Life Form Concepts: Animal Expressions in Mandarin Chinese and German

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Abstract

This paper presents a corpus based study that attempts to explore the functions and concepts of the life form—animal expressions in Mandarin Chinese and German. Animal features are rich and complex. The expressions in terms of tigers, wolves, bears, monkeys, birds, fish, worms, and insects are presented. Certainly the real world provides a starting point for animal expressions. The concepts of the metaphorical vehicles in terms of wild animal names suggest that big, strong or dangerous are the metaphoric source of vehicles of big sized, wild animals such as bears, whereas tiny, insignificant and restless are those for small sized, wild animals like insects. The meaning of a wild animal name in our mental lexicon can be arbitrary and can be based on cultural associations of the animal’s appearance, nature, behavior and the human-animal relation. Moreover, a variety of speech acts utter the emotive function of animal expressions, such as exclamations and intensifiers. All these functions and concepts are achieved by an integration of semantic, pragmatic and morphosyntactic linguistic performance.

Key words: life-form expressions, animal metaphors, fixed expressions, emotive function

I. Introduction

The research on idioms and metaphors are well documented, however, studies on animal metaphors or expressions are comparatively few. Craddick and Miller (1970) examine the animal names used to represent the outer and inner self. They identify the concept of self in terms of animal names. Fraser (1981) examines
insulting terms that involve in animal names. Those in English are: stupid-donkey, coward-chicken, sneaky-snake, mean-dog, nasty-rat and dirty-pig. One of Fraser’s results shows that stupid-donkey and dirty-pig are more widespread while nasty-rat is not. Davies and Bentahila (1989) examine animal terms in British English and Moroccan Arabic. Their informants are instructed to indicate, for each term, which meaning they would most likely understand if they were to hear it being applied to someone. Similarity, salience and relevance are applied to categorize animal metaphors. Nesi (1995) discusses single-word conventional animal metaphors in different cultures.

Chinese and German possess great amount of animal expressions. For example, Wang (1991), Zheng (2000) and Tang (2002) have content rich animal-related sayings in their collections of Chinese idioms. Röhrich (1991), Drosdowski & Scholze-Stubenrecht (1992) and Krüger-Lorenzen (2000) have outstanding German Lexicons in which contain a large number of animal expressions. The present paper reveals the animal functions and concepts in Mandarin Chinese and German. We first launch the framework of the present study. An animal expression (AE) is defined as any Mandarin Chinese or German expression that encodes animal names with metaphorical meaning, without recourse to a separate definition of metaphor, of metonymous blending. That is to say, the AEs in the present corpora are fixed expressions (Alexander 1978, Carter 1987, Moon 1998) include: metaphors, similes, proverbs, sayings, frozen collocations, grammatically ill-formed collocations and routine formulae, for the purpose of focusing on the life form—animal—concepts. Mandarin Chinese (MCh) refers to Mandarin Chinese, the official language in Taiwan. German refers to High German, say the official language in Germany.

Wild animal names will be examined, including tiger, wolf, bear, monkey, bird, fish, worm and insect. Most of the raw data is collected from Academia Sinica Ancient Chinese Corpus, Academia Sinica Balanced Corpus of Mandarin Chinese and the German Corpus Search, Management and Analysis System (COSMAS). The data is then categorized by the animal names in alphabetical order in EXCEL to compile our Corpora of Animal Expressions. The present corpora contain 2780 Mandarin Chinese and 2530 German written and spoken AEs. Different kinds of data relating to individual AE are recorded in up to twelve separate fields, including phonetic transcription of the MCh, word-to-word translation, metaphorical tenor (meaning) of the AE, the origin, the underlying conceit, semantic feature of the metaphorical vehicle, frequency, etc.

Wierzbicka’s (1985) insight about animal terms will be taken as the theoretical framework of the present paper. The significance that collocations, common sayings, endonyms, etc. are evidence for semantic structure was argued by the Russian linguist Apresjan (1992[1974]:33, 35) who says “the folk picture of the world ... reflects the material and spiritual experience of a people... The task of the lexicographer ... consists of discovering the native picture of the world hidden in lexical meanings and presenting it in a system of definitions.” The job of a linguist, in particular a lexicographer, must take the real world—nature, life form as well as human society—into consideration. Wierzbicka (1985) studied animal terms in the way of stating explication that contains many semantically complex words, for example, the explication of tiger in English is:

tigers =
   a. a kind of animal
   b. they live in the jungle
      people keep some of them in special places (zoos)
      so that people can go there to see them
   c. they look like cats and they move like cats
      but they are very much bigger than cats
   d. they are yellowish with black stripes
      they have big sharp claws and big sharp teeth

1 For discussions about metaphor see, for example, Searle (1981), Lakoff and Turner (1989).
e. they kill and eat other animals and people  
f. people think of them as fierce and powerful  
people are afraid of them. (Wierzbicka 1985:164)

In her analysis, the topmost component ‘animal’ indicates that tiger is a life-form word derived from the animal tiger. Component (b) describes its habitat, (c) and (d) refer to its size and overall outer appearance, (e) says its characteristic behavior, and (f) specifies an animal-human relation. In a word, the meaning of a animal word in our mental lexicon contains the components from the animal’s nature, habitat, appearance, behavior and human-animal relation. We will therefore study our collected data from these angles.

The present paper is organized as follows: (1) Presentation of the meanings and concepts of AEs according to the derivation (physical, behavioral attributes, human-animal relations and arbitrary inventions), and outlining the possible developments or explanations of the underlying conceits. (2) Discussion of the conceits and concepts in MCh and German, then (3) a focus on the salient—emotive function.

II. Semantic functions of wild animal names in Mandarin Chinese and German

We will discuss most productive vehicles, first MCh and then German. The sections follow this order: tiger and wolf, bear and monkey, bird and fish, and last, worm and insect. It is to be remembered that an AE consists not only of one semantic component, therefore the same AE could appear and be discussed under several categories. Also, the metaphorical vehicles in German and MCh are not concurrent with each other, e.g., whereas the Hecht (pike) appear to be notable in German, there are no pike AEs found in MCh, thus, pike will be absent in the related MCh section.

