Three Emotional Adverbs in Mandarin Chinese: An Application of Natural Semantic Metalanguage

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Abstract

Emotional adverbs are usually difficult for non-native speakers to comprehend because they belong to the category of empty words (function words). This study investigates the meaning of three emotional adverbs mingming, wanwan, and jianzhi as well as their usages by means of the Natural Semantic Metalanguage approach (Wierzbicka, 1991). The data is mostly selected from the Academia Sinica Balanced Corpus of Modern Chinese, and from conversations among junior high school students. The result shows that each of the adverbs has different implications and can be used in certain specific situations. For example, mingming is used to express negative emotions like disaffection or anger, while wanwan can be used to show speakers’ positive and negative feelings, although it is used only in negative sentences. In the case of jianzhi, it is usually followed by a metaphor or simile and implies a complaint and incredibility. The underlying cognition of the three emotional adverbs is revealed by an analysis of explications.

Keywords: Cognitive Semantics, Natural Semantic Metalanguage approach, emotional adverbs, function words

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I. Introduction

Contexts are essential for the comprehension of some words, especially for some abstract concepts like adverbs. Among Chinese adverbs, a complicated type called “emotional adverb” which lacks for the references is mostly considered as conveying no specific meaning. Nevertheless, emotional adverbs are full of different kinds of emotions within specific contexts. For example, the emotional adverb jing (竟) connotes the meaning of unexpectedness and may imply the emotion of anger or surprise. “Jing expresses a strong disbelief towards some unexpected event” (Ye, 2004)\(^2\). The emotion may be figured out through the context of discourse.

This paper aims to examine the meaning and usage of the three common Chinese emotional adverbs, mingming (明明), wanwan (萬萬), and jianzhi (簡直) with the Natural Semantic Metalanguage approach (Wierzbicka, 1991)\(^3\). The data selected in this paper is collected from Academia Sinica Balanced Corpus of Modern Chinese and from conversations among junior high school students.

This paper is divided into five parts. In the following section, previous research will be reviewed. Section three will sketch the NSM theory, followed by the semantic analysis of the three emotional adverbs. Finally, a conclusion will be given.\(^4\)

II. Previous Research

Before analyzing the emotional adverbs mingming, wanwan and jianzhi, the definition of emotional adverbs and function words should be given first. According to Wang (1985)\(^5\), adverbs in Mandarin are very different from those in English. In English, adverbs are used to modify verbs or adjectives, and most of them are inflected from their adjective forms. However, we cannot indicate Chinese adverbs by their forms because Chinese is an isolating language. Even though it is difficult to identify Chinese adverbs, their roles in sentences are important, too. Some adverbs are used in certain specific situations and others can be applied for various kinds of

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purposes. For example, Wang (1985)\(^6\) divides adverbs into the four types: degree adverbs (*tai*, *hen*, and *zui*), scope adverbs (*du*, *zhi*, and *zong*), time adverbs (*zai*, *yi*, and *ceng*), and possibility adverbs (*ke*, *hui*, and *yexu*). Each of them stands for several particular usages. However, Tang (2000)\(^7\) indicates that the four categories are not enough to distinguish all the adverbs. He further adds one more group named modal adverbs.\(^8\) The so-called modality refers to “the speakers’ viewpoint or mental attitude toward the propositional content of the sentences, including the judgment of the alethic, epistemic, boulomaic, deontic, evaluative, possibility, probability, and necessity of sentences” (Tang, 2000)\(^9\). As a result, emotional adverbs can be used to express speakers’ attitudes or emotions toward the interlocutors or toward the status quo they face. On the other hand, Ye (2004)\(^10\) mentions that “Wang Li used ‘emotional adverbs’ for *yuqi fuci* 語氣副詞;” (Wang, 1985)\(^11\) however, it’s not easy to find an adequate translation for *yuqi* in English. Some may use modal adverbs to refer to emotional adverbs though emotional adverbs usually imply personal emotions. Therefore, in the present paper the term emotional adverb is used instead of modal adverb.

Tang (2000)\(^12\) also states some characteristics about emotional adverbs. First, they belong to closed class; therefore, the number of the emotional adverbs is limited. Second, most of them are abstract and are more about grammatical meaning than lexical meaning. Third, their positions in a sentence are fixed and bound to some phrases. Usually, emotional adverbs are placed in the middle of sentences rather than in the initial or final position. The last characteristic is that they seldom become an informational focus because they rarely stand for new information or important thoughts.

