

**CONCEPTUALISATIONS OF AGEING IN ENGLISH AND CHINESE: A CORPUS-BASED STUDY OF
CONCEPTUAL METAPHORS SURROUNDING 'AGE' AND 'OLD AGE'**

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Abstract

The complexity of the ageing experience – a combination of societal, biological and personal effects – has gained attention in linguistic studies. The combination of language and ageing is even more urgent now because discourses on ageing are going to affect both an increasingly ageing population and those tasked with caring for them. This thesis investigates the conceptualisations of ageing from a cultural perspective, which takes Conceptual Metaphor Theory (Lakoff and Johnson 1980/2003) as its methodological basis. The project aims to uncover how two languages, English and Mandarin Chinese, make sense of ageing, specifically, ‘age’ and ‘old age’, by way of a qualitative study of corpus data. Our analysis starts with a heuristic exploration of *age* and *old age*-related dictionary entries in English and Chinese. It proceeds to focus on conceptual metaphors of ‘age’ and ‘old age’ identified in two newly assembled media corpora in the two languages. The findings show that the universally shared bodily experience, i.e., ageing, is conceptualised in a similar way on a highly abstract level, which is reflected in the conceptual metaphor AGEING IS A JOURNEY both in the idiomatic phrases and in the media data. However, on a subordinate level, the English data employs a DOWNWARD path of the ageing JOURNEY and an UPWARD path by the Chinese data. These finding suggests distinct cultural differences even for the AGEING IS A JOURNEY metaphor. Furthermore, we have identified the following source concepts in metaphors for ‘old age’: LOCATION, CONTAINER, VIOLENCE, DISEASE, A DANGEROUS THING, A LIVING THING and FRUIT. Of these, VIOLENCE, DISEASE, A DANGEROUS THING, FRUIT are not identified in the Chinese media data.

The thesis extends Conceptual Metaphor Theory in terms of its range of topics in a cultural backdrop. In turn, the method proves that metaphor analysis offers a strong tool to understand the ageing experience and employing metaphors seems to be inevitable in our daily communications. To appreciate these cultural differences, we propose to use Metaphor Scenarios (Musolff 2016,2021) to complement CMT in interpreting the disparities systematically.

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List of abbreviations

AUX: auxiliary (except the DE construction which is glossed as a modifier marker elsewhere [Yu 1998])

CLF: classifier

PRT: particle

EN: English

CN: Chinese

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Chapter 1 Introduction

1.1 The topic of the project

The ageing experience is both collective and individual. Not only is it biological, but also societal. The perceptions of ageing may thus vary from one culture to another. However, there is a lack of research as to what specific perceptions about old age are prevalent in different cultures from a linguistic perspective. This research aims to identify such perceptions in the media in English and Mandarin Chinese (Henceforth Chinese), in particular, to examine the similarities and differences in the two cultures. This chapter will provide an introduction to the current project by first discussing the background of the study. Then, we lay out the research problem, the aims and research questions, the significance of the project and finally, the thesis structure.

1.2 The background to the study

In English, discourses surrounding ageing variably are dominantly framed around the biological decline (Katz 2011) and old age is largely represented negatively (Featherstone and Hepworth 2005: 354-362; Vincent 2007). In social context, the underlying factors are reflected by certain powerful patterns. Levy (1996) argues that older adults are implicitly primed with exposure in English either to words designed to elicit a negative stereotype (e.g., decline, dependent, senile, confused) or to words designed to elicit a positive stereotype (e.g., wise, alert, sage, learned). As people grow older and begin to self-identify as old, these stereotypes begin to affect health and well-being in physiological (e.g., stress responses), psychological (will to live) and behavioural (health behaviour) areas (Levy 2009).

Staudinger and Bowen (2010: 254–297) contend that negative stereotypes can limit people’s potential of achieving their goals and personal development. Also, negative perceptions of ageing that risk anxiety can prevent people from actively improving the aging experience (Kotter-Grühn 2015). Linguistic analysis (Ng et al. 2015) has shown that the negativity has increased over the past 200 years. Recent research (Kornadt et al. 2021) calls to avoid using the terminologies negative or positive because the two terms tend to easily associate with bad and good which are “simplistic and insufficient”. Therefore, Kornadt et al. (2021) uses the term Views of Ageing to include ageing in general (e.g., the conventional negative and positive stereotypes) and perceptions of age. In their study, instead of negative or positive stereotypes, the authors suggest other ways of describing the views of ageing, such as gains-and loss-orientated or potential-and-deficit orientated view. However, not only is there insufficient research that focuses on other people’s potential-oriented views of ageing (Kornadt et al. 2021) – which can facilitate older people’s functioning (Kessler and Staudinger 2007) – but also there is far less linguistic analysis, let alone cross-linguistic analysis. The current study aims to fill this gap.

From a linguistic perspective, acknowledging the negative perceptions being unpleasant, people try to euphemism ‘old age’ ¹(Benczes, Burridge, Sharifian, and Allan 2017). For example, novel conceptual names for aged care facilities have come to their naming practices (*villa*², *manor*, *lodge*, etc. instead of nursing homes). Some of the perceptions in English might apply to Chinese. However, distinct differences are envisioned in the sense that the Chinese conceptualisations of ageing has a more neutral to positive slant.

¹ Concepts are in single quotation marks.

² Words and phrases as linguistic examples are in italics.

1.3 The research problem

In order to shift the negative perceptions of ageing – e.g., physical health or illness-related words, such as *stamina* and *sickness* (Ng et al. 2015) – word choices have been under discussion and recommendations have been made. Describing ageing in terms of *struggle*, for example, might not be a good choice. In their author's guideline, *Journal of American Geriatrics Society (JAGS)* ³(2017) highlight such a framework suggests emotional helplessness (e.g., being afflicted with and suffering from the effects of old age). They instead recommend a 'building momentum' metaphorical framework in which "ageing is a dynamic process that leads to new abilities and knowledge we can share with our communities" (JAGS 2017).

Research by Lindland et al. (2016) takes a cultural-cognitive approach in analysing the American people's perception of the experience of ageing, and concludes that this experience is grounded in, and shaped by, the interaction between social, cultural, and other factors. Their study employs cognitive linguistics to investigate how their interviewees understand ageing and comes up with recommendations for communicators. To cite an example:

We also recommend that those trying to make expert information more accessible , and avoid metaphors that are likely to activate zero-sum thinking about public resources. This would include language like "pools" of resources or "pieces of the

³ The JAGS provides guidelines on writing for authors which contain recommended frameworks. See: [Author Guidelines - Journal of the American Geriatrics Society - Wiley Online Library](#)

pie” that may unintentionally lead people to conceptualise public resources as limited stores to be fought over rather than collections of resources that can be grown, expanded, or used in more synergistic and efficient ways.

This study (Lindland et al. 2016) is one of the few studies adopting cognitive linguistic techniques to examining the understanding of ageing. In light of promoting optimal linguistic models in ageing studies, in the more recent author guideline by JAGS (2020), it recommends neutral terms and inclusive terms – *older people, we, us* – to be used for older adults, as well as the “the Building Momentum Metaphor”, i.e., “aging is a dynamic process that leads to new abilities and knowledge we can share with our communities ...” rather than conflict-orientated words such as *fight* to describe ageing experiences. The great benefit from the study by Lindland et al. (2016) – which is adopted by JAGS (2017) – is that it set out a short list of recommendations for communicators to use with the hope to “open up new ways of thinking ageing”. However, whether the strategies suggested – e.g., avoid using metaphors like “pools” of resources which indicates zero-sum thinking – can indeed foster new thinking is questionable because metaphors as such are so conventional that they are taken from granted. Therefore, a cross-linguistic study might shed new light on this topic.

Also, there are some studies of the representation of old age (Wijngaarden et al. 2019: 245–265) and retirement (Sargent et al. 2011: 315-324) using a metaphor approach, but their focus is on the understanding of the social issues, will for life and career stages respectively. Thus, the existing body of conceptual metaphor studies on ageing is yet to grow, especially cross-culturally, which is where the present project tries to contribute.

1.4 Research aims and questions

The purpose of this project is to examine perceptions of the ageing experience in English and Chinese; to test new claims on the discourse of ageing; and hopefully to ascertain whether or not there are metaphorical frameworks that display positive or negative attitudes towards ageing; of which, the neutral and positive frameworks could potentially be used to 'improve', or at least alter, the experience of ageing. By doing so, the project seeks to reveal alternative linguistic frameworks for use by potential or informal caregivers (from paid workers to family members and even to artificial intelligence) when interacting with older adults, to facilitate a less negative experience of ageing (if not a positive one). Finally, the study aspires to explore the strengths and limits of conceptual metaphor as a method in understanding complex issues in the real world, i.e., using natural occurring data. The English data was media discourses retrieved from LexisNexis within the time period of 2013 and 2015. The Chinese data was from the Beijing Language and Culture University Centre covering the same period of time plus a small amount of discourses dated back 1945. The core Chinese media outlets include *People's Daily's* home and overseas editions.

1.5 Research questions

To fit the research aims, this study proposes to address the following research questions (RQ):

RQ 1: What are the source domains in conceptualizing ageing in English and Chinese?

This RQ aims to identify the source domains in each language drawing on the semantic meanings of the non-literal use of language surrounding the key search terms, i.e., *age*, *old*, and *old age*.

RQ 2: What are the similarities and differences in selecting properties of the source domains for the conceptualisation?

This RQ aims to find shared as well as distinct source domains in each language.

RQ3: Do the similarities and differences connect with positive and negative attitudes towards ageing?

This is to decide whether the conceptual metaphors are physical loss oriented or problem oriented.

1.6 The significance of the project

The significance of the study firstly lies in the methodological implication that conceptual metaphors and metaphor scenarios can be useful tools in understanding ageing. Secondly it stresses the need of interdisciplinary, cross-cultural studies in language and health communication. We hope to provide metaphors for language and ageing studies by identifying conceptual metaphors that are related to different attitudes towards and focuses of ageing. It can potentially advance existing frameworks (i.e., the “Building Momentum” metaphor) with practical options, to serve as a linguistic tool for effective communication in policy making, community education, the media platforms, and on personal levels too.

The project is also significant in its cross-cultural approach with real world data in the field of conceptual metaphor studies. It demonstrates that cultural context can override bodily experiences by presenting different conceptual metaphors on the shared target, i.e., ‘old age’.

1.7 The structure of the thesis

The thesis consists of ten chapters: introduction, literature review, methodology, a pilot study of dictionary entries, data sampling, a guide to the data followed by two chapters of data analysis; finally, the discussion and conclusion.

Chapter 1 introduces the research background, identifies the problem, establishes the research aims and questions, specifies the structure of the thesis, and states the significance of the study.

Chapter 2 gives an overview of the conceptual metaphor theory, its critique and development, discussing the aspects of conceptual mapping, embodiment, and cultural variation that this study is particularly interested in. It also reviews the representation of 'age' and 'old' age in both languages in lexical terms and in metaphors.

Chapter 3 is the methodology chapter. It shows how the study incorporates a corpus-based approach. It defines the usage of the terminologies and explores ways of gathering data.

Chapter 4 surveys the dictionary entries of 'age' and 'old age' related set phrases and idioms, so as to obtain an initial understanding of conventional perceptions of ageing.

Chapter 5 illustrates the data sampling and gives details of how the data is gathered to form the corpora. The chapter also outlines the difficulties it encountered in the process. It then suggests a modified version of keyword searches for data gathering.

Chapter 6 offers a guide to the data as in how the data is presented in each language followed by preliminary comments on the main target concepts, i.e., 'age' and 'old age'.

Chapter 7 and 8 deal with the data analysis of 'age' and 'old age' respectively in English and Chinese. Chapter 7 focuses on conceptual metaphors represented by prepositional phrases

in English in terms of the spatial sense prepositions and the DE (*of*) structure in Chinese.

Chapter 8 analyses the conceptualisation of 'old age'. The analysis is organized in terms of the source concepts with a detailed account in context. Chapter 8 also gives an initial discussion on the cultural influence of the 'old age' perceptions.

Chapter 9 comprises a brief discussion of the role of the human body as an experiential basis in the conceptualisations of ageing, the cultural commonalities and differences on old age, with a conclusion directing to cultural attitudes towards ageing drawing on the findings.

Chapter 10 summarises the findings of the project, outlines the strengths and limitations, proposes practical implications and directions for future research.

1.8 Scope of the thesis

The thesis explores the distinct features of conceptual elements surrounding the concepts of 'age', 'old age' and 'ageing' in a general sense in order to offer cultural slant. We have left out factors such as age and gender which are variables that might impact outcomes. This is what we suggest as future research moving forward in Chapter 10.

Chapter 2 Literature review

This chapter comprises six sections including: an overview of Conceptual Metaphor Theory as the methodological basis of the project, and its critique, the evolution of the theory in terms of mapping, embodiment, and cultural variation, the importance of taking a diachronic view; an initial investigation of the representation of ageing in everyday language and in figurative texts. The review of the theory focuses on: an introduction outlining its advantages, shortcomings, and further possible advancements. It finally presents an initial view of the conceptualisation of ageing experience in English and Chinese.

2.1 Introduction

Metaphor has attracted numerous scholars striving to reveal patterns of the development of human cognition (Black 1962; Lakoff and Johnson 1980/2003, 1999; Lakoff and Turner 1989; Fauconnier 1997, Gibbs 1994, 2005, 2016, 2017; Kövecses 2000, 2005; Murphy 1996, 2002; Musolff 2004, 2016, 2021; Müller 2008, Reddy 1993; Richards 1936; Semino 2008, Sontag 1978; Steen 2004, 2007). The definition of a metaphor can be traced back to Aristotle who considers metaphor as an implicit comparison between one and another based on their resemblances (Ritchie 2013:4), e.g., in the line “All the world’s a *stage*⁴, and all the men and women merely *players*” (Shakespeare, *As You Like It*, Act 2, Scene 7, lines 139-140), *stage* and *players* can be easily identified as metaphors. Kenneth Burke links metaphors with perspectives, i.e., points of views, and maintains that a metaphor is “a

⁴ Linguistic metaphors are in italics.

device for seeing something in terms of something else.” (Burke 1954:503-504, originally published in 1935)

Following the mid-20th century’s development, renewed definitions emerge, credited to the Sapir-Whorf theory (Lakoff and Jonson 2003: xi). Whorf’s idea that language is a matter of thought (Whorf 2017, originally published in 1941) sparks the exploration of the relationship between language and thought and generates a great deal of compelling studies worldwide, among which is the CMT. The general assumption is that our reality is reflected through language, and it is structured by the human mind. To make sense of the reality we can study the human mind and conceptual metaphor allows us to do so (Ibarretxe-Antuñano 1999:30). Below we present an introduction to CMT as a starting point for the present project.

2.2 An overview of Conceptual Metaphor Theory (CMT)

In 1980, Lakoff and Johnson (as L&J hereafter) published the book *Metaphors We Live By*, which opened a significant chapter of research into metaphor and the term conceptual metaphor has become a well-researched field since then. CMT takes a cognitive perspective on metaphor with a systematic volume of examples and draws attention to conventional metaphoric expressions in daily language use (Müller 2008: I). For example, the expression “Your claims are *indefensible*” perceives the concept of ‘argument’ as ‘war’⁵. The theory argues that the most basic embodied concepts begin in early infancy experiencing heat and cold, absence and presence of the mother or other caregiver, hunger and thirst, pain and

⁵ Concepts are in single quotations marks.

pleasure, eating and drinking, light and sound, physical orientation and manipulating objects. Therefore, children are primed by their early age prelinguistic experience to understand MORE IS UP ⁶and AFFECTION IS WARMTH, and these are reinforced in the language children hear throughout life. L&J (2003) believe that the structuring of our realities is fundamentally metaphorical. That is, we both think and act in the conceptual system (2003:3), by which they mean that human thought processes are metaphorical (2003:6). These processes – in other words the conceptual system – can be examined through language. Understanding metaphorical expressions (MEs henceforth) is a way to reveal the nature of our experiences of the world. For instance, instances such as “Your claims are *indefensible*” and “I *demolished* his argument” in everyday English are governed by the conceptual metaphor ARGUMENT IS WAR. L&J claim that our conceptual system is governed by metaphors because these metaphors are pervasive in the English language. Hence, how we think and act is a matter of metaphor. L&J (2003:5) put forward the definition “the essence of metaphor is understanding and experiencing one kind of thing in terms of another”.

L&J’s (2003) book *Metaphor We Live By* argues for the definition above by displaying the systematicity of the conceptual system. To illustrate, when we talk about a romantic relationship, we think of LOVE IS A JOURNEY (L&J 2003:44), because these sentences are frequently used:

- a. Look *how far we’ve come*.
- b. We’re at a *crossroads*.
- c. We’ll just have to *go our separate ways*.

⁶ Conceptual metaphors are in higher cases.

- d. We can't *turn back now*.
- e. I don't think this relationship is *going anywhere*.
- f. *Where* are we?
- g. We're *stuck*.
- h. It's been *a long, bumpy road*.

[...]

L&J (2003:45) interpret that underneath all these expressions, a 'journey' is the basic concept, and the journeys take various forms, a car trip (*long, bumpy road, dead-end street, spinning our wheels*), a train trip (*off the tracks*), or a sea voyage (*on the rocks, foundering*). They are all 'journey' metaphors, nonetheless. Apparently, these examples cannot simply fit into the traditional metaphorical comparison, i.e., in the A is B format. Rather they belong to a higher abstract concept of 'journey'. Thus, instead of the explicit A is B format, metaphors appear in all parts of speech. In sentence (a). Look *how far we've come*, the love relationship is compared to a journey on which the travellers, i.e., the couple in the relationship, have taken.

If our concepts are structured in a systematic way by metaphors (L&J 2003:52) in English, how do they come into force and is it the case in other languages? L&J have tried to address this question, but it is still open for discussion. Let us see a version of L&J's explanation for the how conceptual metaphors emerge.

L&J call the aforementioned examples conventional metaphors, i.e., they are found in everyday language and structure the ordinary conceptual system in a culture, in contrast to imaginative and creative metaphors (L&J 2003:139). Conventional metaphors include verbal phrases, propositional phrases and can extend to “speech lexical items” or “phrasal lexical items” (L&J 2003:51). Of all conventional metaphors, from CMT’s perspective, orientational concepts has a whole system of the spatial concepts that are used to understand other concepts. For instance, UP (e.g., HAPPY IS UP, *my spirits rose*) and DOWN (e.g., SAD IS DOWN, *my spirits sank*). These examples grow out of our physical and cultural experience directly. L and J (2003:14) point out that the polar-oppositions such as UP-DOWN, IN-OUT are physical in nature, whereas the orientational pairs such as FRONT-BACK are culture-dependent. The authors also propose that such orientational metaphors reflect values engrained in English cultures (2003: 22-24). It is acknowledged that there are examples like *inflation is rising* and *the crime rate is going up*, where the valence appears to be reversed. This is so because the conceptual metaphor MORE IS UP has priority over GOOD IS UP, since the physical basis of MORE IS UP is manifested more strongly. Land J point out that spatial orientations (up-down, in-out, central-peripheral, etc.) are likely to be found across cultures but “which concepts are orientated which way and which orientations are most important vary from culture to culture” (2003:24).

To provide a more substantial and indicative account, L&J (2003:118) propose that concepts which occur in metaphorical definitions correspond to natural kinds of experience. They are defined by metaphors, such as the concepts for natural kinds of experience in English culture: ‘love’, ‘time’, ‘ideas’, ‘understanding’, ‘argument’, ‘labour’, ‘happiness’, ‘health’, ‘control’, ‘status’, ‘morality’, etc. In comparison, a list of the concepts doing the job of

defining others is suggested, such as PHYSICAL ORIENTATIONS, OBJECTS, SUBSTANCES, SEEING, SUBSTANCES, SEEING, JOURNEY, WAR, MADNESS, FOOD, BUILDINGS, etc. A disclaimer is made that “when we say that a concept is structured by a metaphor, we mean that it is partially structured and that it can be extended in some ways but not others” (L&J 2003:13). That is what L&J call “partial metaphorical structuring” is based on similarity (ibid.). For example, the metaphor IDEAS ARE FOOD (e.g., *What he said left a bad taste in my mouth*) is created out of the similarities entailed by two other metaphors: MIND IS A CONTAINER and the ‘conduit’ metaphor. The conduit metaphor is about linguistic communication in English. It structures source, ideas, and receiver as “objects/substances” that pass along a conduit (e.g., *I’m trying to get my messages across.*), which is documented by Michael Reddy (1993). Thus, in the IDEAS ARE FOOD metaphor, new similarities are created between ‘food’ and ‘ideas’ in the sense that both can be tasted, digested, swallowed, etc. In doing so, new metaphors (creative or imaginative) can be created (L&J 2003:139-146).

The next question is whether or not the CMT fits in cultures other than English. L&J (2003: 22) believe that the values in the structures of conceptual metaphors should be subject to the correspondent culture. It is the culture that gives priorities to the values picked up by metaphors. For example, MORE IS BETTER can be plausible because of this composition: MORE IS UP and GOOD IS UP. However, this conflicts with their claim that “in general the major orientations up-down, in-out, central-peripheral, active—passive, etc., seem to cut across all cultures, but which concepts are oriented which way and which orientations are most important vary from culture to culture” (2003:24). That is to say, it seems unlikely that

there is a boundary between universalism (spatial metaphors cut through all cultures) and relativism (orientational mappings are culture-dependent).

In summary, *Metaphors We Live By* (L&J 2003) has revolutionised the fields of linguistics and cognitive studies (Gibbs 2008, 2011: 575–584). It inspires the rethinking of language, conceptualisation, reason and truth in metaphor studies (Steen 2008:215). Despite being critical of some elements of CMT, Pinker (2007:241) agrees that “conceptual metaphors point to an obvious way in which people could learn to reason about new, abstract concepts”. It has left a number of questions for further exploration nonetheless, such as the validity of the claim that our conceptual metaphors are governed by our bodily experience; the similarity-based metaphorical structuring and the role of culture in constructing metaphors, etc. The present study tries to explore how conceptual metaphors reveal our understanding of the ageing experience, and if there are disparities in such conceptualisations between the British and Chinese cultures; if yes, does that mean managing the disparity would change the perceptions of the experience?

2.3. Critique

The significance of CMT in the literature of cognitive linguistics is evident, but a number of weaknesses have been highlighted as well. Looking into the critical arguments can furnish a comprehensive understanding of CMT. Traugott (1985:18) draws attention to the distinction between conventional and dead metaphors which L&J do not actually delve into. Arguably, L&J seem to exclude dead metaphors. For instance, L&J describe that the expression *the time will come* is based on the conceptual metaphor of TIME IS A MOVING OBJECT (L&J

2003:42) because the word *come* involves space. Traugott (ibid., 18) points out that “they [L&J] do not treat *until* as a metaphor since the preposition no longer has the spatial sense of ‘up to (a location)’.” Thus, metaphors drawing on prepositional phrases are so pervasive in our daily use and have lost their metaphorical sense. That is, they are dead. In this regard, L&J do not provide insights for the boundaries between dead and conventional metaphors. Touching on dead metaphors necessarily take studies into the historical background of a metaphor. In historical studies, it is naturally the task for a theory to explain the semantic change (ibid., 18), in this case why *until* has lost its metaphorical meaning as pose to *come*. In order to generalize more about permanent conceptual structures, Traugott puts emphasis on semantic meanings of words and expressions. From Traugott’s view, L&J’s focus is “the multitudes of surface clichés found in any one language at one time” (ibid, 19) That is, we need to be careful about claims on the conceptual aspects of metaphors guided by CMT.

Therefore, Traugott (1985:31) names what L&J call conceptual metaphor “conceptual schemata” and linguistic metaphors as “metaphors” regardless of types, i.e., whether they are innovative, conventional or dead. For Traugott, between the source and target domain, there is a level of conceptual schemata missing in L&J’s approach. Traugott (ibid.) argues that “the focus in *Metaphors We Live By* is on large numbers of clichéd expressions, without much consideration of the structural constraints imposed by the schemata, or of degrees of conventionalization”. Using the term “conceptual schemata” therefore acknowledges the degrees of conventionalization of the linguistic metaphors. Indeed, this is not the focus of CMT.

Murphy (1996: 176) points out a number of empirical flaws, such as the nature of mental representation in cognitive linguistics. L&J provide neither a detailed psychological model of metaphoric representation nor models that could be used in cognitive linguistics for abstraction. The alternative that Murphy proposes is the “structural similarity” view. To illustrate, Murphy uses the example ARGUMENT IS WAR. It grows out of the structural similarity of the concepts of arguments and the concepts of wars, meaning that the components of the arguments can be projected onto the relations of war in a coherent way. Thus, it is the similarity of the relational structures of the concepts ARGUMENT and WAR that influences the reasoning, or mappings in CMT’s term. Murphy points out that L&J argue against the similarity view.

Given the fact that the majority of the data on which CMT is built is construed metaphors in everyday use, Murphy (1996:183) considers it as a problem of the circularity of evidence. Therefore, other evidence is needed to defend the claims. For example, there is an absence of psychological data to support the conceptual metaphor ARGUMENTS IS WAR, which is derived from examples like *He can’t defend against that argument*. With this in mind, for the future of CMT, Murphy (1996:184) suggests that “predictions about memory, problem solving, induction, measure of conceptual structure (such as typicality and categorization), learning and performance should become more central to the theory.”

Pinker (2007:154-287) acknowledges CMT as a pioneering work but also criticizes it in multiple ways. To give an example, Pinker (2007:247) states “Though I believe that conceptual metaphor really does have profound implications for the understanding of language and thought, I think Lakoff takes the idea a wee bit too far.” The major flaw from

Pinker's perspective is CMT's treatment of universalism and relativism. On the one hand, CMT believes universal bodily experience govern metaphors which are common to humans. On the other hand, the theory also believes many metaphors embedded in experience are culture-specific, which was mentioned in the previous section. Pinker reasons that L&J's professed universalism is actually a different manifestation of relativism because absolute truth means there is a predictable world based on science that is not subject to individual's feelings and attitudes. Thus, Pinker believes that conceptual metaphor is undeniably a powerful reasoning tool but conventional metaphors are not necessarily embodied because "it should come as no surprise to learn that even a metaphor as ubiquitous as TIME IS SPACE does not depend on the concept of time actually camping out in the neural real estate used by the concept of space" (2007:250). It means we can reason on top of the underlying metaphors because we can understand language effortlessly without noticing the metaphors. Therefore, it is problematic to claim, "that most of our thinking is metaphorical" (2007:248). Pinker's such criticism is similar to Traugott's (1985) aforementioned degrees of conventionalization of metaphors, in the sense that dead metaphors would be used without being noticed. From Pinker's view, these would be no more metaphors hence his argument against the idea that our thinking is largely metaphorical.

Furthermore, L&J's claim that individual metaphorical reasoning comes from "sensorimotor experiences so regularly they become neutrally linked" (1999:555), is strongly criticized by Bowers (2009) for being extreme and problematic and "precludes learning about the environment from scientific studies and from the observations and insights of others." In sum, Traugott questions the levels of conventionalization thus looks into the conventional metaphors in a more clinical way than L&J and proposes the classification strata. Murphy

points out the issues of lack of clear mental representations to be applied in practice (e.g. Problem solving) and the missing of evidence (on top of the collections of construed examples) to the CMT's major aspects (e.g., mapping). Pinker argues against the extreme universalism and advises a modest and realistic interpretation of conceptual metaphors – not all our thinking is metaphorical – because there are metaphors that should be analysed and other should be ignored. These critiques put in doubt the aspects of the treatment to conventionality, mapping, embodiment, universalism and relativism. Over the last decades, these areas have been much developed which will be selectively presented in the following section.

2.4. Further development of CMT

Having mentioned previously that CMT has been criticized in terms of the degrees of conventionality of conceptual metaphors, mapping and its claim on universalism, we now present an overview of its further development.

The exploration in cognitive linguistics takes off in late 1980s. Main arguments focus on whether or not the claim that metaphors grow out of bodily and cultural experience is valid. Effort on this is seen in Langacker's (1987) image-schemas, Johnson's (1987) embodiment theory in the book *The Body in The Mind*, and Lakoff and Turner's (1989) *More Than Cool Reason*. In contrast to the aforementioned cognition-oriented research, discourse-oriented research (e.g., Cameron 2003; Musolff and Zinken 2009) is interested in how metaphors are used rather than what a metaphor is. In the meantime, extensive fruitful work is conducted using data in real life. For instance, Graesser et al.(1989) analyse TV programmes and find

out that about one metaphor every 25 words is used by speakers. Thus, investigations into linguistic evidence flourish and claim that metaphors are significant in communication and even in reasoning about abstract concepts, such as time and emotion (Kövecses 1988; Quinn 1987; Sweetser 1990). Here, we shall briefly review how studies have been trying to address the issues pointed out in 2.3.

2.4.1 Conceptual mapping

Following the early theory of conceptual metaphor, in pursuit of the nature of conceptual metaphors, Lakoff and Turner (1989: 112-120) put forward the 'grounding hypothesis'- meaning goes from concrete to abstract and from physical to non-physical- to illustrate that bodily experience is constitutive to the conceptualisation process. Furthermore, Lakoff (1993:2002-251) offers an instructional view for CMT:

- a) "the locus of metaphor is not in language at all, but in the way we conceptualize one mental domain in terms of another"; and a metaphor means "a cross-domain mapping in the conceptual system".
- b) Therefore, 'food', 'substances', 'journeys', 'wars', etc. have become the source domains and 'ideas', 'time', 'love', 'argument', etc. are the target domains.
- c) The abstraction that governs the metaphorical expressions in the thinking process are called "general mappings across domains".

Indeed, these updates have furthered the original CMT and offer a more structural view of the nature of metaphors and how they are processed. A starting point is to define what a

metaphor as opposed to a literal comparison is. In the sentence *the mind is a computer*, the 'mind' is an abstract entity and the 'computer' is a concrete electronic device. As such, the mind and an electronic device are clearly from different categories. Hence, it is a metaphor. By contrast, *A mallet is like a hammer*, is clearly a literal comparison because both the *mallet* and the *hammer* are tools. This view of metaphor leads to the feature-matching interpretation which is favoured by traditional researchers (e.g., Miller 1979; Ortony 1979) but criticized by cognitive linguists (e.g., Glucksberg and Keysar 1990). The latter disagree on the property selection process in the sense that the feature-matching model relies on figurative similarities, yet not all the shared common properties are selected. Bowdle and Genter (2005) argue that this model cannot provide the mechanism for the projection of distinctive properties, nor can it predict new knowledge from abstraction. For example, the metaphor THE MIND IS A COMPUTER promotes new knowledge to highlight some aspects of the mind that are based on the concept of computer, e.g., the capacity of information storing and processing. For this, the feature-matching model cannot solve the problem effectively.

In order to clarify how the mapping is partially realized, Sweetser (1990) applies conceptual metaphors to the study of semantic change (i.e., an external source domain corresponds to an internal target domain) in the investigation of perception verbs (e.g., *tasting* is the source that maps regularly to mean abstract domains as *likes/dislikes*), the abstraction channels through the real-world domain to the mental domain and finally to the speech act domain, namely, from concrete to abstract. To further explain abstractions between source and target concepts, Lakoff (1993) advances the "Invariance Hypothesis", as a general principle, i.e., "metaphorical mappings preserve the cognitive topology (the image-schema) of the

source domain, in a way consistent with the target domain". That is, the mapping takes place through the concrete image to the abstract concept to establish a metaphor in structured and consistent way, e.g., "source domain interiors correspond to target domain interiors; source domain exteriors correspond to target domain exteriors". Up to this point, CMT strengthens that abstract thinking is metaphorical, conceptual metaphors are embodied and the physical bodily experiences are mapped on to abstract concepts. Yet, Lakoff (1993) also states that Invariance Hypothesis is just "an empirical hypothesis" and needs to be tested.

Alternatively, Ibarretxe-Antuñano (1999:31) proposes 'property selection processes', i.e., "the selection of some properties from the set of prototypical properties that characterize the sense of the source domain". This is tied to the concept of embodiment because the chosen properties are drawn from bodily experience. It is the bodily basis that grounds metaphorical mappings. The mapping takes place when the extended meanings of the selected properties are abstract. For example, how the sense of *smell* works. According to Ibarretxe-Antuñano (1999:37), properties of the sense of 'smell' include internal, voluntary, detection, identification, subjective and emotional. Through the process, 'to smell' can be used to mean what the expressions of 'to investigate' and 'to trail something' mean. Later on, Ibarretxe-Antuñano (2013:315-339) further adds the role of culture in the mappings and believes culture functions as a "sieve" that "filters" elements in one culture accordingly in a mapping and that culture and body are mutually dependent where a conceptual metaphor takes place.

This is a step further than L&J's general claim that only some of the aspects in the source domain are projected to the target (L&J 2003:52). For example, the concept BUILDING offers

one of its properties such as “foundation” in formulating the conceptual metaphor of THEORIES ARE BUILDINGS. This method, however, is still confined within the source-target domain binary discussion just as the Invariance Hypothesis, which is strongly criticized by Stockwell who argues (1999) that “acceptance of the Invariance Hypothesis is itself a threat to the value of cognitive linguistics” on the grounds that it reduces the creativity of metaphor.

Also working towards abstraction, Fauconnier (1994) postulates the concept of mental spaces, which is developed into the Blending Theory. Fauconnier (1997:5) points out one striking shortcoming in the research of modern linguistics and philosophy: the emphasis on studying language itself, and independence from its social and cultural context. In doing so, language has been treated as an autonomous subject. Fauconnier highlights the urgency of researching the meaning construction and emphasizes the importance of the study of natural language (ibid, 6-7). Thus, Blending Theory is born (Fauconnier 1994, 1997; Fauconnier and Sweester 1996; Fauconnier and Turner 1994, 1996, 2002), which aims to reveal the nature of thought and language. Fauconnier and Turner (1994) believe there are small conceptual boxes formed when we think and talk for the purpose of understanding and the authors call these small chunks of meaning loaded constructions as “mental spaces”. They are interconnected and can be modified in the process of “blending” (Fauconnier and Sweester 1996). It basically entails an operation that two input “mental spaces” give rise to a third space (Fauconnier 1997:149). The process inherits partial structures from the input spaces and has emergent structure of its own. In theory, this would facilitate the analysis of metaphor in practical terms. Take a look at the sentence “You’re *driving me into my grave*”. According to Fauconnier (1997:171), there are three mental spaces: a space of graves and burial, a space of life with ageing and progressive

weakness, and a space of motion along a path. The sentence is a resultant of the three integrating each other to present a scenario⁷ of one being slowly pushed into a grave. In this case, blending opens a new window of looking into metaphorical mapping by not giving clear directionality.