A. Tigers and wolves

In modern MCh the tiger-AEs are just as frequent as the horse- and dog-AEs. According to Shuowen Jiezi (Classics of the Character Etymology), the tiger is the king of the animals. He was assigned with the features [+bold], [+strong] and [+big]. As the tiger is (1) STRONG and (2) BOLD, he is sometimes (3) DANGEROUS, (4) WICKED and (5) CRUEL as the following examples show. These are some of the concepts of the MCh vehicle tiger. The strength and the boldness of the tiger was applied to “military forces”: huōjiàng 虎將 (tiger-general – a brave general); jiàng'men'huō'zi' 虎門虎子 (general-door-tiger-son – a capable young man from a distinguished family) and huōben 虎奔 (tiger-angry – bold fighter).

(1). STRONG: huō'fu'nu'quān'zi' 虎父無犬子 (tiger-father-no-dog-son – there will be no laggard among the children of or among the children of a brave or talented man)  
(2). BOLD: huō'dan' 虎膽 (tiger-gut – to be very brave)  
(3). DANGEROUS: lao'huō'pi'gu'mo'bu'de' 老虎屁股摸不得 (tiger-fart-thigh-stroke-not- get – like a tiger whose backside no one dares to touch)  
(4). WICKED: xiao'mian'huō 畜面虎 (smile-face-tiger – smiling tiger; an outwardly kind but inwardly cruel person)  
(5). CRUEL: ke'zhēng'meng'yi'huō 祜政猛於虎 (harsh-policy-fierce-than-tiger – tyranny is fiercer than a tiger)  
(6). STRONG: stark wie ein Tiger (strong as a tiger)  
(7). MALEVOLENT: lang'xin'gou'fēi 惡心狗肺 (wolf-heart-dog-lung – rapacious as a wolf and savage as a cur; cruel and unscrupulous)  
(8). CRUEL: cai'gù'huō'kou'you'wú'lang'wo' 才離虎口又入狼窩 (just-leave-tiger-mouth-again-in-wolf-den – to hardly get out of the tiger’s lair just to find himself among the wolves; jump out of the frying pan into the fire)  
(9). GREEDY: wie ein Wolf runterschlingen (like a wolf to devour – to swallow like a wolf (to eat fast
(10). MALEVOLENT: der böse Wolf (the wicked wolf – wicked person)

People were afraid of the tiger, they avoided spelling his name and referred to it as da*chong2 大蟲 (the big worm) or “the king of the mountains”：Wild animals are wild, strong and hard to be tamed, people dealt with them in a respectful manner. Consequently there are no tiger-AEs referring to the human-animal relations. This is a completely different situation from that of domestic animals. A great number of the domestic animals AEs are generated from human-animal relations.

Many tiger-AEs are secular benedictions, e.g., long2teng2hu4yue4 龙腾虎跃 (dragon-rise-tiger-leap – dragons rising and tigers leaping; a scene of bustling activity). However, there is semantic feature [+bringing misfortune], e.g., bai3hu4xing1 白虎星 (white-tiger-star – unlucky person; unlucky wife). This was merely an astronomic term, but an old superstition says that this is a wicked heavenly body. Since then bai3hu4xing1 also applies to a woman who is accused of “causing” misery to her family. A similar sense, a spiteful or quarrelsome woman is called mu2lao3hu3 母老虎 (female-tiger – a tigress; a shrew). It’s notable that tiger typically refers to male or neuter referents, only seldom to women. As soon as it applies to women, it stands for [+bringing misfortune] or [+quarrelsome]. This implies that in the Chinese society at least in the former times a strong woman was not a preferred attribute and that strength was not prototypically a feminine characteristic.

In contrary to MCh there are only few tiger-AEs in German, the example in (6) is one of them. It’s noticeable that there is no tiger in Europe and the Germans used to refer to tiger as “the Asian predator (das asiatische Raubtier)”. The modern metaphor Pack' den Tiger in den Tank (put the tiger in your tank) expresses this concept. It goes back to the advertisement slogan of ESSO company (1965). Another salient feature which refers to the tiger’s behavior is the [+hunt/roaming around for prey]. It was mapped onto the German verb tigern (to tiger – to mooch around the town). All these metaphorical sense of tiger are rather neutral or even positive in comparison with Storfer’s (1935:370) statement that the animal tiger is assumed as an extraordinary dangerous creature. It is an example of cruelty and unrelenting belligerence. Our knowledge of animals and our cognitive model of AEs are often at different levels.

In MCh wolf stands for (7) MALEVOLENT and (8) CRUELTY. Besides, [+hecherous] is common with the examples: se2lang2 色狼 (color-wolf – sexual maniac) and lang2wen3 狼吻 (wolf-kiss – to be raped). This is an arbitrary feature of wolf assigned by the speakers.

According to Jiyun (兼鈞), the bei (豰) is an animal of wolf genus. Beis have short front feet while wolves have short back feet, therefore they often collaborate by walking or working together. The blending of wolf and bei is highlighted in MCh: lang2bei1wei1jian1 狼嘴為奸 (wolf-bei-do-evil – act in collusion with each other), lang2bei1 狼嘯 (wolf-bei – embarrassed; in a difficult position) and lang2bei1xiang4 狼與相 (wolf-bei-face – a sorry face).