There are also differences between Chinese and English emotional adverbs. English modal adverbs like ‘certainly’ and ‘definitely’ may not contain as many emotions or attitudes as Chinese ones. For example, the underlying emotion in the sentence ‘he is definitely coming’ may not be revealed easily. It is difficult to tell the emotion of the speaker though affirmative mood of the sentence can be felt from this

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\(^{6}\) Wang Li（王力）, op. cit., pp.31.


\(^{8}\) We do not differentiate the modal adverbs in Tang (2000) and the emotional adverbs in Ye (2004). They are different terms within the same category.

\(^{9}\) Tang, Ting-chi（湯廷池）, op. cit., pp.200.

\(^{10}\) Ye, Z., op cit. (2004), pp.142.

\(^{11}\) Wang Li（王力）, op cit.

\(^{12}\) Tang, Ting-chi（湯廷池）, op. cit., pp.200.
sentence. In other words, Chinese emotional adverbs can be used to express speakers’ strong emotions, but in English speakers have to take advantage of the intonation or the inflected forms of verbs to emphasize their attitudes (Ye, 2002; 2004; Fang, 1992). Chinese emotional adverbs therefore help interlocutors to comprehend the implicative emotions of speakers. Consequently, as Wang (1985) assumes, emotional adverbs in Chinese are actually as important as other types of adverbs.

As pointed out by Ye (2004), this kind of emotional adverbs belongs to the category of *xuci* 虛詞 ‘empty words’ or ‘function words’ because it is not easy to explain them. They are so abstract that people may not find their references. As Shengelaia (1999) indicates, “the main and essential function is of semantic character”, and some adverbs belong to function words though it may not be so in every language (Shengelaia, 1999). Their meanings will be discussed rather than referenced when being used. For example, Koile argues that the adverbial *ya* in Spanish may be applied to “express an emotional emphasis” (Koile, 1996) as a discourse marker, while Ernst (1994) examines the Chinese adverb *daodi* and points that it may be used to express a strong emotion of impatience in an interrogatory sentence. Teng (2003) mentions that the Chinese interrogative adverb *nandao* has a function to express the emotion of suspicion. They all show that some adverbs may be used to express the emotion, but none of them investigates emotional adverbs specifically. Therefore, there is a need to further examine the usages of emotional adverbs. Among Chinese emotional adverbs, it is found that *mingming*, *wanwan*, and *jianzhi* are commonly used and there are some patterns among them. Besides, the usages of the reduplications *mingming* and *wanwan* are interesting, whereas *jianzhi* are frequently used and are found applied in more than two hundred sentences in

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14 Wang Li (王力), op. cit.
17 Shengelaia, N. op. cit., pp. 1.
Three Emotional Adverbs in Mandarin Chinese: 125
An Application of Natural Semantic Metalanguage

Sinica Corpus though it is not reduplication. As a result, the current study will focus on these three emotional adverbs.

III. Methodology

In this section, the Natural Semantic Metalanguage approach will be reviewed first, and then we will introduce the way to collect the data.

A. The Natural Semantic Metalanguage approach (NSM)

The natural semantic metalanguage approach (NSM), or reductive paraphrase, is based on the idea of clarity and simplicity (Goddard, 1998)\textsuperscript{21}. NSM was developed by Anna Wierzbicka (1991)\textsuperscript{22} to explicate meanings of words in different languages. Unlike frame, because metalanguage is derived from natural language, it is supposed to be understood by any natural language speakers without further signs or conventions. However, with frame semantics, words are understood under the real-world situation and possible roles in that language (Fillmore, 1992 in Goddard, 1998)\textsuperscript{23}. Therefore, though frame may give other language users a thorough comprehension of the word, many of the meanings may not be expressed completely because of the lack of metalanguage. Hence, people speaking different languages may not understand a frame of a word if they don’t know the language in the frame. On the other hand, NSM helps people to understand words by using metalanguage derived from natural languages since it is used to paraphrase a word or to explain a term with semantic primitives. Semantic primitives refer to words which cannot be analyzed anymore and are accessible in almost every language or culture in the world, such as \textit{I}, \textit{you}, \textit{think}, \textit{know}, and \textit{because}. Therefore, the semantic primitives usually share universal grammar (Ye, 2002; 2004; Wierzbicka, 1991)\textsuperscript{24}. For example, Goddard (1998)\textsuperscript{25} uses NSM to explain the idea of \textit{happy}, \textit{joy}, and \textit{pleased} and compares these similar emotional ideas in the following way:

\begin{quote}
X feels happy=

Sometimes a person thinks something like this:

Something good happened to me
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{23}Goddard, C. op. cit., pp.69-70.
\textsuperscript{25}Goddard, C. op. cit., pp.92.
I wanted this
I don’t want other things now
because of this, this person feels something good
X feels like this

With the explication, the abstract meaning of happy becomes clearer. The metalanguage used here, such as sometimes, person, think, and something can be found in almost every language in the world; therefore, the explication may be comprehended in most of natural languages. Besides, the steps within the explication help people to indicate the situation where the word can be used. In this sense, the explication above implies when people feel happy, something good must happen to them first. Besides, most of the time, people have the desire for that kind of thing.

X feels joyful=
Sometimes a person thinks something like this:
Something good is happening now
I wanted this
because of this, this person feels something very good
X feels like this

On the other hand, the feeling of joy is different from happy if we compare their explications. When someone feels joyful, there must be something happening first, although it may not happen to him or her personally. Besides, the present status of the event also makes a difference. However, the pleased feeling may happen to someone without the event occurring to him or her, which makes pleased similar to joyful with the exception that when individuals feel pleased, they may not have to get involved in the present event. That is, the things that make them pleased may have happened before.

X feels pleased=
Sometimes a person thinks something like this:
Something good happened
I wanted this
because of this, this person feels something good
X feels like this
Above all, NSM may be a way to interpret emotional adverbs whose meanings seem blurry with the help of semantic primitives. Also, the explication makes the comparison between word meanings easier, which again scaffolds the perception of word meanings. As Wierzbicka (2007)\(^{26}\) points out, three specifications have to be achieved within the explications: “(i) well formedness),… (ii) coherence, … and (iii) substitutability”. Therefore, semantic primitives have to be used in explications which are meaningful and also can be substituted in the context of the words they explain. According to this framework, the three emotional adverbs will be paraphrased by NSM in order to reveal their underlying cognition and elaborate meanings.

**B. Data Analysis**

*Mingming*, *wanwan* and *jianzhi* are selected in the current study because they are commonly used in daily life. Besides, it is difficult to find appropriate translations in English for them although they all contain emotions which speakers may not notice when applying them. As mentioned earlier, our data was collected from *Academia Sinica Balanced Corpus of Modern Chinese* (Sinica Corpus) and quoted from conversations among junior high school students to support the examples in Sinica Corpus. Eighty-three sentences with *mingming* were collected from Sinica Corpus, whereas thirty-seven with *wanwan* and two hundred and seventeen with *jianzhi* were sorted from the same corpus. The conversations were collected from about two hundred students of seventh and eighth grade during the classes and the recess at school within one month. Whenever they mentioned about these three emotional adverbs, the sentences would be written down immediately. Among the data from students, eleven sentences with *mingming* and five sentences with *wanwan* were recorded, while eight with *jianzhi* were collected from twenty-one students because some sentences were spoken by the same student. The reason for taking these two types of data is to avoid the gaps between different generations and between written language and spoken language. Besides, the sentences made by students may support some of the findings. In other words, the data from Sinica Corpus are more formal than those from conversation notes, while the data from the conversation notes come from typical of daily youth usage in Taiwan and belong to spoken languages.

IV. The Semantic Analysis of Mingming, Wanwan, and Jianzhi

In this section, the usage of the emotional adverbs mingming, wanwan, and jianzhi will be discussed by means of the NSM approach. Their usages will be analyzed along with the examples from the data.