Blending theory has been both welcomed and questioned. Harder (2010:97) agrees that “Blending offers the unique opportunity of mixing conceptual elements in ways that transcend the familiar cultural environment.” Stockwell (1999) agrees that the Blending Theory seems to be more plausible although it is still abstract and difficult to apply. Grady, Oakley and Coulson (1999:121) suggest that “conceptual metaphor theory and blending theory provide largely complementary formalisms” and arrive at the idea that Blending Theory extends the power of CMT and the differences being the motivations to the different aspects of the data (ibid.: 120). Blending liberates CMT from the source-to-target direction. However, as Bundgaard, Østergaard and Stjernfelt (2007) observe, it loses the standard schemas that CMT provides, which are more economical. Besides, it is unclear which mental spaces should be selected to the blends, which are kicked out especially if blending is “not usually consciously perceived” and “dynamic” and “conceptual work may be required at any site in the conceptual array” (Fauconnier and Turner 1996). As a result, Blending Theory can complicate the metaphor processing.

If metaphor processing is not merely about feature-matching, not exactly about projecting selected meaning from source to target domains, and more than the dynamic online space-constructions, what more can be revealed? Bowdle and Gentner (2005) offer “an

⁷ Notice this is different from the scenario in metaphor scenario theory (Musolff 2006, 2016, 2020) which is a sub-type of frames for analysing culturally situated conceptual metaphors.

evolutionary path based on structure-mapping theory”, this “Career of Metaphor Hypothesis” postulates that there is a shift of mode of mapping in a metaphor from comparison to categorization before the metaphor becomes conventionalized.

Understanding novel metaphors involves comparison. The target is structurally aligned with the literal base concept. With repeated use of the metaphor over time, abstract figurative comparisons help to establish “abstract metaphoric categories as second senses of the base terms” (Bowdle and Gentner, 2005). This view of metaphor treats conventional, novel metaphors and similes differently and shows that they evoke different comprehension strategies. Steen (2008:217) endorses the Career of Metaphor Hypothesis based on two advantages it accounts for, a) it breaks the rule that all metaphors involve cross-domain mapping held by CMT, and b) it points out that conceptual metaphors can be realized by comparison alone, which applies to novel metaphors, as distinguished from categorization which applies to conventional metaphors.

From a metaphor production and reception perspective, Metaphor Scenario Theory (Musolff 2004, 2006, 2016, 2020) could be a helpful tool in analysing conceptual metaphors with cultural preferences. Metaphor scenario is closely related to the notion of frame. It allows the receiver to bring in different elements in the context to form a narrative script in order to make sense of a metaphor. It is discourse-based and culturally, historically mediated (Musolff 2016:30). It confines to less rigid cognitive schemata as opposed to a frame. Musolff (2016:30) defines it as:

A scenario is a set of assumptions made by competent members of a discourse community about the prototypical elements of a concept, that is participants, ‘dramatic’ story lines and default outcomes, as well as ethical evaluations of these

elements, which are connected to the social attitudes and emotional stances that are prevalent in the respective discourse community.

Thus, metaphor scenario structures the possible conceptual narratives but the evaluations are dependent on the actual situation in which a metaphor scenario is used. The inferences can take into consideration of assumptions of target concepts in a specific cultural context. In sum, cognitivists try to reveal the metaphor comprehension so as to figure out how a metaphor is derived. The traditional comparison is developed from a feature-matching model, which is strongly criticized. With the “property selection process”, it is hard to tell which features of the similarities should be selected. The domain mapping approach is put forward in a way similar to the “Invariance Hypothesis” which strictly states the semantic change or metaphorical mapping goes from the concrete domain to the abstract domain in a coherent and consistent manner. Another model called “Property selection process” tries to capture the nature of mapping, which ties up to the idea of embodiment. However, they all fall into the source-target domain dichotomy which gives limited space for practical analysis on the various types of metaphors. Therefore, “Blending” offers a more flexible approach, i.e., that there should be mental spaces that give rise to the emergence of metaphor as the resultant of mental spaces. However, it is criticized for being too abstract and difficult to apply or not economical. In order to formulate an integrated model yet practical, the “Career of Metaphor Hypothesis” is postulated maintaining that there is a shift of mode of mapping in a metaphor from comparison to categorization until it is institutionalized. Therefore, novel metaphors are probably comprehended by comparison, and it is subsequently ascribed to a categorization. Through repeated use, the novel metaphor becomes a conventional one. “Metaphor scenario” deals with metaphors in

context drawing attention to the interpretation of a metaphor in use. Trying to reconstruct the mapping relationships can be tricky; therefore, we will use aspects of different theories to achieve the aims of our research, i.e., to highlight cultural similarities and differences of the target domain 'ageing'.

2.4.2. Embodiment

The Lakoffian view on metaphor is that the experiential basis of conceptual metaphor is both bodily and cultural, with a bias of the body as the experiential basis, even claiming conceptual metaphors are fundamentally embodied (L&J 2003; L&J 1999; Gibbs 2005). Ziemke and Frank (2008) propose a broader definition of embodiment, which is "the bodily and sensorimotor basis of phenomena such as *meaning, mind, cognition* and *language*" (2008:1). Within that broad remit, however, there is no consensus on a unified framework for embodiment theory.

In the literature, there have been rigorous studies on spatial metaphors about the correlations of language, thought and culture (Boroditsky 2001, Boroditsky et al. 2010, Boroditsky and Gaby 2011; Hendricks and Boroditsky 2017; Jackendoff 1983, L&J 2003; Radden 1985; Traugott 1985). In *Metaphors We Live By* (2003:14-21), MORE IS UP is called an orientational metaphor because it gives a sense of spatial orientation. Jackendoff (1983:209-210) also indicates "if there is any primacy to the spatial field, it is because this field is so strongly supported by non-linguistic cognition; it is the common ground for the essential faculties of vision, touch, and action." In *Philosophy in the flesh* (L&J 1999), Lakoff and Johnson come up with a list of primary metaphors which are believed to be directly

derived from bodily experience (L&J 1999: 49), among which is MORE IS UP. The authors suggest that the metaphor “is embodied in three important ways. First, the correlation arises out of our embodied functioning in the world, where we regularly encounter cases in which ‘more’ correlates with ‘up’. Second, the source domain of the metaphor comes from the body’s sensorimotor system. Finally, the correlation is instantiated in the body via neural connections.” (L&J 1999: 54).

To show how the body and culture work together to generate primary metaphors, Yu (2008:247-261) finds the study of metonymy helps, suggesting that the path of a metonymy to an abstract concept starts from bodily experience to metonymy to metaphor and finally to abstract concepts. In Yu’s (ibid.) study, he focuses on the concept of ‘face’ in Chinese and English and demonstrates that in both languages the body part of face generates a similar string of metaphors or metonymies. For example, the face is perceived as ‘the locus of dignity and prestige’ and both share the metonymy of FACE STANDS FOR PERSON. In the meantime, Yu (2008) proposes that even such a commonly shared metaphor as DIGNITY IS FACE, has different uses when it is mitigated by culture. Because the metaphor entails the proposition that dignity is a feeling and a valuable process. The cultural value of face might be different as the author discusses that Chinese has more conventional expressions in relation to the body part of face partly. This is because its social value is different from English, Yu argues. Meanwhile, it is important to recognize that the origin of the metonymic chain hypothesis can be traced to the early 2000s (e.g., Barcelona 2003; Radden 2003). For instance, Radden (2003:93-109) demonstrates that some metaphors are metonymy-based. For instance, one of the metonymic relationships is the correlation as in “Correlations are mainly based on observation and, in order to compare the changes in the two events, they

have to be in proximity. Correlation is thus a fundamentally metonymy relationship” (Radden 2003:96). In which case, MORE IS UP/LESS IS DOWN and HAPPY IS UP/SAD IS DOWN belong to this category.

More recent research is devoted to uncovering the metonymy- metaphor-concept relation to see how it goes from bodily experience to metonymy to metaphor to abstract concepts (Maalej and Yu 2011:9) with the interest in “how body interact with culture as manifested in language in order to gain a deeper understanding of cognition”. The weak point in the argument is that this metonymy-metaphor concept relation only explains body parts-related abstraction. A mapping such as OLD AGE IS A FRUIT (*at the ripe old age*) would not be able to find a metonymy base (see Chapter 8 section 8.2.7).

Alongside the discussion of the validity of embodiment, new theories are advanced. For example, “perceptual simulation theory” (Barsalou 1999) which promotes the idea that language activates the simulation of multiple bodily perceptual experiences linked to the metaphors. This theory is supported by Ritchie (2006) by analysing the metaphor GRIEF IS A JOURNEY. Ritchie maintains that such a metaphor that is triggered by words of *invigorating and full of adventure, getting over, wounds, recover, obstacle*, etc. cannot be analysed by conventional CMT’s terms because the mapping keeps shifting, which endorses the needs of the perceptual simulation theory.

In sum, the evolution of CMT on mapping and embodiment tackles the relationship between mind and body, which is that people think and act metaphorically in English. The central focus of the studies is on the cognitive thought, as Musolff (2016a:9) points out that

L&J put primacy of the conceptual aspect over the linguistic aspect for metaphor and metonymy with a strong emphasis on the former. However, there is hardly convincing evidence found to suggest that all metaphors grow out of bodily experiences and the body produces universal sources for abstract concepts. A more likely tenet perhaps is that these conceptual metaphors are somehow mitigated by cultural values. Even L&J (2003:14) themselves ascertain that “spatial experiences are physical in nature, orientational metaphors based on them vary from culture to culture”. The following section traces some well researched concepts centring on the cultural variations.

2.4.3 Cultural Variation

As pointed out in the previous section, one of the main entailments of conceptual metaphor is that primary metaphorical concepts are based on physical experiences, so it would be plausible to assume that the physical conditions of life occur across many cultures form universal metaphors (Kövecses 2002, 2005; L&J 1999; Ritchie 2013). CMT’s equivocal position on universalism and relativism is especially unhelpful to validate the idea of embodiment when the interpretation of their data is not checked across cultures. To address issues related to universalism, cross-cultural evidence and explanations of metaphor have been discussed intensively by Kövecses (2005).

Kövecses (2005:26) supports the idea that a conceptual metaphor can be assumed when a source domain and a target domain correspond to each other, and it is based on bodily experience, e.g., metaphors of ‘emotions’. On the one hand, Kövecses (2005:35) believes that because emotions are universally experienced then metaphors of emotions should be

universal. For instance, Kövecses (2005:39 ff) finds the ‘container’ image in Old English gives rise to the conceptual metaphor THE ANGRY PERSON IS A PRESSURIZED CONTAINER, which is also found in Chinese, Japanese, Hungarian, Wolof, Zulu and Polish. Kövecses (2005:36) cites the linguist Yu’s examples to support the claim that there are two universal metaphors in this domain:

(1)

- a. HAPPINESS IS A FLUID IN A CONTAINER (e.g., *He’s bursting with joy*)

*Ta xin zhong chong man xi yue*⁸

He heart inside fill full happiness

‘His heart is filled with happiness’.

- b. HAPPY IS UP (e.g., *I’m feeling up*)

Ta hen gao xing

He very high spirit

‘He is very high-spirited/happy’.

Kövecses (2005:64) suggests that the linguistic examples in (1) only display the diversity at a surface level that conceptual metaphors are at least near universal. These examples indeed seem to point at the direction that Chinese and English share largely the source domains for ‘happiness’. Yet Kövecses (2005:70) also mentions that the Chinese metaphor HAPPINESS IS FLOWERS IN THE HEART has no equivalent in English, which originally is presented by Ning Yu (1995, 1998), for instance:

⁸ The Chinese linguistic metaphors are displayed in the pattern of toneless Chinese pinyin in italics, followed by word for word translation and followed by free translation in inverted commas.

(2)

Ta xin-hua nu-fang

He/she heart-flower wildly-bloom

‘Flowers are blossoming wildly in his heart’

(Yu 1998:65)

Taken (1) and (2) together, it implies that cultural variations should be examined while strong claims on physical experience are made to reflect how we make sense of the multi-cultured world.

To explain the role of culture in constructing conceptual metaphors, Yu (2009:297) claims that the conceptions of ‘heart’ constitute the Chinese cultural models for *morality*. For example, there are the metaphors BEING MORAL IS HAVING A BIG HEART (MORAL IS BIG, MORAL IS GOOD and GOOD IS BIG) and BEING IMMORAL IS HAVING A SMALL HEART (IMMORAL IS SMALL, IMMORAL IS BAD and BAD IS SMALL). Examples for these conceptual metaphors are found in the comparison between Chinese and English as well as in other languages. For instance, the equivalent of the metaphor LIFE IS A JOURNEY in the Hmong language (spoken mainly in Laos and Thailand) is LIFE IS A STRING (Kövecses 2005:71).

Although the two images present a line or a route, it is likely that they do not produce similar systematic linguistic forms. However, Trim (2011:59) claims that many arguments in conceptual metaphors, such as embodiment, tend to be potentially universal only at a high level of abstraction. For instance, in the Chinese metaphor of HAPPINESS IS FLOWERS IN THE HEART, ‘happiness’ is one of the emotions and ‘flowers’ are entities in the CONTAINER-BODY PART ‘heart’. Therefore, a more abstract structure can be EMOTIONS ARE PHYSICAL ENTITIES IN A BODY PART. This way, it is in line with what L&J (2003:50) suggest: PHYSICAL

AND EMOTIONAL STATES ARE ENTITIES WITHIN A PERSON, e.g. “He has a pain *in* his shoulder”. That is to say, the categorization of conceptual metaphors can vary if there are no constraints of the levels of abstraction in consideration.

Let us turn to psycholinguists’ view on this. Here is one example about possible cultural variation of spatial metaphors supported by experiments. Lera Boroditsky (2001) has investigated two conceptual metaphors: TIME IS HORIZONTAL vs. TIME IS VERTICAL to see whether these conceptual metaphors can play a role in understanding metaphorical language. Boroditsky tries to address the question: *Does the language you speak affect how you think about the world?* Based on three experiments among English speakers and Mandarin speakers, the author finds that English speakers predominantly think of time horizontally and Mandarin Chinese speakers think about time both horizontally and vertically, but mainly vertically. According to a set of experiments, Boroditsky suggests that one can think of an abstract domain differently, if one has been trained a different way, i.e. “Learning a new way to talk about a familiar domain can change the way one thinks about that domain” (Boroditsky 2001:19). This is an intriguing finding but the validity of this conclusion has been challenged after unsuccessful attempts to try to replicate the finding that English speakers think of time horizontally (January and Kako 2006).

In response to January and Kako, in another article published in 2010, Boroditsky, Fuhrman, and McCormick ask a follow-up question, ‘Do English and Mandarin speakers think about time differently?’ They test the original hypothesis with new data and firmly claim (2010: 427-431) that English and Mandarin speakers do think of time differently, with Mandarin speakers tend to think of time vertically (earlier time-points above and later time-points

below). In their study, it is highlighted that the comparisons about cross-linguistic differences in thought have to be tested through the *same* task. This means the results of their experiments are results under specific cultural settings. More recently, For example, Hendricks and Boroditsky (2017:800-818) argue that results from new experiments suggest that learning new languages can create new ways of thinking temporarily. For example, Hendricks and Boroditsky (2017:800–818) find that English participants who are trained with new metaphors (e.g., *Tuesday is above Wednesday*) and tend to think of time vertically in the follow-up non-linguistic tasks. The results suggest that new metaphors can yield new non-linguistic representations of time. To some extent, these compelling tests imply that cultural relativity might play a dominant role from a psycholinguistic point of view.

Alongside the argument of universality versus relativity, a different approach is taken to integrate cultural aspects with linguistic expressions which essentially embraces cultural variation as a backdrop. Sharifian's research (2011, 2017) explores the relationship between language and cultural conceptualisations, which establishes the new discipline of "cultural conceptualisations" theory that draws upon cognitive psychology, complexity science, distributed cognition and anthropology benefiting areas of applied linguistics (such as Teaching English as an International Language and political discourse analysis). Musolff (2004, 2016, 2017) also argues against the culturally universal stance of CMT and finds culturally specific patterns in the interpretation of the NATION AS BODY metaphor, which vary among cultures. Musolff (2017:337) finds that Chinese speakers prefer to interpret the metaphor NATION AS A BODY on a geography-institution metonymy and the majority of non-Chinese speakers favour "anatomy-and/or physiology-based analogies to political institutions". For instance, the metaphor instance the *head of the body* represents the

Queen of England is produced by a British student and the one Beijing is the *heart* and *brain* is produced by a Chinese student (ibid:332). Not only do Musolff's findings reveal indications of cultural relativity of the NATION-AS-BODY metaphor, but also, they suggest that the type of data – surveys in this case – could be an important factor to be considered. Because one of the criticisms of CMT is that their data is contrived instead of natural occurring data.

In sum, investigations into emotion metaphors imply that not every metaphor found in one culture can be applied in others. In some cases, it is hard to crystalize a definite line for the boundaries between domains where the abstractions occur. For instance, the Chinese metaphor HAPPINESS IS FLOWERS IN THE HEART, which has been considered as being unparalleled in English (Kövecses 2005:70), can also be subsumed under the more general metaphor EMOTIONAL STATES ARE PHYSICAL ENTITIES IN THE HUMAN BODY as Trim (2011:59) argues. In the following section, we present a brief review of the diachronic approach to conceptual metaphors.

2.4.4 A diachronic view

The preceding discussion tells that the relationship between universality and cultural variation of conceptual metaphors remains an unsettled argument possibly because different cultures place different values even on the same societal aspects, and also a culture develops over time. Thus, it is not surprising that language evolves with some aspects stay and some change over the course of history. To some extent, the changes of

linguistic habits are a record of the historical development of a culture, as highlighted by Raymond Williams in his pioneering book *Culture And Society 1780-1950* (1961:xvi).

Trim (2011: 59) suggests that histories of metaphors in diverse languages must be included in studies of metaphor universality (Lakoff 1990; 1993; L&J 1999, Kövecses 2005). Some metaphors are synchronically universal to cultures but diachronically different among some cultures. Regarding the changes, Trim (2011:56) argues that cultural factors are essential and advances that it is possible that even when conceptual images are the same, relevant linguistic expressions can differ.

Yu (2011: 143) also points out that although his findings of embodiment via body parts are in line with Radden's (2003) metonymic chain hypothesis, only diachronic studies can confirm whether the metonymic chain model is correct. In studying the perceptions of ageing, Benczes, Burridge, Sharifian, and Allan (2017:608-609) quote that "old age" deteriorates to "senile", "belonging to old age" dating back to 1600s carrying negative connotations – as Samuel Johnson's dictionary shows – "a senile maturity of judgment". Also, "age" entered to English in the 14th century to mean "period of human life" but it has soon changed to refer to "the end part of life" and so has "aged" to mean "the latter part of life" since the 1400s. This shows that historical evidence of how one subject evolve provides deeper understanding of the subject in social contexts. Thus, it links conceptual metaphor and culture prompting reflections on perceptions within one society.

In this section, we have put forward a brief introduction to a dichroic view on conceptual metaphor. Through time, metaphor may change correlates with cultural changes. Thus, not only does it provide a historical angle to conceptual metaphor, but also explains offers lens

to understand culture through conceptual metaphor. Bowdle and Gentner (2005:210) stress that metaphor researchers should be very careful with generalizing findings. This is because the generalization can be affected by the conventionality of metaphors or similes as well as their grammatical form. Moreover, a generalization of a case demands careful examination of data in cross-cultural studies with a historical view. The next section will draw closer attention to this topic in British English and Chinese.

2.5 Conclusion

This chapter has presented a review of the CMT, a critique, and its further development. The central focus of the review is about claims that thought is metaphorical in the first place, and that how conceptual metaphors explain ways of perceiving human experience. In terms of the development, the review focuses on two aspects: a) mapping, which discusses how metaphors in everyday English (conventional metaphors) are formed; b) embodiment, which is to do with the claim that conceptual metaphors are governed by bodily experience. Arguments surrounding these two aspects lead to the discussion of cultural variation followed by a diachronic perspective, which helps with better understanding synchronic cross-cultural comparisons.

To conclude, the present literature review chapter has ascertained that CMT is undeniably impactful with its convincing view that metaphor is fundamental in construing concepts and making sense of reality (Allan 2008:8). This chapter has presented the discussions surrounding its shortcomings: a) the unclear boundary between conceptual schemata and linguistic metaphor (Traugott 1985); b) the lack of empirical data and its failure to provide analytical models for reasoning or mapping (Murphy 1996); and c) its equivocal position

between cultural universalism and relativism (Pinker 2007). Furthermore, context should be included in the analysis (Fauconnier 1997). The aforementioned rich body of work relevant to this project has shown that, in the past decades, scholars including the original authors of *Metaphor We Live By* (L&J 2003) have contributed considerably to address these issues. These theoretical commitments will be taken forward in the remainder of this thesis. This thesis strives to use a breadth of methods to investigate how ageing is understood in English and Chinese. If two vastly different cultures are in comparison, what elements stand out as similar and different? Thus, cultural variations will be a major focus, including lexical level, conceptual level and discursive level. To achieve this broad aim, the present project will rest on a corpus-based approach supplemented with a heuristic understanding from dictionary terms.

Chapter 3 Methodology

3.1 Introduction

As a starting point for the present project, the previous chapter has introduced the CMT with a detailed account on its merits and shortcomings as well as a breadth of further theoretical development, regarding issues of mapping, embodiment, cultural variations, and a diachronic view.

Our aim is to uncover the general source domains for ‘ageing’ to instantiate conceptual metaphors. In order to fulfil this aim, the present chapter sets out to design a methodology that is suitable for a contrastive study. It consists of a discussion of a corpus-based approach, an explanation of a cross-linguistic study, terminologies to be included in the thesis followed by a description of the data from the corpora and dictionaries.

Tentatively, the thesis will try to address the questions:

- 1) What are the source domains in conceptualizing ageing in English and Chinese?
- 2) What are the similarities and differences in selecting properties of the source domains for the conceptualisation?
- 3) Do the similarities and differences connect with certain positive or negative linguistic behaviours in context?

3.2 Operationalising metaphor in corpus-based research

In the evolution of CMT, it has become clear that empirical is crucial for furthering its theory. Arguably, using corpora data compensates one of CMT's original theoretical flaws, which is the lack of empirical data (Sinclair 1991, 2003; Allan 2008). To bring fresh and refined insights to the research of conceptual metaphor, natural occurring data has become increasingly attractive (cf. Allan 2008, Charteris-Black 2004, Moon 1998, Stefanowitsch [eds]. 2006, Steen 2007). A crucial question to be asked is how one organises words' meanings in order to group them into bigger units, i.e., organizing lexical items to conceptual systems. Charteris-Black (2004:20) suggests two related questions: how we know *which* names belong to *which* things and a question about the criteria for determining *what* is normal or abnormal in language use (ibid). Charteris-Black also suggests what we can turn to an etymology dictionary to manage words' meanings, a synchronic dictionary to answer the second question and a large corpus to provide evidence for patterns of language use. We take up this suggestion as a general guideline for building up the corpora for the present project.

The term *corpus* can be defined as "a relatively large collection of naturally-occurring texts, which have been stored in machine-readable form" (Meyer 2002), or traditionally, it simply refers to a collection of texts, or sometimes collections of various kinds e.g., the Bible like Charteris-Black's (2004) study or dictionary entries, or it can be "a collection of texts that have been put together according to specific criteria" (Nasti 2012:52). The corpus Charteris-Black (2004) used was the *Bible* (Old and New testaments). Following these definitions and practices, the current work dictionary entries as one set of corpus and media discourses as

another set. First, we look up age and old respectively in the dictionaries and collect collocations that are deemed metaphorical. Then, the core body of our data comes from newspapers which has been a data source received much attention within metaphor studies, for instance in political discourses (Musolff 2016) and health communication (Semino, 2008). The aim is twofold. One is to combine a heuristic understanding with realistic understanding of the target concept. Because, after all, media discourses are now part of our daily life. The other is to include different types of texts to representativeness" (Deignan 2005:77). Two types of texts are nowhere near enough to be representative, but it can launch us a manageable and reasonable departure of our research. As McEnery and Hardie (2012:187) have pointed out that CMT is criticised for its basis on intuition, any corpus discussion would enable a discussion on the topic that otherwise might have been impossible. Again, Deignan's works (e.g., 2005) greatly contribute to corpora-based approach to conceptual metaphor analysis.

We have now laid out the necessity of investigating conceptual metaphor in corpus data, not only to contribute to the methodology in CMT but also to acknowledge the importance of the types of data in gaining clearer outcomes in the observations. That said, it is worth mentioning that there are two ways in conducting corpus research: corpus-based and corpus-driven which is initially brought up by Tognini-Bonelli (2001). According to Deignan (2005:89): corpus-based research starts with existing paradigms and investigates these using the corpus; corpus-driven research starts with a clean slate, with no assumptions about what will be found. The present project is interested in finding out metaphorical patterns in a backdrop of CMT on a specific topic, i.e., 'ageing'. It starts with existing

theories or categories and the corpus is used as a tool to assist the investigation. Therefore, it is corpus-based research, as will be further explained in the next section.

3.3 A corpus-based approach with a discourse focus

The current study focuses on links between target and source concepts reflected through lexical items in terms of the aspects of lexis, semantics and pragmatics. Contributing to corpus linguistics, the purpose of the following studies is to demonstrate the value of a corpus-based approach to the study of metaphor. This research is not a quantitative analysis, yet it uses frequency as a helpful indicator for the importance of some concepts which priorities the focus of the qualitative analysis. We provide qualitative analysis regarding “grammar and usage, and language and thought” complimented with a mild quantitative analysis (Steen 2007:118). Hence it is a mild form of qualitative analysis. To put it simply, we use CMT as a theoretical framework and employ a corpus-based approach to metaphor. The major task is to find out metaphorical patterns that are used to convey the meanings of our target concept ‘ageing’. This project does not so much intend to test theoretical models (e.g., proposals about ‘mapping’ and arguments on ‘embodiment’ discussed in the previous chapter) but rather aims to contribute to metaphor studies in terms of the role of culture.

The project is thus situated in the field of discourse-based approaches. Deignan (2005:124) groups this kind of research into two types: a) studies that analyse a certain type of text to show how metaphors are used to demonstrate a message or ideology, which is in accord

with the tradition of Critical Discourse Analysis; b) studies whose goal is to look at how metaphors are used among speakers to develop shared understandings during the interaction. The reason behind the two discourse approaches are the different concentrations of texts or aims and research questions. This current study aims to answer the main questions: what significant metaphors are used in the texts and what entailments, or motivation could be behind the metaphors followed by a comparison of the two cultures under investigation. To achieve this, we organize linguistic expressions gathered from the corpora according to their semantic constructions. To illustrate, *the threshold of old age* implies that old age is perceived as a building – hence is under the LOCATION concept – because of the word threshold, which by definition means “the piece of wood, stone, or other material forming the bottom of a doorway, which is crossed in entering a house, building, or room” (*OED* online).

Meanwhile, we agree that metaphor can convey a strong sense of evaluation (Charteris-Black (2004:195). Therefore, this thesis also seeks to elicit the patterns of viewpoints or attitudes towards ‘ageing’ through conceptual metaphor. In brief, we analyse a piece of discourse on ageing then go further to attest approximate conceptual patterns and embedded attitudes. The underlying assumption is that we gain a picture of a sense of reality by way of the metaphorical language even though “there is always the gap between the proposition expressed and the meaning intended” (Goatly 1997:15).

Admittedly, the evaluation of a metaphor is not always straightforward. Sinclair and Carter (2004:137) state that “ambiguity in a text is created by the method of observation, and not the structure of the text.” To deal with this, again a corpus perspective can ascertain the

findings and address the weaknesses in discourse analytic methodology (Deignan 2005:135). For instance, it can bring about rich connotations of metaphors and limit over-generalisation from linguistic data. To give an example, Deignan (2005:135) provide fresh findings from an observation made by Santa Ana (1999) who finds that the dominant conceptual metaphor in a corpus about immigrants in the US was IMMIGRANTS ARE ANIMALS and argue that it has a negative valence. One of the examples is “Employers *hungering* for cheap labor *hunt* out the foreign worker”, about which Santa Ana (1999:467) argue that “Immigrants are seen as animals to be eaten, by American industry.” Deignan’s (2005:135) investigation into her corpus – which is a general corpus comprising a “cross-section of the Bank of English⁹” varying from newspapers to books and magazines (Deignan 2005:77-78) – looking at the word *hunt* and its connotations finds that there are different evaluative meanings associated to *hunt*, for instance *good hunts bad* and *good hunts good*. In this regard, Santa Ana’s example should fall in the *good hunts good* pattern to indicate that foreign workers are sought for, therefore are desirable. Strictly speaking, Deignan’s (2005:137) comparison does not agree with Santa Ana’s conclusion, i.e., the metaphor IMMIGRANTS ARE ANIMALS does not suggest a negative view of immigrants. The point to be taken from here is that evaluations of a conceptual metaphor should take its situational context into consideration.

In short, a corpus-based approach boosts the validity of the analysis of linguistic expressions and the latter provides in-depth understanding of mental patterns, i.e., conceptual metaphors.

⁹ The Bank of English is a subset of the COBUILD corpus: Bank of English - Wikipedia. It is only available to a small group of researchers (<https://www.english-corpora.org/coca/help/compare-wbo.asp>).

3.4 A cross-linguistic study

Putting discourses under investigation in a cultural environment, we can generate more accurate insights. In the previous chapter, we discussed cultural variation in conceptual metaphor studies to show that, in order to understand metaphor, it is inevitable to pay close attention to cultural variation. Hence cross-linguistic corpus research is needed.

Deignan (2005:99) has documented the variety of studies that have contributed to the understanding of metaphor using cross-linguistic data. Here is a brief summary of some of the points in terms of the methodologies that have been used and are relevant to the present study.

In order to compare metaphors in English and Polish, Deignan, Gabrys and Solska (1997) looked at a corpus containing citations of linguistic metaphor from the Bank of English. They grouped the metaphors according to source domains and they asked Polish native speakers to translate the citations into Polish and the translators also had to comment on the translatability of the metaphors. The researchers found that for some metaphors, both the underlying mappings and linguistic realizations were the same in both languages. In some cases, the underlying mappings were the same, but the participants had to translate the metaphors with a considerable paraphrase. This finding further cements the idea that cultural influence in linguistic realization cannot be overestimated.

Boers and Demecheleer (1997) investigated metaphors of various domains in economics discourse in corpora of English, French and Flemish. They used frequencies to find that

although generally the same source domains were used, the frequencies of the domains turned up differently among the languages corresponding to cultural preferences. This way, frequency is proved to be a very useful indicator for understanding and organizing conceptual metaphors. Boers and Demecheleer (1997) found that some metaphors reflect national cultural traits. For instance, the British tended to use more metaphors associated with gardening, whereas more cookery metaphors are used in French. Charteris-Black (2003) compared English with Malay and found that folk beliefs motivated English speakers to refer to the heart as the centre of feelings whereas the Malay speakers referred to the liver. This was to do with the cultural role of each organ as Charteris-Black (2003: 141–157) commented.

Deignan (2005:100) cites Semino's (2002) findings in two corpora of English and Italian to also show choices of metaphors seemingly reflect cultural attitudes towards a topic, which is supported by another analysis by Charteris-Black and Musolff (2003) who investigate metaphors in the *British Financial Times* and its sister German publication on the topic of euro. Similar to Semino, Charteris-Black and Musolff (2003) also find that metaphors in German and English reflected different attitudes to the euro despite obvious parallels. The German conceptualisation provides an image of an object or even a beneficiary, whereas the English perception suggests an active and combative image of euro that can *hit out*. Notice that euro is more of a political rather than cultural. Thus, the attitudes are strongly political in the primary sense. Nevertheless, such findings seem to suggest that "metaphors are often chosen in order to present a particular evaluative stance towards the topic" (Deignan 2005:100).

To conclude, these examples and findings show that adopting a corpus-based approach while taking contextual meanings into consideration serves well the purpose of identifying and explaining conceptual metaphors. The current project follows this path – building up corpora, equipped with tools to detect patterns in the conceptualisation that may differ from others – in order to understand metaphors surrounding ‘ageing’ as precisely as possible.

3.5 Scope of data

We set out to collect data within a descriptive framework. Technically, there are two types of corpora, namely *special* corpora which can be as small as tens of thousands of words (see Cameron and Deignan 2003:149-160), and *general* corpora which can be as large as millions of words (e.g., *British National Corpus*). Cameron and Deignan (2003) provide a good example to start with a *special* corpus to obtain a clue of distinct patterns that are used as starting points in larger corpora. Then, there is an idea of the size of a general corpus. Flowerdew (2004:19) says that in fact there is a general agreement that small corpora contain up to 250,000 words. These claims provide some guidance for the current project with a rough size of the corpus. Practical limitations in collecting the data are discussed later.

The data collection for the research corpus of this study went through two broad stages: I) manual searching in dictionaries, II) four steps of keywords searching in the media discourses. To start with, some terminologies are introduced below, followed by the steps of data collection.

3.5 Terminologies

This section gives a description of the terms thesis adheres to which includes a working definition of metaphor, domain, text-type, keyword, lexeme, lemma, token, and collocation.

3.5.1 A working definition of metaphor

In Chapter 2, we mention that the L&J's definition for a metaphor is "understanding and experiencing one kind of thing in terms of another" (L&J 2003:5) (e.g., THEORIES ARE BUILDINGS). Steen (2007:157) postulates a similar version that a conceptual metaphor is a "cross-domain mapping". We also take the note that contextual meanings where metaphorical expressions occur are crucial for our interpretations. Based on the investigation of lexical meaning, Channell (2000:54) postulates that "the same word has different meanings for different speakers at the same time and speakers continue to learn new meanings and new uses of words they already know". This observation, from Charteris-Black's (2004:20) view, is particularly applicable to metaphor. To explain this, here is an example about the interpretation of the proverb *a rolling stone gathers no moss* from Moon (1998:248-9), who says there are two opposing meanings and assessments of the proverb:

- 1) "people who move around a lot will never acquire wealth, position, stability and so on";
- 2) "people who move around a lot will never grow stale and dull".

Thus, the positive or negative interpretation one has of it depends on what one thinks of the *moss* (Charteris-Black 2004:20). That is, metaphors are dynamic and active and metaphor interpretation cannot bypass its context in use.

3.5.2 Domain and metaphor scenario

As mentioned above, Steen's (2007:157) definition for metaphor is "a cross-domain mapping", which involves the search of words, phrases, morphemes that manifest this idea. In this framework, **domain** is used to describe a conceptual area as opposed to another. In the investigation of the conceptual structures, there are two stages involved: identifying domains and identifying mappings. The way Steen deals with these two terms is:

"when discussion the identification and analysis of conceptual structures of metaphorical language in grammar, I will assume that cross-domain mappings involve two domains. When we then turn to metaphor in usage [...], I will include the possibility that there may be more than two domains or spaces, particularly for the situated and specific meanings of individual words in unique events of usage" (Steen 2007:179).