The wolf in German stands for (9) GREED and (10) MALEVOLENT. Even the adjective wölfisch (wolfish – greedy, cruel) was formed. No wolf-hyena relation is seen in German, but the combination of wolf and sheep gave raise to several AEs: Wer sich zum Schaf macht, den fressen die Wölfe (who acts like a sheep will be eaten by wolves); ein Wolf im Schafspelz (the wolf in sheep’s skin – the wolf in sheep’s clothing); Der Wolf frisst auch von den gezähnten Schafen (the wolf devours even by the counted sheep – a wicked person dares a bad deed even if obvious). In reality the predator is after the sheep because sheep are simple prey. In the Bible and in fairy tales wolf and sheep do appear often side-by-side; their relationship represents the contrast between good versus evil or weak versus strong.
**D: Bears and monkeys**

In MCh, several bear-AEs such as *huătāi'xiōngyao* 虎背熊腰 (tiger-back-bear-waist — backs like and lions like bears; stalwart men) and *chí'lexiōngzì* baozi 吃了熊心豹子膽 (eat-le-bear-heart-leopard-gall — to be bold and fearless) refers to the bear features [+strong] and [+bold]. In the bear family, panda's outer attributes, such as its black rings under the eyes, show up. *Mao'xiōng*  медведь (cat-bear — a panda) is created to jest someone who has black eyes from lacking sleep or being hurt.

The *bear* in German has the similar metaphorical meaning but is more diversified as shown in (11), (12), (13) and (14). Brinkmann (1878:294) comments that in the languages the concept of “big” mutates easily into that of “coarse, rough and ugly” and the concept of “small” into that of “fine and dainty”. The bear-AEs, the mouse-AEs and so on confirm this viewpoint.

(11). **COARSENESS**: ein ungelecker Bär (a un-licked bear — a rude bloke)
(12). **POWER**: stark wie ein Bär (as strong as a bear)
(13). **MEN**: Knuddelbär (hug-bear — pet name for a male)
(14). **INTENSIFIER**: Bärenkalte (bear-cold — very cold)
(15). **TOMFOOLERY**: jemanden zum Affen halten (to consider someone being a monkey — to fool someone)
(16). **INTENSIFIER**: Affengeduld (monkey-patience — great patience)

In German, *Panda* is a synonym of China because China is where pandas origin of. Feuchtmayer (1986:518) speculates that the name of the city “Berlin” is developed from the animal name *Bären* (bears) by **phonetic adoption**. Bärchen (little bear) and Knuddelbär (hug-bear — pet name for a male) are terms of endearment for men.

The appearance and behavior of monkeys are highlighted in MCh. The examples observed from the appearance are: *hou2shu'ân* huou4shu'ân* 猴子不知屁股红 (monkey-not-know-buttock-red — people usually cannot be conscious of their own mistakes, as cattle cannot be conscious of its own powerful strength), *shou4huou2* 猴皮猴 (thin-skin-monkey — a bag of bones) and *jiàn1zui3hou2sai1* 尖嘴猴腮 (sharp-mouth-monkey-check — to have biting mouths and narrow cheeks; people having gaunt cheeks as ugly as monkeys). *Hou2ji3* 猴急 (monkey-rush — to be very impatient) and *xiāo3hou2zi* 小猴子 (little-monkey-zi — a young and small monkey; an anxious but naughty little boy) picture monkey’s jumpy behavior. Also the loanword *de2hou2* 得猴 (get-monkey — to commend someone who is restless or discontented with his lot) from Taiwanese has the underlying conceit that monkey’s seem impatient or rushed. The AEs such as *de2hou2* 得猴 (get-monkey — to commend someone who is restless or discontented with his lot), *xiāng2xiōng2* 熊熊 (bear-bear — suddenly), *ji1po2* 鸡婆 (chicken-aunt — to be nosy), *zhua1long2* 抓龍 (catch-dragon — massage) and so on are instradialectally motivated innovations. They are the result of language contact between MCh and Taiwanese. *Taka ji1po2* as an example. *Ji1po2* is a phonetic translation from the Taiwanese gebe (someone who likes to take care of something which is not his business), a frequent usage in newspapers and in spoken MCh. The linguists believe that *ji1po2“鸡婆” should be written as *ji2po2“家婆”*, but the mass media persist the orthography *ji1po2* 鸡婆. The Chinese character *ji2* 鸡 (chicken) is used here probably because the semantic feature [+talkative] of the *chicken* does fit to the sense “smart-alecky, saucy, brassy”. Homonyms play a key role as the words are loaned. Sometimes a transliteration can be so widely used that it becomes a

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2 Taiwanese is a dialect that 73.3% of all speakers speak in Taiwan (Huang 1993:21). The transcription of Taiwanese is based on IPA (International Phonetic Alphabet).

3 See Hsieh (1994) and Li (2000) for more examples about such borrowings.
Among the German AEs, the concept (15) TOMFOOLERY and (16) INTENSIFIER are of special interest. Many monkey-AEs in German express these two concepts. Affenliebe (monkey love - doting affection) refers to a blind, exaggerated parent love. Riegler (1907:6) explains the concept is that the monkey mother hugs her favorite cub and carries the other ones on her back when being chased. In case of highest danger she throws away the cub held in her arms, her favorite cub, which allows her to move faster to rescue herself and the less beloved cubs. The favorite cub is the victim of her mother’s blind love. This AE therefore also carries (15) TOMFOOLERY and reflects German’s observation on monkey’s behavior.

Affengeil (monkey horny) means excellent. This is a popular saying among teenagers to express approvals. The head "geil" of the compound is a polysemy that can mean lecherous, but in Affengeil it loses the connotation of sexuality. Röhrich (1991:74) explains that “geil” means “glad, happy” in Middle High German, the “Affen” in Affengeil serves merely as an intensifier, just as that in Affenschande (monkey disgrace – absolute scandal) does. Many German animal names have more morphosyntactic function than semantic function. This will be further discussed in the next chapter. Homonym or pseudo-homonym creates AEs that have nothing to do with any nature of the named animals, another example given by Feuchtmayer (1986:525): Affenschande (monkey disgrace – absolute scandal) and Maulaffen feilhalten (mouth monkey offer – to hang around with open mouth and no action) do not relate to Affe (monkey) but to offen (open).

C. Birds and fish

Human language pays as much attention to birds as it does to domestic animals. Brinkmann (1878:513) notices that while there are relatively few metaphors related to animals that are not in a close relationship to the human being, the number and importance of metaphors related to fowl is quite comparable to that of other domestic animals.