A. Mingming (明明)

The morpheme ming 明 possesses the meaning of ‘clear’ or ‘bright’; however, when it is duplicated as mingming, the original meaning changes. In other words, mingming becomes an emotional adverb which is difficult to define. When mingming is used in a sentence, some emotion will be also expressed. As to the word meaning itself, some may translate mingming as ‘obviously’ or ‘plainly’, but the emotions contained in the phrase seem to be ignored in this translation. Therefore, in order to clarify the meaning as well as the emotion that mingming refers to, it may be explicated as the following.

Mingming
(a) I know something happened.
(b) Someone did something or said something about this.
(c) I feel something bad.
(d) I say it is not true.
(e) I say this because I know something.

Example (1a) below may explain the explication. The speaker felt sick and went to the hospital to have a shot. The nurse told him that it would not take much time to do it. However, the speaker experienced it and felt bad because he didn’t agree. As a result, he used mingming to express his dissatisfaction about the nurse’s statement.

(1)a. Hushi mingming shuo dade hen kuai, keshi wo que 護士 明明 說 打 得 很 快，可是 我 卻 Nurse MINGMING say shot very fast but I instead ‘Though the nurse said it would be very fast to give the shot, I felt that it juede you yi shiji zhi jiu. [Sinica Corpus]
Therefore, if *mingming* is omitted as example (1b), a statement is expressed rather than a feeling of dissatisfaction even though the rough meaning of the sentence remains the same. In example (1b), the speaker expressed disagreement with the nurse, but the underlying emotion may not be perceived as well. Unlike example (1b), example (1a) clearly expresses a strong emotion of dissatisfaction. In this sense, *mingming* is an emotional adverb since it has the function of delivering emotions.

(1)b. *Hushi shuo dade hen kuai, keshi wo que juede you*  
Nurse say shot very fast but I instead feel have  
‘Though the nurse said it would be very fast to give the shot, I felt that it  
yi shiji zhi jiu,  
one century of long  
had been one century long.’

As in example (1), the speaker in example (2) from the student in class showed a negative emotion toward the interlocutor. The student complained that he didn’t play joke on his classmate, but his teacher kept blaming him. Hence, he used the term *mingming* to express his anger and complaint. Without *mingming*, example (2) can only be used to express an event rather than the strong emotion of dissatisfaction intended by the speaker. Therefore, we may use the explication to understand *mingming*. The student knew that someone else had tricked his classmate, but the teacher said something bad and blamed him, which made him upset. As a result, he defended himself with example (2) and showed his dissatisfaction because he knew the whole event.

(2) *Mingming jiu bushi wo zuo de, laoshi hai yizhi ma wo.*  
MINGMING PART\(^{27}\) not I did, teacher still keep score me.

\(^{27}\)The abbreviations are used in the current paper as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abbreviations</th>
<th>Meanings</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PART</td>
<td>particles, e.g., <em>ma</em> 嘛, <em>a</em> 啊, and <em>lou</em> 嘩</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[mor. par.]</td>
<td>morphosyntactic particles, e.g., <em>de</em> 的</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NEG</td>
<td>negation markers, e.g., <em>bu</em> 不 and <em>mei</em> 没</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BE</td>
<td>verb BE, e.g., <em>shi</em> 是</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
‘I didn’t do it, but the teacher still kept scoring and blaming me.’

Accordingly, the adverb mingming is usually used to express negative emotions such as anger, dissatisfaction, and helplessness. If the adverb mingming is taken off, the interlocutors may not feel such a strong emotion. In this sense, mingming functions as an emotional adverb, especially in spoken language.

B. Wanwan （萬萬）

The morpheme wan 萬 refers to ‘ten thousand’; however, its meaning changes when it becomes wanwan. Wanwan has nothing to do with a meaning about quantity; instead, it is used as a warning to create an emphasis indicating that one shouldn’t do something. Unlike mingming, there is a more restricted usage with regard to wanwan. Wanwan is only used in negative sentences rather than in positive sentences. Most of the time, wanwan is followed by the negation markers bu or mei. In example (3), it is obvious that the sentence will be meaningless if the negation marker is removed. The speaker stated that her grandfather wouldn’t allow her to run in the race because he thought it was shameful to wear a pair of shorts. Also, the emotion of negation in this particular sentence would be much stronger than in one without wanwan. In this sense, we may perceive wanwan as an emotional adverb.