What Steen means by **domain** is "a semantic structure that functions as the base for at least one concept profile (typically, many profiles)" (2007:179). However, it can be tricky in operating this term. For example, the word 'arc' can be understood in relation to the domains of circles. And circles also provide a base for understanding others like 'diameter', 'radius', 'chord', etc. (Steen 2007:179). In this regard, 'circles' can be identified as one conceptual domain. But this definition could be inadequate when it comes to actual research. Because one domain cannot be understood without another, for instance, the 'arc' is a relative notion in comparison to a 'square' or a 'triangle' in a more general sense (Steen 2007:180), and also theoretically the boundaries between domains are difficult to

draw (Warren 2002:126-127), nor are they self-evident (de Mendoza Ibáñez and Díez 2002: 489-532).

The current project will still use domain for the purpose of convenience, accepting that it is imprecise to demarcate the boundaries between domains or at least it is “difficult and subjective” (Allan 2008:11). Plus, domain can be used to organize concepts. For instance, the JOURNEY domain consists of concepts such as LOCATION, PATH, and TRAVELLER, etc. Allan uses core concepts instead of domains for the reason that “in many (and probably most) cases, expressions are motivated by more than one source concept” (Allan 2008:30). This is an alternative to acknowledge that using the term core concepts means there are more than one concepts motivated in the conceptualisation process.

Musolff (2016:12) points out that semantic field is the linguistic manifestation of a domain, whereas the notion of domain is loaded with “commonly held beliefs, folk theories and ‘encyclopedic’ knowledge about source topic”. That means we can treat semantic field and domain differently, the former being the linguistic manifestation of a concept and the latter its conceptual counterpart. In addition, domain’s cognitive orientation basically reflects the concept of frame which means “that there are some schemata or image of concepts that link together in a system, which impose structure or coherence on some aspects of human experience, and which may contain elements which are simultaneously parts of other frameworks” (Fillmore 1975). As one type of the frameworks, drawing our attention to the cultural attachment that a domain has, carrying semantic meaning as well as contextual inferences between source and target concepts, Musolff (2004) puts forward the **metaphor scenario** as an analytical tool for conceptual metaphor. Here is the definition:

A scenario is a set of assumptions made by competent members of a discourse community about the prototypical elements of a concept, that is, participants, ‘dramatic’ story lines and default outcomes, as well as ethical evaluations of these elements, which are connected to the social attitudes and emotional stances that are prevalent in the respective discourse community (2016:30).

To give an example, with NATION AS A BODY metaphor, Musolff (2021:17) identifies the “Fable of the Belly scenario” – providing the narrative involving the rebellion, its turning point in the belly (some or all body parts rebelling against the belly because the belly gets all the nutrition) and a happy ending (the rebels being convinced that without the belly they will starve) – as a source scenario for analysing “socio-political hierarchy and its legislation”. Considering metaphor scenario’s culture orientation, the current thesis will apply it for explaining metaphor patterns with distinct cultural preferences.

In sum, the present study operates on the scale of **domain** in the first place when trying to capture source domains by investigating semantic meanings of the key terms (e.g., the JOURNEY domain). We also use concepts when looking into obvious sets of semantic manifestations. For instance, based on examples of *reaching old age* and *approaching old age*, the source concept of GOAL is motivated for understanding OLD AGE. *Reaching* and *approaching* are motions happening in a journey situation suggesting a sense of goal, which is why they both come under the JOURNEY domain and OLD AGE is understood as the GOAL. **Metaphor scenario** will be useful when we need to describe evaluative attitudes towards ‘ageing’.

3.5.3 Text-type

Deignan, Littlemore and Semino (2013:33) documented that Goatly (1997) was one of the earliest scholars to identify metaphor use across text-types including conversation, national news reports, popular science articles, magazine advertising of consumer goods, modern novels and short modern lyric poetry (1997:314). However, Deignan, Littlemore and Semino (2013:37) found that Goatly (2011) mixed up the categories of “register” and “genre” at different points to describe his data in the analysis. Steen et al. (2010) term text-type as “register” in their research across four corpora comprising news reports, conversation, academic discourse and fiction. Similar to “register”, “genre” has been used to the point that their definitions are vague. Deignan, Littlemore and Semino (2013:40) interpret “genre” as “a specific text-type used by a specific community of speakers, for specific purposes. The purposes of the ‘genres’ are reflected in the characteristic language use in stages within texts.” In order to avoid a fixed and clear-cut definition for “register” and “genre”, they retreat to the general term of text-type in their analysis (2013:41). In the present thesis, we use newspapers as the main text-type. As a supplement to this, dictionary entries (see Chapter 4) meeting the requirements are another set of data.

3.5.4 Other terms

Through **keywords**, we then obtain corpora with a range of other terms for which to look out for identifying linguistic patterns. Moon (1998:47) states “one of the most important and basic pieces of information to be derived from a corpus concerns lexis: the frequencies and distributions of lemmas, and the form and collocational patterns in which they occur.” We follow Moon’s (1998:5) definition for **lexeme** as “a nexus of related sense realized by a

single set of forms” and **lemma** as “a set of forms that realize an individual lexical item: that is, base form and its inflections or orthographic variants”, e.g., *bear* belongs to one lemma but two lexemes- a polysemous verb meaning “carry and tolerate” and a noun meaning an “animal”. We adopt **tokens** to refer to instances capturing a particular item or type (Moon 1998:5). Related to lemma, another important notion is **collocation**, which was defined by Sinclair (1991:170) as “the occurrence of two or more words within a short space of each other in a text.” These will be the terms appear in our data analysis when needed.

In cross-linguistic studies, keywords can yield compelling insights into cultural values. Wierzbicka (1997:5) has stated that “words with special, culture-specific meanings reflect and pass on not only ways of living characteristic of a given society but also ways of thinking”. Wierzbicka gives an example about the Japanese cultural meaning of ‘friendship’ (ibid). In Japanese, the term for friend is *miai*, and the concept of ‘friendship’ is manifested by talking about *miai*, practicing *miai* in social rituals and by also thinking about *miai*. For this reason, achieving a list of keywords tops the steps for the current research. It should be noted that the notion of keywords in the first place can be subjective and intuitive. In a narrower scope, Charteris-Black (2004:37) states that “keywords are therefore words that have a tendency to be used as conventional metaphors rather than words that will always be used as metaphors.” Even though this statement reminds researchers of the metaphorical conventionality in the metaphor interpretation process, it does not cancel the function of keywords in uncovering metaphorical patterns, regardless of their conventionality, i.e., whether or not they will be vivid to writers or speakers’ minds. As such, decisions of keywords will be a crucial task for the current project.

3.6 Building up corpora and finding out metaphors

Once the corpora are formed, the crucial task is to identify metaphorical patterns. We have mentioned that Steen et al.'s definition for metaphor as "cross-domain mapping" (2010:157) involves major elements for finding metaphors, we shall follow the Metaphor Identification Procedure (MIP) initially developed by the Pragglejaz Group (2007) and refined by Steen as "MIPVU"¹⁰(see Steen et al.2010, chapter 2). The basic procedure looks like this:

1. Find metaphor-related words (MRWs) by examining the text on a word-by-word basis.
2. When a word is used indirectly and that use may potentially be explained by some form of cross-domain mapping from a more basic meaning of that word, mark the word as metaphorically used (MRW).
3. When a word is used directly and its use may potentially be explained by some form of cross-domain mapping to a more basic referent or topic in the text, mark the word as direct metaphor (MRW, direct).
4. When words are used for the purpose of lexico-grammatical substitution, such as third person personal pronouns, or when ellipsis occurs where words may be seen as missing, as in some forms of co-ordination, and when a direct or indirect meaning is conveyed by those substitutions or ellipses that may potentially be explained by

¹⁰ VU stands for Vrije Universiteit, the university in Amsterdam at which scholars of Pragglejaz Group worked (Steen, et., 2010:ix).

some form of cross-domain mapping from a more basic meaning, referent, or topic,
insert a code for implicit metaphor (MRW, implicit)

5. When a word functions as a signal that a cross-domain mapping may be at play,
mark it as a metaphor flag.

6. When a word is a new-formation coined, examine the distinct words that are its
independent parts according to steps 2 through 5.

(Steen 2010:25-26)

We should highlight that it is unnecessary that we go through all these steps to decide
whether a metaphor occurs. See an example below to demonstrate how the “MIPVU” is
used in the present project.

(1a) *My approaching old age will be fine.*

Each word in the sentence above (1a) is used directly or literally except *approaching*
because its basic meaning is “to come nearer to” (*OED* online) in space. This use of
approaching involves a domain shift treating old age somewhere situated in a space. The
phrase *approaching old age* should be marked as a metaphor. Thus, we have used step 1
and 2 in the “MIPVU” to identify a metaphor and no further steps are needed for this
instance. This way, we perform the identification procedure in an economical and flexible
way depending on how complex the instances are. In comparison, the following example is
more complex hence a step-by-step procedure should be performed:

(1b)

I am *on the frontier of* old age

In (1b), the lexical units that can be metaphorical is the phrase *on the frontier of*,
Contextually, the phrase means the proximity to old age, i.e., being identified as old (Step
1&2). To apply Step 3, it is proceeded by *old age*, which indicates a concrete place that

frontier is associated with. *Frontier* has its basic meaning in *OED*: “the part of a country which fronts or faces another country”, which evokes the meaning of a place. This meaning has a more basic sense than the categorisation of an age group. Compare these two senses allow us to see a cross-domain mapping: LOCATION and the abstract concept of OLD AGE. Thus, according to Step 5, *frontier* implies the metaphor OLD AGE IS A LOCATION.

The current study follows the above steps and selects *age* and *old* as keywords and manually in the dictionaries as a starting point and are searched in the selected newspapers for the media corpora. We notice that a number of expressions might inevitably be left out at some point if they do not contain the keywords *age* or *old*, examples are *over the hill* or *advanced in years* (Urdang 1997:298) or *long in the tooth* (Rodale et al. 1979:801) as synonyms for *old*. To minimise the possibilities, we manually search through the dictionaries and thesauri in order to include idiomatic phrases that do not contain words of *old* nor *age* and are not automatically traceable. The collection of data went through the following steps.

First, as briefly mentioned in the previous chapter, that to understand ‘ageing’ the essential concepts are ‘age’ and ‘old’. The root of the present participle of *ageing* is *age*, so that it involves age in a process. Therefore, we hope as soon as the conceptions of ‘age’ and ‘old’ become clearer, it will be possible to envisage how the process of ageing, i.e., grow old is perceived. In practice, we gather the lexical items under lemmas *age* and *old* in the dictionaries in two languages as the initial stage. These results will also function as a reference corpus in future and a comparison with those arising from natural occurring data.

Second, the creation of the media corpora is proven to be difficult. To have an idea of what types of metaphors could be left out by just examining keyword collocations, we read through a collection of 50 articles (see section 3.9) to identify metaphor candidates. These articles are chosen under the idea that they contain *old* to make sure that they are relevant. This step starts in English, if the results are positive and productive in generating metaphor tokens, we then extend it to Chinese. However, section 3.9 mentions that there are only a few metaphorical expressions detected in this process in English, therefore, an investigation of 50 Chinese articles is not carried out. We then move on to explore different search patterns of keywords to see if there is a most suitable pattern for gaining data. Chapter 5 offers a detailed report of the process.

With the above two steps completed, we conduct our data collection and carry on with the analysis, hoping to test the methodology in terms of its productivity (whether metaphors emerge in the data) and efficiency (whether the metaphors can provide insights for the topic in question).

To obtain tokens by searching keywords in the newspapers, I used the software tool of *Sketch Engine* (Kilgarriff al. 2014). It has been proved to be the essential to help with the management of corpora (Deignan 2017). *Sketch Engine* assists to perform the tasks of word counts, generating concordances in order to find collocations and frequencies. For step one, applying Allan's (2008) method, we consulted *OED* for the meaning of other words where needed, then We looked closely to the semantic meanings of the rest of the sentence for finding metaphor tokens.

3.7 Structure of the corpora

The current project's corpora are from these sources (mainly newspapers): *LexisNexis* in English and Chinese corpus drawn from Beijing Language and Culture University Centre (henceforth BCC) in Chinese.

LexisNexis allows users to search up-to-date news content in general and other publications across a wide range of industries as well. It also enables different connectors to tailor the search terms, and the results can be downloaded on the browser. The general news sector includes more than 50 leading major newspapers from the US and around the world (see *LexisNexis Academic User Guide*). Our English corpus is generated from *LexisNexis* supported by the University of East Anglia, to differentiate our corpus from *LexisNexis*, our corpus is labelled as Nexis 1 in this project.

The BCC¹¹ repository contains over 15 billion Chinese characters (Li and Guo 2016). BCC is different from *LexisNexis* in the sense that it does not contain up-to-date new sources. The nearest data we can reach from our research dates to 2015. To distinguish our Chinese corpus from the platform BCC, we name our Chinese corpus as BCC 1.

We will delve into more information about our corpora in the following sections.

3.8 Media corpora description

¹¹ A more detailed introduction to the platform and the Chinese corpus is in Chapter 6, section 6.3.

As mentioned above, Nexis1 stands for the English media corpus and BCC1 stands for the Chinese media corpus.

3.8.1 The English corpus: Nexis1

Our Nexis1 corpus is made of passages from *The Times*, *The Evening Standard* (London), *The Daily Mail and Mail on Sunday* and *The Guardian*, with the timespan from 01/05/2013 to 01/05/2015.

It should be pointed out that since the sources using search terms can be duplicated, the quantity of the data we shall see can only serve as a helpful indicator rather than an accurate description of frequency or data size.

To build Nexis1 corpus, the articles meet these requirements:

- 1) Published in one of the UK National newspapers
- 2) Published between 01/01/20013-30/12/2015
- 3) Contain the keywords

3.8.2 The Chinese corpus: BCC1

The BCC1 corpus was constructed from newspaper reports covering the years 1945-2015 and texts from social media called *Weibo*¹²– which is similar to a combination of *Facebook* and *Twitter* – from 2013 according to the portal (Xun, Rao, Xiao, and Zhang 2016). Our search is within two chosen newspapers *People's Daily* – home and overseas editions –

¹² Social media provides recent data whilst newspapers are only available sporadically by 2010. Section 6.3 gives a fuller description.

spanning from 1945 to 2015, *Wenhui* Newspaper, and Weibo, but it does not set up a time frame. The dates of our Weibo data shows that period is between n 2013 and 2015. Thus, the BCC1 corpus meets the following requirements:

- 1) Published in the *People's Daily* or *Wenhui* Newspaper or posted on *Weibo*.
- 2) Dated between 1945-2015
- 3) Contain the keywords.

3.8.3 Keywords and terms in English

In order to understand 'ageing', we must start with the most relevant lemma, which arguably is *age*. The *Oxford Dictionary of English Etymology* (Onions, Friedrichsen and Burchfield 1996:19) documents that *age* means "the period of existence of time" and also "to grow old". The *OED*¹³ says that *age* especially means "the later part of life when the physical effects of protracted existence become apparent" and as a verb it means "to grow old, become aged" (*OED*). As such, in English and we select *age*, *old* and inevitably *old age* as keywords for focus of our study.

3.8.4 Keywords and terms in Chinese

The benefit of starting with *age* and *old* in English is that there are close counterparts in Chinese, which is not the case with lemma *ageing*. It is rather hard to select suitable Chinese lexemes to be matched with the English counterpart *ageing* because the two languages have different rules of word formations. For the moment, the trouble is English *age* does

¹³ We use *OED* online and the reason is explained in Chapter 3 section 3.7

not have a precise Chinese equivalent. Here is a quick look at the word *age* in modern Chinese which is expressed by the following compound words.

- a. *nianji* year record 'age' (CCD 2002:1410)
- b. *nianling* year number 'age' (CCD 2002:1410)
- c. *nianshi* year thing 'same as *nianji*' (CCD 2002:1141)
- d. *suishu* year number 'age, years' (CCD 2002:1839)

As for *old* and *old age*, it is easy find *lao* '[as opposed to young] old' (CCD 2002 1158), *laonian* old year 'old age' (CCD 2002:1159)

In the meantime, we want to point out that the lemma *ageing* has to be made explicit in Chinese in words like *shuai lao* decline old 'old and feeble' (CCD 2002:1793), or *laohua* old change' '[of population] ageing, becoming old', with the subject of the former should be an individual pointing out specific physical changes and the latter normally a population or knowledge (CCD 2002:1158). The implication is that strictly speaking there is no linguistic term as a counterpart of *ageing* in Chinese. It seems that *ageing* conveniently covers all life stages but in doing so risks conceptually blending them together, making it harder to understand them in isolation. This section's discussion clarifies that suitable keywords for the current study are *age* and *old* and *old age* in both languages, with the easiest matched term in both languages being *old*. We shall see a more detailed summary regarding dictionary entries in Chapter 4.

The process of identifying keywords indicates that the ageing process is perceived fundamentally differently. We notice for instance, the notion of "to pass, get beyond a particular age" is expressed differently. This is found as *turn* in English. In the literature

review chapter, we identified *man* ‘to grow, to fulfil’ in Chinese to refer to the similar meaning. On this occasion, the predicate in English would be a verbal format, i.e., *turning x (year of age)*. However, a nominal predicate in Chinese is the most frequently used term, which means the sentence might not have a verb (Ramsey, S.R. 1987:71). Instead, two noun phrases can be linked together without any verbs in between:

(2)

Ta ershi sui.

She twenty year (of age)

‘She (is) twenty years (old)’.

As such, there is another feature worth mentioning, i.e., “predicate adjectives”, which refers to adjectives that can stand alone or can be called ‘stative verbs’. That is, they are verbs describing a quality or state (Ramsey 1987:72), e.g., *nianji da le* age big PRT ‘old’. Sometimes *old* can also be expressed in the form of adverbs as the *shang* ‘up’ in *Nianji shang qu le* age up go-PRT ‘getting old’ (see Chapter 7). A most frequently used term expressing the age of humans tend to be *nianji* (see the term a. in this section), which then become our key search term. In order to gather a relatively comparable size of corpus, *nianling* ‘age’ was also used when there are not enough metaphorical examples. *Nianshi* year event ‘age’ normally refers to older persons which makes it a slight too specific term to be included. *Suishu* is explored in Chapter 5 in the data sampling process.

3.9 An examination of 50 articles

In order to assess how representative our keywords can be on the topic of *ageing*, we performed a small pilot study. What follows is a description of the pilot study in English using *old* as the keyword and we used it as a search term on *LexisNexis*. We have selected *The Evening Standard (London)* and *The Times* (01/01/2018-31/12/2019) as the sources. The choice of these two newspapers was based on two criteria: the frequencies of old-related words and the balance of a national newspaper and a regional one.

Since there is always a risk that choosing certain keywords to search for patterns in a large general database that is not inclusive, it seemed natural to make a similar attempt what Cameron and Deignan (2003) and Chateris-Black (2004:35) have made. That is, the analysis combines a small corpus and large corpus. For this reason, the key term *old age* was searched on the *LexisNexis* platform to attain a small sample so that every sentence can be read manually. Only 50 articles from the search results were downloaded for the pilot study amounting to just over 50000 words.

The examination of the texts did produce some metaphoric expressions or metonymies, which would have been missed otherwise.

For instance,

(3) "*White hair* flying, hands never still"

(4) "Teddy (Danny Glover) and Waller (Tom Waits) - all three were known as the, ho-ho, *Over the Hill* Gang.

(5) *on the cusp of turning 74...*

Indeed, examples like above would not make to the corpus by keyword (i.e., *old age*) searching because none of the two words either *age* or *old* appears in the texts. However, it was laborious to go through a sample of 50000 words to detect only a sizeable number of metaphors – see example (4) and (5), and metonymies – see example (3), all of which are relevant to the target concept ‘aging’. Nevertheless, this step was necessary in setting up a productive way of gathering data and also suggests that a more sophisticated is needed, specifically in terms of search terms. Chapter 5 shows how we try to address this issue.

3.10 Conclusion

Having set up a working definition of metaphor (a cross-domain mapping), terminologies introduced, data collecting procedures and corpora explained, initial data sampling is then carried out (see Chapter 5). Following the data sampling, we have amended the search terms for the final datasets. In short, there are two stages the data sampling in Chapter 5 and the final data for analysis in Chapters 7 and 8. Data sampling was the first time that *age* and *old* are searched in both English and Chinese, which took us to a further revision of key search terms (see 5.4).

Chapter 6 explains the data structure in detail. Before we carry on with our corpus analysis, there is one crucial aspect of the target concept needs to be discussed, which is a review of the relevant dictionary entries on ageing (see Chapter 4). We believe that a heuristic impression of the concept of ageing by looking up definitions of *age* and *old* together with their surrounding idiomatic expressions will undoubtedly enhance our understanding of the

topic (as mentioned in 3.5.3). After a review of the dictionary entries, we will resume our corpus analysis, starting from task of data sampling.

Last but not least, this thesis is not committed to a Lakoffian tradition of CMT in every aspect. Yet, it is committed to generalising of conceptual metaphors from linguistic evidence. As Deignan (2017) suggested, the first step to decide a methodology is to take a critical look at the data. With this in mind, for practicality purposes, we use a combination of methods to analyse the data, dividing into two stages of analysis, i.e., the perceptions of *age* in English and Chinese and the perceptions of 'old age' in both languages. Putting the two stages of analysis together, we aim to gain a view of the conceptualisations of the ageing process.

Chapter 4 Dictionary meanings of 'old'

4.1 Introduction

The aim of the project is to uncover the perceptions of ageing in English and Chinese, the cultural similarities and differences between them, and to identify optimal cultural models of metaphorical representations of ageing. To lay out a foundation of the lexical semantics of *age* and *old* prior to the corpus analysis, we try to synthesise the implications in the dictionaries to investigate their general usage that has been adopted and practiced. We then also examine entries that suggest metaphorical uses as a summary of the perceptions drawing on fixed phrases, which we believe convey cultural values. For metaphorical expressions, this current chapter focuses on the dictionary entries that include the keyword *old* in idiomatic compound words and phrases. As with *old*, these entries should be associated with the definition of a human as being old, i.e., as “having lived or existed a long time” (*OED*).

The main English dictionary we rely on is *Oxford English Dictionary* (*OED*). It is worth mentioning we use *OED*’s online edition through the access provided by the University of East Anglia. In addition to all what the print editions have, the online edition publishes quarterly updates which is viewed as an advantage (Mair 2006:36-54). Thus, wherever *OED* appears in the present thesis, we mean its online edition. As an additional source, we consult *Macmillan Dictionary Online* for convenience and precision in corpus research (<http://www.macmillandictionary.com/>) was used in English (Demjén, Semino, and Koller, 2016). In the meantime, we use *The Oxford thesaurus: an A-Z dictionary of synonyms*

(Urdang 1997) and *The synonym finder* (Rodale et al. 1979) to look for old-related synonyms.

For Chinese, we use the *Xiandai Hanyu Cidian* ‘Modern Chinese Dictionary’ (hereafter *XDHYCD*) and its Chinese-English edition *Contemporary Chinese Dictionary* (CCD 2002). Since the Chinese dictionaries are less known, it is worth mentioning their suitability. *XDHYCD* is the first Chinese dictionary and the most comprehensive dictionary for Chinese studies by Mandarin Chinese and non-Chinese speakers and has been used as a general corpus (Hong et al. 2011). The first edition came out in 1978. This project refers to the fourth edition published in 2002. It contains by far the most entries, with over 60,000 entries (*XDHYCD* 2002:4). It has been employed for metaphor research repeatedly by Yu (1998, 2009, 2017) who has produced the most studies of conceptual metaphors from a Chinese perspective – and we also rely on its Chinese-English edition – *Contemporary Chinese Dictionary* (CCD) – heavily in our investigation. We use one online dictionary that can search idioms from *Hanyu Da Cidian* (*The Grand Chinese Dictionary* <http://www.hydc.com/>) in order to obtain as many idioms as possible. Another Chinese online dictionary is also used: 汉典 *handian* ‘Chinese Dictionary’ at (<http://www.zdic.net/>), which has been used in corpus-based metaphor analysis (Ahrens and Zeng 2022).

4.1.1 Lexical semantics: *Old* is euphemized in English but not in Chinese

To begin with, this section presents a preliminary semantic description of *old*- and *age*-related dictionary entries, from a lexical and conceptual level. The keywords we draw attention to include *age* and *old* in English. However, to establish the comparison between the two languages, two Chinese lexicological terms, namely word and character, need to be explained, as they differ from English.

In the book *Studies in Chinese Language*, Halliday and Webster (2005:48) point out that “the category of ‘word’ is set up to meet the need for a linguistic unit smaller than the clause and larger than the character.” As for character, Halliday and Webster (2005:24) provide a rather detailed definition:

The single character was not only the written symbol of a lexical unit [...], but also usually analysable into parts of which one (and that, moreover, the basis of lexicographical entry) functioned as a unit of a system of written forms (‘radicals’) which classified lexically (by meaning at the lexical level) and lexicographically but not phonologically.

In other words, a ‘word’ can consist of one or more complete characters. Characters can be free or bound. For instance, *lao* ‘old’ and *xiao* ‘small/young’ can be free or bound with others as prefixes “in front of a name depending on one’s seniority, which indicates a sense of familiarity functioning somewhat like English nicknames as Vicky for Victoria” (Sun 2006:56). *Lao* is such a commonly used term and prefix; it is worth noticing that *lao* has a much larger currency in colloquial Chinese than *xiao* (Sun 2006:56). It does not evoke demeaning connotations as the English *old* might do (e.g., *decay*) in daily uses and no derogatory meaning of *lao* ‘old’ is listed in the dictionary (see section 4.2.2). However, *lao* can be used to euphemise death as CCD (2002:1156) states “euphemism, (often of old

people, with character 了 (le 'PRT' attached) pass away; die", which is indeed related to death. That is, in order to avoid using the term of death, the use of *lao* 'old' is encouraged in. This is not the same as avoiding 'old' because of the related notion of death.

We have identified *old* as the keyword in both languages without much difficulty (see 3.8.4). However, *old* has a quite different historical trajectories in English and Chinese. In English, according to the *Oxford Dictionary of English Etymology* (Onions, Friedrichsen and Burchfield 1996:625), the etymology of *old* comes from the Old English *ald* of Western Germanic origin and it is related to Dutch *oud* and German *alt*. In present-day, *old* commonly means "having lived a long time; not young or new" (*OED*). Euphemisms of *senior* and *of a certain age* are used to refer to people who are no longer young. This explanation has been documented by Benczes in Burridge (2015) in their study about current attitudes to ageing as reflected in the names of Australian aged care facilities, observing that in Australian English the use of *old* seems to become more invisible (i.e., is replaced by other words) or reduced (the root meaning is always present).

The meaning of Chinese *old* can also be conveyed by the written symbol of 老 *lao*. It resembles the image of a person with a walking stick to refer to people who are no longer younger and is described in the following way:

(老, *lao*, old) describes an old person bending his back wearing an elaborate head-dress, and a child or a man bowing to him. Although this character is used as the old person now, the original meaning was a person of no ordinary status, an older bureaucrat. (Lee 2018:58)

The description above explains that *lao* 'old' is created to mean an older person with status according to the written symbol, and with time it reserves the meaning of an old person in general, which complements Sun's study mentioned above (Sun 2006:56) on the meaning of *lao* 'old'. The fact that *lao* 'old' is frequently used in a wider spectrum to the point that it loses its original meaning completely, *laohu* 'tiger', shows that *lao* is not a term that needs to be euphemized as its English counterpart *old*.

4.1.2 Lexical semantics: Age in English and Chinese

In 3.8.4 we have pointed out that there can be at least four Chinese terms that convey the meaning of *age*. We present the dictionary definitions here:

Table 1 Age in English and Chinese dictionaries

English	Chinese
a. the period of existence or of time b. to grow old c. the later part of life when the physical effects of protracted existence become apparent	a. <i>nianji</i> year record 'age' (CCD 2002:1410) b. <i>nianling</i> year number 'age' (CCD 2002:1410) c. <i>nianshi</i> year thing 'same as <i>nianji</i> ' (CCD 2002:1141) d. <i>suishu</i> year number 'age, years' (CCD 2002:1839)

As Table 1 shows, only in English, *age* suggests the meaning of *old*.

We also notice that in general, *old* in the *OED* is a relative term, i.e., as meaning "having existed for a long time" or "as opposed to not young". While the English *age* implies *old* and *old* carries disparaging connotations, the Chinese *lao* 'old' instead can be used as form of

respectful form of address, for instance, *xu lao*, surname old ‘Old Mr. Xu’ (XDHYCD 2002:757). In order to see further how *age* and *old* are commonly understood in the two languages, we will look in detail at the dictionary definitions in the following sections.

4.2 From lexical semantics to metaphorical expressions

We look up these two keywords – *age* and *old* – in each language and read through all the entries to look for metaphor candidates. In English, *old age* can be implied through *age*, e.g., “esp. The latter part of life, when the physical effects of ageing become apparent, old age” (OED). Unlike English, deriving *old* from *age* often relies on word-formation in Chinese. For instance, there are entries like *nianmai*, year stride, ‘old and tired, old’ to mean old age (CCD 2002:1410). It is from entries as such that metaphorical expressions seem to emerge in Chinese given that are two concepts involved in *nianmai*, year stride, ‘old and tired, old’, i.e., AGE as in *nian* ‘nian’ and BODY as in *mai* ‘stride’. We also observe that more adjectives are added to AGE as collocations – as if it is an OBJECT – to create the meaning of *old age*. For instance, *gao* ‘high, tall’ as in *nianshi yi gao* age already high ‘be advanced in years’. A description of such terms is in Chapter 7.

Note that in Chinese, we mention in 4.1.1 that the written symbol of *lao* ‘old’ in Chinese contributes to the meaning of the concept of ‘old’. Thus, we also use the written symbol of *old* to search for related words and expressions as set phrases in the dictionaries. In addition, additional *old* – related in set phrases were obtained from the online dictionary mentioned above (*The Grand Chinese Dictionary* <http://www.hydc.com/>) which is used by Yu (2009), as well as 汉典 *handian* ‘Chinese Dictionary’ at (<http://www.zdic.net/>) (Ahrens and Zeng 2022)

Eventually, we classify the identified metaphor candidates into source domain groups. To give an example, *lao liao* old face '(my own) reputation' is obtained by going through *lao* - related compound words in the dictionary *XDHYCD* (2002). In the meantime, *jiang gui zhi xing*, *dao lao yu la* the nature of ginger and cinnamon is that they become spicier when they are old , 'the older the ginger and cinnamon become, the more pungent their flavour' is collected by using the online dictionary (<http://www.hydc.com/cy/chengyu/cy02221.htm>). It is worth noticing that it is not easy to draw the boundaries between concepts when organizing the source domains. For instance, the instantiation of *sword* in *bao dao bu lao* good sword not old 'the man is old, but not his sword or elderly persons still at their height of skills' could in principle be assigned to one of three domains: WEAPON, TOOL-INSTRUMENT and CONFLICT.

One solution is that we could look for contextual meanings. In dealing with dictionary entries, we rely on the example sentences as much as possible. Another way is to examine the distribution of close instances before assigning them into categories. The forthcoming sections provide a detailed discussion of the idiomatic phrases that have a metaphorical sense. Technically, we go through an examination of the source concepts that the idioms might evoke through the semantics.

4.3 An overview of the source domains

Our target domain is 'old', and the task of investigating idiomatic expressions in the dictionaries is to detect what source domains are used for understanding the target. The focus is on the links between the source and target concepts.

By identifying the semantic incongruity of conceptual units between source and target domains (Steen 2010) involving metaphor focus identification and metaphorical idea identification as the starting point, we find 24 entries out of over 100 candidates as metaphorical expressions in English, and 30 in Chinese. To illustrate the identification process, take the idiom *over the hill* for an example. This idiom has to be understood figuratively if it is used when a person is not literally travelling over a hill. Therefore, the focus of the lexical item is the ‘movement’ of travelling. The idea is that passing the prime time of a life course, i.e., *old*, is like travelling over the hill. After the peak of the hill comes the downside of a hill’s slope, and this is matched with old age. To put it another way, ageing is thought of as travelling over a hill and being old is on the downside of the slope. Examples such as this one are linguistic manifestations of conceptual metaphors, i.e., a “cross-domain mapping” (Steen et al 2010:5). An overview of the metaphorical expressions identified is presented as follows:

Table 2 Source domains from English dictionary entries

Source domain	Examples	No. of entries
BODY PART	<i>old-hearted, old-grey, greybeard, hoary, old hand, old head, old-faced, old-bone</i>	8
MOTION-FORCE	<i>disintegrated, crumbling, broken-down, worn out, decay</i>	5
JOURNEY	<i>getting on (in years), over the hill, long-lived, past one's prime, advanced in one's years</i>	5
ANIMAL	<i>old trot, old serpent, old dragon, old trout</i>	4
PLANT	<i>ripe, to grow old</i>	2
Total		24

To show a comparison to English, the Table below (Table 3) provides Chinese examples in the same domain.

Table 3 Source domains from Chinese dictionary entries

Source domain	Example			No. of entries
ANIMAL	<i>lao ma shi tu</i>	old horse know way	'old and experienced'	10
BODY PART	<i>lao lian</i>	old face	'reputation'	8
JOURNEY	<i>lao mai</i>	old walk/step	'doddering'	5
PLANT	<i>jiang gui zhi xing, dao lao yu la</i>	the older the ginger and cinnamon become, the more pungent their flavour.	'the older, the blunter'	5
WEAPON/BATTLE	<i>bao dao bu lao</i>	a good sword never gets dull	'old yet still strong and competitive'	2
Total				30

Overall, the generalisation of the Chinese domains is administered by applying the same method, i.e., analysing the semantics of the individual words and identify non-literal words. Domains with under two examples are not included in the study.

In summary, the tentative summary of the metaphors based on the idiomatic phrases in English and Chinese allow us to draw a preliminary understanding, that the experiential manifestations of the concepts of OLD AGE and AGEING share certain similarities. That is, we perceive the state of OLD AGE of humans in terms of our understandings about aged ANIMALS, some aspects of a JOURNEY, the aged BODY, etc. It seems that based on the source domains, the following conceptual metaphors are implied:

- a) OLD PEOPLE AS AGED ANIMALS (English and Chinese)

- b) AGEING IS A JOURNEY (English and Chinese)
- c) OLD AGE IS ON THE DOWNSIDE OF THE AGEING PATH (English only)
- d) AN OLD PERSON IS THE AGED BODY (English and Chinese)
- e) OLD PEOPLE ARE DECAYED PLANTS (English and Chinese)

Next, we go through each of these conceptual metaphors to explore the correspondences between to source and the target concepts. ANIMAL and BODY PARTS in total number (including both languages) seem to be the richest groups, therefore we begin with the source domain of ANIMAL.