Flying has always been human’s desire. The underlying conceit of most of the bird-AEs focuses on bird’s aptitude of singing and flying, and coined the following metaphors: bu1yi2er1fei1 不翼而飞 (is flying without wings – has got lost), cha2che1nan1fei1 挥翅高飞 (not to be able to fly away even with wings – hard to escape) and yan2hua4cheng1xian1 羽化成仙 (to ascend to the sky and become immortal – to pass away in Taoism). An restricted person is compared to birds being kept in a cage as the AEs long4zhong2niao3 羽中鸟 (cage-in-bird – a caged bird; a restricted person) or just the other way fang4chu1long2zideniao3 放出笼子的鸟 (release-out-cage-zu.de-bird – a bird released from the cage; a liberated person). The concept (17) GAIN relates to a underlying conceit from birding, a human-animal relation.

Some of the metaphors refer to the twittering of the birds or generally to the bird singing, such as huang2ying1chu1gu3 黄莺出谷 (golden-oriole-out-valley – a golden oriole flies out of the valley; very nice singing), ying1ge’yan1wu3 歌燕舞 (orioles-sing-swallow-dance – orioles sing and swallows dart; a springtime landscape; a scenery full of prosperous life), ying1wu3xue2she2 鸟雀学舌 (parrot-learn-tongue – to parrot something), wu4ya1zui3 鸟瞰 (crown-mouth – promising bad luck; people who like to spread gossip) and jin1ji1bao1xiao3 金雞報曉 (gold-chicken-report-dawn – the cockcrow announces the daybreak).

A concept of the bird is LOVING COUPLE as in fu4qi1ben4shi4 tong2lin2niao3 夫妻本是同林鳥 (husband-wife-origin-are-same-wood-bird – as a matter of fact a married couple is like two birds sharing the same forest; a married couple belongs together), bi4yi2niao3 比翼鸟 (juxtapose-wing-bird – the legendary bird

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4 For the grammaticalization of morphological root, see Hsieh and Eschbach-Szabo (2003).
couple flying with synchronous flapping of wings; a devoted couple) and jian1 die2 qing2 shen1 鵲鶠情深 (the legendary bird-flatfish-affection-deep – a tender loving couple).

A metaphorical sense of bird is [+penis], as in xiao3 niao3 小鳥 (birdie), xiao3 ji4 ji1 小雉雞 (small-chicken-chicken – reproductive organs of male children) (small rooster) and niao3 ren2 鳥人 (bird-man – a stupid man). According to Guo (1994:46), niao3 ren2 originally is a curse stated in the novel Shuhuzhuan (The Robbers from Liangshan Marsh) and “鳥” shall be pronounced as diao3, a homonym of diao3 居 (penis).\(^5\) The homonyms pave the way for this semantic development as an abuse and further to the meaning “a silly, unpleasant person” – a part-for-whole semantic change.

As for German, also many bird-AEs refer to flying. Riegler (1907:11) says that whatever can fly is for the folks a bird. This concept generated several AEs: vogelfrei (bird-free – outlawed), sich frei wie ein Vogel fühlen (to feel free like a bird – to feel really free), silberner Vogel (silver bird – airplane), etc.

The human-animal relations “birding” and “bird-hunting” derived the German: Lockvogel (bait bird – decoy), den Vogel abschießen (to hit the bird – to hit the target; to gain the best profit) and der Vogel ist ins Garn gegangen (the bird was entrapped in a net – the prey is taken in). The features [+target] and [+goal] generated bird-AEs like den Vogel abschießen (to hit the bird – to take the cake).

(17). GAIN: yi4 shi2 liang2 niao3 一石兩鳥 (one-rock-two-bird – kill two birds with one stone; to gain two advantages by a single move)
(18). PROFIT: fang3 chang2 xian3 diao2 da4 yu2 放長線釣大魚 (release-long-line-catch-big-fish – to throw a long line to catch a big fish, adopt a long-term plan to secure something big)
(19). fish-water: munter wie ein Fisch im Wasser (the fish is in his element – the person is in optimal element conditions)
(20). fish-fishing: der Fisch hat angebissen (the fish took the bait – a person took the bait)
(21). PROFIT/PURPOSE: den Fisch an der Angel haben (to have that fish on the fishing line – to be sure of that profit)
(22). SOMETHING/SOMEONE: alle anfallenden kleinen und großen Fische erstmal auf Eis legen (to put all the small and big fish on ice first – to gather all the property and put it aside)
(23). QUICK: hechten (to pike – to do a racing dive)

In Ich habe ein Vögelchen davon singen hören (I heard the bird singing about), the bird is a messenger. It was a belief that some birds might provide congenial people with secret messages. According to Riegler (1907:95), some AEs date back to ancient pagan ideas that refer to birds being messengers of superhuman wisdom. The raven, crane and owl played an important role in the Greek and German mythology and even today they are believed to possess divine skills. This brings an arbitrary feature to German bird.

In the old days, people believed that mental derangement was caused by demon obsession. Riegler (1907:101) explains that Vogel haben (to have a bird – to have a screw loose) compares someone’s confusing thoughts to a to-and-fro flying bird. Röhrich (1991:1679) agrees with him and says that the German saying ‘Bei dir piepst’s wohl? (it’s chirping in your head – you must be off your rocker) shares the same concept. In fact, many AEs utter this sense, e.g., Greifen im Kopf haben (to have crickets in one’s head), einen Spotz im Dach (to have a sparrow under the roof), einen Hirmwurm haben (to have a brain worm), einen Käfer (a beetle), or eine Mücke im Kopf (mosquito in one’s head). As we can see, birds, worms and insects are the metaphorical vehicles here. They serve an “emotive function” of language.

A Vögelchen (birdie) is an endearment for a woman and can also be for a child. The earliest record of the colloquial usage vögehn (to bird – to have sex) is in Middle German. Originally vögehn was used only for coition of birds. In Röhrich (1991:1681) states that a bird or a birds beak denotes a penis in vulgar language.