(3) Qu lou chu datui saipao, zhe shi waigong wanwan buneng
去 露出 大腿 賽跑，這 是 外公 萬萬 不能
Go show thigh race, this be grandpa WANWAN can’t
‘To show ones’ thighs to race is not allowed by grandpa.’

yunxu de. [Sinica Corpus]
允许 的。
allow

The speaker in example (4) strongly doubted and felt angry about the way the bid was preceding; therefore, he used wanwan to emphasize that this was an unreasonable and ridiculous event. Accordingly, wanwan is also used to emphasize a negative emotion like disaffection or anger. Additionally, when someone feels surprised, he or she may also use wanwan to express his emotion as example (5) below illustrates.

(4) Guoren wanwan xiang bu dao, shiyu wei ju zhuanye
人 萬萬 想 不 到，事 當為 祖言
‘To think about this is not possible for me. The truth is that I was right.’

[example (3) and (4) are in Chinese, with translations provided in the text]
People in Taiwan would never think that more than ten jury members with professional backgrounds could decide a bid of more than twelve billion by using I’intimeconviction of evidence through inner conviction in a problematic situation.

In the following example, the joyfulness of the speaker can be felt in the utterance. The speaker thought that her boyfriend would never have contacted with her after the unhappy event, but she got a phone call from him. Therefore, when wanwan is followed by xiangbudao 想不到 or meixiangdao 沒想到, both the opposite emotions joyfulness and anger may be expressed.

(5) Jingguo shengri shijian, Xiao Chan yiwei ta gen Huang Feng
經過 生日 事件, 小 螞 以為 她 跟 黃 蟻
After birthday event, Xiao Chan think she and Huang Feng

zhijian wan le, wanwan mei xiang dao, Huang Feng hai
之間 完 了, 萬萬 沒 想 到, 黃 蟻 還
between over, WANWAN NEG think, Huang Feng still

hui dadianhua lai yue ta, ta jianzhi kuai le
會 打電話 來 約 她, 她 簡直 快樂
call date her, she JIANZHI almost happy
Moreover, *wanwan* can be replaced with *qianwan* under certain circumstances. Take example (6) for instance, in which *wanwan* can be paraphrased by using *qianwan*. However, sometimes when *wanwan* is substituted with *qianwan*, the sentence sounds weird. For example, we may not rephrase *wanwan* with *qianwan* in example (3) because *qianwan* is used when the speakers ask the listeners not to do something, so the subject of the utterance must be the second person, as in English imperative sentences. Consequently, if no other subject precedes the emotional adverb *wanwan*, *wanwan* can be replaced with *qianwan* without changing the meaning as example (6) illustrates. On the contrary, *qianwan* will not appear in a sentence with a third person subject right in front of it. As example (3) has shown, the subject of the sentence is the grandfather, who belongs to the third personal nominal groups. In that case, *wanwan* may not be changed into *qianwan*.

(6) *Yinci kaogu gongzuo bi xu zixi huanman jinxing*,
因此 考古 工作 必須 仔細 緩慢 進行,
*Therefore archaeological job need carefully slowly progress*.

*wanwan buneng shiyong guaishou deng jixiehua gongju*.
萬萬 不能 使用 怪手 等 機械化 工具。
*WANWAN can’t use backhoe etc mechanisation tools.*

Besides, *qianwan* can be used in both positive and negative sentences, while *wanwan* can only be inserted into negative sentences. Example (7) is collected from one of the students. If we compare it with example (8), we may find that they both express the same meaning, but it is clear that only *qianwan* can be applied in both examples (7) and (8). On the contrary, *wanwan* may only be used in example (8) which contains a negative marker. Furthermore, *wanwan* is more likely to take place in formal speech or written forms, while *qianwan* is used in daily speech more often. That is why fewer sentences about *wanwan* are collected from students.

(7) *Qianwan yao jide dai zuoye lai*.
千萬 要 記得 帶 作業 來。
*QIANWAN remember bring homework come.*
Three Emotional Adverbs in Mandarin Chinese: An Application of Natural Semantic Metalanguage

(8) Wanwan  buke  wangji  dai  zuoye  lai.
WANWAN  can’t  forget  bring  homework  come.
‘Don’t forget to bring the homework here.’