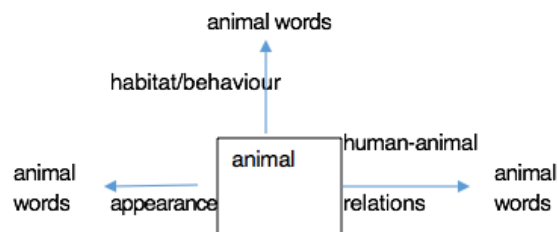
4.4 OLD PEOPLE AS AGED ANIMALS

Scholars agree that ANIMALS are a rich source domain to talk about humans in English (Lakoff and Turner 1989; Charteris-Black 2004; Allan 2008). Allan notes that traditionally there is a distinction between animals and humans, the former being associated with emotions and the latter with reason (2008:138) and she highlights the fact that an adequate account of the entries cannot be achieved without taking into account cultural factors (beliefs, symbolism and folklores) (ibid p.146).

Research on animal terms has also been done in Chinese. In a contrastive study, Hsieh adopts a corpus-based approach to examine expressions encoding the name of 'cat' to reveal people's thoughts in Mandarin Chinese and German (Hsieh 2006). The results show that *cat*-related metaphors in Mandarin mean 'weak' in general. In German, there are more *cat*-related expressions with a wider range of meaning "weak, false, small, unimportant, flattering, quick, shrill". Also, there is *she-cat* as in *Katze* and *tomcat* as in *Kater*. With Mandarin speakers, *cat* is often for both genders and there are only a few tomcat expressions. The author observes that "while cat seems to be the most popular pet in

Germany, Mandarin Chinese speakers consider it an ominous animal” and points out that “this is also the case in Germany, but only on specific occasions, such as when a black cat appear suddenly” (Hsieh 2006:2211). Hsieh also claims that there is a close semantic connection between an animal and a certain metaphorical domain, e.g., *cat* is used to talk about ‘woman’ in German but it is mostly gender-neutral in Mandarin. For instance, Hsieh (2006:2210) mentions that the expression *xia mao peng dao si lao shu*, blind cat meet dead mouse, ‘a lucky hit’ designates the features of ‘animal, hunting, weak’ but it is gender-neutral. The implication from studies as such is that we can extrapolate conceptual relations through semantic connections of isolated examples, but we must also be aware that these examples are historically situated and may well be arbitrary when they are created.

Overall, we find that animal names used in English as *old*-related collocations (e.g., *old cat*) are rich, of which we identify for conceptualisations of ‘old’ include *old trot*, *old serpent*, *old dragon*, and *old trout*; cases in Chinese are more including the mythical *dragon*, *families of ox*, *horse*, *fish* and *bear*, amounting 10 examples. Building on previous works (Goddard 1998; Labov 1973; Wierzbicka1985;), Hsieh (2006) develops a sketch of animal-human mapping in the following figure:



In the following analysis, we will refer to this figure where applicable as a loose framework in breaking down the features involved in the mappings between the source and target concepts.

4.4.1 *Serpent and dragon*

In this category, we find comparable expressions shown in the following examples (EN for English and CN for Chinese).

(1) EN

b. *Old serpent* (oed.com)

c. *Old dragon* (oed.com)

(2) CN

lao tai long zhong (CCD 2002:816)

old look dragon chime

‘doddering’

Technically, we have a REPTILE family identified, represented by two instances in English – *old serpent* and *old dragon* – and one in Chinese as examples (1) and (2) demonstrate.

Although *dragon* is technically just a mythical animal, the familiarity of it in cultural contexts makes it a valuable instance that is worth studying, especially in Chinese as a symbol of the authority of the emperor in Feudal societies (CCD 2002:816). *Serpent*, too, in English has its symbolic meanings attached. Here is a definition for *serpent* from the *OED*:

- a) Any of the scaly limbless reptiles regarded as having the properties of hissing and ‘stinging’; *Zoology* a reptile of the group Ophidia n.; a snake: now, in ordinary use, applied chiefly to the larger and more venomous species; otherwise only *rhetorical* (e.g. in contexts suggesting senses b, c), or with reference to serpent-worship;
- b) The serpent, ‘more subtle than any beast of the field’, that tempted Eve (Genesis iii. 1–5); the Tempter, the Devil, Satan. Also, the *Old Serpent* (after Revelation xii. 9).
- c) As a symbol of envy, jealousy, malice, or wiliness; A treacherous, deceitful, or malicious person.

In c), concerning the figurative meaning of person, *serpent* is defined as ‘a treacherous, deceitful, or malicious person’. We can understand that *old serpent* connects to behavioural features in a person when compared to a serpent indicated in c). As b). shows, *old serpent* can also mean the Devil Satan, as well as what *old dragon* is used for. It seems that *old serpent* is used with the original reference to the “devil’s primeval character” (*OED*). There is also the “old enemy” sense involved reflecting the evilness connotation. We should note that we need further information on whether or not *old serpent* is always mentioned about an older person in context, even humorously. The actual comparison we can make between English and Chinese is with the concept of ‘dragon’ in example (2).

Dragon is listed in the *OED* as a symbol as a devil or monster, i.e., a devilish person of in terms of behaviour and personality, a fiend or “a fierce violent person, esp. a fiercely, or aggressively watchful woman”. *Old dragon* just as old serpent is referred to as the Devil, connecting with the perception of behavioural resemblance.

Dragon in Chinese is associated with a set of completely different meanings. Conventionally, the mythological animal *dragon* together with its female counterpart *phoenix* “represent noble or heroic qualities”, in particular the dragon - who controls the sky and rain - “is neither good nor bad, but rather the embodiment of a powerful natural phenomenon” (Herzberg and Herzberg 2012:97-98). Besides, *dragon* has long been the embodiment of power with emperors over thousands of years of the Chinese feudal system. Even dragon relevant robes and interior decorations are exclusively possessed by the highest power. Thus, the concept of ‘dragon’ overall denotes strong positive meanings, such as prestige and power. Potentially, the entry – *lao tai long zhong* old look dragon chime ‘doddering’ – likely connects to the look of an old person resembling to the shape of curled-up dragon or a chime as a humped old person. In this respect, it is the appearance of dragon mapped on to the looks of an old person.

After a quick examination of the instances of *old serpent* and *old dragon* in English, and *lao tai long Zhong*, old look dragon chime, ‘doddering, shake or tremble from old age’ in Chinese, it seems that the perceptions of OLD through the understanding of DRAGON in Chinese and English almost bear the opposite connotations. In English, DRAGON represents a symbol of evilness arising from the poisonous nature of a serpent. In this sense, an *old serpent* or *old dragon* is used to understand a human. In Chinese, DRAGON is regarded as a

symbol of power and prestige, which is held higher than human. However, the Chinese entry does not necessarily reflect the symbol of power because the association fixates on the physical appearance. The implication seems to be that assessment on the positive and negative mentality of old age cannot be revealed by a domain as a whole. Elements of a domain may be used differently for either negative or positive perceptions.

4.4.2 WATER SPECIES

We consider *trout* and *muschel* in one group in a broad sense given that they are examples of water species.

(3) EN

Old trout (oed.com)

(4) CN

Lao bang sheng zhu (zdic.net)

Old oyster bear pearl

‘birthing a son at an advanced age’

The *OED* defines *old trout* as a derogatory term for an old woman. According to *The Oxford Dictionary of Word Histories* (2002:524) *trout* originally “is from late Latin *tructa*, based on Greek *τρογείνη*, *trogein*, ‘gnaw’”. The use of the derogatory phrase *old trout* referring to an elderly woman is found from the late 19th century”. This gnaw-related definition of *trout* is also found in the *Concise Etymological Dictionary of the English Language* as “a nibbler, also a fish with sharp teeth” (Skeat 1882:575). Linking *old trout* and old woman can have multiple interpretations. In the first place, *trout* as fish is a type of food, and is meant to be fresh to be good. *Old trout* is therefore unpleasant to eat. Hence, a derogatory term for an older woman. Secondly, *trout* has sharp teeth and bites, which can be a trait of

unpleasantness. Thirdly, as we age, our lips lose the fullness and become thin which does look like fish's lips. Lips are a symbol of femininity given that it has been reported that lipsticks tend to be the first cosmetic product teenagers have ever won (Clarke and Bundon 2009:203). It can be argued that the mapping is based on such a bodily trait. Lastly, since *trout* is a type of a freshwater fish, we may be able to connect the domain of FISH and the domain of WOMAN by our understanding of other aspects of them. For instance, according to Allan (2008) FISH is used for conceptualising FOOLISHNESS. The author (Allan 2008:169) adds that "another possible factor in the FISH-and-FOOLISHNESS mapping is the fact that [...] fish are unable to make any vocal sound" and lists the proverb *as dumb as the fishes*. Indeed, all the aforementioned interpretations are within Hsieh's (2006) mapping model, i.e., habit/behaviour feature of, appearance and human-animal relationship. In this case, the problem is any of the interpretations shows a degrading perception of older women.

The Chinese entry – *lao bang sheng zhu*, an old oyster producing a pearl, 'an old person becomes a new parent' (HYDCD online) – gives a strong link between the source and target semantics. That is, the fact of having a child at a later age is compared to the function of an old mussel bearing pearls. Pearls are precious, therefore, in general, the term is understood as a flattering phrase (HYDCD online). *Mussels* are either marine or freshwater species. It is no interest of the original author's intention to distinguish whether mussels should be considered marine or freshwater species from the idiom's origin¹⁴. In any case, mussel is a water species, and the term is not really gender specific. Instead, the idiom complements an

¹⁴ It was from a letter by the writer and official Kong Rong (153–208) to an older official Weiduan to complement Weiduan's two sons for being knowledgeable and promising. (<https://www.zdic.net/hans/%E8%80%81%E8%9A%8C%E5%87%BA%E6%98%8E%E7%8F%A0>).

old person's achievement as a parent. It is worth pointing out that the Chinese entry in this group seems to be more arbitrary between the source and the target.

4.4.3 Ox

This is a group where we only see *ox*-related expressions in Chinese.

(5) CN

- a) *lao huang niu* old yellow ox 'willing ox, person who is diligent and conscientious in work' (CCD 2002:1158)
- b) *lao niu po che* old ox a broken cart 'making slow progress' (CCD:1160)
- c) *lao niu shi du* an old cow licking her calf 'parents doting on his or her child; parental love; dote on one's children' (CCD 2002:1160)

Ox is "a large cloven-hoofed, often horned ruminant mammal, *Bos taurus* (family Bovidae), derived from the extinct Eurasian aurochs and long domesticated for its milk, meat, and hide; a cow, a bull; (in plural) cattle. Frequently spec.: a castrated adult male of this animal, esp. as used as a draught animal; a bullock" (OED). *Ox* in English stresses the size and strength. This is a category in which no English entries are found in the *OED* associated with 'old age'. Allan (2008:155) observes that entries in her corpora demonstrate that the *OX* domain has associations with AGE. Specifically, youth standing for inexperience derived from the entries of *calf* for a stupid fellow. Interestingly, the mapping between AGE and INTELLIGENCE is indeed partial, because we do not find entries related to *ox* are used for understanding an older age.

In Chinese, as (5) shows, figuratively, the tokens are associated with diligence in a) and b) and caring behaviour in c). Alongside the feature of behaviour or function of pulling ploughs, the third entry c) draws attention to the human quality of sacrifice and caring emotions. Sagart (1999:192) finds that in old Chinese, *niu* 'ox, a member of the Bos', is often mentioned as "a sacrificial animal in the oracular inscriptions". It suggests that OX is engaged in a society symbolically. Further to this, parental love is abstracted from the scene that an old ox licking a calf. Understanding of this category probably shows that this is due to the proximity. Cattle used to be in Chinese people's life as sheep in English culture because China was and still is an agricultural country. To some extent, people work with them and they live in every household as part of a family.

The comparison that OX is a relatively common source concept in Chinese but not in English, which we assume is from the cultural environment of the human-ox relationship in the two societies.

4.4.4 Horse

In the *horse* group, we continue to see multiple metaphorical expressions in Chinese but one in English.

(6) EN

Old trot ([adj. : Oxford English Dictionary \[oed.com\]](https://www.oed.com/))

(7) CN

a) *lao ji fu li* (CCD, 2002:1159)

old horse bend-over stable

'old people may still cherish high aspirations'

b) *lao ma shi tu* (CCD 2002:1159)

old horse know way

‘old and experienced’

c) *lao ma si feng* (zdic.net)

old horse whinnying wind

‘an old horse craves for action’

d) *lao ma wei ju* (zdic.net)

old horse as pony

‘treating an old person as a child (not showing respect to old people)’

Despite the vague connections between *old trot* and old woman, we can argue that *old trot* can be placed in the group comprising horse-related expressions. In the *OED*, *old trot* refers to “now rare an old woman or (occasionally) an old man”(oed.com). *Trot* has its “senses relating to a trotting movement” and “originally of a horse”. This seemingly arbitrary metaphor is of interest in the current thesis to be included because it is in its detail and nuance that the value it possesses, i.e., the possible relation between an old person, especially an old woman, and the trotting movement of a horse. The arbitrary sense of it is that no one really thinks of a horse anymore when they use the phrase *old trot*. Even with *old horse* in *OED* has no connotations to age. The Chinese ones, however, probably invoke the concept of HORSE and its properties more vividly when in use.

There are four Chinese entries making up the majority of expressions in the ANIMAL domain. Two examples, a) and b), are born out of the battle context. As the CCD documents (2002:1159), a) is from a poem by the war-lord Cao Cao (155 – 15 March 220)¹⁵. B) is also dated back to wartime as the CCD explains: “according to *Hanfeizi* Forest of Commentaries, Guan Zhong¹⁶ lost his way on his return from a battle under the command of Duke Huan of Qi, but he eventually found his way home by letting his mount, an old horse, lead the way”. Hence, the mapping between OLD and HORSE involves expectations and imaginations of the personified characteristics of a horse. For instance, in the Chinese entry a), the eating habit of an old horse is used to understand high spirits of an older person. Drawing from the four instances in Chinese, we do not see the hierarchical relationship between humans and horses. Thus, when older individuals are compared to aged horses, it is not a way of demeaning older individuals. In fact, the opposite is true. Entries (6a), (6b) and (6c) all seem to compliment older persons in terms of their spirituality, experience, knowledge, and social status. Therefore, to some extent, it is the social values which lead participants in the discourse community to interpret the metaphor in one assumed way. Here, the implied social value is that old age is not conceived as a detriment in that older soldiers or generals can serve a battle in a different manner than, but as effectively as, younger ones.

From the view assigned to aged warhorse that we mention above in 6) and in 5), we may understand that the Chinese way of personification is to humanize animals: the attributes of humans are mapped onto animals rather than the other way around. Also, this seems to suggest that the target concept OLD AGE influences the view of the source concept HORSE,

¹⁵ Caocao is a poet, statesman, and warlord in the Eastern Han Dynasty in Chinese history. See De Crespigny (2010)

¹⁶ One of the Chinese philosophers in the pre-Qin period (Johnston & Wang 2020:519).

i.e., the wishes of being knowledgeable and wise at an older age are carried in the observations of the actions in an aged horse. For instance, Entry a) is a line from a poem by Cao Cao, who is an imperial warlord (De Crespigny 2010):

lao ji fu li, zhi zai qian li;
old horse bend-over stable; will in thousand li;
'an old war-horse may be stabled, yet still it longs to gallop a thought li.'
Lie shi mu nian, Zhuang xin bu yi
heroic person evening age, strong heart not stop
'although a hero is old, yet he does not become less ambitious'
(in *Though the Tortoise Live Long* by Cao Cao CCD 2002:1159)

In essence, the poem expresses the ambition of a *lieshi* 'hero' in their old age through the image of an old warhorse. Since the expression *lao ji fu li* has become an idiom (6a) and has been repeatedly used in general, the assumption is that such an evaluation reflects the person's wish as well as the cultural value on an older person, by borrowing the warhorse image that can facilitate the ambition of an older person. Clearly, we cannot theorise the associations easily between the source and the target concepts by using a conventional CMT mapping, i.e., elements from the source concept are used to understand an abstract concept. In *old trot*, we cannot trace the HORSE concept in general. Although in Chinese (6) the relationship between horse and human is contextualised in a battle scenario. How much correspondences of a warhorse and an ambitious older person can be established remains unclear.

4.4.5 Bear

Bear-related expression is yet another group that we find in Chinese but not in English. See the idiom below.

(8)

lao xiong dang dao [_ \(hydc.com\)](http://hydc.com)

old bear in the way

‘a powerful general blocks a main road in the battlefield’

This expression, *lao xiong dang dao* ‘a powerful general blocks a main road in the battlefield’ evokes two senses of a bear, i.e., appearance and behaviour. The appearance aspect is pronounced in another more common idiom *hu bei xiong yao* tiger back bear waist ‘to have tiger’s back and a bear’s waist – tough and stocky’ (CCD:2155). When we speak of *bear* on its own, however, we speak of a sense of “coward, timid, impotent” (CCD 2002:2155). Hence, the metaphorical sense in (8) to mean an old and experienced general blocks a main road in the battlefield shows power and strength should be understood in its context not in isolation. The animal sense of *bear* reflects more straightforwardly in its experience, which is nothing to do with ‘old’ in general.

In sum, the analysis of the ANIMAL source domain does seem to indicate a contrast in the two languages: degrading connotations in English (in the groups of *serpent and dragon, fish, horse*) and mainly positive associations in Chinese (in the groups of *fish, ox, and horse*) when ‘old’ is understood through aged animals in their own contexts. The correspondences between the source and target, however, can refer to **Error! Reference source not found.**) by Hsieh (2006), i.e., “appearance, habit/behaviour/human-animal relations” when it comes

to talk about old people and old animals specifically. Despite that, we can still contend that English animal metaphors suggests that 'old age' is largely an inferior and unpleasant aspect of a person, perhaps a constituent of the so-called problem of ageing in the English discourse, i.e., the society considers old age as "a crisis of capacity" as Charise (2012) argues; Chinese animal metaphors in contrast bear the wishes of humanizing animals (see the idioms in the *ox* and *horse* groups). That is, we can see that culture seems to influence the conceptualisations of the target concept in terms of favouring what elements are involved in the mappings.

4.5 BODY PART FOR PERSON metonymy

Traditional CMT (L&J, 1980, Johnson 1987) argues that conceptual metaphors are grounded in our bodily experiences. Kövecses (2002:16) also maintains that our bodily experiences serve as ideal source domains for metaphors. In the current chapter, indeed, the BODY domain shows pervasive similarity in employing body parts and bodily features to make sense of old age. L&J (2003:35) differentiate metonymy from metaphor in the sense that we use one entity to refer to another that belongs in the same domain, whereas for metaphor, we impute qualities of one entity to an entity in another domain. For example:

(9)

The ham sandwich is waiting for his check.

In this case, the *ham sandwich* refers to the person who has ordered a ham sandwich because the ham sandwich is related to the person through the action of ordering. We do not see any of the qualities of the sandwich are used to understand the person. Therefore, it is a metonymy. For the current project, entries that are bodily- related are employed to represent the person due to ageing features, even the bodily features are part of the

physical development of a person in their old age. In this sense, the entries can be considered as metonymies because old age and the bodily attributes technically are in the same domain BODY. The point that our perceptions – in this case of ‘old age’ – originate from the body (Bagasheva 2017:195; Johnson 2008: 160) is perhaps on a highly abstract level. In the current study, connotations in the associations between ‘old’ and the sources are different due to the cultural views on the body, body parts and body attributions. We present the English and Chinese sections separately. Overall, the body part metonymies are compound words in the two languages. Syntactically and semantically, the Chinese and English usages are similar.

(10) EN

- a) *old grey* obsolete old man, greybeard
- b) *greybeard* a man with a grey beard; an elderly or old man.
- c) *hoary* having white or grey hair, grey-haired.
- d) *old-hearted* denoting an attribute which is or appears old, or is characteristic of an old person
- e) *old-faced* having a face characteristic of age
- f) *old head* an old or experienced person
- g) *old hand* a person who has been employed for a long time or who has experience in a business, or who is skilful in doing something
- h) *old-boned* obsolete manured with old bones.

(11) CN

- a) *lao shen* old body/torso ‘I myself [of an old lady]’ (CCD 2002:1161)

- b) *lao tou'r* old head-PRT 'old chap, a familiarity' (CCD 2002:1162)
- c) *lao tou-zi* old head-PRT, 'old fogey, usually used by a wife/children as familiarity'
- d) *lao lian* old face 'reputation' (CCD 2002:1159)
- e) *hong yan an lao* red face dim old 'one loses charm with age (female)' (CCD 2002:805)
- f) *lao cang* old grey 'old hoary' (CCD 2002:1158)
- g) *nian lao se shuai* year old colour decline 'one loses charm with year (female)' (CCD 2002:906)

The English body-related entries in example group 10 are mostly linked to bodily attributions, as in 10a)-e). In 10d) we have *old-hearted* for 'old age' as it denotes "an attribute which is or appears old or a characteristic of an old person" similar to *old-faced*. This way, age becomes the main property in the mapping. HEART is symbolically considered as the seat of courage, personality and character (Musolff 2004:102), thus it is connected to emotions, and emotionally old is the meaning in describing someone with an *old heart*. The Chinese scholar Yu (2009:130) argues that, from ancient times, HEART governs the mental power as the store of spirits; Yu contends that in ancient Chinese, HEART is the center of the body and proposes the conceptual metaphor THE HEART IS THE RULER OF THE BODY (2009:179), which indicates the important status of the HEART. It is worth noticing that we have yet to see old heart in the Chinese entries. Instead, growing old with a liberated heart seems to be encouraged. In *The Analects*¹⁷: 2.4:

The Master said: "at fifteen, I set my heart on learning. At thirty, I found my balance through the rites. At forty, I was free from doubts [about myself]. At sixty, I was

¹⁷ It is a book of "the selected sayings" by the most influential intellectual figure in Chinese history Confucius, and The Analects exists as "the fundamental body of thought that has shaped Chinese civilization for over two thousand years" (Confucius, & Hinton 2014:16)

attuned to what I heard. At seventy, I follow what my heart desires without overstepping the line.” (Confucius and Chin 2014:14)

The Master refers to Confucius, whose views on life stages as above function as a cultural script for the Chinese society thousands of years ago. It advertises the doctrine of adaptiveness by laying out aims for different ages. However, we need to bear in mind that this might not reflect the view of life expectations in the current society.

English (10g) *old head* does not signify old age but experience. We keep this entry to make a comparison in analysing other parts of the body that actually imply age. Meanwhile, this term has its equivalent in Chinese, see Chinese 11b) with some slight difference. Chinese 11b) *lao tou’r* old head-PRT, ‘old chap, a familiarity’ bears undertones of intimacy as the CCD states (2002:1161); and 11c) *lao tou-zi*, old head-PRT, ‘old fogey, usually used by a wife/children as familiarity’ carries derogatory meaning on the one hand; on the other hand it is an address used by a wife to a husband or a child to a father as in *old man*. Hence the English expression *old head* is different from the Chinese one because *old head* does not necessarily mean an old person.

It is the same case with the English *old hand*, which is not associated with age. The *OED* defines it as “a person who has been employed for a long time or who has experience in a business, or who is skillful in doing something.” This means that an *old hand* can be an old person or an experienced person. Interestingly, in this case, the Chinese expression is in line with its English counterpart. Given that neither of these expressions necessarily refers to an older person, we have excluded this token in both datasets.

Using *face* to stand for the person is seen in both English 10e) and Chinese 11d). This is due to its complexities in expressing the concept of ‘face’ in different ways. For example, technically Chinese e) and g) are related to ‘face’ using COLOUR/COMPLEXION as an essential property to refer to women’s looks indicated by *hongyan* red colour ‘pretty woman’ which hints a gender inequality in ancient Chinese discourses. On the English side, *OED* online lists *face* as a whole to mean being ‘viewed with reference to its attractiveness or degree of beauty’ in its definition 2b). It is noticed that the majority of the quotations to illustrate this definition are about female’s looks. For instance, “a pretty girl, whose face was her fortune” from *Spirit Lake (Iowa) Beacon* 22 Feb. 2 (OED).

All in all, as a metonymy, ‘face’ refers to ‘a person’ in both languages. Another shared attribution in both languages is the greyness of hair, although it is more pronounced in English with more tokens. The fact that no entry about *greybeard* is found in Chinese might link to the claim that beards are symbols of men’s social biological seniority and in its mythology are symbols of superpower (Amsler 2018:26). Generally speaking, *greybeards* are the proximity of sagehood.

It is interesting that OLD BODY/TORSO is not found in English as a source concept. In Chinese, as example a) *laoshen* old body (I myself [of an old lady]), usually in “early vernacular” “old woman’s self-effacing term of address” (CCD 2002:1160) in Table 5 shows. The figure below gives a brief summary of the symbolic meanings when body parts are used for talking about OLD AGE.

Table 4 Symbolic meaning of the body parts

Old-	EN	CN
Head	emotion/personality/characteristics	reasoning/mental spirits
Hair	greyness with age	greyness with age for self-effacing
Face	lit. having a face with characteristics of age	fig., dignity
Hand	fig., experience	fig., experience
Torso/body	N/A	Self [of woman]
Bone	lit. to mature with old bones	it exists in colloquial language used as self-effacing
Heart	fig., having characteristics of an old person	N/A
Beard	greyness	N/A

Summing up, it is common in English and Chinese that OLD AGE IS AN AGED BODY as an experiential basis. Bodily ageing signs are easily used to represent old age, for instance, grey hair in both English and Chinese. Still, we can see differences. In English, perceptions of OLD AGE tend to emphasize the physical loss in old age (see *greybeards*, *old-hearted*, *old boned*). In Chinese, entries do show physical changes with age, however, the bodily terms, i.e. those are referred to as *lao tou* PRT 'old head PRT', and *lao lian* 'old face' as well as *lao shen* *old body*, tend to be used in a colloquial and communicative manner either as endearment or self-effacing. We have pointed out that *old-hearted* as a fixed phrase is English specific and not in Chinese as the current study shows. Some expressions in English, i.e., *old-faced*, *old-boned*, are obsolete and they seem to be used to describe non-aged people or things.

Overall, THE BODY PART FOR PERSON metonymy is manifested in the present study in perceiving OLD AGE. Using body parts (e.g., face) or attributions (e.g., grey hair) to represent a person in their old age emphasizes the body parts or attributions as ageing signs, which can either clarify or complicate the views of 'old age'. Just as what L&J (2003 36-37) have claimed that metonymy has primarily a referential function, that is, "it allows us to use one entity to stand for another" which "allows us to focus on some certain specific aspects of what is being referred to". For example, as mentioned previously, the Chinese *lao lian* 'old face' and *laotou* PRT 'old head PRT' are normally a self-effacing way of phrasing (as they are similar to old fogey or old geezer, see examples 10b and 10c), and *laoshen* 'old body' is generally used in this way by a female speaker. Therefore, it seems that which ageing signs are selected for understanding ageing is up to the cultural preferences.

4.6 PEOPLE ARE PLANTS

Previous study finds that there is a connection of 'grass' and 'human', for instance, *in the blossom of her age* (Deingan 2006:113), in which the process of "plants growing and being cultivated" is used to understand human development (Deignan 2006:119). In the PLANT category, we include examples in this category for comparing the constructions of stages of life. We find more Chinese entries than English entries, as shown in examples (12) and (13).

(12)

EN

a) *ripe*

b) *to grow old*

(13)

- a) *lao xiu* 'old rotten myself [of man]' ([hydcd.com](http://www.hydcd.com))
- b) *ju lao he ku* Chrysanthemum old lotus withering 'a woman is no longer young' ([hydcd.com](http://www.hydcd.com))
- c) *lao dang yi zhuang* old should [be] stronger 'one gets more capable with age' ([hydcd.com](http://www.hydcd.com))
- d) *lao cheng diao xie* old complete wither 'used in obituary for an aged well-regarded person' <http://www.hydcd.com/cy/htm2/lc9659.htm> ([hydcd.com](http://www.hydcd.com))
- e) *jiang gui zhi xing dao lao yu la*, ginger and cinnamon PRT nature, arrive old more spicy 'the older one gets, the more honest and blunt they become' ([hydcd.com](http://www.hydcd.com))

These idiomatic expressions in examples 12 and 13 bear out the established conceptual metaphor PEOPLE ARE PLANTS (Lakoff 1992:232) in both languages, i.e., using the growing process of plants to understand the life course of people. When PEOPLE is understood in terms of PLANTS, naturally, there is a process of withering involved. In English, this is manifested by *ripe* which denotes time for eating (of fruit), hence the end of life. On the other hand, *ripe* also implies "readiness for harvesting" (OED) which brings about a sense of achievement. The Chinese (13 a) *lao xiu* 'old rotten myself [of man]' contains a similar conceptualisation linking *rotten* with *old*, meaning very old. Notice (13 a) in Chinese is self-effacing term in spoken language, i.e., used to mean *I myself*. *Ripe* frequently appears in the term *ripe old age* to mean "advanced in years". That is, their pragmatic senses are different.

Grow old is taken from the definition for *age* as a verb. The term makes the semantic transfer from PLANT by *grow* to the target domain, the AGEING process. We have mentioned it in section 4.2.1.

The Chinese entry (13b) *ju lao he ku* Chrysanthemum old lotus withering ‘a woman is no longer pretty’ uses the life status of the chrysanthemum and lotus – old and withering – to mean a woman at an older age, which implies a derogatory sense. Interestingly, entry (13c) *lao dang yi zhuang* old should [be] stronger ‘one gets more capable with age’ is normally male oriented (HYDCD online). The remaining two entries either show an optimistic view on ‘old age’ as in (13e) – the English translation on the HYDCD online is “a green old age” – or a euphemistic way for death as in (13d). (13e) evokes a mapping between manner and taste, which is identified as MANNER IS TASTE (Chateris-Black 2003) through expressions like *honey-tongued* in Malay. Here, older persons’ directness and bluntness are expressed through the strong spicy taste of matured ginger and cinnamon.

To sum up, in this category, we can see the general underlying conceptual metaphor PEOPLE AS PLANTS in both languages. However, there are cultural differences. In English, the natural process of growing plants is mapped on to the ageing process of people through the word *ripe* referring to old age. In Chinese, the natural process of withering plants - different from growing - is mapped on to the ageing process of people in a self-deprecating manner in (13a) or in obituaries as in (13d) or for praising in (13c and e). Just as (13c), (13b) once again demonstrates a gendered conceptualisation of ageing, the focus on appearance in women in contrast to the capability in men.

4.7 AGEING IS MOTION

In this category, we mainly have English expressions to exemplify the idea that ‘old age’ is perceived as some kind of force behind motions, that is, AGEING IS MOTION, given that *old* is expressed in the following ways:

(14) EN

- a) *disintegrated*,
- b) *crumbling*,
- c) *broken-down*,
- d) *worn out*.

The semantics related to expressions in example 14 belongs to a category associated with buildings, constructions or mechanical objects in a process of breaking down, transforming into a new state. From the force dynamics (Lakoff 1987; Langacker 1987; Talmy 1988) principles, the change of motion can be self-propelled or caused by external forces. Also, expressions in example (14) are perhaps similar to L&J’s (2003:258) example as in *I’ve fallen in love*, but we seem to be going in different directions in which CHANGES ARE MOTIONS is with *fallen in love*.

Disintegrated, *crumbling* and *broken-down* suggest the source concept is a substance which is undergoing the process “to reduce to fragments” as the definition of *disintegrated* shows (OED), with *crumbling* and *broken-down* expressing the same meaning. An old person cannot literally fall into pieces. The reality of being old is transferred to the process of being fragmented. Thus, the physical body of an old person is the substance in the mapping and the destroying of it is at the centre of conceptualisation. The only possible force is OLD AGE

which is implied as the cause. We can also understand that CHANGES ARE MOTIONS is applied in this case, as these expressions suggest a new state that an old person reach, regardless of the status of the new state.

The term (14d) *worn out* contains the meaning of “(with object) diminish, disappear gradually” (*OED*). The human body corresponds to the object and the figurative meaning is that a person is losing strength or vitality. In this case, we can see that “destroying and devouring are actions in which an entity ceases to exist” as Lakoff (1993:232) observes. The claim that “the passage of time will eventually result in death” (*ibid.*) can find its evidence here in the sense that using destroying actions and event to understand the concept of ‘old’. Again, it is worth noticing this explanation is much English centred provided that no similar terms are identified on the Chinese side.

We find the following mappings are contested:

- a) THE BODY IS A SUBSTANCE.
- b) THE AGEING BODY IS THE SUBSTANCE BEING DESTROYED.
- c) AGE IS THE FORCE CAUSES THE DAMAGE.

To further cement these mappings in English as opposed to Chinese or other languages, a dataset of higher frequency of substance-based, destroying-related and especially causal relationship-oriented expressions would need to be presented, which perhaps explains the limitation of dictionary entries.

4.8 JOURNEY metaphors

In the development of CMT, Lakoff has introduced the concept of the “EVENT structure” – essentially dealing with space and time – claiming that “various aspects of event structure, including notions like states, changes, processes, actions, causes, purposes, and means, are characterized cognitively via metaphor in terms of space, motion, and force” (1993:220). To illustrate:

A PURPOSEFUL LIFE IS A JOURNEY

- Target Domain: Life
- Source Domain: Space
- The person leading a life is a traveller.
- Inherits Event Structure Metaphor, as in:
 - Events = Significant Life Events
 - Purposes = Life Goals Thus we have expressions like:

He got a head start in life. He's without direction in his life.

I'm where I want to be in life.

I'm at a crossroads in my life.

[...]

L&J (1999:60-61) further explain that the conceptual metaphor A PURPOSEFUL LIFE IS A JOURNEY as comprising two sub-metaphors:

- PURPOSES ARE DESTINATIONS
- ACTIONS ARE MOTIONS

As such, our dictionary entries in the present study shows a variant of the metaphor LIFE IS A JOURNEY, that is AGEING IS A JOURNEY in the following way.

Target domain: AGEING

Source domain: JOURNEY e.g., progress of a journey is the length of life one has lived (*to get on in years*)

Traveller: the person who is ageing (the subject of the clause tends to be a person in EN, see 15) or the person's age ('age' is the subject of the clause in CN, see 16d-e)

The following examples will show that the conceptualisation of ageing in English and Chinese differs in relation to the perceived TRAVELLER of the JOURNEY. This section leaves us a heuristic understanding of the JOURNEY metaphor with a full description in Chapter 7.