\(^5\) Diaoren 鳥人 is pronounced as niaoren in colloquial usage.
A bird with a modifier to represent for someone is often heard in German: *komischer Vogel* (comic bird – odd character), *seltener Vogel* (rare bird), *lockerer Vogel* (loose bird), *schräger Vogel* (askew bird), *lustiger Vogel* (funny bird – good for a laugh), *Spaßvogel* (jesting bird – jester), *Pechvogel* (bad luck bird – unlucky person) and *Glücksvogel* (lucky bird – lucky person).

Let us now turn to the vehicle *fish*. Most of the fish-AEs refer to fishing based on the human-animal relation that fish is our essential food supply. (18) illustrates the *fish* concept *PROFIT*. Water is an essential element for fish. Many AEs refer to this underlying conceit: *yu'da'shuixiao3* 禹大水小 (fish-big-water-small – consumption exceeds production; an unwieldy and overstaffed organization) and *you3shan1wu4mu4* you3shuan1wu4mu4 有山無水 有山無水 (have-mountain-no-wood have-water-no-fish – mountains without woods, waters without fish). Riegler (1907:216) expresses that “fish in the water” stands for the symbol of emotional health. Symbols may call in metaphors, in this case, for example, *ru5yu4de2shui3* 如鱼得水 (as-fish-get-water – to be in one's element).

The AE *diaoyu2* 釣魚 (fishing-fish – to angle; to fall asleep for tiredness) images the conceit of the fishing *rod* in the hands of a sleepy fisherman waiting for the biting fish. This is then extended to picture of a sleeping pupil. The mollusks calamari is a kind of fish. *Chao2you2yu2* 炒魷魚 (fry-cuttlefish – to fry cuttlefish) means “to be fired”. The origin of this saying goes back to Cantonese dialect (Chen 1991:9). According to Chen (1991:2) and Xu (1998:32), the sense developed as follows: the octopus rolls itself when being boiled > a person rolls it’s bedding and suitcases when leaving > a person is leaving the office > a person was fired. The metaphorical extension of *chao2you2yu2* is from the field “food” to that of “job” which is motivated by the metaphoricality that they are the same passive (caused by external force), have the same reaction (rolling) and same result (the end of a life or a career life). A complex but step-by-step and witty extension. *chao2you2yu2* has its semantic field shifted from “food” to “job”, *diaoyu2* is shifted from “leisure activity” to “schooling”. A social development is also mirrored in AEs.

The German *Fisch* (fish) shares many concepts with MCh *yu* (fish). The basic underlying conceits are (19) fish-water and (20) fish-fishing (see above). Besides (21) *PROFIT/PURPOSE*, there is the concept (22) in which a fish stands for an OBJECT or even for a PERSON, e.g., *ein dicker Fisch* (a thick fish – a big profit), *kleiner Fisch* (a small fish), *großer Fisch* (a big fish), *kalter Fisch* (a cold fish), and *Backfisch* (a throwing back fish – someone who behaves like an young girl falling in love). This is a similar case to German *bird* and other vehicles in terms of animal names.

As fish are cold-blooded, there are many *Fisch* (fish) AEs referring to this nature, e.g., *kalt wie ein Fisch* (cold like a fish) and *fischblütig* (fish-blood), which means cold or heartless. The concept of the *Hecht* (pike) is noticeable in German. According to Röhrich (1991:686), originally *Hecht* referred to “a thieving person; a robber”, later on it was used in a positive sense “a (smart) guy”. In our German AEs corpus, the semantic features of a *Hecht* are [+jump], [+quick], as (23) shows. The *Hecht* behaves “bold, active” in a fishpond as perceived by the Germans and therefore can be extended in German to [+a dangerous person].

D. Worms and insects

The MCh *chong2* 蠕 (worm) was used originally for all animals and even for people (Wu 1995:314). In *Shijing* (Book of Odes), *chong* stands for the insects. Later, *chang2chong* 長蟲 (long-worm) and *da4chong2* 大蟲 (big-worm) were formed to refer to snakes and tigers, respectively. Nowadays, *chong* is a synonym of (24) INFERIORITY. The concept of (25) DAMAGE goes back to the fact that many worms live in foodstuff, such as in a rotten apple or meat.

The well known computer-problem-year 2000 (expected troubles with most of the computers with
There are much more insect-AEs in German than in MCh. The conceits for MCh bee lies in [+much], [+hurried], e.g., yt\^wo\'feng\^ - 鸿蜂 (one-nest-bee - to swarm) and feng\^yong\^er\^chu\^ 繁蜂而出 (bee-crowd and-out - swarm forward). Although there are not many bee-AEs in German, three concepts are identified, as shown in (30) DILIGENCE, (31) ATTRACTIVENESS and (32) WOMEN. The MCh fly-AEs indicate to [+inferior], such as ying\^y"gou\^gou\^ 蝴蝶戏蝶 (fly-camp-dog- careless - shamelessly seek personal gain) and [+to buzz around], e.g., wu\^tou\^cang\^ying\^ 雉头苍蝇 (no-head-fly - to disorderly rush and bump). AEs also demonstrate semantic extension involved with metonymy, again, a part-for-whole coding strategy, e.g., e\'mei\^ 蝶眉 (moth-eyebrow - delicate eyebrows; a beautiful woman).

In German, besides the fly concepts (33) SMALL SIZE and (34) INSIGNIFICANCE, there are AEs relating to the [+light weight] of the insect, e.g., Fliegengewicht (flyweight - weight class (in boxing, wrestling). The AEs Fliegenfänger (fly paper - a bad goalkeeper in a football), wenn du dich auf den Kopf stellst und mit den Beinen Fliegen fängst (if you put yourself on the head and with the legs flies catch - No way!) and zwei Fliegen mit einer Klappe schlagen (to kill two flies with one fly swatter - to kill two birds with one stone) have the underlying conceit from fly catching.