If we examine the oral data students uttered, it can be found that wanwan are usually followed by the negation words buke as example (9) illustrates. Example (9) happened when the teacher told the students that there would be a test the next day. One student tried to persuade the teacher not to give the test, so he said the sentence below. The student thought they didn’t want to have a test and he expressed his feelings of negation and resistance.

(9) Laoshi,  wanwan  buke  a!  Ni  tai  canren  le.
Teacher,  WANWAN  can’t  PART!  you  too  cruel  .
‘Teacher, you really can’t do it! You’re too cruel.’

Hence, wanwan can be defined as an emotional adverb used to emphasize strong restraint or a reminder as the explication below shows:

\[ \text{Wanwan} \]
\[ \begin{align*}
(a) & \quad \text{I know something happened.} \\
(b) & \quad \text{I feel something.} \\
(c) & \quad \text{I think it can’t be done, or it can’t have been done.} \\
(d) & \quad \text{I say it can’t be done, or it can’t have been done.} \\
(e) & \quad \text{I say this because I know something.}
\end{align*} \]

Therefore, if we examine example (10) with the explication, the usage of wanwan will become clearer. In example (10), the speaker knew that the buildings were constructed and repaired, and a lot of people were required. Therefore, he thought it would not be done if no one participated. Accordingly, he used wanwan to emphasize his convictions.

(10) Rengshou  ma,  jiu  shi  laodongli  le,  xiujian  dongxi  ma,
Human-hand  PART  namely  labor force,  build  things  PART
‘The so-called hand namely refers to the labor force. Building or repairing
meiren shi wanwan buxing de, erqie ren duo liliang da
nobody is WANWAN not allow and people many power big
tings can never be done without manpower, and the more people there are

ah! duo zhao xie ren zhun meicuo. [Sinica Corpus]
PART more find some people certainly right.
the more power it will be. It won’t be wrong to find more people.’

C. Jianzhi （簡直）

The use of *jianzhi* is much more complicated. *Jianzhi* consists of two morphemes which mean ‘simple’ and ‘straight’ respectively. However, it is also surprising that the combination of *jian* and *zhi* is irrelevant to the meaning of its roots. It contains the sense of ‘little short of something’ or ‘fairly’. Besides its literal meaning, *jianzhi* can be used to express speakers’ attitudes and emotions. Similar to *wanwan*, *jianzhi* is also used to emphasize the speakers’ feelings, but *jianzhi* can be inserted into both positive and negative sentences. As a result, the feeling or the attitude that the speakers express may also be either positive or negative. Moreover, there may be a metaphor or simile right after *jianzhi*.

In example (11), the speaker lost her purse, and the interlocutor helped her to find it. The speaker felt not only surprised but also happy about this. Thus, the speaker stated the sentence as follows.

(11) Xiao didi, ni ke zhenshi congming a, jianzhi jiu xiang
Little brother, you really smart PART, JIANZHI like
‘Little boy, you’re really smart like a little detective! I want to thank you!’

xiao zhentan yiyang ma! Wo yao xiexie ni lou! [Sinica Corpus]
little detective same PART I want thank you PART!

Certainly, the interlocutor is not a detective but a little boy. However, the speaker was so happy and surprised that he regarded the little boy as a smart detective. Therefore, the speaker used the simile *xiao zhentan* （小偵探） ‘little detective’ to describe the little boy since he might have the qualities of a detective.
On the other hand, *jianzhi* can also be used to express a negative feeling or complaint. As in example (12), the speaker heard the music which sounded like noise to him, so he felt upset. He then said the music was a kind of torture for the audience. Though the speaker didn’t use a simile, a metaphor can be found here because the unpleasant music is compared with torture.

(12) *Ting bu dao zhu xuanlu, zhiyou zhen er yu long*  
Listen no main melody, only rock ear want deaf  
‘I can’t hear the main melody, but only the deafening sound of beating. It’s  
*de jiyue, jianzhi shi nuedai tingzhong* [Sinica Corpus]  
really an abuse to the audience.’

Even when a simile and a metaphor are not used, the utterance may also imply an exaggerated idea as example (13) shows. The speaker wanted to stress the importance of learning, so he said that people may not know how to live if they don’t want to learn at all. There is no simile or metaphor inside the sentence; however, an overstatement is used.