4.8.1 English examples

(15)

- a) *to get on (in years)*
- b) *over the hill*
- c) *long-lived*
- d) *past one's prime*
- e) *advanced in one's years*
- f) *Decayed*

In the English examples, the TRAVELLER is understood to be the ageing person, for the subjects for the entries must be people at an older age as in "*he was getting on in life, whereas his fiancée was not yet twenty*" (OED). In this sense, 'age' is embodied by the ageing person, i.e., passing of age is the motion of the person. Also, a direction of the movement is implied in the motions: i.e., forward (*get on in years, advanced in one's years,*

past one's prime, long-lived) or downward (*over the hill, decayed*). We should point out that (15f) *decayed* can be classified in the JOURNEY group because *decay* has the meaning of “to fall off [...]” (*OED*). These entries demonstrate that the English perceptions fall under the ‘location-dual’ system. In contrast, ‘age’ – referring to entries in the following section – is an independent traveller in Chinese and the destination or direction is not implied for the moment.

4.8.2 Chinese examples

(16) CN

a)	<i>lao mai</i>	old walk/step	‘doddering’ (zdic.net)
b)	<i>lao jiang hu</i>	old river lake	‘experienced by being there long’ (zdic.net),
c)	<i>fan lao huan tong</i>	return old come child	‘old age goes away and youth comes back’ (hydc.com)
d)	<i>lao zhi jiang zhi</i>	old about to arrive	‘old age is about to arrive’ (hydc.com)
e)	<i>huan nian que lao</i>	return year get rid of old	‘old age goes away/be young again’ (hydc.com)

Example (16a) depicts walking manners in old age. (16b) utilises the referential meaning of *jianghu*, which is “all corners of the country” (zdic.net), indicating well-travelled, Examples (16c), (16d) and (16e) imply that ‘age’ is not attached to the body because old age as the subject of a sentence moves independently. Idioms in example (16) contain little information about the destination. Meanwhile, there is a salient desire for youth, and they express the idea that old age can go away, and youth can come back. Hence obviously ‘age’ is in the motion. Notice that we see ‘old age’ in these Chinese expressions behave differently in comparison to examples in section 4.7 that causes an ageing body to

disintegrate, as with *crumbling*, *disintegrated* and *broken-down*. Such a comparison directs us to the point that when we see AGEING is understood as MOTION, we have to bear in mind that we should avoid rush into a conclusion that the ageing process is understood in the same way in English and Chinese.

In terms of the AGEING IS A JOURNEY metaphor, the orientation of the JOURNEY – possibly affected by the social values of getting old and being old – is shown on the English side, i.e., a downward movement.

- a. AGE IS A FORCE.
- b. AGEING IS MOTION OF THE BODY.
- c. CHANGE OF AGE IS CHANGE OF LOCATION.
- d. OLD AGE IS THE DOWNSIDE OF THE PATH.
- e. THE AGEING PERSON IS THE TRAVELLER.

In contrast, mappings in Chinese are suggested as:

- f. AGE IS AN ENTITY INDEPENDENT FROM THE BODY.
- g. AGEING IS MOTION OF THE ENTITY AS WELL AS THE PERSON.
- h. CHANGE OF AGE IS THE MOVEMENT OF THE ENTITY.

The fundamental difference from the English conceptualisation seems to be that AGEING can be an external process by employing the OBJECT schema in Chinese. Consequently, the subjective experience of ageing is less in the hands of the strong force of 'age' than that in English. Hopefully, conceptual metaphors in more recent data will shed light on this.

4.9 FUNCTION FOR PERSON metonymy

In this section, we have a brief discussion of two idioms in Chinese and we consider that they are instances of metonymies.

(17) CN

- a) *bao dao bu lao* good sword not old ‘a good sword never gets dull’,
- b) *jian lao wu mang, ren lao wu gang* blade/sword old no sharpness, person old no firmness ‘one gets old and loses his skills’

Example (16a) emphasizes that even when one gets old, the capacity or function remains (XDHYCD 2002:44). The conceptual links are like this. *Dao* ‘sword’ stands for the function of a sword, and by extension the function of a sword stands for the person that uses the sword. The function of a sword is motivated by the term *dao* ‘sword’ and using it motivates the person. It is similar to the EYE FOR FUNCTION OF THE EYES case (Barcelona 2003:249), as in *John has good eyes*. In (17b), the opposite the function of a sword – dullness or bluntness of a blade/sword – is also mentioned using the same conceptual link.

In summary, clearly and not surprisingly, sword as a tool or even a weapon is a reference point of metonymy for a person. It is important to notice that the evaluation about the person’s capability is contextual given that examples in (17) associate with two very different status of a sword/blade. Therefore, without context, we could go only so far to describe the two idioms as metonymies for understanding the status of people in their old age.

5.0 Conclusion

This chapter tries to describe lexical entries and old-related idioms that have metaphoric meanings. We have presented over 50 fixed phrases and idioms from two languages for an initial understanding of 'old' in general. Based on these entries, we postulate these metaphors:

- a) OLD PEOPLE ARE AGED ANIMALS
- b) OLD PEOPLE ARE AGED BODY PART/ATTRIBUTE
- c) PEOPLE ARE PLANTS
- d) AGEING IS A JOURNEY
- e) AGEING IS MOTION.

a-e) are shared in both languages but e) is only seen in English.

In analysing a), we try to see if Hsieh's (2006) model of analysing the conceptual relationships between humans and animals (see Figure 1) emphasising appearance, human-animal relationship, habit/behaviour could apply in conceptualising the target concept. From this group, we have examples in Chinese suggest a positive or neutral view of 'old', see the WARHORSE concept in section 4.4.4 (e.g., *lao ma shi* tu old horse know way, 'old and experienced'), whereas the English examples show a relatively degrading view (e.g., *old trot*).

Group b) are metonymies which show more similarity in English and Chinese, i.e., using ageing signs in the body to understand getting old, except that old hearted is only in English and Chinese idioms about the ageing body show a sense of self-effacing use of the examples (e.g., *laoshen*, old body 'I [myself]'). As for the similarities, indeed, ageing characteristics such as grey hair, aged face, and even bone are employed on both sides to talk about older adults. For instance, *lao cang* old grey 'old hoary' in Chinese and *oldgrey* in English. Yet, we have discovered subtle differences in using certain body parts.

Notice that *old heart* is an idiom in English but not in Chinese. *Old head* in English denotes experience but familiarity in Chinese, especially the latter is pragmatics oriented. That is, the term *lao tou* PRT old head PRT ‘old man or old person’ often occurs in communicative settings as a form of addressing among people close-by or a self-effacing term. These differences possibly reflect how HEAD and HEART are perceived. HEAD in English is exchangeable with BRAIN (Musolff 2021:69), and the HEAD-HEART pair often metonymically represents the elements of REASON and EMOTION (Musolff 2021:81). Following this point, *old heart* entails emotional ageing experience in English while *old head* acknowledges experience. Yet, the semantic meaning of *old* in *old head* has faded because it does not necessarily mean an older person.

Moreover, a marked feature is seen in the gendered discourse among the *face*-related entries, specifically in Chinese. There are two occurrences use of *se* colour ‘countenance’ and *yan* colour ‘countenance’ (see example [11e]) to talk about women lose their charm with age. Even though there are shared views of the ageing signs, the differences still suggest that the two cultures use the same metonymy BODY PARTS/ATTRIBUTES FOR PERSON differently.

Cultural specifics continue to show in metaphors PEOPLE ARE PLANTS, AGEING IS MOTION and AGEING IS A JOURNEY. In general, we see optimism with ageing in the Chinese entries but not in the English entries. Once again, we strengthen that the idiomatic expressions are isolated examples. The assumptions in our descriptions are only interpretations of the transformation from semantics to perceptions out of real use. In the conclusion of this

thesis (10.1.1), we compare these observations with the results from our media discourses for a fuller view of prevalent conceptions. In the following chapter, we resume our corpus approach beginning with a trial run of the data sampling.

Chapter 5 Data sampling

5.1 Introduction

This chapter seeks to gather initial data samples on track to building up full corpora that will tackle the research questions laid out in Chapter 3. To create the media corpora, we have gone through a pilot study and adjustments are then made. These steps help to confirm the effectiveness of search terms. The pilot study is a data sampling trial run, using target domain keywords for the searching - including *age* and *old*. This method of tagging vocabulary associated with the target concepts in the interface with source concepts has been tested by a number of scholars (Musolff 2004; Stefanowitsch 2004; Tissari 2003) and has been proved to be successful.

After the preliminary study of the pilot data, we realized that the search terms for our data collection needed to be refined after we noticed that the repetition of one token became very high in the Chinese sample. For instance, *nianji* 'age' as a search term appeared frequently in the token *nianji da*- age big 'old' with 77 frequencies out of just 115 instances in total from one newspaper. Meanwhile, we found a large number of conventional metaphors (e.g., AGE AS AN OBJECT/LOCATION) from the data but very few complex metaphors. However, this step is necessary because:

[...] in order to be able to arrive at the metaphors, metonymies and inherent concepts, and, eventually the prototypical cognitive models [of emotions], one needs to study the conventionalised linguistic expressions that are related to a given notion. (Kövecses 1991:30)

In addition, searching *old* in English did not yield promising data for conceptual elements associated with *old age*. Thus, the modified method of data collecting is to look for lexical items that may correspond to complex metaphors. We then have broadened the potential collocations from a grammatical pattern perspective. This approach also drew on Musolff's (2004:11) work on search of metaphors that reflect attitudinal differences toward European integration between Britain and Germany. The process is illustrated below.

5.1 Data sampling

For the English corpus, I selected *The Times* (National) and *The Evening Standard* (London). To achieve balanced corpora for a trial run, I focused on two newspapers in Chinese, one national and one regional. The Chinese corpus comprised *People's Daily* (National) and *Wenhui Newspaper* (Shanghai). Below is a description of the samples from our test run of data collection.

5.1.1 The English sample

The data was from *The Times* (National) and *The Evening Standard* (London) within the timespan between February 2019 and February 2020. The search used the key word *age* together with the pronoun *I*. The reason of adding the pronoun *I* was to see if we could detect perceptions of 'age' from a first person's perspective. The theoretical purpose was to check whether there were semantic patterns with *age* and *old* for the final data collecting in order to find a relatively big pool of metaphors without ending up with an overwhelming number of texts. The first 1000 citations were downloaded, among which 90% of citations were with *The Times* and 10% were from *The Evening Standard* (London). Also, we tried to

search *old* together with the pronoun *I*. Of the first 1000 citations just under 80% of the citations were from *The Times* and just over 20% were from *The Evening Standard*. We then investigated the first 200 citations carefully.

5.1.2 The Chinese sample

The Chinese data appears slightly different regarding the search terms and the timespan. For instance, the Chinese data covers a broad spectrum ranging from 1950s to 2017. To show the differences among the search terms in the two languages, see the table below.

Table 1 Search terms in English and Chinese for a trial data collecting

English	Chinese
<i>age</i> and <i>I</i>	a. <i>nianji</i> 'age' b. <i>suishu</i> 'age'
<i>old</i> and <i>I</i>	c. <i>lao</i> and <i>wo</i> 'old and I'

As seen in Table 1, *age* in Chinese is chosen to be expressed by two terms lexical items (a. and b.) here. We have discussed our choices in Chapter 3 section 3.8.4. In addition, the initial search of Chinese term a. *nianji* 'age' on its own did not produce an unmanageable number of results. Therefore, the pronoun *I* was left out in the search term for *age* in Chinese and proceeded to use just *nianji* 'age'.

However, for *lao* 'old', unlike *nianji* 'age', including the pronoun *I* produced more precise data. Therefore, we kept the term *lao AND wo* 'old AND I' for the corpus. In so doing, the

most frequent collocates were found to be mostly in the pattern of *surname AND lao 'old'* as a respectful address to an old person. In total, we found 91 metaphorical expressions in this round detailed in section 5.3.

5.2 Procedure of data collection in English

As mentioned in section 5.1.2, the majority of the sample data were from the *The Times* and a minority from *The Evening Standard*. For the search term *age* and *I* — the pronoun *I* can be anywhere in the article — we examined the first 100 citations concordances, of which 34 were identified as metaphorical expressions, applying the MIPVU (Steen et al. 2010). Moreover, among those linguistic metaphors, 30 come under the source concept of LOCATION. In other words, LOCATION seems to be the most frequently used source concept.

The LOCATION concept, which is derived from the cognitive grammar point of view (Langacker 2008), comprises prepositional phrases: *at the age of*, *at an age of*, *at age seven*, *at a young age*, *from the age of*, *up to the age of*, *under-aged*, *at this age*, *hit the retirement age*, *aged over*. For instance, the prepositional phrase *from... to...* “describe a series of locations amounting to a path” (Langacker 2008:177). All these are what Maslen and Cameron (2010:4) describe as “most conventionalised” metaphors that one would not notice any incongruity without looking for them. Yet, they serve as a starting point of cultural interpretations of the target concept. Chapter 7 is devoted to such conventional metaphors.

The CONTAINER concept is also shown. For instance, preposition *in* as with *in old age* indicates that ‘old age’ is a container that has interior and exterior areas, just as *he has a pain in his shoulder*, which is an example that L&J (2003:50) give for the conceptual metaphor EMOTIONS ARE PHYSICAL ENTITIES IN A BODY PART (see section 2.4.3). To verify this initial impression, I examined another 100 citations. It is worth mentioning that 47 rows of the results were found duplicated which left just over 50 citations for a further analysis, of which 20 linguistic metaphors were identified seen below:

Table 2 Metaphor instances out of 100 citations in English

Citations	Source concept	Frequency
<i>at ...age (of)</i>	LOCATION	9
<i>middle-aged</i>	LOCATION	2
<i>aged over</i>	LOCATION	1
<i>before the age of</i>	LOCATION	1
<i>under-age</i>	LOCATION	1
<i>from ...age</i>	PATH	1
<i>by the age of</i>	PATH	1
<i>aged over</i>	LOCATION	1
<i>in middle age</i>	CONTAINER	1
<i>showing his age</i>	A THING	1
<i>after the age of</i>	LOCATION	1
		Total :20

Table 2 shows that the dominant source concept seems to be LOCATION. Verbs preceding ‘age’ in which the latter is the object are listed as: *raise the retirement age*, *increase the pension age*, *surrounding the age of criminal responsibilities*. These expressions are not our focus because they denote age divisions for policy making instead of individual ageing

experiences. In terms of prepositional phrases, their prepositions are most frequently paired up with age: *at, of, in, from, to, by, under, with, over*, etc., which produce the most metaphorical candidates. For instance, *at* is believed to express the co-location between two entities with location being conceptualized as a directionless point (Evans 2010:215, Herskovits 1985, Leech 1970, Tyler and Evans 2003). Such prepositional phrases with *age* should be a focus as a foundation of our analysis to understand the conventional perceptions of the concept 'age'.

Unlike the Chinese data whose *age*-based citations reveal the concept of 'old' by adding spatial dimensions of *big* or *up* to the concept of 'age' being an OBJECT, the *age*-related terms in English have yet to show how 'old' is conceptualized. Therefore, we need a different set of data about 'old age'. Thus, the same process of identifying metaphorical expressions as for *age* was applied to *old*. Among the first 200 citations, 31 were duplicates and were discarded and 136 were literal, which left us 31 citations as potential metaphors. This operation indicated that going through concordances of *old* by searching *old* and *I* is not the best way to locate metaphors. Focusing on certain collocates is more productive. Therefore, also borrowing the findings from the heuristic analysis of idiomatic phrases from the dictionaries in Chapter 4, we tried the pattern of *old* and noun (e.g., *old trot*) as the candidate collocate for a round of search. It is worth mentioning that in the search – from which the first 1000 results were generated – there are 1242 collocates in the pattern of *old* and *noun*. This means that potentially there is a good size of data available by searching *old AND noun* on *Lexisnexis*.

5.3 Procedure of data collecting in Chinese

The output of the previous search seems to suggest that in Chinese that we should prioritize the concept of ‘age’ in order for the search to be more profitable. Table 3 below presents the search results.

Table 3 Citations in Chinese

Search term	<i>People's Daily</i>	<i>Wenhui Newspaper</i>	Total
<i>nianji</i> ‘age’	2706	1803	4509
<i>suishu</i> ‘age’	138	112	250

We searched *nianji* in the *Wenhui Newspaper*, which produced 1803 citations. With *People's Daily*, using the same search terms generated 2706 citations. For example, *shang le nian ji* up-PRT, age ‘getting older’ , and *nianji da/xiao*, age big/small, ‘old/young’. For lemma *suishui* ‘age’, the results were fewer, with 112 from *Wenhui Newspaper* and 138 from *People's Daily*. Besides, the collocation *suishu da*, age big ‘old’, emerged frequently. Therefore, *suishui* ‘age’ as a synonym to *nianji* ‘age’ seems to be used less often than the latter. In the meantime, the results of *suishui* ‘age’ did not generate more interesting or new metaphoric expressions. There is little value of using it as a search term. Subsequently, we analysed the first 200 citations from each paper (due to the design of the platform, the data was compiled separately) to identify source domains. The results are presented below.

Table 4 Metaphor instances out of 200 citations in Chinese (*Wenhui Newspaper*)

Collocates of <i>nianji</i>	Source concept	frequency
<i>nianji-da</i> age big, 'old/older'	OBJECT	43
<i>Xiaoxiao nianji</i> , small small age, 'young'	OBJECT	16
<i>Nianji xiao</i> age small '(young'	OBJECT	10
<i>Nianji qingqing</i> age light light, 'young'	OBJECT	5
<i>Nianji qing</i> age light 'young'	OBJECT	5
<i>zhe ba nianji</i> this handful age 'old'	OBJECT	5
<i>shang nianji</i> up/above age 'old/older' ¹⁸	OBJECT	4
<i>Nianji buxiao</i> age not small, 'not young'	OBJECT	3
		Total:91

In a similar way, the results from the *People's Daily* are given below.

¹⁸ This is an example that in Chinese the adjective *shang* 'up' functions as a verb which means *nianji* 'age' should be treated as the subject. Hence age is perceived as an object that rises. This is laid out in section 3.8.4.

Table 5 Metaphor instances out of 200 citations in Chinese (*People's Daily*)

Collocates of <i>nianji</i>	Source concept	frequency
<i>Nianji da</i> age big 'old'	OBJECT	77
<i>Nianji xiao</i> age small 'young'	OBJECT	17
<i>Yi ba nianji</i> a handful age, 'old'	OBJECT	10
<i>Dao le [...]</i> <i>nianji</i> arrived at [years of] age, 'get to the age of'	LOCATION	4
<i>Shang nianji</i> up age, 'old/older'	OBJECT	1
<i>Nianji qing</i> age light 'young'	OBJECT	6
		Total:115

The analysis of the collocations of both keywords finds that 'age' is mainly understood as an OBJECT or LOCATION. The candidate conceptual metaphor is AGE IS AN OBJECT or AGE IS A LOCATION ON AN AGEING PATH. By saying 'age' is conceptualised as an OBJECT, we mean that the concept is viewed as a thing that can be seen and touched, and that can move freely. Generally speaking, to express the equivalent meaning of 'aged' or 'old' in Chinese, the linguistic expressions are found to be *age is big* (*nianji da*, age big, 'older') or *age has gone up* (*shang le nianji*, up PRT age, 'old').

It has been claimed that "Chinese language users have a tendency to think of the world in terms of entities and substances that have spatial properties" (Wang 2019:180). Through an investigation of a common grammatical pattern *Adj+V* found in Chinese, Wang further supports the idea that actions and activities are understood as entities or substances (ibid). Coinciding with these claims, 'ageing' does seem to be conceptualized as an entity with spatial properties, i.e., age bigger/up-PRT.

‘Age’ is also thought of as a LOCATION. For example, the citation *dao le zhe-ge nianji*, arrive PRT this age, ‘got to such an age’, uses the source concept of LOCATION to understand the target concept of ‘age’. Also from this occurrence, the *verb AND age* pattern appears to be important because it provides a new source concept different from OBJECT. Therefore, this semantic pattern can potentially reveal more source concepts, depending on what other verbs can proceed *nianji* ‘age’.

5.4 Keywords amended and trial run

Having discussed the outcomes of the data sampling, subsequently, we will use both *age* and *old* to retrieve data. We specifically look for texts that mention the two words – *age* and *old* – in one paragraph, which ensures that the topic of the paragraph is about ageing. To achieve this, on Nexis 1, the criteria of *age* and *old* appearing within one paragraph is technically a command, and this command is realized on *LexisNexis* in the form of *age W/P old*. When the data is gathered, the term *old age* – which meets the aforementioned criteria that *age* and *old* appear within one paragraph – will be paid special attention. This way, we can guarantee that collocations with both *age* and *old* will have effective potential metaphors that will not be excluded.

In order to test if the above search terms can work practically, we performed a brief test run on the *LexisNexis* platform. To avoid overlapping results with our final Nexis1 corpus, we chose a more recent timespan, which was set as “previous two years” by the search date (14/05/2020). We gained 12,056 results in from two newspapers *The Times* and *The Evening Standard* (London). We used the analysis Sketch Engine (Kilgarrieff, et al. 2014) analysed the

first 100 results. With the function of “Word Sketch” – *Sketch Engine* gave a one-page summary of grammatical behaviours of one term – we found 330 occurrences of *age* as a noun and 422 occurrences of *old* as an adjective.

We then made a close examination of the collocations. With Word Sketch, not only can we view the frequencies of the collocations, but also their typicality score (TS). For instance, with the collocation of *old age*, for ‘old’, the TS is 12.79, as opposed to a TS of 8 for *old woman*. The higher the score is, the stronger the collocation is. To put it another way, *old age*, with a higher TS score, tends to be a stronger collocation than *old woman*. Also, *old age* has the highest frequency - 103 - among all the collocations. Out of the 103 concordances, at least 12 were deemed to be potential metaphorical expressions (see Table 6 below), which were expected to be categorised as conceptual metaphors.

Table 6. Metaphor candidates for *old age* in the test run

Grammatical categories	Examples
Prepositional phrases	<i>a contraption that transports you into old age</i> <i>the threshold for older age</i> <i>the threshold of old age</i> <i>as one long slippery slope, ending in the crash of old age</i> <i>that can flower in old age</i> <i>the journey into old age</i> <i>at the ripe old age of 68</i> <i>in the winter of old age</i>
verb Be with <i>old age</i> as subject	<i>old age is all the rage</i> <i>old age is just plain tough</i>
verbs with <i>old age</i> as subject	<i>old age can liberate us</i>
verbs with <i>age</i> as object	<i>she vowed to fend off age...</i>

Table 6 shows that prepositional phrases (e.g., *into old age*) produce by far the most metaphor candidates, which is in line with the method we set up. There are four prepositions that seem to form strong collocations with *age*; these are *of* (occurred 10 times, e.g., *the wisdom of age*), *at* (occurred 15 times, e.g., *at the age of*), *in* (occurred 19 times, e.g., *in old age*) and *with* (occurred eight times, e.g., [...] *decline in a linear fashion with age*). This round of search indicates that we should prioritize the prepositional phrase category as it produces by far the most metaphorical expressions. The remainder of the categories are less as productive but are useful to enlarge the database and provide a reference for deciding Chinese search patterns (see 6.3 in Chapter 6).

In theory, metaphorical expressions can emerge from collocations using a head word, either *age* or *old*. Practically, when *age* is the search lemma on Work Sketch, the strong collocation *old age* shows the same frequency (occurring 103 times) as the result for the single lemma *old*. It would be repetitive to go through the occurrences of *old age* again for metaphors. The implication is that the focus of our analysis are the results for *age* and results for *old*.

5.5 Conclusion

We have gone through a brief search for building up our corpora by testing out the lemmas of *age*, and *old*. We found that of the different terms in Chinese to mean the equivalent of English *age*, *nianji* was the most frequently used one, with which we can derive the meaning of *old*. This connection – *old* can be expressed by *age* through word formation – in English was less strongly evidenced in the search results. We propose that the search words should include both *age* and *old*, just as what we have done in gathering dictionary entries in order to refine our data collecting. One solution is to expect both *age* and *old* appear in the article, but they do not need to be in one phrase or sentence. Rather, they can be within one paragraph to make sure the focus of the text is surrounding ‘ageing’.

From the data sampling, we have learned that the English conventional metaphors were mainly abstracted from prepositional phrases. Given that using *nianji*, ‘age’ alone produced metaphorical expressions in a highly uniformed way (e.g., the source domain OBJECT is predominant), therefore, instead of broadening the search scale as is done in English, we

can narrow down the search terms in Chinese to *age*-related prepositional phrases or verb phrases. The next chapter shows a detailed account of the final search patterns and results.

Chapter 6 The corpora and a guide to the data

6.1 Introduction

Following the test run in Chapter 5, we obtained refined data collections. To include both key words *age* and *old* in English, we used “age W/P old”, which means the pattern contains the keywords *age* and *old* within one paragraph. This way, we created our English media corpus, which was labelled as Nexis 1. Accordingly, we gathered our Chinese data in the corpus of BCC1. This chapter consists of a description of the corpora and a guide to the data presentation.

It is worth mentioning that the number of words that each corpus contains is just a relative indicator of the data size. This is because repeated citations exist in both the Chinese and the English corpora. As mentioned in Chapter 2, one English word can correspond to one or more Chinese characters, which partly results in an imbalance of the corpora sizes. We have chosen to keep the corpora as they were. After all, our aim is to present a comprehensive qualitative analysis instead of a quantitative one.

6.2 Description of the English corpus Nexis1

Data in Nexis1 were taken from four newspapers (see Table 1 below), covering the timespan between May 2013 and May 2015, amounting to 296,562 words. The texts are *age* and *old* *age*-related extracts.

Table 1 Nexis1 Structure (1/5/2013 -1/5/2015)

Newspapers	Texts	Words
<i>The Times (London)</i>	6357	87712
<i>The Evening Standard (London)</i>	1632	21200
<i>The Daily Mail and Mail on Sunday</i>	4215	61804
<i>The Guardian</i>	7311	125846
Total	19515	296562

In Table 1, “texts” are paragraphs that contain both *age* and *old*. In other words, we do not extract the whole articles but only the relevant paragraphs. A majority of the texts come from the *The Guardian* and *The Times (London)*; this can be a helpful indicator for future data gathering as to which media outlet can be most useful for producing instances. On the Chinese side, we obtained a database of comparable size, as seen in the next section. Both corpora are under 300,000 words and the numbers of metaphorical expressions for *old age* are very close, with 657 in English and 402 in Chinese.

6.3 Description of the Chinese data in corpus BCC1

BCC stands for Beijing Language and Culture University Centre and our corpus BCC1 is made of 214,967 words. Part of the data are taken from *Weibo* (a major Chinese social media platform functioning as the equivalent of Facebook and Twitter combined) and covers the period from 2013 to 2015; the rest come from newspapers, specifically two editions of the *People’s Daily* – home and overseas editions – spanning the period from 1945 to 2015. All the Chinese data are sourced through the BCC platform.

For the sake of a clean view of the results, we present the data for ‘age’ and ‘old age’ separately in Chinese. Each concept involves different search terms, due to the refinements that were made in the pilot study (see Chapter 5). In total, we identified 375 metaphorical expressions for ‘age’ and 101 for ‘old age’ (see Table 2 and Table 3).

Table 2 BCC 1 *Nianji* ‘age’

	MEs	Citations	Words
<i>v*de nianji</i> verb ... DE age ‘verb [...] age that’	88	186	14883
<i>nianji de</i> age DE ‘age of’	149	297	20998
<i>de nianling-</i> DE age ‘age of/that’	138	1000	54492
Total	375	1483	90373

Table 3 BCC1 *laonian* ‘old age’

	MEs	Citations	Words
<i>lao nian de</i> old age DE ‘of old’	90	723	44338
<i>de laonian</i> DE old age ‘old age of/old age that’	11	1456	80256
	101	2179	124594

Search terms in Tables 2 and 3 all contain the *DE*, ‘of’ construction, which is a functional construction. *De* can “occur between two phrases and mark the phrase containing the two phrases as a nominal” (Zhang 1999). The string *de laonian/nianji/nianling/laonian* basically

can follow either a verb, and adjective or a noun phrase, making the string vital for conceptualizing ‘age’ or ‘old age’ because its flexibility in allowing descriptive terms around ‘age’ and ‘old age’ in Chinese. So far, we have obtained relatively comparable corpora sizes for both the English and Chinese data.

6.4 Data presentation

Our data are presented in tables, with information about sources of the data, the number of words and source domains. Applying MIPVU (Steen et al. 2010), we first locate metaphor candidates, then we categorise instances into source domains according to their semantic connects. Concepts like ‘age’ and ‘old age’ are in single quotations. Linguistic metaphors or lexical manifestations of conceptual metaphors are in italics. Take, for example, the token *descend into old age* - this is filed under the source domain of JOURNEY with the target ‘old age’ being conceptualised as a LOCATION on the downside of the ageing slope. In presenting the instances from the media corpora, we present the metaphor token with texts on both sides. To give an example:

- (1) “[...] generally far more mature than men *from an early age*, run out of time physically [...]”.

We consider the instantiation above in italics to have a metaphorical sense indicated by the preposition *from* in terms of the spatial meaning that *from* evokes, according to cognitive semantics, in which from can frame a mental spatial configuration as in “gestation period varies greatly *from* one species to the next” (Langacker 2008:82). Thus, different ages signal difference spatial positions.

The Chinese linguistic metaphors are displayed in the pattern of toneless Chinese pinyin in italics, followed by word for word translation and followed by an idiomatic translation in inverted commas. For instance, *mai ru laonian de menkan*, step enter old age DE doorstep, ‘step into the doorstep of old age’.

In our media corpus in English, the token *ripe old age* is deemed to be a fixed phrase (which also appears in section 4.6 on dictionary entries) or an idiom. And it is the same case for *take its toll*, as in “old age was *taking its toll* on his body”. These two linguistic metaphor candidates are under the source domains of PLANT (suggested by *ripe* and is discussed in Chapter 8 section 8.2.7) and VIOLENCE/OPPONENT (*taking its toll* suggests that old age is perceived as a possessor of frailties and for a detailed analysis see Chapter 8 section 8.2.5).

With the Chinese media data, one distinct feature is the *DE* ‘of’ construction (mentioned in 6.3) which serves as a construction similar to the English prepositional phrases, e.g., *at the age of*. Here is a quick look at the classification of the conceptual elements involving the construction. When *DE* follows a verb phrase and precedes *age* or *old age*, the conceptual element associated with the potential source domain draws on the verb. To give an example:

(2)

ke ta ye dao le feng yu piao yao de nianji

but he also arrive PRT wind rain windy sway DE age

‘but he has also reached an old age’

So, example (2) is grouped with the LOCATION domain identified through the verb *dao le*, arrive PRT, ‘arrived’. The remaining information – the elements rainy and windy weather – describes a grim picture of age indicating the sense of no longer being young. Thus, it also appears to be metaphorically rich and will also be taken into the analysis.

When *DE* goes after *age* or *old age*, the conceptual element in consideration would normally be before the term of *age* or *old age*, which functions as the attributions of *age* and *old age*. Below is an example:

(3)

shang le sishi sui nianji de ren [...]

Up PRT forty year age DE people

‘People over forty years old’

Example (3) is filed under the source domain of JOURNEY, because *shang le*, up PRT, ‘gone up’, is the conceptual element in the mapping, in which the adjective *shang* ‘up’ functions as a verb, which is another distinct feature in Chinese (Chao 1976:359), i.e., the adjective *shang* ‘up’ is used as a verb phrase, meaning ‘to go up’, and in particular in (3) the particle *le* is a marker of past tense.

6.5 Metaphorical examples of ‘old age’ from BCC1 and Nexis1

In Chapter 5, we conducted an initial discussion regarding the conceptualisation of ‘age’, with OBJECT being a major source concept in Chinese and LOCATION in English. Before our detailed analysis in Chapter 7, we present in the current section a glance of the perceptions of ‘old age’ in Table 4 below, but for a comprehensive understanding of the ‘old age’-relevant metaphors we turn to Chapter 8.

Table 4. Example of the source concepts for the conceptualisations of ‘old age’ in Nexis1 and BCC1.

Source domains	MEs in English	MEs in Chinese
VIOLENCE/OPPONENT	<i>launched a passionate defence of old age surrender to old age succumbs to old age</i>	N/A
JOURNEY - LOCATION	<i>descend into an infirm old age; tip into old age; lapsed into comfortable old age</i>	<i>jinru</i> enter-in ‘enter’ <i>zouxiong</i> walk towards ‘walk towards’ <i>mairu</i> stride in ‘stride to’ <i>buru</i> step in ‘step in’
JOURNEY-TRAVELLER	N/A	<i>Zhong jiang daolai</i> DE <i>laonian</i> finally will arrive-come DE old age ‘old age will eventually arrive’

In Table 4, we can see the VIOLENCE/OPPONENT source domain displays in English but not in the Chinese. In the JOURNEY source domain, we have two sub-concepts involved, LOCATION and TRAVELLER which both appear in Chinese whereas the TRAVELLER sub-concept does not seem to turn up in the English data. The comparison of these perceptions is covered in Chapter 9.

In Nexis1, there are roughly 324 prepositional phrases with *old age*, of which 40 tokens are classified as complex metaphors and are analysed in Chapter 8.

The current step is an attempt to shift the data collecting from purely lemma-based search of target domain tokens (i.e., by tagging *age* or *old*) to a pattern-based search (i.e., when *age* and *old* appear within a paragraph in English), although the manual search in Chinese is slightly different, mainly at lexical level. As Deignan (1997:189) puts it, “if only the base form

is studied, some metaphorical uses may be missed”, also based on the data sampling and trial run in Chapter 5, it is safe to say that the shift of the data collecting methods seems to augment the data in seeking out metaphoric usage at the contextual level. This increase in data will facilitate the investigation into the conceptual level and discussion on dominant metaphors in each language.

6.6 The data in comparison

With the data consolidated, here we demonstrate the results in Table 5.

Table 5 Frequency of MEs in the Corpora

Concepts	Frequency of MEs in English Nexis1	Frequency of MEs in Chinese BCC1
'age'	591	321
'old age'	66	82
Total	657	402

For the concept of 'age', the number of MEs in Nexis1 is nearly twice their number in BCC1. However, this is not a problem in the analysis because the vast majority of the MEs in Nexis1 belong to one source domain, which is LOCATION identified by prepositional phrases (e.g., *from an earlier age*). The rest of the MEs are spread out in other source domains. In other words, the concentration of the MEs does not affect the qualitative analysis. More MEs do not mean more source domains, granting that the investigation into the source domains for 'age' will still be valid. The value of the distribution lies in the proof of prevalence patterns in our daily communication, in that such conventional ways of perceiving one thing (ageing) in terms of others (e.g., LOCATION and PATH) can go unnoticed at all.