The name Grille (cricket) in German gains a polysemous meaning [+mood], [+foolish behavior] or [+quirk] since the 16\(^{th}\) century. According to Hübner (in Röhrich 1991:582), this meaning does not relate to the animal itself but goes back to the Latin grilli (creation of grotesquerie) which may have become known by the humanistic circles in the 16\(^{th}\) century. Also the plural form Mucken of Mucke (mosquito) obtains the sense "mood" first in the 16\(^{th}\) century (Drosdowski 1997:472).
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Vehicles</th>
<th>Mandarin Chinese</th>
<th>German</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bird</td>
<td>gain 10.3%, loving couple 10.1%, messenger, girl, someone, something, unpleasant person, followers, penis, free, nice voice, timid, stupid, small, inexperienced, parroting, crazy, awkwardly, useless, determination, goal, (sun)</td>
<td>comic 11.1%, confidential messenger, free, goal, small, light weight, cute, sort little, rapidity, loosely, unsteady, mad, strange, confusing thought, merrily, sexual intercourse, defect, sacrifices</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fish</td>
<td>profit 17.1%, fecundity 12.2%, person in danger 7.3%, lover 5.6%, well, swim well, goal, work, chance, ability, someone, something, friend, society/group, message, innocent, joke, (acrobatics)</td>
<td>someone 13.7%, profit/purpose 11.8%, event 11.8%, cold-blooded, uncertainty, unreliability, (no intelligence)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tiger</td>
<td>strength/power 24.4%, danger 22.1%, wickedness 15.1%, cruelty 9.3%, leader 12.3%, courage/boldness 7.6%, greed 5.5%, big, great, swallowing, jumping, vitality, proud, significant, valuable, energetic, robust, awfully, auspicious, superstitious</td>
<td>strength/power 66.7%, courage, hunt, protector, rapidity, gasoline, (jealousy)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wolf</td>
<td>malevolence 26.9%, cruelty 15.4%, lecherous, thankless, yammers, cunning</td>
<td>cruelty 27.8%, destruction 22.2%, malevolence 16.7%, hunger 16.7%, greed 16.7%, evil, strong, intensifier</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Worm</td>
<td>damage 64%, laze 28%, inferiority 24%, small, insignificant, flattering, hungry, enthusiastic, poisonous, disease, scatterbrain, (decomposition, other animal)</td>
<td>parasite 25%, small size 20%, defenselessness 20%, trouble 18%, defect 15%, danger 15%, bad conscience 9%, shape of a thread, restless, anger, poor, addiction, mad idea, mystery/secret, disturbing, (wriggling forward, grave)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

From the data that we have collected, we can summarize the semantic functions of bird, fish, tiger, wolf, and worm as in Table 1. Some of the functions were presented in the above sections. Table 1 and the above presentation shows that animal features are richer and more complex than only one feature can represent. This list still does not provide a complete picture of the meanings of those animal names, nor could it ever hope to.

The percentages in the table indicate the more salient functions. They are the concepts and will be adopted in a full list of wild animal names below. Those in brackets are out-of-date components which can be found only in literature, for example, jin’niaoyu’tu4 金鳥玉兔 (gold-bird-jade-rabbit – the crow of gold and the hare of jade; the sun and the moon) and su2long3man’yan3 龍漫衍 (fish-dragon-overflow-develop – conjuring tricks). In German, [+jealousy] (tiger), [+wriggling forward] (worm) and [+no intelligence] (fish) are recorded in Riegler (1907), but these semantic features are lost during the course of last century. Nesi (1995:276) describes, “metaphors change and develop across time and space. Traditional uses do not always accord…” There are fading AEs, while newly invented ones are also invasive, such as those related to computers (Maus mouse – the computer equipment mouse, qian’xi’chong2 千禧蟲 thousand-year-worm – millennium bug). The reasons for the disappearance or replacement of a semantic function can be traced from the development of technology and society, e.g., people wear yan’wei3fu2 燕尾服 (swallow-tail – swallow-tailed coat) instead of chang2pao2ma’gua4 長袍馬褂 (long-robe horse-gown – a mandarin ceremonial wide-sleeved jacket in a ceremonial occasion. When electronic mail is popular, the retronym snail mail is produced. Neither zwei Finger Adler-System (two-finger-eagle-system – the beginner’s method to type using two fingers) nor Elchtest (elk-test – dynamic test of the car stability) were needed some decades ago. Language contact changed the structure of the language, such as the enlargement of roots (long2 龍 dragon stands for textile) and the development of semantic markers (such as ma3 馬 horse) to phonetic representations. This again supports that AEs form a vital part of the language.
III. Discussion

Table 1 shows that MCh tiger is more productive than German tiger while worm is reversed. The less productive vehicles concentrate on specific concepts, e.g., German tiger focuses more on the concept POWER (66.7%) whereas MCh tiger POWER (24.4%), DANGER (22.1%), MALEVOLENCE (15.1%), CRUELTY (9.3%), etc. The bear in German has the similar metaphorical meaning but more diversity as shown in examples (11), (12), (13) and (14). Brinkmann (1878:294) comments that in the languages the concept of “big” mutates easily into that of “coarse, rough and ugly” and that of “small” into that of “fine and dainty”. The bear, the mouse and so on all confirm this view. Take an elephant-AE as an example. Originally the meaning of Elefantenhaut (elephant skin) was merely the skin of an elephant. By sense extension the expression gained an additional meaning. The semantic feature [+thick/fat] plays here the decisive role. The outer physical size transformed into a behaviour feature. The extension of the meaning of Elefantenhaut (to have a thick skin; to be insensitive, indifferent, apathetic) goes from the skin of the elephant to insensitive people. This tendency of changing from concrete concept to abstract concept echoes Aitchison’s (2001:130) possible universal laws: Humans “using everyday external bodily behavior to describe internal events”.

