific elements in a particular domain are chosen is closely related to specific local cultural practices of Hakka.

Most Hakka people inhabited in less developed areas when they first moved to Taiwan. Their way of life vigorously fostered their cultural conception. They learned to make use of the natural resources around them to live through the hardship. With astute observations of the weather and the climate, they practiced farming, raising animals for business or food, and growing vegetables to add to their staples. Hence their language, which is the most salient product of a culture, strongly reflects their cultural conception. Sayings, statements with wise advice of life, especially echo their folk knowledge established through their life.

Take the domain of plants for example first. Chinese mustard is one of the essential staples in Hakka cuisine. Because winter is too cold for rice to grow, during the winter, rice field is used to grow Chinese mustard instead. The produce is often transformed into several shapes for later use: pickled, preserved or dried. This vegetable hence is a four-season staple for Hakka people. And owing to its importance, it is frequently employed in their language. Moreover, due to the inherent features of Chinese mustard—flourishing in the cold winter, but withering in the hot summer—the second component of a two-part allegorical saying hence picks up such salient biological features, and in turn, the targeted meanings of the sayings can be easily inferred. Likewise, other than Chinese mustard, sugar canes, bamboos, celery, scallions, radishes are often found expressions in two-part allegorical sayings for the same reasoning. Domains of animals and complex objects exhibit similar generalizations—expressions from farming are used. Hence, domestic animals such as dogs, cats, chickens, ducks, cows, or pigs are often highlighted in the source domain. Animals such as mice, foxes, tigers, or snakes, which usually come to steal crops or fowls, are utilized to represent evil behaviors. In the same vein, expressions of complex objects often come from instruments for farming such as windmills, coir raincoats, oil lamps, or bamboo baskets.

Whereas most pertinent ICMs of Hakka two-part allegorical sayings accord with the universal basic Great Chain proposed in Lakoff and Turner (1989)—with the lower forms of being signifying human affairs—some of them employ expressions related to gods. Although Lakoff and Turner (1989: 204ff) state that the extended Great Chain, which concerns gods or the universe, is central to Western tradition, the linguistic expressions observed in two-part allegorical sayings evoke such extended Great Chain. Gods, especially God of Earth and God of Death, are often made use of in this discourse form. God of Earth, who is believed to protect their lands and crops, is highly respected by Hakka. Nevertheless, because the temple for God of Earth is built right around their fields, he is like “a member of the family”, who can be teased or humored.

On the other hand, God of Death, who is believed to dominate the world after death, is also paid great reverence to by them. However, because death is both unknown and inauspicious, expressions involving God of Death are often employed to teach or to curse.

## 5. Concluding remarks

Two-part allegorical sayings, although carrying the main characteristics of idioms identified by previous studies (cf. Nunberg et al. 1994, Gibbs 1995, Kövecses and Szabó 1996), display uniqueness of their own. Geeraert's (1995, 2003) model of classification of idioms are substantially modified. Specifically, two-part allegorical sayings illustrate isomorphic and non-isomorphic correlations between the linguistic forms and their semantic structures. However, the mappings can be either total or partial. Secondly, while all the intended meanings are motivated, some of them are derived through conceptual mechanisms but others are drawn from sound associations that heavily rely on speakers' adjustments of the frames. A taxonomic framework is hence established to succinctly categorize this genre into six types—partially isomorphic with sound associations, partially isomorphic with conceptual associations, totally isomorphic with sound associations, and totally isomorphic with conceptual associations, non-isomorphic with sound associations, and non-isomorphic with conceptual associations.

Moreover, in line with Lakoff (1987) and Lakoff and Turner (1989), this study maintains that the relevant ICMs of two-part allegorical sayings are closely related to the cultural models made up by Nature of Things and the Great Chain. This discourse form resorts to lower forms of being to signify human affairs. However, the study further claims that the evoked knowledge schemas are deeply grounded in local cultural practices. Hakka examples investigated in this study clearly demonstrate how their language mirrors their cultural conception.

It has been mentioned frequently that interpretations of two-part allegorical sayings involve not only cognitive mechanisms but also sound mechanisms. Frame adjustments need to be triggered to obtain the intended meanings. Just exactly how the intended meanings are derived is another issue worth future endeavor. Various types of metonymy—part-for-whole, whole-for-part, action-for-result, among others—have been utilized in the source domain. A logical speculation is that the target domain should illustrate a reverse pattern of metonymy. Should such a speculation be validated, the *GENERIC IS SPECIFIC* and the *SPECIFIC IS GENERIC* metaphors claimed in Lakoff and Turner (1989) will demonstrate a mirror image in the source domain and the target domain. Examination of this hypothesis is a task for another context in the future. Furthermore, in addition to the two prevalent metaphors, interactions of metonymy and metaphor are detected in some of the derivations of the meanings. What are the possible patterns of interactions of the cognitive mechanisms and how they correlate with the various types of this genre are also issues that require further investigation.

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## Appendix: The character versions of Hakka examples

### Type 1:

- (5) 春天个果園—有桃李（有道理）。
- (6) 爛風車—賺絞（賺搞）。
- (7) 豬利頭傍酒—雙舌（雙蝕）。

### Type 2:

- (8) 著蓑衣救火—惹火上身。
- (9) 老虎借豬—有借無還。
- (10) 燈盞無油—費心。
- (11) 石頭頂種菜—難生根。
- (12) 十二月甘蔗—兩頭甜。

### Type 3:

- (13) 火燒豬頭—熟面（熟面）。
- (14) 麥管吹蕭仔—小氣（小氣）。
- (15) 伯公透大氣—神氣（神氣）。

### Type 4:

- (16) 燈草打結—心毋開。
- (17) 書堆肚个蛀蟲—咬文嚼字。
- (18) 糞缸肚个石頭—又臭又硬。

### Type 5:

- (19) 十二月芥菜—上心（傷心）。
- (20) 三月桃花—多謝（多謝）。
- (21) 棚頂个老鼠—無擠（無錢）。

### Type 6:

- (22) 竹編个鴨仔—無心肝。
- (23) 六月芥菜—假有心。
- (24) 捉猴入山—顛倒做。
- (25) 泥伯公過河—自身難保。