After the data was assembled in excel sheets (see section 3.6), source domain to each ME was assigned. This again was done by hand and was assisted by *Sketch Engine* (Kilgariff, et al. 2014). The same procedures were administered in Chinese, except that we did not use *Sketch Engine* on the BCC platform. Instead, we read through the citations on BCC and copied the lines with MEs to the excel sheets.

Table 6 and 7 below present an initial overview of the source domains in view of the two languages. For the concept of ‘age’, the most frequently used source concept seems to be LOCATION followed by PATH, OBJECT, MOVEMENT-ORIENTATION and GOAL (notice GOAL is not manifested in Chinese). In terms of the concept of ‘old age’, there is a more diverse range of source domains in English than in Chinese.

Table 6 The source domains that are found to understand the concept of ‘age’ in English and Chinese

Source domain	Frequency in English	Frequency in Chinese
LOCATION	435	113
PATH	122	0
OBJECT	27	173
MOVEMENT-ORIENTATION	2	32
GOAL	5	0
Total	591	329

All the source domains shown in Table 6 can in theory come under the JOURNEY domain.

Yet, this does not mean, the conceptualisations of ‘age’ in English and Chinese are the same.

The MEs hierarchy in Chinese descends in this order: OBJECT, LOCATION,

VERTICALITY/ORIENTATION, CONTAINER and PLANT (see, Table 3 in 7.3). The commonalities

and differences are analysed in Chapter 7.

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Table 7 The source domains that are found to understand ‘old age’ in English and Chinese

Source domain	Frequency in English	Frequency in Chinese
JOURNEY	16	19
VIOLENCE/OPPONENT	13	0
CONTAINER	10	52
FRUIT	5	0
ILLNESS/DISEASE	4	0
A SCARY, EVIL, DANDERIOUS THING	5	0
A LIVING THING	5	6
Total	66	77

Table 7 above shows the distribution of the source domains for ‘old age’ in two languages. In comparison to Table 6, frequencies of the source domains for ‘old age’ are noticeably fewer as fewer MEs were found. Fundamental changes take place in the conventionality of the MEs. Compare *at the age of* (ME for ‘age’) and *at the grand old age of* (ME for ‘old age’), it becomes easier to notice the incongruity between *grand* and *old age* than that between *at* and *age*. Meanwhile, complex mappings (e.g., OLD AGE IS AN OPPONENT in the VIOLENCE domain) appear for the target ‘old age’, which to a certain degree makes ‘old age’ a more complex concept to explore.

In summary, this chapter has explained the procedures that we carried out to establish the corpora comprising the information about the search terms, media outlets and the sizes of the corpora, especially how we used the search terms and how the metaphorical expressions were organized. We have also laid out the general rules of interpreting the data. The analysis in the following two chapters (Chapter 7 and 8) goes from ‘age’ to ‘old age’ followed by a discussion of the similarities and disparities in Chapter 9.

Chapter 7 Conceptualisations of 'age' in English and Chinese

7.1 Introduction

With the media corpora being compiled, our exploration of the target concept of ageing begins, comprising two crucial concepts: 'age' and 'old age'. The aim of this chapter is to explain the commonality and cultural specificity of the metaphors surrounding the bodily experience of ageing, specifically of 'age'. We argue that in both languages, the dominant metaphor is AGEING AS A JOURNEY. However, the specific ways in which the journey is conceptualized are distinct. In English, the agent, i.e., traveller, of the journey is the ageing party, whereas in Chinese the concept of 'age', too, – as the traveller – takes the journey. Hence, directions of the path vary from English to Chinese which essentially implies that the paths are different. We argue that the ageing path in English is an arc and old age is on the downward side. Whereas the Chinese ageing path is an upward one without an end goal. To elaborate, the analysis in the current chapter goes through these steps: Firstly, we present the data for each specific domains, drawing on which conceptual metaphors are abstracted. Secondly, we discuss possible schemas that pinpoint the associated conceptual metaphors as a comparison, which touches on cultural models for conceptualizing 'age'. Thirdly, we end with a discussion on the possible cultural bases for shaping the conceptual metaphors.

7.2 Conceptualisation of 'age' in English

The English data are age-related prepositional expressions retrieved from the corpus Nexis1. The prepositions' spatial senses are the conceptual foundation from which the metaphors are abstracted. In claiming that they have metaphorical senses, we build on cognitive semantics. For instance, *at* is believed to indicate a co-location relationship between two entities with location being conceptualised as a directionless point (Evans 2010:215, Herskovits 1985, Tyler and Evans 2003). Thus, the lexical unit *at the age of 62* concerns the relationship between a person and a location, but it does not reveal the direction of either of the elements involved. Thus, in the current project, phrases with *at* and *age*, are put in the category of LOCATION domain. That is, the source concept for the target concept 'age' is LOCATION, and so are the prepositions *over*, *under*, *below* and *above*. They profile different spatial relationships between a person and their 'age' in the construction PREP + *age (of)*. Overall, we have examined 332 *at* related phrases, 72 for *over*, 27 for *under*, two *above*, and two for *below* (See Table 1 below).

Table 1 Lexical items for 'age' in English – the LOCATION source concept

Preposition	Frequency	Example
<i>At</i>	332	<i>At the age of 62</i>
<i>Over</i>	72	<i>Over the age of 50</i>
<i>Under</i>	27	<i>Under the age of 40</i>
<i>Above</i>	2	<i>Above the retirement age</i>
<i>Below</i>	2	<i>below the official age for receiving a full old-age pension</i>

Another source concept that we have identified is PATH, drawing on the study of prepositions including *by*, *from*, *between*, *beyond*, and one phrase *get to* (See Table 2).

Table 2 Lexical items for ‘age’ in English – the PATH source concept

Preposition	Frequency	Example
<i>By</i>	45	<i>by the age of</i>
<i>from...to...</i>	35	<i>from the age of...to...</i>
<i>Between</i>	30	<i>between the ages of</i>
<i>Beyond</i>	5	<i>beyond the age of</i>
<i>get to ...</i>	6	<i>get to... age</i>

The preposition *by* indicates the meaning of “in the vicinity of or close to”. *From ... to...* implies the concept of PATH with a source point suggested by the preposition *from*, which is considered to “describe a series of locations amounting to a path” (Langacker 2008:177). *Beyond* indicates greater distance. The phrase *get to* insinuates the concept of GOAL. Through the semantic analysis, we see the emergence of the complex metaphor AGEING IS A JOURNEY. To put it simply, on the journey of ageing, a traveller starts from a location of a specific age and goes through a path composed of a series of further (later) ages toward a goal, i.e., old age. Therefore, elements involved in the conceptualisation include travellers, manners or means of travelling, locations, a path, a destination, impediments, etc. Some of these constructions may or may not be mapped onto the target concept. What follows is a close examination of the distinct mappings linking the source (JOURNEY) and target (AGEING) domains.

7.2.1 AGE IS A LOCATION

This metaphor AGE AS A LOCATION is probably so conventionalised that hardly anybody actually thinks of a place when saying or hearing the expression *at the age of 62*. However, other metaphors are more complex and as such conspicuous. Take, for example, *at a tender age*. The word *tender* triggers a sense of ‘delicacy’ to mean “having the weakness and

delicacy of youth”, just like a tender plant that needs careful nurture to survive which is transformed from the physical sense of softness and delicacy in texture (*OED*). Similarly, the phrase *at the ripe old age* reflects the same mapping of the conceptual metaphor AGE IS A PLANT/FRUIT (discussed in 4.6). Thinking of age as a plant or fruit recognizes the “process and stages of natural growth” (Charteris-Black 2004:191) and the stages of a plant resemble the stages of a life course. However, it is likely that linking ‘ripeness’ with ‘old age’ evokes the proximity to death because ripeness connotes readiness for harvesting in English. In this case, it seems to suggest that there are cultural values involved in the mapping, reflecting on the relationship between old age and the end of life. To put it another way, in the case *at a tender age*, the notion of LOCATION – where the age is positioned on the lifespan – becomes less salient as the concept of PLANT. In this case, the idea of being young becomes the main message because *tender* indicates delicacy in plants that need protecting as in “tender plant (figurative), something needing careful nurture if it is to survive and develop” (*OED*). This is to demonstrate that an investigation into the collocation *at ... age* can offer a deeper understanding of ageing starting from the conventional metaphor AGE IS A LOCATION.

When age is conceptualised as a location, the ageing experience means an ageing party passes through different locations. Some locations are plain, such as *at the age of 62* or *at a young age*. Other locations indicate value of being old. For instance, the token *at an advanced age* implies a positive view on old age because *advanced* conveys a meaning of progress and success (*OED*). Basically, we look through the same pattern – the preposition *at* and a modifier preceding the word *age* – and the outcome shows a great degree of consistency in viewing age as a location and something else. To start with, the collocations

at this age and *at that age* indicate A CLOSER AGE IS A CLOSER LOCATION, which is reflected by demonstratives *this* and *that* as they refer to a nearer or farther place. See the examples below.

(1) ¹⁹

a) Modelling *at this age* (nearly 70) isn't about being gorgeous, though you do need to be able ...

b) of all the desperate ideas Labour has cooked up over the course of this interminable election campaign, giving 16-year-olds the vote is the most cynical. Good grief, even my husband currently the Conservative Chief Whip was a Socialist *at that age*.

c) People aged 50 upwards are looking for a type of exercise that suits running are not going to be beneficial to most in that age group. </s><s> ²⁰Ballet helps refine balance, flexibility and core strength. </s><s> These are key to maintaining anyone's health, but are especially important *at that age*.

At this age in (1a) refers to the author's own current age, i.e., 70. It is a near enough location that the person uses *this* to mean the current age. *At that age* in (1b) is about the age of 16, which is proposed by the Labour party to be the voting age. The context shows the writer is a much older person who disagrees on the proposal and accuses it to be "most cynical". As such, the distance between two ages is the distance between two locations. By this, a sense of in-group and out-group sentiment is suggested. To put it differently, a close distance means a close relationship which is reflected by *this*, and it is articulated from an

¹⁹ Labels of all English data sources are listed at the end of each example in Appendix 2. A major part of Chinese data is no longer stored on the platform *BCC*; thus, the label of Chinese data sources cannot be provided.

²⁰ "s" in Sketch Engine's annotation stands for "sentence" and the symbol means "beginning and end of a sentence" ([Corpus annotation and structures | Sketch Engine](#)).

in-group point of view. Whereas *that* insinuates an out-group's point of view for categorizing other people, for which (1c) provides further evidence. The categorization is realized by *at that age*, *in that age group* and *50 upwards*. Moreover, the relationship between a person and the location is detected by investigating other pronouns that occur between *at* and *age*.

Collocations with the first and third possessive pronouns reveal views or emotions about 'age'. It seems that *at my age* is used when the speaker shows negative emotions, such as self-doubt, lack of confidence or low self-esteem. Whereas tokens like *at his age* or *at her age* tend to carry more positive views or emotions. To illustrate, see the examples below.

(2)

a) ... says he can't go out and "hit" on women like he used to because it "just doesn't feel right *at my age*" ...

b) No point in marrying *at my age*. Maureen Lipman says she "can't really see the point" in remarrying despite having found love again. </s><s> The 68-year- old, whose husband Jack Rosenthal died 10 years ago

c) told me he didn't expect to be playing Mercutio '*at my age* ', though he and Branagh pointed out that Mercutio's age is never mentioned.... ... The 76-year- old theatrical knight has been persuaded by Kenneth Branagh to play Romeo's ...

(2a) suggests that the person is aware of his age (*at my age*) on a daily basis and that age and feelings resonate. His age pressures him to think that he should adjust how he could interact with women to be socially acceptable as with *right*. (2b) is even more so. Age is mentioned as a hurdle that stops the person from progressing life events, i.e., marriage. (2c)

tells that the 76-year-old theatrical actor has low expectation for his career in playing certain roles on the stage. All these examples suggest that the speakers have passed the age for doing something. In other words, the current location is one not appreciated, and the earlier ones are better. It evokes the reminiscence of youth.

Furthermore, from the lexical item *at an advanced age*, we can see this mapping for a person: A FARTHER LOCATION IS AN OLDER AGE, as advance means “farther on” (*OED*). This is consistent with the GREATER DISTANCE MEANS GREATER AGE GAP with the collocation *at that age*. Moreover, *at an advanced* denotes an important factor that the direction of the ageing path at a later stage seems to be forward, which is more positive than downwards. For more insights into the direction of the path, these prepositions are studied: *above*, *below*, *over*, and *under*.

Above and *below* each indicate the “relative spatial location of two things, primarily with respect to the vertical axis” (Langacker 2008:71). See the instances below.

(3)

a) although the number of people saving enough increases *above the age of 50*, only 53% do save enough

b) ... last three years where children under 10, who are *below the age of* criminal responsibility and cannot be prosecuted, are believed to have ...

In example (3a), the lexical item *above the age of 50* demonstrates that the two things positioned in a spatial location relationship are two age groups, being older than 50 or

younger than 50. Example (3b) also shows there are two things in a spatial relationship, one being “the age of criminal responsibility” and the other being “under 10”, with the latter below the former. This vertical view corresponds to the metaphor MORE IS UP. An older age is more of years, hence the notion of UP. However, this verticality appears when it is not about one person’s ageing experience. Instead, the quantification of age is used as a group identification (3a) or a qualification for something (3b). In other words, unlike *at an advanced age*, mapping age on a vertical axis is not about personal ageing experience. *Under* profiles a spatial relationship like *below*, with *under* being used more frequently than *below*. There are 27 occurrences of *under* but only two of *below*. Thus, *under* seems to be a more common choice. For instance, *under age* is a set phrase to mean “below the (legal) age of majority” (*OED*).

Over, too, functions as a group identification, as reflected in the following examples.

(4)

a) what I'm doing and that I'm showing women *over a certain age* don't have to hide.

b) The number of men *over the age of 50* suffering from severe loneliness in England will increase to...

However, *over* is slightly different from *above* and it is used for personal ageing experience too. As Lakoff (1992:419) claims, it has the sense of above as well as cross, see the idiom *over the hill*. Commenting on the sentence *Pete Rose is over the hill*, Lakoff writes:

“*Over the hill* makes use of schema 1 [‘The ABOVE-ACROSS Sense’] and a metaphor for understanding a career in terms of a journey over a vertical extended landmark like a hill. In this metaphorical model of a career, one starts at the bottom, may go all

the way to the top, and then goes downhill. Thus, *over the hill* means that one has already reached and passed the peak, or high point', of one's career and will never have that high a stature again." (1992:439)

In our case, *over a certain age* in (4a) also shares the sense of above and across. In fact, it is used to refer to older women in a euphemistic way as with women over a certain age in (4a). This way of downplaying age implies that *over* carries the sense of across, i.e., "one has already reached and passed the peak, or high point" (Lakoff 1992:439). Here, it is understood that *over* profiles a spatial relationship for two things, i.e., two ages, with one is above and across the other. To put it another way, in (5b), the age of 50 is considered as a location or landmark and ages older than 50 are positioned above and across it for a comparison. That means, *over* not only instantiates the concept of location or landmark but also suggests a sense of path or trajectory, particularly in *over a certain age* because of the across sense. Therefore, the two things in comparison are put on a vertical axis as well as a horizontal one.

So far, we have described the conceptual metaphor AGE IS A LOCATION. In line with this view, a closer age is perceived as a nearer place and so as a farther place for a farther age. When the location is where the ageing person is, i.e., when a person is talking about their own age using the lexical item *at my age*, the awareness of age in their daily life is clearly manifested (see instances in example 2). An age group distanced from another group by a 'big age gap' can be expressed by the term *at that age* just as distances between two locations. We find that location can also be used to categorize other people or groups, and the attitudes towards age are also expressed in terms of locations. In the case of mapping

location onto age, they can be put on a horizontal or vertical axis, depending on whether it is about a person's ageing experience or not. If it is, we argue that the horizontal axis comes into play (e.g., *at an advanced age*). Otherwise, the vertical axis is used (e.g., *above the age of 50*). To conclude, here are the tentative mappings in sight so far.

- THE AGEING PARTY IS THE PERSON WHO TAKES THE JOURNEY.
- DIFFERENT AGES ARE DIFFERENT LOCATIONS.
- DISTANCE BETWEEN LOCATIONS IS AGE GAP.

These initial mappings seem to suggest the fundamental role of LOCATION in the network of conceptual elements under the JOURNEY domain. We shall see the mappings manifest in forthcoming sections. It is worth stressing again that the preposition *over* provides information for the concept of PATH because it profiles the spatial relationship of one thing is above and across the other. To illustrate how ageing is conceptualized from the perspective of a PATH, the following section offers an account in detail.

7.2.2 AGEING IS A PERSON WHO TRAVELS ALONG A PATH

The source concept of PATH emerges from the analysis of the prepositions listed in Table 2: *by the age of (43)*, *between the ages of (35)*, *beyond the age of (5)* *get to ... age (5)*, *beyond ... age (3)*, *by peak age (1)*, *aged between and... (2)*. Essentially, the PATH schema should consist of a starting point or SOURCE, a destination or GOAL and a series of LOCATIONS between the SOURCE and the GOAL (Evans 2010:45). For instance, prepositions *from*, *to* and *through* are often thought to manifest this schema as the example below shows.

(5)

John travelled *from* England through the tunnel *to* France.

In this example, the preposition *from* indicates the starting point; *through* suggests the path and *to* signals the goal. As mentioned earlier, in our case, there are instances such as *from* one age *to* another, or *between* two ages, just as in the way of moving from one location to another. Now we present the linguistic evidence from the corpus starting with *by*.

The 45 instances of the preposition *by* can be deemed to be manifestations of the PATH concept based on its meaning “close to, in the vicinity of” (*OED*). It indicates that ageing is an accumulative process proceeding an age. See the examples below.

(6)

- a) ... 50 pupils were said to have topped 16 stone *by the age of* 11 last year and...
- b) ... hoping to have set up home *by the age of* 30 compared to 28 for women...
- c) ... One in four children has tooth decay *by the age of* five...

Notice that the above examples are in fact not about an individual's ageing experience. However, it is perfectly fine and normal for someone to say “By the time I am ... years of age ...” Thus, the claim that it indicates the source concept of PATH still applies. More explicit evidence for the PATH concept is seen with the preposition *from*.

(7)

- a) ... accepts its first nursery students *from the age of* three
- b) ... generally far more mature women than men *from an early age*, run out of time physically.
- c) ... by as much as 10 percent per decade *from the age of 40 onwards*, so don't set yourself ...

d) ... freedom to access your retirement savings *from the age of 55, rising to 57* in 2028 ...

(7a) and (7b) can be understood as being associated with the SOURCE concept. However, there is some difference between (7c) and (7d) when both the source and path are present in the sentences. *Onwards* in (7c) indicates a horizontal movement, whereas *rising* in (d) suggests verticality. It is possible that this disparity is rooted in the different roles of age in the two cases. (7c) is coherent with the PATH schema viewing a life course as a journey. (7d) views age as a numerical measurement of another concept, i.e., access to retirement savings. To put it differently, (7d) is technically not about individuals' ageing. Rather, age is conceptualized as a measurement governed by the MORE IS UP mapping, which involves the VERTICALITY schema. Of all the 35 instances, there are 12 such expressions that belong to the non-ageing PATH schema. That is, according to the context, the *from ... age* collocation is used to indicate a source projecting different paths depending on the themes of the sentences. From a cognitive grammar's perspective, the lexical items with *from* lead a mental scanning in terms of the direction of the optimal path to the standpoint (Langacker 2008:88). Lakoff (1993) has argued that this kind of Idealized Cognitive Models (ICMs) help understand the target. In this case, the ageing path is conceptualized through the image of *onwards* in (7c), which does not suggest an upwards direction as the word *rising* does. It suggests an idea of linear movement on the ageing path.

Previously, with the preposition *at*, we proposed that DISTANCE BETWEEN LOCATIONS IS AN AGE GAP. Here, in the similar vein, the token *between the ages of ... and...* illustrates this feature of PATH precisely. *Between* is probably a preposition designating a more salient

spatial relationship than others, for example, *beyond*. *Beyond* reflects the mapping DISTANCE TRAVELLED IS YEARS OF AGE ONE HAS LIVED. The following examples explain this.

(8)

- a) ... people in good enough shape to play tennis *beyond the age of 100* ...
- b) ... in an attempt to remain in the game *beyond the age of 65* ...
- c) ... with a 5 per cent increase in the odds for living *beyond the age of 95* ...

In all the examples in (8), *beyond* collocates with a greater age which is in line with the meaning of “on the farther side, a greater distance”. It implies that there is an existing distance as a comparison to the greater distance indicated by *beyond*. Therefore, a path is made up of current distance and a greater distance, i.e., the current age and older ages. According to Lakoff (1993), there are two metaphors relating to the concept of quantities. One is MORE IS UP, and LESS IS DOWN. The other one is LINEAR SCALES ARE PATHS. We can see that citations in example (9) exemplify LINEAR SCALES ARE PATHS rather than MORE IS UP, which means ageing on the later stage of life can be a linear movement.

So far, we have discussed the metaphor AGE IS A LOCATION, and the PATH schema. In particular in this section, we discussed:

- DISTANCE BETWEEN LOCATIONS IS AN AGE GAP
- DISTANCE TRAVELLED IS YEARS OF AGE ONE HAS LIVED

Now, combined we see the complex metaphor AGEING IS A PERSON PASSING THROUGH LOCATIONS ON THE AGEING PATH, which inevitably designates the notion of MOTION for understanding the idea of ageing (the phrasal verb *get to* in 7.2.3 also demonstrates this), i.e., change of an age is understood as change of a location and a series of locations make

up a path. Previously, we argued that *over* carries the senses of above and across, implying the ageing movement can also be an arc because a peak point on the path is suggested. In that case, we need to point out that it does not contradict the view of ageing as a linear movement because the linear part can refer to a certain chunk of path rather than the whole journey. Possibly it is associated with the end of the path drawing on these terms: *at an advanced age* and *beyond*. When the notion of END emerges, an important conceptual element needs to be discussed, that is, the GOAL of the PATH. Indeed, the following examples demonstrate that AGEING IS A GOAL-ORIENTED PATH.

7.2.3 AGEING IS A GOAL-ORIENTED PATH

Langacker (2008:439) mentions that “the preposition *to* designates a path-goal configuration (*She walked to the store*).” It is this point of view that is applied here in our analysis. There are five instances of *get to* involving movement or progress made and they are listed here, and in the meantime they exemplify the mapping CHANGE IS MOTION .

(9) *get to*

- a) ... over-50s are sensible drinkers and you don't *get to a certain age in life* without knowing your limits.
- b) Older women fall into a black hole in broadcasting. [...] It is that they *get to a certain age*, then they find they are near the exit and they...
- c) 'You *get to an age* when you're not totty anymore'; At 43, Richard Armitage thinks he's too old to be a pin-up.
- d) You look at the game differently when you *get to my age*.

- e) She's a tough old bird [...] I can see myself in her. [...] You *get to an age* where you don't care what people think and enjoy dishing out...
- f) Paddy will move back into his own bedroom when he *gets to the age* he wants his own privacy. After all, have you ever heard of an 18-year-old who is eagerly still climbing into his parents' bed?

The dictionary definition for *get to* is “to reach or attain an end aimed at” (*OED*). As can be seen, the definition reflects the sense of ‘goal-directedness’. As such, it is not surprising to see that all instances 9 (a-e) suggest the idea of being judged to be ‘too old’ for something. The implication is that there is a proper age and an old that is too old socially or professionally, namely about drinking (9a), broadcasting (9b), being in a poster (9c), gaming (9d) and manners (9e). We see *older women* in (9b) which is referred to later in the sentence by “a certain age”. That tells the goal of the path is old age. (9c) suggests the same as in *you’re not totty anymore*, meaning being judged to be *old* even though the age of 43 is not old at old. In (9e) it is the idiom “old bird” as the obvious term for old age. Only in text (9f), *get to* is associated with the comparative form *older* instead of *old*. In this sense, *get to* in (9f) denotes the concept of PATH suggesting progress made.

From the instances, *get to* is linked with an older age except (9f) which is about the life course progress of growing up. Notice that the ages considered *old* vary from one case to another although there are just two occasions where the specific ages are mentioned, for instance *over 50s* and *at 43*. The implication is that the ageing is more of a social event. However, it is worth mentioning that even though the feelings of ‘old’ can be associated

with different ages, they all fall under the PATH schema. In this way, there seems to show consistency in viewing ageing.

Previously, in discussing the case of *over*, we have pointed out that the ageing path is an arc with old age at its end. Therefore, an arc entails a peak point, i.e., one's prime time, with old age on the downward side. By analysing 27 instances of the lexical item *with age*, we hold that this mapping is seen: GETTING OLD IS GOING DOWNWARDS. See the following examples.

(10)

- a) Optimizing sleep at an older age may help to delay the *decline in brain function seen with age*.
- b) Scientists have already been able to prove that older people's ability to pick up new skills declines *with age*.

The word *decline* in both examples suggests the direction of a movement being downward. In fact, *age* in the construction V + *with age* here means 'older age', which does differ from 'old age'. On these occasions, 'old age' becomes a relative term leaving space for determining when is 'old'. Yet, that does not cancel the implication that 'old age' is thought to be involved in a downward movement reflected by the verb *decline*. (10a) points out that the problem of a decline in brain function is caused by old age. (10b) says the decline of the ability to learn new skills is due to old age. The following examples illustrate that old age, as a force, asserts a causal influence.

(11)

- a) People *turn Tory with age*.
- b) She's *mellowing with age*.

Langacker believes that *with* profiles “a relationship of accompaniment” (Langacker 2008:389) as in *My cat is crawling with fleas*. Radden (1985:192) considers it as a companion²¹ metaphor. He gives this example: *His hair turns grey with age* and explains: “[...] age is viewed allegorically as man's steady companion who, due to their permanently being together, also exerts a certain influence upon him” (Radden 1985:19). Such an influence we believe is displayed in (11). ‘Age’ is viewed as a companion of people’s political stances as in (11a) and it is associated with personality changes as with (11b).

It is worth pointing out that the relationship between a person and their age is manifested by the consequences it causes rather than an independent entity. Therefore, the companionship involves causal effects which implies power dynamics between ‘age’ and the person. We shall discuss this further in the next chapter focusing on ‘old age’.

There are also around 30 instances of *between the ages of...* where the word *between* suggests the notion of distance, which is what the concept of PATH entails, together with motion or progress being made. To give an example,

(12)

[...] of invisibility that starts to settle around our shoulders *between the ages of 40 and 45* is far harder to shake off [...]

Example (12) is a typical instance of denoting a position/location between one age and another, just as between two locations, using distance to express an age range.

²¹ Here, “companion” is what Langacker would call an accompany (Langacker 2008:389).

In this section, we have carried out a semantic study on the prepositions selected to gain insights into the conceptualisation of ageing in English. The analysis focuses on the lexical items *by the age of*, *from ... age*, *with*, *beyond the age of*, and *get to ... age*. We eventually arrive at these mappings:

- AGEING IS A GOAL-ORIENTED PATH. (... *get to a certain age* ...)
- GETTING OLD IS GOING DOWNWARDS (...*decline with age*)

Given the discussion above, we propose that it is the PATH schema seems to play a central role in the conceptualisation of ageing in English.

7.2.4 Summary of the conceptualisation of 'age' in English

Briefly, we have mentioned these mappings arising from the data:

AGE IS A LOCATION

- A CLOSER AGE IS A CLOSER LOCATION
- A FARTHER LOCATION IS AN OLDER AGE
- DIFFERENT AGES ARE DIFFERENT LOCATIONS.
- DISTANCE BETWEEN LOCATIONS IS AGE GAP
- GREATER DISTANCE MEANS GREATER AGE GAP
- DISTANCE TRAVELLED IS YEARS OF AGE ONE HAS LIVED

AGEING IS A PERSON WHO TRAVELS ALONG A PATH.

AGEING IS A GOAL-ORIENTED PATH.

GETTING OLD IS GOING DOWNWARDSThese mappings in English suggest thatthat it is the SOURCE-PATH-GOAL schema that structures the age perceptions to a large extent. In other words, we find that ageing is conceptualised as a person's movement on a path toward old

age. The path is made up of different ages as locations through which the person passes, and the path is an arc with old age as the downward slope. Distances between locations are age gaps. Age itself is conceptualized an accompaniment on that path, one who can negatively influence the ageing party when they are on the downward slope. We argue that this accompaniment is embodied as it is permanently together with the ageing party instead of an independent agent.

It is worth mentioning that with the LOCATION concept, we have detected that people think of their age in terms of location, using *at*, along with people's attitudes toward age - or rather, old age – which suggests a degree of regret (about their own age) or disapproval (about age groups with a big age gap). As for the PATH concept, it is striking that the MORE IS UP metaphor exists, but it is not used for personal ageing experience. Instead, it is used when age is a group identity measurement. We have then identified that old age is thought of as a goal of the path. Taking all the elements together, we maintain that the general conceptual metaphor AGEING IS A JOURNEY is well entrenched in English.

In the meantime, it is recognized that the highly generalized constructions do not offer much understanding of a culturally bounded concept. In the AGEING IS A JOURNEY metaphor. Insights lie in the subcategories of the cover term of journey, or the constitutes of the domain, such as a location, traveller, a path, or even an obstacle. For instance, with the LOCATION domain, at a tender age and at the ripe old age have different implications (see 7.2). To explore this idea further, we present our interpretation of the Chinese data in the forthcoming sections.

7.3 Conceptualisation of 'age' in Chinese

The following three lexical patterns are used in searching for 'age'-related metaphorical expressions and they all refer to the semantic meaning "the age of" in context:

- a. *verb* *²² *de nianji* *verb* * DE age 'verb * age that' ²³
- b. *nianji de* age DE 'age of'
- c. *de nianling* DE age 'age of/that'

About 370 metaphorical expressions are identified, which are organised into source domains as Table 3 below shows. The analysis here excludes entries with fewer than five occurrences.

²² The symbol * stands for number of words between the verb and "*de nianji* (age of)"

²³ The gloss contains Chinese pinyin, word-by-word gloss, and English translation

Table 3 Source domains for ‘age’

Source domain	Frequency	Example
OBJECT	173	<i>da nianji de lao ren</i> big age DE old person ‘an old person’
LOCATION	113	<i>dao le ren lao zhu huang de nianji</i> arrive AUX person old pearl yellow DE age ‘he arrived at an old age’
VERTICALITY	31	<i>Shang le nianji,</i> up AUX age ‘old’
CONTAINER	6	<i>50 kai wai de nianji,</i> 50 open out DE age. ‘over 50 years of age’
PLANT	5	<i>cheng shu de nianling</i> complete ripe/mature DE age ‘mature age’

In total, the metaphorical expressions comprise 173 instances for the source domain of OBJECT, 113 for LOCATION, 31 for VERTICALITY, six for CONTAINER, and five for the PLANT domain. As can be seen, ‘age’ is predominantly conceptualized as an OBJECT. Technically speaking, VERTICALITY explains the direction of the OBJECT’s movement. Thus, it would also make sense to use OBJECT as a cover concept. However, for the purpose of highlighting the direction of the age’s movement, VERTICALITY is listed and analysed independently. All these elements together point to the core conceptual metaphor AGEING IS A JOURNEY. It is worth noticing that the traveller on this journey is ‘age’ itself as well as the ageing person, with the former being dominant.

7.3.1 AGE IS AN OBJECT

This section presents an account on the metaphor AGE IS AN OBJECT/TRAVELLER. Under the JOURNEY source domain, we contend that in Chinese AGE can be an independent traveller as well as the ageing person.

The defining features of an object also describe the characteristics of a traveller which are used as the archetype of nouns (Langacker 2008:104). From the example below (13), it can be seen that the size of an object is used to describe age that seems to be composed of substances that can grow big.

(13) CN

zheme da nianji de yi ge lao ren

such big age DE one CLF old person

‘an old person of such a great age.’

In (13) DE construction links the two phrases *zheme da nianji*, this big age, ‘such a great age’ and *yi ge lao ren*, one CLF old person, ‘an old person’, making age as an attribute of the old person. Using the adjective *da* ‘big’ indicates the noun *nianji* ‘age’ being an OBJECT. The demonstrative pronoun *zheme*, ‘such’ explains the degree of its following adjective *da* ‘big’ emphasizing the state of the OBJECT. Hence, in our case, it is the quantity of the years of age, being expressed in terms of size. Therefore, the adjective *da* ‘big’ is employed to describe the age of an old person.

Moreover, in corpus BCC1, there are citations which display more dimensions for the OBJECT concept. See the following examples.

(14) CN

- a) ... *ta yi-zai shuo yao zhua-jin mu-qian de nianji he zhuang-tai...*
... he once-again say want grab-tight eye-front DE age and shape-state ...
... 'he repeatedly stressed that [he] should make the best of the current age and state' ...
- b) ... *diyì shì tāde niánjì xiǎo, cái èrshí sān suì*
...first is his age small, only 23 year
'... firstly, he's young, only 23 years old'
- c) ... *tā céng gǎntán zìjǐde niánjì qīng, xīwàng néng xùnǔ "lǎo" qǐ-lái- ...*
... he used to lament his age light, wish can quickly "old" rise-come ...
'... he used to lament about being young and wish he got older quickly...'

In the above examples, (14a) emphasizes the substance of an object, (14b) deals with the size, and (14c) is about substance in terms of weight. It is inferred from (14a-c) that the dimensions of SIZE and WEIGHT are involved in the mappings for the metaphor AGE IS AN OBJECT, with small and light corresponding to being youth. In a symmetrical way, the notion opposite to small is big, and big refers to an older age. That said, it is not common at all to use heavy – the opposite notion to light - for older age, or at least it is not reflected in our data. We assume that it is perhaps because heavy is associated with negative emotions in Chinese, e.g., SAD/UNHAPPY IS HEAVY (Yu,1998:255). So far, the analysis has shown that the

perceptions of AGE exemplify the trait of “material substance” in Langacker’s terms (2008:104).

It is worth stressing that example (14a) highlights the size of age just as (14b) because it can be grabbed. As a result, this conceptualisation of age – AGE IS AN OBJECT - in Chinese makes a compelling case that age is an object independent from the target referent of the person. There is not a clear, direct correlation between the person’s own bodily experience and the ageing process although it may be implied in context. Yet, by objectifying ‘age’, it can be reasoned that the conceptualisation brings along acceptance of ageing instead of conceiving it as a decline within the person’s body.

‘Age’ can even be felt like an OBJECT that is grabbable:

(15) CN

you le yi ba nianji de ren zai chong fan xuexiao

have AUX one handful age DE person again return school

‘people of a certain age return to school’

Not only does *handful of age* add another sense (touching by hand) of understanding ‘age’, but also confirms the object aspect of it by being the predicate of the verb *you* ‘to have’. Further to the metaphor AGE IS AN INDEPENDENT OBJECT, the following section discusses the movement of the OBJECT which tests the assumption that in Chinese ageing is possibly an open-ended process with ‘age’ itself moving upward.