Features of different animals can be composed in a two-animal AE, and unlike the composing of the poetic metaphors that “is the use of ordinary conceptual resources in extraordinary” (Lakoff and Turner 1989:72) and “is very complex” (Lakoff and Turner 1989:71), the features of different animals in two-animal AEs are used to interact and highlight specific features of the animal names in question. For example, tiger in MCh can combine with wolf; and its [+greed], [+hunger], [+cruelty] are stressed, as in lang2 tun1 hui3 yan4 狼吞虎咽 (wolf-swallow-tiger-gobble – wolf down; gobble up) and ru1 lang2 si1 hui3 如狼似虎 (like-wolf-like-tiger – as ferocious as wolves and tigers; like cruel beasts of prey). When sheep and tiger meet, tiger’s [+cruelty], [+violence], [+danger] is emphasized, as in yang2 ru1 hui3 kou3 举报老虎 (sheep-in-tiger-mouth – in a perilous position). There are 11.78% AEs with two or more vehicles in MCh, but only 1.93% in German. This has to do with the different modes of thinking as put forward in Hsieh (2004).

Our corpora indicates that Chinese tend to generate more AEs from animal appearances and apply them to the basic-need domain (see Table 3), e.g., that a snail carries a shell is observed by Chinese people, thus, wu2 ke2 gua1 niu2 无壳蜗牛 (no-shell-snail – people who are not capable of purchasing houses) and gua1 niu2 zu2 蜗牛族 (snail-tribe – people who do not possess real estate) are produced, to apply to the basic housing need. On the other hand, the Germans tend to generate more AEs from animal behaviors or habits and apply them to an emotion domain, i.e. they carry emotionally-charged subject matter, such as the Basic Emotions6 ‘anger’, ‘fear’, ‘surprise’, etc. The proportion can be higher if we include AEs such as qian2 lu2 ji4 qiong2 贫贱优新 (Qian-donkey-skill-poor – the Kweichow donkey at the end of its resourcefulness; a person who has exposed his limited ability) to not only the ABILITY domain but also EMOTION with the consideration that the donkey shows his poor ability when he is scared.7

The fact that a snail carries its shell is also observed by the Germans, but the behavior that it withdraws into its shell when encountering danger is the conceit of the AEs: sich in sein Schneckenhaus zurückziehen (self-in-one's-snail shell-withdraw) and jemanden zur Schnecke machen (someone-to-snail-make). They are composed to denote "to go into one's shell" and "to come down on someone like a ton of bricks", respectively. Table 3 counts the percentages of different types of underlying conceits and (the share) of metaphorical tenors in MCh and German (see Hsieh 2004 for detail).

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6 For Basic Emotion see e.g., Izard (1977), Ekman (1992, 1993). For the related criticism e.g., Russell (1994).
7 The semantic values of most AEs as well as other expressions can be manifested, say either positive or negative, according to the different contexts, see e.g., Gumperz and Hymes (1986), Fischman (1968) for...
Table 3. The underlying conceits and metaphorical tenors in the AE corpora

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Underlying Conceit</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
<th>Metaphorical tenor</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Chinese</td>
<td>German</td>
<td>Chinese</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appearance</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>Basic need domain&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Emotion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Behavior</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>Basic need domain</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Emotion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arbitrary</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The tenor EMOTION is our concern in this section. German gives examples in various acts of speech: terms of endearment, exclamations, and other emotive expressions such as comparing someone’s confusing thoughts to a to-and-fro flying bird. Röhrich (1991:1679) says that the German saying ‘Bei dir piepst’s wohl?’ (it’s chirping in your head – you must be off your rocker) shares the same construct. In fact, many AEs utter this sense, as we have mentioned above: Grillem im Kopf haben (to have crickets in ones head), einen Spatz im Dach (to have a sparrow under the roof), einen Hirn wurm haben (to have a brain worm), einen Keifer (a beetle), or eine Mücke im Kopf (mosquito in ones head). The metaphorical vehicles are birds, worms and insects. This gives us a clue of the "emotive function" of AEs in languages.

Another type of emotive AE set is the endearments. The full set of the German endearments in terms of animal names is in (35).

(35) Emotive function: terms of endearment
For men: Bärchen (little bear), Knuddelbär (hugging-bear), Brummbär (growling bear);
For women: Lamm/Lämchen (lamb/little lamb), Schmusekatze (flattering she-cat), Kätzchen (little cat), Hasel/Hasi/Häschen (rabbit/little rabbit), Mäuschen/Mausi (little mouse), Spätzchen (little swallow), Täubchen (little dove), Vögelchen (little bird);
For children: Frosch/Fröschelein (frog/little frog), Mäuschen/Mausi (little mouse), Schafchen (little sheep), Spatz/Spätzchen (swallow/little swallow), Würmchen (little worm).

Some of them are interchangeable for both women and children. Lakoff and Turner (1989: 170ff in Moon 1998:197) set forth that “animals form the second highest level, and are seen in terms of ‘instinctual attributes and behavior.’” Sharing the so-called “bestial instincts” (Lakoff and Turner 1989:168), it’s not surprising that both German and MCh have a good amount of AEs concerning EMOTION.

The third type of emotive AE set is the exclamations:

(36) Emotive function: exclamations
Kuckuck: Das mag der Kuckuck wissen (the cuckoo knows about it – Devil knows), Geh’ zum Kuckuck (go to cuckoo – go to hell), Zum Kuckuck noch mal (to cuckoo – damm it), Hol’ dich der Kuckuck (the cuckoo may pick you up – Go to hell), der Kuckuck ist los (the cuckoo is loose – it’s like all hell let loose there), Pferd: Pferdefuß (horse-foot – cloven hoof; drawback), Sau: Ich werde zur Sau (I become-to-the-sow – I am turning to a devil), Motte: Du kriegst die Motten (you have the moth – blow me), Storch: Nun brat’ mir einer einen Storch (someone may bake a stork for me – Such a surprise).