(13) *Ruguo bu qu xuexi, jiushi zheng qiangmian er li,*  
If NEG go learn, straight wall stand,  
‘If people don’t want to learn, they will not know how to face the things on  
*jianzhi bu zhi gai ruhe miandui renjian shi le.*  
JIANZHI NEG know should how face earth things .  
the earth.’ [Sinica Corpus]

Therefore, *jianzhi* can be explicated as follows. When people use *jianzhi*, they first feel something that may be positive or negative because of another event. They say something with an exaggerated simile or metaphor so as to express their strong feelings.

*Jianzhi*  
(a) I know something happened.  
(b) I feel something (bad or good).
(c) I say something.

Take example (14), for instance, in which the speaker knew that the living room was very dirty, which made him uncomfortable. As a result, he compared the floor of the living room to an incinerator, which is far from the truth.

(14) *Jia lǐ de keting diban zàng de huì nian ren,*

家裡的客廳地板髒得會黏人,

The floor of the living room is dirty enough to stick things, and it's dark.

*hei de jianzhi xiang fenhualu.*

黑得简直像「焚化爐」。

like the destructor.

When it comes to example (15) which is made by a student, the explication may also be applied. The student first knew that the lunch was not delicious by glancing at it, and he felt disgusted at the food. Therefore, he said that the lunch was like hogwash that he would never taste again.

(15) *Zhe ge neng chi ma? Zhe jianzhi shi soushui ma!*

這個能吃嗎？這簡直是餿水嘛！

‘Can this be eaten? It looks just like hogwash!’

V. Conclusion

Emotional adverbs are in a difficult category of function words that may not be defined easily, but few researchers have explored them. This study examines the emotional adverbs *mingming, wanwan* and *jianzhi* by means of the NSM approach. Through analyzing the ample examples contained here, these three emotional adverbs become clarified and explicit.

First, *mingming* is used to express a negative feeling such as anger, disaffection or helplessness when someone does something against what the speaker has understood. Additionally, by adding *mingming* to the sentence, speakers may defend themselves or other people from ongoing situations or conversations.
On the other hand, *wanwan* can only appear in a negative sentence, which differs from the usage of *qianwan*. However, it can be used to emphasize both positive emotions like surprises and negative emotions such as forbiddance. As to *jianzhi*, it is usually attached by some similes or metaphors in order to describe a sense of complaint or incredibility. Thus, it can express not only positive but also negative emotions as in the case of *wanwan*.

Besides, we may distinguish the meanings of these three emotional adverbs if the explications are compared. For *mingming*, it is used when someone does something or has comment on something that has happened before. As to *wanwan* and *jianzhi*, it is unnecessary for someone else to have any reactions. Speakers who use *wanwan* and *jianzhi* may only try to express something toward the events that has happened. Moreover, *mingming* is applied when people feel upset or bad, whereas *jianzhi* may be used when good or bad feelings happen. When it comes to *wanwan*, people may have either ill feelings or surprising feelings and their comments with *wanwan* are only used either to stop something which may happen or to express their feelings toward the unexpected incidents.

With an understanding of the semantic aspects of emotional adverbs, emotional adverbs will be implicated more precisely. With NSM, these seemingly abstract emotional adverbs become clearer, and their underlying meanings can be distinguished from one another.
References


論中文情緒副詞「明明」、「萬萬」、「簡直」

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摘要

情緒副詞屬於虛詞的一種，因而對中文學習者而言，情緒副詞常是難以理解的。本文以自然語義中介語理論 (NSM, Wierzbicka, 1991) 來探討「明明」、「萬萬」及「簡直」三種情緒副詞的意義及用法。語料主要查尋自中央研究院平衡語料庫，部分口語語料則來自目前國中生的日常對話。研究結果顯示此三種情緒副詞皆富含不同之語意且用於不同之語境。比如，「明明」用來表達不滿及憤怒等負面情緒，「萬萬」可同時用於傳達正面或負面的語意，唯其僅可置於否定句中。而「簡直」則時常伴隨隱喻或明喻出現，並可表達抱怨或不可置信的情緒。三種情緒副詞所傳達的情緒與其背後所隱含的認知語意藉由自然語義中介語理論一一浮現。

關鍵詞：認知語意學、自然語義中介語理論、情緒副詞、虛詞

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