7.3.2 GETTING OLDER IS AGE ITSELF GOING UPWARDS

Land J (1980:15) emphasise that although spatial experiences “are physical in nature, the orientational metaphors based on them vary from culture to culture”. The current analysis seems to be partially in harmony with their belief, in the sense that ageing is reflected through similar spatial experience, i.e., JOURNEY metaphor, yet the orientation metaphors of ageing differ from Chinese to English. There are 32 instances are orientational. They are based on the spatial terms *shang*, ‘up/above’ or *xia*, ‘down/below’, meaning older or younger, and *shang xia* ‘above below’ together they mean ‘about’. Take, *50 shang xia* 50 up down, ‘about 50 years of age’. See examples (16)-(18) below for a closer examination.

(16) CN

Shang dian nianji de ren chang huainian 50 niandai he 60 niandai qianqi.

Up bit age DE people often reminisce 50s and 60 era early.

‘Older people often reminisce the early 50s and 60s.’

In (16), this mapping GETTING OLDER IS GOING UP arises. It is realised by the spatial term *shang* ‘up/above’. The term is considered as a verb here, meaning “ascend, go up or rise” (CCD 2011:1679). So, the meaning of old is delivered by the lexical unit *shang dian nianji*, up bit age ‘old/older’. It should be noted that the agent of this upward action is ‘age’. As such, it is consistent with the AGE IS AN OBJECT/TRAVELER metaphor.

Similarly, the upward direction is also used to describe age group with a specific age, for instance, *people over 60*:

(17) CN

Kan shang qu tamen dou zai 60 sui wang shang de nianling

Look up go they all are 60 year toward up DE age

‘They all look over 60 years of age’

In (17), the information of *over 60* is denoted by the lexical unit *60 sui wang shang*, 60 years toward up ‘older than 60 years of age’, which indicates the orientation of the ageing process – upward. Unlike *over*, it only has the *above* sense. In fact, another citation seems to justify this perception by bringing up the opposite direction – down:

(18) CN

Yi wei 50 sui shang xia nianji de nanzi

One CLF 50 years up down age DE man

‘A man around 50 years old.’

This instance (18) involves two directions to mean ‘around’ the age of 50, with *Shang* meaning older and *xia* meaning younger. These two terms depict the traveler’s trajectory being vertical. The age of 50 has two directions to be compared with. *Shang* means ‘above’ in this case and *50 sui [yi] shang* means older than 50 years of age. *50 sui [yi] xia* ‘down, below’ would mean ‘below 50 years of age’. Therefore, as the person ages, their age goes up. The ageing trajectory is from a lower position to a higher position on a vertical axis. We argue that this is in line with the orientation metaphor MORE IS UP (L&J 1980:16) and MORE refers to the more years of age.

At this stage, we cannot know whether the OLDER and UP association has anything to do with the experiencer’s general well-being, i.e., GOOD IS UP at all (Grady 1997). Research in spatial metaphors in Chinese finds that UP and DOWN is one of the pairs that link with morality and immorality which essentially supports the GOOD IS UP mapping (Yu 2016). For the time being, we can be assured that VERTICALITY links with OBJECT/TRAVELER.

In sum, the VERTICALITY schema stands out because of the implication of the orientation, as well as the agency it links – it is age itself instead of a person. The current analysis tries to ascertain that the VERTICALITY metaphor plays a positive role in combination with the JOURNEY metaphor in viewing ageing. Also, given that the OBJECT metaphor integrates the concept of TRAVELER, OBJECT and VERTICALITY converge under the JOURNEY domain. Next, more information about the OBJECT concept is provided, i.e., AGE IS A CONTAINER OBJECT.

7.3.3 AGE IS A CONTAINER OBJECT

L&J (1980:30) have an extensive discussion on “Container metaphors”, e.g., VISUAL FIELDS ARE CONTAINERS (*The ship is coming into view*). Also, CONTAINER is listed as one of the main image schemata by Johnson (1987:126), which is grounded in our interactions with containers. There are more: BODY AS A CONTAINER or BODY PART AS A CONTAINER such as THE EYES ARE CONTAINERS FOR EMOTIONS (L&J 1980:50), or ANGER IS THE HOT GAS IN A CONTAINER in Chinese (Yu 1998:79). In our study, ‘age’, too, is conceptualised as a CONTAINER in Chinese. As Johnson states (1987:30-31), a container image schema consists of bounded spaces which are exterior and interior (e.g., *You wake out of a deep sleep.*). In the present study, we find that ‘age’ is indeed considered as a bounded area, hence the conceptual metaphor AGE IS A CONTAINER, which implies that a substance is inside the container, which is age.

Five instances are gathered for the CONTAINER metaphor, which outlines the content of age as a container, making age voluminous. These expressions include: *50 chu tou* 50 out head ‘over 50’, or *50 kai wai* 50 open out ‘over 50’. It implies that inside of the container there is the area for being younger and outside for older. To illustrate:

(19) CN

Ta chuan zhe zhan-xin de huangse Menggu paozi, kan yangzi you 50 kai wai de nianji

He wear PRT brand-new DE yellow Mongolia robe, look appearance have 50 open
out DE age

‘He is wearing a brand-new yellow Mongolian robe, (he) looks over 50 years of age.’

Example (19) describes a person’s appearance and age. The CONTAINER metaphor is realized by the lexical item *50 kai wai* 50, open out, ‘over 50’. From *open out*, the CONTAINER image is drawn as if ‘age’ can open outwards over the course of ageing. Apart from the CONTAINER, the Chinese word *you*, ‘have’ speaks to the fact that there is another perception which is the OBJECT metaphor, because it treats age as a possession that the person has. In Lakoff and Johnson’s term (1980:30), we can say ‘age’ is a CONTAINER OBJECT.

Another example comes from this expression:

(20) CN

zai shiq/ba sui chong man jiqing de nianji

to be at 17/18 year full of passion DE age

‘at the age of 17/18 - an age full of passion’

In the above example, the lexical item *full of* exemplifies the CONTAINER metaphor. Age is viewed as a container with passion in it at the age of 17 or 18. The term *zai*, ‘to be at’ is understood as a location. Therefore, the LOCATION source domain also comes into play. This example demonstrates the combination of the source concepts – LOCATION and

CONTAINER – are in use. The remaining citations all fall under the CONTAINER OBJECT category.

The CONTAINER metaphor brings to light the subtle difference in how one metaphor works in different cultures. Perceiving ‘age’ as a CONTAINER can be found in Chinese²⁴. However, it is in Chinese that ‘age’ emerges clearly as bounded spaces which show inside and outside from the corpus evidence. The perception of age being a bounded area in terms of inside and outside suggests that the CONTAINER grows with the years. Hence, it implies that ageing is an accumulative process by saying one gains or accumulates contents as one gets older. It is a passive or objective process in comparison to a JOURNEY in which the ageing party is the traveller. In other words, it is not subject to a person making active progress toward a goal, and by extension it suggests the person is not in control of ageing. Whereas for a journey of a person, it is generically an elective process, which is a more active experience in the sense that the travelling individual is thought to be responsible for the process.

To summarise, we have discussed that age is talked about in terms of a CONTAINER. This CONTAINER expands as it can grow fuller and larger. Previously, it is demonstrated that AGE IS AN OBJECT that can move up. Hence, we argue that at the heart of the conceptualisation of ‘age’ in Chinese sits this metaphor: AGEING IS A JOURNEY OF AN OBJECT ON AN UPWARD PATH. It entails the mapping AGE IS A CONTAINER OBJECT, and the orientational aspect discussed in 7.3.2 (GETTING OLDER IS AGE ITSELF GOING UP) still holds. Data in this section adds weight to show that the OBJECT is the dominant source domain with 173 occurrences

²⁴ Later in the analysis, both in Chinese and in English, conceptualising ‘old age’ as a CONTAINER is common which is discussed in Chapter 8.

which is almost half of the overall frequencies. It is followed by the second most common source concept – LOCATION.

7.3.4 AGE IS A LOCATION

Most MEs in this category follow a verb, such as *dao le*, arrive AUX ‘arrived at’. An overview of the distribution is presented in Table 4 below.

Table 4 LOCATION tokens

Token	Frequency
<i>dao le</i> , arrive AUX ‘arrived at’	56
<i>guo le</i> , pass AUX ‘passed’	43
<i>bu ru</i> , step enter ‘step into’	6
<i>zou xiang</i> , walk towards, ‘walk towards’	4

The first three items, *dao le* arrive, AUX, ‘arrived at’ and *guo le*, ‘passed’, and *bu ru*, step enter, ‘step into’, can be associated with either a relatively young or old age. The term *ru*, ‘enter’, demonstrates that the JOURNEY domain is used in a much-nuanced way when it is combined with other concepts such as CONTAINER. Below is an example about the most common phrase, *dao le* arrive AUX ‘arrived at’.

(21) CN

- a) *Tamen shuo, dao le 50 duo sui de nianji, yi bu zai wei zheyang de xiongxin suo qushi.*

They say, arrive AUX 50 more years DE age, already not again AUX this DE ambition AUX drive

‘It is said that when you are over 50, you will no longer be driven by this kind of ambition.’

- b) *Jishi dao le wo zheyang de nianji, wo ye zhunbei lianxi ziji de Putonghua le.*

Despite arrive AUX me this DE age, I also prepare practise myself DE

Mandarin AUX

‘Despite my age, I am still prepared to practise my Mandarin.’

- c) *Wo 30 sui le, suiyue ru suo, yi shun-jian wo yijing dao le yuanli qing-se zou xiang chengshu de nianling.*

I 30 years AUX, years as shuttle, one twinkling-of-an-eye, I already arrive AUX far away green-bitter walk toward ripe DE age.

‘I am already 30. Time has flown, and in the twinkling of an eye I am more mature and far from being young.’

Sentence (21a) talks about 50 years of age as a location that the ageing person passes, as reflected by the item *dao le* arrive AUX ‘arrived’. (21b) mentions a person’s current age as a location. It is worth noticing that (21b) implies that the person does not feel having passed the prime time in life because they still proceed to learn new skills. In other words, the two sentences can be viewed as talking about setting up new goals at a relatively later stage of life, with one being realistic (a) the other being optimistic and ambitious (b). These examples demonstrate that *dao le* arrive AUX ‘arrived’ is used for a range of ages, old and young.

(22) CN

- a) *Yi guo zhi tianming de nianji, Wang Guixin cai da shang hulianwang de kuai che*

Already passed know heaven destiny DE age, Wang Guixiang just got on internet DE express train/bus.

‘Wang Guixiang only just started to benefit from the internet when she is in her 50s.’²⁵

- b) *Yi bu ru zhi tianming de nianji, Chen Deyu yuefa ren zhun le yi ge li.*

Already step enter know heaven destiny DE age, Chen Deyu more recognises precisely AUX one reasoning/way.

‘Now that he is already in his 50s, Chen Deyu believes more firmly the theory that ...’

Guo le pass AUX ‘(passed’ is used to mean the person has passed 50, so is *bu ru* step enter ‘enter’. The difference is that (22a) perceives 50 years old as an ordinary LOCATION but the latter as a CONTAINER-LOCATION. Thus, the second example (22b) interweaves JOURNEY and CONTAINER metaphor. This is another example which exemplifies that the JOURNEY domain often overlaps with other concepts.

Furthermore, these two sentences reflect different attitudes towards the fact of being over 50. (22a) is about achievement of the person in their 50s which is unusual, but (22b) is about being attached to age-related norms. These citations show that *guo le*, pass AUX

²⁵ [50] *Zhi tian ming*, know heaven destiny ‘in his 50s’ is a line by Confucius about life stages. We discussed this in Chapter 4 section 4.5.

'passed', collocates with *age of 50* which is a LOCATION-CONTAINER realized by the verb *ru* 'enter', and it can be further viewed as a LOCATION-CONTAINER-OBJECT. Thus, the content of age as a container is highlighted. The meaning *ru* 'enter' evokes a set of image schemas as Langacker (2008:33) illustrates (see the screenshot below) "the concept of ENTER can be analysed as a combination of the image schemas object, source-path-goal, and container-content".

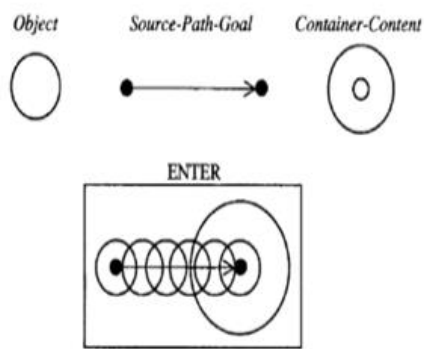


Figure 1 SOURCE-PATH-GOAL

With some modification, in our case, *ru* 'enter' can be viewed as a combination of the image schemas object, source-path, and container-content. The following figure tries to show this.

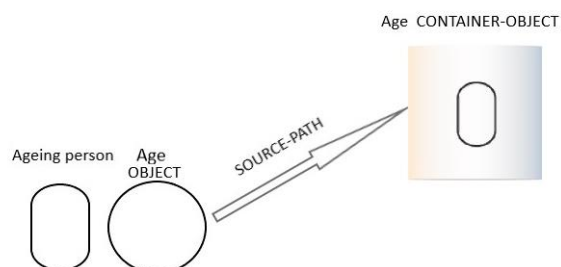


Figure 1 The OBJECT schema in conceptualising ageing in Chinese

As Figure 7.3.4 presents, GOAL is absent from the PATH because our data do not show any evidence of it. Also, it shows AGE has changed from a 2D circle to a 3D container as it grows over the course of ageing, with the dimensions of BIG and UP – which are dimensional concepts as Yu (2016:110) puts forth – expressing the idea of getting older. It is worth noticing that the elevated path should in theory consist of a series of AGE OBJECTS and the ageing person, in order to show the motion of ageing. But for the sake of a clear view of the path and the ENTER concept, we have excluded them from the figure.

(21) and (22) both concern the age of 50 while using different motion verbs. We argue that the CONTAINER realized by *bu ru* 'step enter' shows a degree of power over the person. However, this power is not necessarily a negative influence as it depends on the attitude from the person – either accepting it with ease or unease. It seems, then, that the perception of a later age is closely related to the context rather than a simple assessment of being old or young.

More often, we observe that there is the tendency that *guo le*, pass AUX (passed), is seen to be associated with a younger age. Here is an example.

(23) CN

Moran hui shou, cai faxian, yijing guo le zuo meng de nianling

Suddenly return head, just discover, already pass AUX make dream DE age

‘Looking back suddenly, (I) just realised that (I) have passed the age of pursuing dreams.’

Example (23) stresses that the age of pursuing dreams is viewed as a location. Arguably, pursuing dreams is generally associated with youth. Henceforth it comes as no surprise to see (21a) in which it is thought that people over 50 are not ambitious anymore. Also, in this example, it shows that age is mentioned in relation to one feature of the age expectations – especially a relatively young age. In fact, there are a good number of such instances that a young age is captured through an age-related activity or behaviour, and often it is the verb *guo le* pass AUX ‘passed’, that is used to convey this sense. To illustrate this interpretation further, the following examples express the idea that one is no longer young by mentioning a different activity or behaviour supposed to be associated with being young.

(24) CN

a) *Yuanlai wo zao-yi guo le xin tiao jia su de nianling*

Afterall I early-already pass AUX heart beats add speed DE age.

‘Afterall I have way passed the age of being excitable.’

b) *Yijing guo le zuo meng de nianling, yijing guo le na duan feng hua xue yue de nianling.*

Already pass AUX make dreams DE age, already pass AUX that CLF wind
flower snow moon DE age.

‘I have already passed the age of pursuing dreams and being romantic or melancholic.’

With (24a), the cultural assumption is that being excited - by saying one's heart beats fast - is a common trait of young people. It reflects cultural norms on people's general feelings based on age. In (24b), the notion of a young age is signalled by these elements: dreams, wind, flower, snow, and moon, which are socially structured or expected. We have already mentioned that youth is linked to dreams. Originally 'wind, flower, snow, and moon' are subjects in Chinese classical literature, and they are also used to refer to romance or a love affair (CCD 2011:578). Again, this is another example about socially expected feelings and behaviours that are attached to age.

Through these examples (23-24), age is talked about specifically in the pattern of "not young". By saying someone has passed the point of being young, the notion of ageing is subtly indicated. There are two possible underlying motivations: the chosen perspective, and an attitude of understatement towards ageing. First, it is the perspective of looking at age from birth onwards instead of a 'time-left-to live' perspective (Freud and Ritter 2009). As such, the focus is on being young or not. Second, expressing the meaning of *not young* rather than explicitly self-characterizing as being *older* is an understatement, which alleviates the innate fear of the physical decline.

So far, we have seen that the location can be a specific age or a distinct age period. Furthermore, the data show consistency in the sense that a bigger age gap is a farther distance between ages. See the example below.

(25) CN

Yiqian dou jue de 20 sui shi hao yaoyuan de nianling. Ming nian wo dou you de gen-zhe nide bufa ben san le.

Previously even feel 20 years is very far DE age. Next year I even again have to follow AUX your steps run 30.

‘I used to think that 20 is extremely far away. Next year I will be following your steps and turning 30.’

In (25) age – 20 years old – is mentioned as a location in distance. In a coherent manner, it says the person will run towards another location, which is 30 years of age. The terms *bufa* ‘steps’ and *ben* ‘run’ are perfect examples to represent the concept of TRAVELER. Here, the ageing party is the traveller, and the path is made up of by a series of ages.

In this section 7.3.4, we have analysed the metaphor AGE IS A LOCATION, and how people identify their current age by way of LOCATION. The LOCATION is used to refer to either a younger or older age. When a location refers to a younger age, the movement is walking or running, and with older age, the manner becomes stepping into. It implies that the CONTAINER aspect is highlighted at an older age. A distinct aspect found is that people tend to employ OBJECT metaphors (e.g., *nianji bu xiao*, age not small, ‘not young’), meaning ‘not young’ to express the notion of ‘old’. We argue that this might benefit the ageing party, as it alleviates the inner fear of physical decline.

The analysis seems to justify the belief that age is potentially socially constructed. That is, young and old are relative terms. For instance, the age of 50 can be viewed as old but it also comes with achievement. Furthermore, unlike the previous section where age itself is a

CONTAINER-OBJECT as a TRAVELLER, when AGE IS A LOCATION, the traveller becomes the ageing person who arrives at or passes different locations. Therefore, we hold that on the ageing journey, both the ageing individual and age are perceived as travellers. The difference is that when the ageing person is the traveller, the direction of the journey does not show in the data. Whereas with the OBJECT schema, i.e., 'age' is the traveller, we argue that the journey is upward oriented.

7.3.5 Summary of the conceptualisation of 'age' in Chinese

Through the investigation of corpus data from BCC1 in terms of how 'age' is conceptualised in Chinese, we have identified these mappings:

- AGE IS AN OBJECT.
- AGE IS A LOCATION.
- AGE IS A CONTAINER.
- GETTING OLD IS AGE ITSELF GOING UPWARDS.

Arguably, these mappings can all be integrated into the OBJECT domain considering locations, and containers are OBJECTS too. Together, these conceptual metaphors compose the complex metaphor AGEING IS A JOURNEY. Thus, the JOURNEY domain can be used as an umbrella term that covers the concepts of LOCATION, TRAVELER, ORIENTATION and PATH. Some culturally distinct features with these metaphors are worth noticing.

First, it seems common to view age from the perspective of the 'time of birth' rather than the 'time left to live'. Thus, there is a great portion of linguistic expressions of 'not young' for saying 'getting old'.

Second, the OBJECT concept designates an objective perception toward 'age' with respect to its size (big and small), movement (upward), substance (light). Also, the VERTICALITY concept – the upward orientation, to be precise – plays an important role to background the awareness of physical decline.

Third, the CONTAINER schema allows us to visualise ageing as a cumulative process, as the content inside the container is highlighted. This aspect is in consistent with viewing age in the time from a birth perspective.

Finally, the spatial metaphor GETTING OLD IS AGE ITSELF GOING UP suggests the status of being old in the society. The direction of *shang*, 'up', is found to be used as a positive direction in describing the Chinese ancestor – descendent relationship, referring to the ancestors (Li 1995:192-193). For instance, *shang yi bei*, up one generation 'the previous generation'. That means, as Li argues, the ancestors are viewed as worthier by the spatial metaphor *shang* 'up' (ibid p.192). If the spatial metaphor is indeed a indicating a positive direction, using it to refer to getting old denotes that being old is worthier.

The conceptual elements in the JOURNEY domain are combined in this way: AGE IS AN OBJECT. The data suggests that the OBJECT schema dominates the conceptualisation of ageing in Chinese. The power of the OBJECT schema in Chinese has been studied by scholars who argue that it gives birth to some generic metaphors, such as IMPORTANCE IS SIZE and IMPORTANCE IS WEIGHT (Yu, Yu and Lee 2017). In terms of the perception of 'age', we have demonstrated that these dimensions – size and weight – are mapped on to age, i.e., BIG IS OLDER, SMALL IS YOUNG, and LIGHT IS YOUNG. The assumption arises that the culture is in

favour of 'old age' the positive directions and dimensions are designated to it. A fuller picture can be drawn in a comparison with the findings in English.

7.4 Cultural variation: SOURCE-PATH-GOAL vs OBJECT

In this section, we present a brief cross-cultural comparison to conclude this chapter. Within the CMT tradition, it is believed that universal bodily experience gives rise to the same primary metaphors as they derive directly from bodily experience (Grady 1997, Kövecses 2010, Lakoff and Johnson 1980). Given that ageing is a universal bodily experience, it could be expected, then, that universal conceptual metaphors of ageing would be found across cultures. Our semantic analysis in the previous sections shows that in both languages AGEING IS A JOURNEY is the dominant metaphor, which essentially inherits the classical LIFE IS A JOURNEY metaphor (Kövecses 2010: 50; Lakoff 1994: 62–63; Yu 1998: 17–19) and the EVENT STRUCTURE (Lakoff 1993). Despite the fact that some metaphors – AGE IS A LOCATION, CHANGE IS MOTION, and THE AGEING PERSON IS A TRAVELLER – are shared in both cultures, English and Chinese still differ in terms of these aspects: who is travelling on the journey, which direction the path leads to and whether there is a goal for the journey. We would like to refer to Figure 7.3.4 again for the conceptualisation of ageing in Chinese as it is much more imagistic than English.

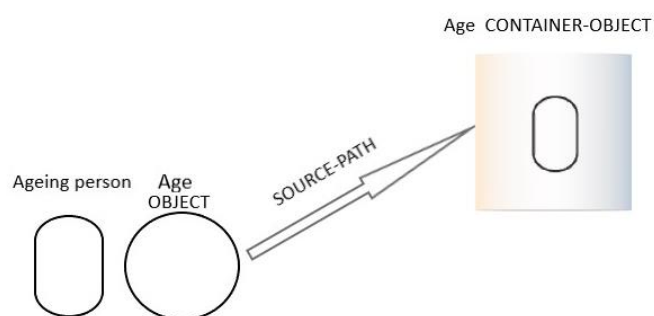


Figure 2 The OBJECT schema in conceptualizing ageing in Chinese

As can be seen in Figure 2, in Chinese, 'age' is a moving object on an upward path. This is a vital aspect of conceptualizing ageing, especially when it is compared with the English perception, in which 'age' is embodied in an ageing individual person. In other words, the person and 'age' are permanently together. Thus, in English there is a single traveller on the journey even though two entities are involved, i.e., the person and their 'age'. Whereas in Chinese, these two are independent travellers. Consequently, the difference is reflected in how old age is expressed. For instance, we find the phrase *get to a certain age* repeatedly expresses the meaning of old in a certain social context in English. The motion *get to* is clearly carried out by the ageing individual. In Chinese, the equivalent is found to be this lexical unit *shang dian nianji*, up bit age, 'old/older', where age itself completes the action of going up.

Another point worth stressing is the direction of the movement. In English, we argue that the ageing path is often an arc and old age is on its downside slope (e.g., *over a certain age*).

In the Chinese data, we have not detected the direction of the ageing party's movement. Instead, we find that 'age' moves on an upward path without a destination in sight. The question arises as to what motivates the different combinations of metaphors? The fact that the same bodily experience is reflected differently in the conceptual metaphors implies that metaphors are selected with culture-specificity to form the JOURNEY metaphor because the basic metaphors are governed by different schemas. In English, we argue that the PATH schema lies behind the metaphor AGE IS A LOCATION based on the semantic descriptions of the prepositions used in context, for instance, *over*. As such, the GOAL is usually present as part of the schema, reflected in our corpus by the *get to* phrase. So, *get to the age of* means a person turns another age. Unlike other life goals – as in A PURPOSEFUL LIFE IS A JOURNEY (Lakoff 1993), the goal of ageing is not desirable, after all, if it means end of life.

By contrast in Chinese, the OBJECT schema commands, and especially the MORE IS UP image-schema is essential. It highlights contents, direction, and size, and gives birth to other metaphors such as IMPORTANCE IS SIZE, and IMPORTANCE IS WEIGHT (Yu, Yu, and Lee 2017). For instance, BIG is attached to positive values in both languages (online *OED* and *CCD*). HEAVY is mapped on to IMPORTANCE in English (*OED*) and Chinese (*CCD*, see also a comprehensive summary in Yu, Yu and Lee (2017)) especially the compound word for importance in Chinese is *zhongyao* 'heavy important'. LIGHT, on the other hand, has the sense of UNIMPORTANCE. As discussed in section 7.3.1, in Chinese, only LIGHT, as in *nianji qing* age light 'be young' not HEAVY, is used as a source concept in talking about being young because HEAVY is related to negative emotions such as SADNESS. As a matter of fact,

in the *Contemporary Chinese Dictionary*, *qing* in the term *nianji qing* is listed as “small in number” (2002:1565), which goes hand in hand with the SIZE concept.

It is clear, then, that the same subjective experience, the shrinkage of the body, is mapped onto different sensorimotor experiences, e.g., UP or DOWN. Using Chinese data as a comparison, alternative views toward ageing are brought up:

- a. It is only in English that the lexical term *age* has taken up the meaning of old age.
(e.g., ... *adores youth? A daft idea, but given the white noise of age - prejudice and grim premonitions of disintegration of mind and body ...*)
- b. The direction of the ageing journey is experienced by a person and is predominantly down in English, whereas the direction of the in Chinese is upward. In Chinese, ‘age’ seems to be viewed as a mind-free object which is subsequently understood in terms of size and weight referring to the notion of old or young. As a result, perhaps a relatively neutral reality of ageing is created because the downward perception of movement is not intrinsically motivated. This encourages a more open and receptive attitude toward ageing, which in return helps build up a coping mechanism of talking about it.
- c. Viewing ageing as a shrinkage of the body in English (Thomas and Adams 2014) emphasises the loss, which perhaps comes from the end-of-life perspective. On the contrary, the gaining process in Chinese arguably stems from the from birth onwards just as a container is filling up.

A distinct feature in Chinese it that it is common to use an understatement – see the term *guo le ... de nianji*, pass AUX ... DE age, ‘passed the age of ...’ to refer to ageing. We contend

that the difference might have major impact on the subjective experience of ageing in these ways:

- a. In Chinese, the detachment to the control of ageing process avoids negative associations of ageing as it removes the ownership for the ageing process. This is achieved by viewing 'age' as an independent OBJECT.
- b. Seeing age as a CONTAINER OBJECT projects gains instead of loss with the container growing fuller, which lays the experiential basis – as it links with the MORE IS UP metaphor directly – for the supposedly high status of an older individual in the society.
- c. Assisted by the two perceptions above, the ageing JOURNEY in Chinese is thus theoretically more age friendly for the general well-being.

In conclusion, it seems that the complex metaphor AGEING IS A JOURNEY has different cultural interpretations, with 'age' being an independent OBJECT in Chinese, which leads to specific scenarios. Still, we can see at a higher level that there is the same complex metaphor AGEING IS A JOURNEY, and some basic metaphors are the same – AGE IS A LOCATION, CHANGE IS MOTION – but it is the sub-categories that are different. The LOCATION in Chinese is perceived differently from English, as is the direction of the motion. In other words, the interpretations of the complex metaphors are different, and it is because there are two different schemas to follow: SOURCE-PATH-GOAL vs OBJECT. In a broader sense, this is in line with the view in CMT that even though universality tends to be found with basic conceptual metaphors as they are grounded in bodily experience, “which values are given priority is partly a matter of the subculture one lives in and partly a matter of personal values” (L&J 2003:23). Accordingly, we expect that different cultural beliefs on

ageing should be channelled through the conceptual metaphors for old age, which is investigated in the next chapter.

The current semantic analysis seems to coincide with the finding by Li (1996:194) about the perception of age in Chinese culture: there is the correlation of age and “a source of physical prowess and agility” rather than the correlation “between old age and the loss of physical prowess”. However, the author argues that the linguistic expressions do not necessarily reflect the perception of age in the culture that might be impacted by Confucius’ ethics. We are aware that the generalisation of linguistic data might not be able to reflect the current cultural values as they are extracted from a certain time and language always changes. Meanwhile, we cannot ignore social-political and cultural factors that can affect languages. Thus, despite the linguistic differences, Chinese speakers might have conformed to Western values on thinking about ageing.

7.5 Conclusion

The perception of ‘age’ basically concerns the relationship between a person and their age. Our analysis in this chapter shows that this relationship is reflected to a significant degree differently in English and Chinese. We argue that the concept of age is mainly constructed through the PATH schema in English and through the OBJECT schema in Chinese. Although the ageing process is fundamentally a way of motion and in this regard it is universally, the conceptualisations in the two languages are shared only on these associations: AGEING IS A JOURNEY and CHANGE IS MOTION. As discussed in the previous section, the English data support a SOURCE-PATH-GOAL schema, whereas in our Chinese data a more pervasive

aspect is the OBJECT schema drawing upon the observation that ‘age’ is structured in terms of a physical object with dimensions such as SIZE and WEIGHT.

The question remains as to what results in the different schema choices. Gibbs (1999:155) argues that “social and cultural constructions of experience fundamentally shape embodied metaphor”. Yu (2017) holds that besides the bodily experience, the actual selection of a metaphor depends to a large degree on its cultural basis. If cultural beliefs determine which basic metaphors are selected (e.g., AGE IS A LOCATION or AGE IS AN OBJECT) to form more complex metaphors, we can assume that the hierarchical relationship between the old and young – rooted in the ancestor worship culture (Li 1995:191-200) – provides a cultural basis for the UP-DOWN schema in Chinese. Hence, GETTING OLDER IS AGE ITSELF GOING UP. In English, Katz (2011:187) says “in Western culture, the dominant story about ageing bodies is framed around the biology of decline. Physical ageing appears to represent the deepest, most natural and most obvious truth about what it means to age”. It is possible that this cultural narrative of decline foregrounds the conceptualisation of age in the English language, with the ageing path as an arc with old age on the downward slope.

The current chapter serves the goal of locating ‘age’ in the conceptual system through a contrastive analysis. In so doing, it contributes two theoretical points. First, we can trace perceptions of bodily experience (i.e., ageing) through studying conceptual metaphors (e.g., AGEING IS A JOURNEY). Second, the power of culture in shaping conceptualisation cannot be overestimated since we have identified the different perceptions in English from those in Chinese. Our examination of the expressions on *old age* will provide a fuller explanation to this observation in the next chapter.

Chapter 8 Conceptualisations of ‘old age’ in English and Chinese

8.1 Introduction

In the previous chapter we presented the metaphoric conceptualisations of ‘age’ in English and Chinese. We arrived at the conclusion that there was a main shared conceptual metaphor in both languages, namely AGEING IS A JOURNEY. An essential difference between the languages can be observed, which is manifested in different schemas – SOURCE-PATH-GOAL in English and OBJECT in Chinese. The implication is that the later part of life, i.e., ‘old age’ and its position on the ageing path, is viewed differently, which takes us to the discussion of ‘old age’ perceptions. It is intriguing to find out in what ways perceptions of ‘old age’ align with or deviate from perceptions of ‘age’. Hence, our analysis contributes to a discussion of a conventional view in English that is focussed on the biological decline (Katz 2011); and it will shed light for an ongoing debate as to where old age starts and what it means (Daignault, et al. 2021). Building on a separate set of corpus data from Chapter 7, this chapter discusses how ‘old age’ is conceptualised in context. Our semantic analysis has gone through these main steps:

- 1), *Old age* is used as the search term in the corpus.
- 2), A sentence on each side of old age is examined to decide whether or not *old age* is viewed metaphorically.
- 3), With the above achieved, the metaphorical instances are grouped according to their semantic connections.
- 4), After the metaphors are detected and gathered, each utterance is analysed within the surrounding context.

Based on the data obtained through the application of the four steps above, the chapter presents 40 English examples and 20 Chinese examples, followed by a comparison of the cultural perceptions of ‘old age’. We refer back to the overview of data presented in Table 7 in section 6.6.

Table 7 The source domains that are found to understand ‘old age’ in English and Chinese

Source domain	Frequency in English	Frequency in Chinese
JOURNEY	16	19
VIOLENCE/OPPONENT	13	0
CONTAINER	10	52
FRUIT	5	0
ILLNESS/DISEASE	4	0
A SCARY, EVIL, DANDERIOUS THING	5	0
A LIVING THING	5	6
Total	66	77

In this chapter, we show that on a highly abstract level, in English, ‘old age’ is understood in terms of JOURNEY (e.g., LOCATION and PATH), CONTAINER, VIOLENCE, ILLNESS/DISEASE, SCARY, EVIL, and/or DANGEROUS THING, LIVING THING and FRUIT; in Chinese, it is mainly conceptualised as CONTAINER, JOURNEY (e.g., LOCATION) and LIVING THING. As can be seen, there are shared source concepts and discrepancies, which perhaps reflects very different attitudes towards ‘old age’ – e.g., *old age* and disease are synonymous so as to be avoided, in English, vs ‘old age’ comes with bodily changes as well as charm to be adapted, in Chinese, which is fully explained in section 8.4.

We try to apply the above steps in both English and Chinese. Due to the restricted availability of the platform for the Chinese corpus, our access to its data is limited. A disclaimer should be made here that the data were finalised in June 2020 after extracting the instances from the platform BCC (Beijing Language and Culture University Chinese

Corpus), part of which belong to texts from a Chinese social media platform *Weibo* from the year 2013. These data, which contribute to half of the set, are no longer available on BCC. However, metaphorical instances are kept in a word document²⁶.

8.2 Conceptualising ‘old age’ in English

Old age is defined as “the later part of life; the period of life after youth and middle age; the state of having existed for a relatively long time, usually with reference to deterioration” (*OED*). This definition is about the stage of *old age* over the course of lifespan with reference to deterioration. The forthcoming sections illustrate a detailed analysis based on our empirical data.