Here we have one of the most common uses of language – a means of getting rid of our nervous energy
when we are under stress. Swearing and obscenities are probably the most common signals used in this way, especially when we are angry or feel frustrated. Crystal (1997:10) believes that there are also a variety of emotive expressions of a positive kind, such as our instinctive verbal reactions to nice scenery and wonderful paintings and our utterances of fear and affection. “At a more sophisticated level, there are many literary devices of grammar and vocabulary” which convey the language users’ feelings (1997:10). The exclamations in the form of AEs are the emotional pourings giving our surprise, disapproval, etc. as (36) shown.

(37) Emotive function: intensifiers
Affe: affengell (monkey-horny – great), Affenhitze (monkey-heat – scorching heat), Affenschaende (a monkey-shame – a absolute scandal); Bär: Bärenkälte (bear-cold – big cold); Bärenhunger (to have a bear-hunger – to be ravenous), Laus: Lauselämmer (louse lout – lout rascal), lausige Kälte (lousy cold – absolutely freezing); Ratte: ratzeputz (he ate everything) rat bold – he polished off the lot), ratzekahl (he ate everything) rats bold – he polished off the lot; Wolf: Wolfshunger (wolf hunger – very hungry); Elefant: Elefantenhochzeit (elephant wedding – a merger of two big companies; jumbo merger); Tier: tierischer Ernst (animal gravity – very serious and bureaucrat); Sau: saubillig (sow cheap – very cheap), saudumm (sow stupid – extremely dumb), saugrob (sow coarse – very coarse), saukgut (sow-good – great), etc.

The intensifier in German in terms of animal names, as exemplified in (37), serves the function to increase the tone or mood. At the same time, it is a model particle offering morphosyntactic function. They go through the process of grammaticalization as Traugott (1995:32) describes “…forms and constructions that at first express primarily concrete, lexical, and objective meanings come through repeated use in local syntactic contexts to serve increasingly abstract, pragmatic, interpersonal, and speaker-based functions.” Grammaticalization is observed in animal name usage in both languages, especially in German. They reinforce the meaning of their heads in the compounds or the phrases, e.g., the Affen in Affenschaende (monkey shame – absolute scandal) doesn’t mean “monkey” and the Bären in Bärenkälte (bear-cold – big cold) doesn’t refer to “bear”. They lost or mitigated their own semantic function and work as a grammatical unit. Table 4 summarizes the concepts of all the wild-animal expressions in our Mandarin Chinese and German corpora.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Vehicles</th>
<th>Mandarin Chinese</th>
<th>German</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bear</td>
<td>strong</td>
<td>coarseness, power, men, intensifier</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beast</td>
<td>cruelty, fright</td>
<td>malice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bee</td>
<td>numerous</td>
<td>diligence, attractiveness, women</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bird</td>
<td>profit, gain, loving couple</td>
<td>comic effect</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>crane: calmness, isolation</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>mandarin ducks: loving couple</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>swallow: nice voice, joy, sexuality</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>turtle dove: aggregation</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>wild goose: letter, alone</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>bustard: pimp</td>
<td>cuckoo: devil</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>nightingale: beautiful singing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>peacock: vanity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>raven: black</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>sparrow: tiny</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>stork: delivering kids</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>swan: presentiment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Animal</td>
<td>Meaning</td>
<td>MCh</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------</td>
<td>-------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>----------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fish</td>
<td>profit, gain, goal, fecundity, person in danger, lover</td>
<td>profit/purpose, someone, event</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elephant</td>
<td>big size, precious</td>
<td>big size</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frog</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Snail</td>
<td>small house</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Snake</td>
<td>malice, fright, villain, low-grade, greed</td>
<td>poison, trick</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tiger</td>
<td>strength/power, leader, danger, wickedness, cruelty, courage, boldness, greed</td>
<td>strength/power</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Turtle</td>
<td>inferior, sexuality</td>
<td>slow</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weasel</td>
<td></td>
<td>quick</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wolf</td>
<td>cruelty, malevolence, greed, embarrassment</td>
<td>cruel, destruction, malevolence, hunger, greed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Worm</td>
<td>inferiority, unimportant, damage, decomposition, parasite, laziness</td>
<td>parasite, small size, defenselessness, defect, trouble/disturbance, danger, bad conscience</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Empty grids indicate that there is no corresponding concept; either the vehicle is not productive or it has diverse meanings.**

### IV. Conclusion

This study presents an application of the MCh and German AE corpora, aims to explore the semantic and pragmatic functions of the wild animal names in the light of the underlying conceits. AEs form a vital part of the language. Through new additions or losses during the course of history, for known or unknown reasons, the semantic functions are related to the appearance, behavior, nature, human-animal relations or arbitrary inventions, all based on the culture. Hereby we affirm that the arbitrary features have dwelled, if not long established, in the derivation chain of the animal expressions.

The most salient underlying conceit in MCh is appearance and in German is behavior. Certainly the real world provides a starting point for animal expressions. The concepts of the metaphorical vehicles in terms of wild animal names (see Table 4) suggest that big, strong or dangerous are the metaphorical source of vehicles of big sized, wild animals such as bears and lions, whereas tiny, insignificant and restless are those for small sized, wild animals like insects. Nevertheless, “the choice of salient feature, and the significance attached to that feature, varies to such an extent as to appear arbitrary” (Nesi 1995:276). Our AE corpora indicate that MCh tend to generate more AEs from animal’s appearance and applies them to the basic need domain, while German generates more from animal’s behavior and applies them to the emotion domain. Both MCh and German concern a good number of emotionally-charged subjects in their AEs. Various acts of speech, such as terms of confusing thoughts, terms of endearment, exclamations and intensifiers articulate the pervasive emotive expressions in German. This is performed with an integration of semantic, pragmatic and...
morphosyntactic linguistic performance in German.

The conceptual metaphor A HUMAN BEING IS AN ANIMAL is widespread. Since human beings and animals share the same bestial instincts that other life forms don’t have (Lakoff and Turner 1989:168). When we express ourselves in terms of AEs, strong feelings are involved; AEs are perfect acts of speech to be used in the situations when a topic is so emotionally charged that, as Low (1988) says, “ordinary literal speech fails.”

[References]