8.2.1 JOURNEY

In total, there are 16 JOURNEY-related metaphorical frequencies, making it the predominant source concept. The identified metaphorical tokens are assigned to two different groups as Table 1 below shows.

Table 1 Conceptual elements and the lexemes for the JOURNEY domain

Conceptual elements	Lexemes
LOCATION	<i>at the grand old age, a different country, on the frontier of, on the road to, reaching, approaching, the boundaries of...</i>
DOWN	<i>descend into, tip into, lapsed into</i>

²⁶ The word document is compiled in Appendix 3.

Table 1 lists the conceptual elements and corresponding lexemes identified from the corpus, based on which two core conceptual metaphors can be extrapolated: OLD AGE IS A LOCATION and OLD AGE IS ON THE DOWNSIDE OF THE SLOPE, as analysed in the following sections.

8.2.1.1 OLD AGE IS A LOCATION

As shown in Table 1 above, *old age is a different country* is a good example of the metaphor OLD AGE IS A LOCATION. The rest of the examples are associated with the same semantic field. To get to a PLACE/LOCATION, there should be a PATH, hence the token *on the road to old age*. Being close to an age is expressed as *reaching/approaching* an age, which are used for describing the process of getting close to a place. When someone is old, terms such as *at the grand old age* or *on the frontier of old age* are used, which also activates the spatial characteristics of 'old age'. In addition, the preposition *to* in *on the road to old age* signals the notion of destination according to Cognitive Grammar (Langacker 2008). In this section, we go through these tokens and discuss specific features of the conceptual metaphor OLD AGE IS A LOCATION in use.

There are seven occurrences of *at the grand old age*; some of them are used in relation to the dictionary meaning "impressive because of age" (OED). For example:

(1) EN

Italian pensioner who found herself catapulted to big-screen stardom - at the grand old age of 93... There can be few actresses who have won a prize as most promising newcomer at the age of 93.

Indeed, 93 is an impressive age one can live to, especially in the context of being an actress which is an industry that values young females. Valeria de Franciscis being recognised as a “newcomer” at the age of 93 is an unconventional achievement because a “promising newcomer” is normally expected to be young. Besides, the impressive achievement is explicit as the phrase “few actresses” indicates rarity.

However, *grand old age* does not always concern old age:

(2) EN

Even though in my head I’m convinced I’m not a day past 32, I will officially *reach the grand old age of 48*. Not ancient by any stretch. But *alarmingly close to 50* and a further reminder of the fact that the gap between how I think of myself and how others see me *has widened to an abyss*.

In (2), we see the central conceptual metaphor of AGEING IS A JOURNEY. A string of lexemes reveals that AGEING is thought to be a JOURNEY. *Reach* denotes the movement of the body, in this case the ageing party, i.e., the author of the article. There are two perceived ages mentioned as locations, the felt age by the author and the age the author assumes that others would assume. The difference between these two ages is conceptualised as a gap, which is described as *an abyss*, i.e., “a bottomless chasm; any unfathomable cavity or void space” (OED). However, within this conceptualisation, *the grand old age* has lost its literal meaning and gives little information about old age as opposed to any other age, because 48 is by no means an old age, as said by the author. Hence, it adds irony to the discourse because the grand old age is in fact used to mean the opposite (Rodríguez-Rosique 2013:18) or it shows a transgression of the quality of the information (Levinson 2000:117-118). However, the author implies 50 is an old age that is something frightening. This is indicated

by the adverb “alarmingly”. The literally meaning of “alarmingly” expresses a sense of “fear, apprehension and disturbingly” (*OED* online), which evokes a stereotypical perception of being 50. Therefore, there is a clash between the personal feeling (*not ancient*) of being 48 and a social view of being 50, and we understood that this is a negative commentary of how others perceive ‘old age’. In this context, *grand old age* is said in a positive way to mean a negative attitude towards old age as an echoic thought in the society, which can be considered as the use of irony (Wilson and Sperber 2012). Thus, this instance implies that the concept of ‘old’ poses a threat to people.

There are also instances where *at the grand old age* is followed by a young age reference to achieve the irony effect:

(3) EN

[...] Lau is the original personal style blogger. Yet *at the grand old age of 31*, she is stepping away from the idea of putting her own style at the centre of her blog [...]

The age of 31 on its own is usually considered to be a young age. Thus, (3) demonstrates that ‘old’ is relative and should be understood contextually. According to the speaker, the blogger thinks 31 is no longer the age for her to put her own style at the centre of her blog. This assessment hints a clash between the blogger’s self-image and what is considered current in the fashion industry.

The verb *reach* is commonly used to mean to have lived to an age just like example (2) “reach the grand old age of 48” and old age is conceptualized as a LOCATION at which one arrives. See the example below.

(4) EN

It is a blessing to *have reached old age*, so there is some luck there already.

More specifically, 'old age' is associated with the notion of 'country'. See following example.

(5) EN

She [Joan Bakewell] said " Old age is *a different country*. It feels quite different. I am *on the frontier of* old age and I know it is *a different place* from where I used to live".

As a quotation from a talk at Hay Festival in 2014 by the broadcaster Joan Bakewell, while advocating the pleasures of old age, example (5) recognizes the negative feelings of old age.

The LOCATION concept is materialized as *a different country*. Also, it alludes to a formulaic statement "the past is a foreign country" from the novel *The Go-Between* by L.P.Hartley.²⁷

The underlying perception is about a situation that is unfamiliar. In the current example, there exists this metaphor: *old age is a different place*. Conceptually, old age is a "different country", and youth is a place "where I used to live", i.e., 'home'. In this way, the experience of ageing is expressed in terms of places of familiarity and foreignness. The term *frontier* carries the sense of boundaries of a territory. Here, it means the beginning of old age at the age of 81 according to the article.

As opposed to a home place, a *different country* suggests that 'old age' causes negative feelings although it is euphemized by the term *different*. As a different place, not only is it

²⁷The novel by L. P. Hartley was published in 1953 which gives a critical review of society at the end of the Victoria era (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Go-Between). It has also been adapted to films with an opening line "The past is a foreign country" (<https://learningonscreen.ac.uk/ondemand/index.php/prog/0AE49DB1?bcast=116491219>).

lonely, but also alienating. Just as a “foreign country”, in old age, one feels like a stranger in a new place.

The term *a different country* may also be related to Shakespeare’s comparison of the afterlife to “the undiscovered country” in *Hamlet* (Act 3 Scene 1). It has been pointed out that death in the scene is defined as a journey to the “undiscovered country” from which no one returns (Malecka 2012:149). In the current case, instead of death, ‘old age’ is described as a “different country” which technically views ‘old age’ and ‘death’ as being almost the same. Meanwhile, mentioning the term *country* evokes a sense of identity, and *on the frontier* consistently intensifies it. This proves that age is a convenient measurement for categorizing people and a key factor for identity building (Estes, Biggs, and Phillipson 2003:26). The way of conceptualizing ‘old age’ as an unfamiliar place continues in describing getting old in terms of approaching the boundary of another country. This experience can be accompanied with fear and uncertainty.

With the above being said, the concept of ‘country’ can be further explored with positive outcomes, such as exciting experiences:

(6) EN

“This show is trying to say that there are lots of great fun things about being old and rather than keeping struggling into your seventies racing about trying to be groovy, I think it's better to think of old age as *a new country, an exciting country.*”

Text (6) is a quotation from journalist Virginia Ironside in 2013, and the “show” refers to “Growing Old Disgracefully” that she was going to perform. In contrast to a *different*

country, an alternative is suggested in (6), that is, a *new country* and an *exciting country*. It is possible to think a new experience is followed by excitement, which portrays the ageing experience as something to look forward to. As the speaker mentioned, this new experience is associated with fun. Thus, the new and exciting aspects of exploring a country are activated, leaving the lonely and unfamiliar traits aside.

Another specificity of the OLD AGE AS A LOCATION is to do with the notion of destination. See the example below.

(7) EN

How playing video games could help us stay sharp *on the road to old age* ... designed video game, based on reacting to signs while driving, improves older people's ability to multitask.

The token *on the road to old age* in (7) shows that 'old age' is talked about as a place first and foremost. Then, the preposition *to* profiles the place, i.e., old age, further as a destination. A sense of purpose on a journey is an essential tenet described in the EVENT STRUCTURE schema and the PURPOSES ARE DESTINATIONS metaphor (Lakoff 1992). Indeed, in the case of ageing, the impact of the destination is acutely felt by individuals and well captured as our data show.

8.2.1.2 GETTING OLD IS GOING DOWNWARDS

The data suggest that 'old age' is perceived to be a place on the on the downside of the ageing path, which is associated with ill-health. For example:

(8) EN

The winter of 2011 saw the road outside ... Only a handful [carers] showed me any kindness. Suddenly, it dawned on me that this could very well be my fate for the rest of my life should I be unfortunate enough to *descend into an infirm old age*. The idea filled me with cold terror.

The text (8) above is from an article telling eight weeks' experience in contact with carers. The adjective "infirm" – which is a term that means "physically weak or feeble" – links 'old age' with physical weakness and this variation of old age is thought of as a lower place than the preceding life stages, as provided by the verb *descend*. The modal verb *should* indicates that such a conception is possible to happen but is undesirable because it is considered "unfortunate".

There are further instances showing that not only is old age unhealthy, but old age in general is a place on the downside of the path as the following example suggests.

(9) EN

Get a dog. Seriously, do. Dogs not only reduce stress, lower blood pressure, force you to exercise and promote sociability you to exercise and promote sociability, but once you *tip into* old age your preoccupations will collide perfectly because you'll both be thinking " Who is going to feed me" [...]

Text (9) is from an article trying to give advice on preparing for getting older. *Tip* has the meaning "to throw down, cause to fall or stumble" (*OED*). Metaphorically, it portrays old age as a place lower down that one stumbles on; thus, it causes chaos that interferes a

normal daily life. Life transitions from physically being capable to dependent, which implies the person will need to be fed just as their dog.

From the two texts above (8-9), both an unhealthy old age and a healthy old age in general are viewed as a place to which a person declines. Thus, the conceptual metaphor GETTING OLD AGE IS GOING DOWNWARDS is abstracted. However, we find an instance when the DOWNWARDS aspect is followed by a term “comfortable old age” as the following example shows.

(10) EN

[...] Atwood revisits an earlier work of her own in "I Dream of Xenia With the Bright Red Teeth", where the characters from *The Robber Bride*, now *lapsed into* comfortable old age [...]

The word *lapse* is to “fall away by slow degrees” (*OED*). This token shows that the mental image of ‘old age’ is a place into which an ageing person falls. It is about the characters in *I Dream of Xenia With the Bright Red Teeth*, a story by Atwood. Essentially it is an interpretation of ageing and friendship. On the one hand, it inherits a conventional view on ageing as decline, on the other hand it portrays friendship among the three characters who keep each other accompany. They are now enjoying their late life. Hence their attitudes to old age insinuate the impression of a *comfortable old age*. It can be understood that even though conventionally old age is a place in a lower position than the previous life stage, it is not necessarily bad if it is *comfortable*.

8.2.1.3 OLD AGE IS THE PATH TO DEATH

If JOURNEY is understood in a broad sense as progression in space and time with a beginning and an ending, we find that 'old age' can be conceptualised as another relevant element, such as a BURDEN for a PERSON engaged in a RACE. The following text presents the scenario that the ageing process is a race in which the ageing person participates, and their 'old age' is perceived as a BURDEN.

(11) EN

I am afraid of the *run-up* to death, because I have had to watch it. But I think that many of us who are on *the last lap* are too busy with the *baggage of old age* to waste much time anticipating the *finishing line* [...]

The tokens *run-up*, *the last lap* and the *finishing line* belong to the semantic field of RACING. They reveal that the ageing process is perceived as a race, where the person is a runner heading for a *finishing line*, i.e., death. 'Old age' is conceptualised as some property or package one must deal with on the *last lap*. However, this is not a normal race in which the fastest runner wins. On the contrary, to some extent it is the slowest who actually wins in reality. Thus, it is understandable that the run-up to the end could be scary. Moreover, it tells that this form of conceptualisation is problematic because ageing is almost a losing race by default which leaves the runner, i.e., the ageing person powerless.

In another JOURNEY scenario, 'old age' is conceptualised as a cheap flight, i.e., the Ryanair flight, to the 'country' of death:

(12) EN

Death, according to Hamlet, is the undiscovered country, from whose bourn no traveller returns'. But old age, I suspect, is *the Ryanair flight* you have to take to get there: undignified, uncomfortable and full of hidden costs they only mention in the small print. And woe betide you if you try to take too much baggage.

Comparing old age to a cheap and uncomfortable flight on the journey to death reveals the negative perceptions of old age through the source concept – *undignified, uncomfortable and full of hidden costs they only mention in the small print*. As a cheap flight, one cannot take on too much baggage which implies that old age becomes a limiting factor to one's life and what is relevant to the past, i.e., youth, has to be left behind.

In summary, in this section, we have presented two core conceptual mappings: AGEING IS A JOURNEY and OLD AGE IS A LOCATION, both of which are based on the source concept JOURNEY. Conceptualising AGEING as a JOURNEY highlights some of the elements within the JOURNEY domain, but not all. For instance, there is no agency on the ageing person because ageing is a natural process. Therefore, some aspects of the JOURNEY domain are not represented in the mappings, for instance, goal setting, even though 'old age' is conceptualised as the GOAL of the ageing PATH (e.g., *the road to old age*). In other words, no one takes the initiative to set out to grow old age for their life course and the end of life is not a matter of choice. With the LOCATION, there are specific PLACES (e.g., *a different country*) and non-specific PLACES (e.g., *at the grand old age of 32*). In terms of the PATH, the instances show that it is viewed as the *last lap* to death or the *Ryanair flight* to death, which puts this PATH concept in a less favourable position in comparison to others. That said, there is evidence to show alternative perspectives. For instance, 'old age' is a *new country* as opposed to a *different country*. Thus, it seems that LOCATION is a more malleable

concept than PATH for perceiving old age because of the diversity of LOCATIONS, whereas the PATH connects unambiguously to the end point of life. In the following section we show that the CONTAINER source domain, too, illustrates varying possibilities of ‘old age’.

8.2.2 CONTAINER

In this section we discuss how the CONTAINER concept – as a superordinate term given that there are different types of containers – is employed by English speakers in conceptualizing ‘old age’. It is materialised by the prepositions *in* and *into*, *out of*, and the verb *enter*. 10 instances in the corpus attest to this metaphor OLD AGE IS A CONTAINER, which often appears together with the LOCATION concept. In general, the attributes associated with OLD AGE include softness, inactivity, being slow, suffering and loneliness. All the identified instances are used to categorise groups of people in their old age other than the speaker. The exceptions are two uses of the first-person collective pronoun *us* and the possessive form *our* as in “in our old age” and “us into a healthy old age”.

The next instance presents a CONTAINER-PLACE combination.

(13)

Fashion expert Gemma Champ said many women now *stay* physically *active into their old age*, meaning they have the confidence to carry off younger designs. ...

The implied norm from (13) is that older women would not be expected be confident to wear younger designs because clothing can be the embodied representation of age (Twigg 2013). The example shows the change from this convention. Here, the lexical item *active* is connected to being young and it is considered a good thing if this trait carries on with

ageing, as shown by the verb *stay*. That means “to remain in a place” while being in a movement “into” old age, advocating that older women should act as the younger ones do, which effectively denies old age.

The following example also uses “stay” but slightly different from (13) because the combined concept with CONTAINER is OBJECT instead of MOVEMENT.

(14)

Scientists find genetic clue to mental decline ... inequities - why some *stay sharp as a tack in their old age* while others are forced to give up crosswords at the age of 60.

Technically, *sharp as a tack* in (14) is a simile by using *as*, synonymous to *sharp as a razor* to refer to people who are “acute or penetrating in intellect or perception” (*OED*) given that sharp has its meaning of “having a keen edge or point”. Thus, it means that some people are still intelligent and quick-minded despite old age in comparison to *mental decline*. The adjective *sharp* brings about the meaning of having a piercing point, which implies the concept of OBJECT.

Moreover, *remain/stay active* implies the metaphor STATE AS LOCATION, which perceives OLD AGE as a different PLACE from youth. *Stay physically active* requires one to be active as they were before while their age has changed, that is, people make conscious efforts to keep away from OLD AGE. Here, it is another state of youth – i.e., *being sharp* – in which one stays. Like *remain*, the verb *stay* means the ageing party still embodies the feature of being young, i.e., the mind still functions well. This type of conceptualisation recognises the change of life stage on the one hand, as well as the non-movement of ageing on the other. The idiom *sharp as a tack* emphasises the quickness of their mind. Thus, different from

being physical active in the previous example, this one points out that being active in the mind is another possibility in old age. These examples highlight some high expectations of 'old age', i.e., ageing while remain young physically and mentally.

The following example indicates the fact there is substance in the CONTAINER.

(15) EN

[...] of helping people to *get* what they wanted *out of their old age* rather than just "writing them off" by assuming they had to [...]

By saying that people can get something *out of* their old age, it acknowledges the fact that OLD AGE as a CONTAINER has substance to offer. As such, from the content-oriented perspective, a positive attitude is displayed in the example. The following example also shows this:

(16) EN

Each generation, *entering* old age and *filling it out*, brings something new, because each generation is ...

The instance emphasises the active role – *entering* and *filling it out* – of the generation in dealing with the relationship between them and old age. Although this is uttered from a third person's perspective (meaning, it is talking about other people's old age instead of personal experience), it opens up another option of talking about old age. We do find an instance (17) whereby the first-person collective pronoun is used, which is a case about care for later life and not really about the experience of ageing.

(17) EN

In a nationwide scheme, 45 minutes helping a neighbour to eat breakfast or go shopping would earn us 45 minutes' help *in our old age*.

In sum, the examples in this section partly echo the study by Thomas and Adams (2014) that 'age as container' is used to categorise other people. In general, the CONTAINER domain offers an effective window to see cultural beliefs and attitudes to old age. Overall, it seems to be commonly expected that the older one gets, the milder and less active one may become. However, the expectations are changing. Older adults are also considered to be able to keep being active. What is encouraging is that the focus is directed to the content of the 'age container', hence the gains from old age.

The data suggest that CONTAINER on its own is not strongly evaluative in perceiving ageing. To a large degree, this overlaps with the AGE AS A LOCATION metaphor viewing the location as a bounded area. As a CONTAINER, the contents inside of old age can vary. Thus, we find that OLD AGE can also be viewed as a CONTAINER OBJECT (as opposed to a CONTAINER LOCATION), which highlights the substance in it. We contend that the CONTAINER OBJECT scenario insinuates a relatively more positive attitude toward old age. In doing so, objectifying 'old age' may direct the ageing party to a positive outlook of ageing.

8.2.3 VIOLENCE

Another frequently used source concept is VIOLENCE, with eight frequencies in our corpus. In this perspective, 'old age' is filled with VIOLENCE and ACTION, exemplified by the eight tokens that vary from battle-associated lexical items to force-related terms that cause combative actions to happen. For instance, *defence* in the following text.

(18) EN

VETERAN broadcaster Dame Joan Bakewell *has launched a passionate defence of old age* - saying that some of the best life experiences are only appreciated with the wisdom that comes with maturity.

Defence is a military action related term. Here, the way of defending OLD AGE is by pointing out the positive attributes, such as “maturity” and “wisdom”. However, the fact that Dame Joan Bakewell needs to defend OLD AGE implies that OLD AGE is under attack, at least in the corresponding profession, i.e., broadcasting.

(19) EN

We are advised that medicine and its promise of an extended life span have given us an unprecedented opportunity: we can spin out the prime of our lives indefinitely. And if we *surrender* to old age, we are fools or worse, cowards.

The article where (19) is taken is titled as “An old codger’s guide to life in the slow lane” which is a review of the book *Travels With Epicurus*²⁸ by Daniel Klein (May 2nd 2013, *Mailonline*). The article in the *Daily Mail* by Marcus Berkman highlights that the current belief surrounding old age is that old people should enjoy old age by staying young, as with “spin out the prime of our lives indefinitely”, rather than surrender to ‘old age’ because that would be foolish or cowardly, which reflects social perceptions and expectations of old age. Hence, example (19) illustrates that with such social expectations, there comes the consequence of surrendering to old age, i.e., fools and cowards. Thus, *surrender* shows that *old age* and *we* can clash and can create tensions between ‘old age’ and ageing individuals.

²⁸ The 4th-century BC Greek philosopher.

Afterall, *surrender* is a military term given its definition: “to give up (something) out of one's own possession or power into that of another who has or asserts a claim to it; to yield on demand or compulsion; esp. (Military) to give up the possession of (a fortress, town, territory, etc.) to an enemy or assailant” (*OED*). ‘Old age’ is viewed by the English society as hostile and powerful and individuals are motivated to be defiant. The article stresses that the book by Daniel Klein counteracts such social perceptions.

The article then supports that the attitude for a happy old age should be acceptance. Nevertheless, it is important to remind us that *surrender* is a term that triggers combative senses, which intensifies the perceived relationship between the involved parties. If older people *surrender to old age*, then, they empower ‘old age’ and let it take control of their life.

Another term which suggests that the ageing individual bow down to ‘old age’ is *succumb*:
(20) EN

World's oldest person dies aged 116 [...] Jiroemon Kimura, from Kyotango in Japan,
succumbs to old age after seeing four emperors and 61 prime ministers come and go.

Succumb – “to bring down, bring low, overwhelm” (*OED*) – falls under the VIOLENCE domain. It implies that ‘old age’ is the superior force to which the person Jiroemon Kimura has given way. Thus, example (20) constructs a natural course of life in the way of a battle between the person and OLD AGE, making the former appear as the loser (even though Jiroemon was then the oldest person in the world as the article claims). As such, not only does OLD AGE appear to be aggressive, but also the ageing party is not strong enough in the

fight. Furthermore, OLD AGE is portrayed as the sole cause of death, which is a type of narrative that leads to fear of AGEING and OLD AGE.

More evidence shows that OLD AGE is so antagonised that actions are taken to “beat” it:

(21) EN

Cohabiting *beats* a lonely old age

The above sentence is the headline of a news article in *The Times* claiming that cohabiting has taken off in Britain among the “over 85s”: “a growing number of the ‘oldest old’ in Britain are living together rather than marrying.”. The verb *beats* – “to strike with repeated blows” (*OED*) – carries a sense of VIOLENCE. The adjective “lonely” makes the action of *beat* targeted. However, “a lonely old age” in the headline is just a generalisation of the fact that some older people who might have ended up living alone choose to live together. As such, ‘old age’ is easily equated with loneliness, which legitimises the violent action of *beating*. As shown above, in the VIOLENCE domain, OLD AGE is in the role of a powerful figure based on extracts (19-20) to which the person *surrender* or *succumb*. Instance (21) animates OLD AGE to be the violent antagonist. We also find that the VIOLENCE sense is expressed through the outcome of an unspecified action on the ageing person. For instance,

(22) EN

Sir Anthony had vowed to continue working until he reached 100. At an exhibition at the Gagosian Gallery in London in June, he told *The Independent*: “It’s what I like doing. *Old age is a shock*, but I still enjoy making the works. I look forward to going into the studio. I would be bored if I didn’t do that.”

The instance above is extracted from the article “Anthony Caro, sculpture's great apprentice, dies aged 89” in *The Times* (2013). The artist implies that he was not mentally prepared for old age because a *shock* indicates the suddenness and unpreparedness of the arrival of ‘old age’, even though it is a natural biological process. The implication is that the chronological age is separate from the subjective experience of ‘old age’, i.e. being the victim of a *shock*. In this mapping, ‘old age’ is the ATTACKER, and the ageing person is the RECEIVER of the attacking action. Moreover, conceptualising old age as some kind of violent force can also be expressed in the following way:

(23) EN

[...] And then in a matter of seconds *I was propelled prematurely* into old age, and I now observe my contemporaries with deeply envious eyes - desperately wishing, to rehearse that corny old line, I could have some of what they're having [...]

Propel is “to drive or push forwards, onwards, or in a specified direction; to cause to move along” (*OED*), which triggers a sense of action and movement. The passive voice hides the agent of the action but it is implied that ‘old age’ is the force that causes the action to happen. The feeling of being old appears to be a quick process as it happens “in a matter of seconds”. Besides, the process is against the ageing party’s will because the person thinks it is not the time yet to be categorised as old as *prematurely* indicates. That is, the person does not connect the chronological age with psychological age together for sure. The unwillingness thus strikes the ageing party suddenly. The fact that the action is in a passive voice means that there is some form of force that has pushed the person forward into the state of being old. Like the feeling of a *shock*, this example also hints at unpreparedness and unexpectedness for the transitioning into old age.

Conceptualising OLD AGE as VIOLENCE contributes to the perception that old age is a problem. Hence, action plans follow suit. We see the verb *tackle* is used repeatedly:

(24) EN

a. He's buying a stairlift to heaven; Robert Plant's new album *tackles old age* and loneliness with gusto, says Will Hodgkinson

b. In the wake of Germaine Greer or agony aunts Irma Kurtz and Virginia Ironside, the most influential women's voices *tackling old age* tend to suggest they are contentedly post-sexual, "free at last" from erotic passion...

The verb *tackle* bears the meaning "to grip, lay hold of, take in hand, deal with; to fasten upon, attack, encounter (a person or animal) physically" (*OED*). We hold that the action of tackling in both cases conjures up a scene of physical contact, portraying old age as something to be tamed. The difference lies in the manners that come with the action of tackling. The lexical unit *with gusto* denotes a sense of enjoyment. However, *tackling* in (24b) is accompanied with the emotional word *agony* that implies suffering. Regardless of the manners of the actions and results of the actions, these two examples present the notion that old age is problematic. It is an individual's choice to deal with it with passion or pain.

The terms *defence* and *surrender* are considered as War-based discourse according to CMT (Land J 2003:5). Hence, lexical items like *beat* can be allocated to the VIOLENCE group (Potts and Semino 2017:60). In this section, we try to explain that 'old age' is associated with VIOLENCE in English, in which 'old age' can be viewed in terms of an OPPONENT or a FORCE.

The ageing party has either physical conflict with it (*succumb, surrender*) or experiences the effect that 'old age' brings, for instance, a *shock*.

To summarise the mappings identified in the conceptualisations in the VIOLENCE domain, we find:

- a) OLD AGE IS AN ADVERSARY THAT HOLDS POWER OVER THE AGEING PERSON (see examples 19 and 20).
- b) OLD AGE IS AN ADVERSARY (see examples 21 and 24). Different from the point above, this does not indicate the power dynamics.
- c) OLD AGE IS A FORCE THAT INFLUENCES THE AGEING PERSON (see examples 22-23).

Arguably, the conceptual metaphors discussed in this section suggests a view on getting old in terms of victimising the ageing person. As such, old age can be actively hostile resulting in the ageing individual having to *surrender* and *succumb*. The person who succumbs to old age seems as not having fought hard enough to win. This way of viewing old age is far from comforting, as in example (20). It may even stir up emotions that intensify anxiety and anguish toward old age which is hostile and powerful.

To conclude, we contend that the conceptual metaphors identified above serve to emphasise the prevalence of stereotypical views of OLD AGE, as being infirm and feeble. Equating old age and a *shock* emphasises the quick arrival of old age as it nominalises the verb form of *shock* i.e., "to move suddenly and swiftly" (OED online). In a more pronounced way, OLD AGE is in a rival position to a person in a battle, in which a person *surrenders* or *succumbs* to OLD AGE. OLD AGE is so powerful that it puts older adults' intellectual capacity

in doubt. Research shows older adults in particular tend to fall victims to scams in the UK and those victims are described as “stupid, gullible, and greedy” (Bailey, Taylor, Kingston and Watts 2021). The scam victim image is one example of using the stereotypical impression of old age (weak and feeble) to reason and justify incidental consequences of behaviours (becoming victims of scams).

On constructing old age, Vincent (2007:944) argues that “military metaphors [e.g., *war on old age*] are particularly useful [in communicating the meaning of ‘old’] because they explicitly or implicitly characterise old age as an unmitigated enemy”. Having investigated the examples in detail, our analysis suggests people are mindfully avoiding the label of old age given that OLD AGE appears to be a sudden realisation. Attitudes toward ‘old age’ as such can affect the way we live. Example (18) echoes the VIOLENCE perception – using the term *launched a defence* – calling for the recognition of the positive attributes that ‘old age’ brings, i.e., “wisdom” and “maturity”. Notice that associating OLD AGE with VIOLENCE tends to be seen in the discourse about others. In other words, very few of the examples are uttered from a first person’s perspective. These examples might not represent specific personal ageing experiences, but such examples showcase normative expectations about ‘old age’ in the culture.

8.2.4 DISEASE

The question of whether old age is a disease has been debated within gerontology focusing on the relationship between medicine and biology (Vincent 2006:687). One of the metaphors for ageing in the disease category is recognised as AGEING IS PATHOLOGY (Swacha 2017). Consequently, pursuing a *cure* has been driving relevant research. Our data

suggest that 'old age' is indeed conceptualised as a DISEASE, which supports the perception that 'old age' is associated with decrepitude.

(25) EN

We can't wait for a *miracle cure for old age*; More funding for dementia research is welcome.

Extract (25) is another headline in *The Times* (2013). There are two issues in this example. Firstly, it medicalises *old age* by looking for a *cure* for it, even though old age is a natural process and part of our life. Besides, "can't wait" illustrates the urgency of the medical condition. Secondly, *old age* is mentioned together with dementia, which makes a direct link between these two concepts and reduces them to one of the many facets of old age. The case is even more impactful when *old age* is compared to a specific disease as the example below (26) shows:

(26) EN

[...] One of Illich's arguments in those days was that medicine, despite its apparent successes, was not notably increasing life expectancy. Alas, he was wrong. *Artificially prolonged old age is the new iatrogenic malady.*

The example (26) above is from an article by Margaret Drabble in the *Guardian*. Illich refers to Ivan Illich, the Austrian philosopher, and this extract deals with one of Illich's arguments on *medicine* and *old age*. "Iatrogenic" is a term that Illich uses to label diseases. Illich does not have faith in medicine for "not notably increasing life expectancy". The article's author, the writer, Margaret Drabble, however, points out that medicine indeed increases life expectancy greatly. Yet, the author compares it to a new disease and re-labels it as the "new iatrogenic malady".

In the article, Drabble explicitly puts it “As we move into our unwanted last decade, we will, entirely predictably, become lonelier and more likely to suffer from dementia and more and more expensive to maintain.” Hence, the underlying metaphor insinuated is ARTIFICIALLY PROLONGED OLD AGE IS A DISEASE. Strictly speaking, the author meant the years in old age during which one needs medical care is considered as a disease. This way, the novelist Margaret Drabble²⁹ is arguing against the idea of extending lifespan through medicine. In the following example, ‘old age’ has been given a medical character by suggesting a remedy for it.

(27) EN

[...] He [Daniel Klein] wrote: “Of all the things that wisdom provides to help one live one's entire life in happiness, the greatest by far is the possession of friendship. ”

And the infirmities of old age? *Moaning to your friends is by far the best medicine.*

(27) is extracted from a review for a book *Travels with Epicurus* by Daniel Klein. The fact that a *medicine* needed implies precisely that OLD AGE is perceived as a DISEASE. In addition, there is another metaphor, MOANING TO FRIENDS IS A MEDICINE FOR THE DISEASE, in which *moaning to friends* is the target and medicine is the source concept. Thus, this metaphor medicalises both FRIENDSHIP and OLD AGE. Not only FRIENDSHIP, but also more resources that can be connected to old age are within the remit of medicine as a comparison is implied by the superlative term “best”. Ironically, the author is promoting living an “entire life in happiness”, complaining to friends – even though is the most effective “medicine” – already implies unhappiness in life.

²⁹ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Margaret_Drabble

It is undeniable that old age is exposed to illness much more and the physical change is inevitable. However, when OLD AGE is repeatedly associated with DISEASE as examples 24-26 do, which consequently hide other aspects that are healthy and satisfying, such as knowledge, experience, and achievement, etc. As such, it is fair to say that DISEASE is a rather negative source domain which facilitates negative perceptions of 'old age', such as "ageing is to do with what goes wrong in old age, with failure" (Vincent 2007). Given that ill-health is indeed part of the later life (Benczes, Burrridge, Sharifian, and Allan 2017), it is very easy to link the concept of disease with old age by some manifestations of it. That means there may be a metonymic base for perceiving old age in terms of disease.

One of the problems is that metaphors that have a metonymic basis are more basic and natural because they have strong physical or causal association (L&J 2003:39, Radden 2003:93). If this is the case, the reasoning of behind the metaphor OLD AGE IS A DISEASE is that old age is the cause of a disease based on the proximity between old age and ill-health, i.e., medicines appear more often in old age. Another problem is, 'old age' is so hard to define that it changes time to time and society to society. Therefore, these metaphors are in theory best avoided, especially it has been long debated whether ageing should be considered as a disease (Vincent 2006), so as not to facilitate the possibility of letting OLD AGE IS A DISEASE become the dominant discourse. Kritchevsky argues (2019:125):

"The 'old age is a disease' metaphor would lead us to act and feel about advanced age the way do about disease. Old age would be something to be feared and avoided. There would be a tendency to expect to identify abnormal pathologies driving aging, which hucksters could exploit to offer 'aging cures.' There would be a

tendency to expect persons of advanced age to cede autonomy to medical authorities.”

There are two points to bear in mind regarding the above argument. One is whether or not OLD AGE IS A DISEASE is a pronounced metaphor in English. The other is, if so, to what extent the fear of old age as fear of disease is felt by persons at an advanced age. Our analysis finds that DISEASE is indeed used as a source domain in conceptualising ageing. However, it is still open for exploration whether or not it leads to disease-related actions and feelings. That said, once again, it reveals the pessimistic view on ageing.

8.2.5 A SCARY, EVIL, DANDEROUS THING

The writer Martin Amis is quoted in an article in *The Times* saying “old age is not for old people”, and compares ageing to a low budget horror film. Because it is a low budget one, the quality gets worse as the film develops – meaning old age is worse than other life stages:

(28) EN

[...] Martin Amis gave a talk in which he said that old age was “*like starring in a low-budget horror film, saving the worst till last*”. Pointing to the likes of John Updike and Saul Bellow as writers whose work got weaker in old age, Amis admitted that he himself, then aged 50, was finding his vocabulary shrinking.

In example (28), the key information implied is that old age is scary like a horror film. It is understood by the author that the quality of life in old age is worse than before, given that Amis says at the age of 50 his vocabulary is shrinking.

Another threatening THING is captured in this way:

(29) EN

[...] But he [Lou Reed] also admitted that old age was *taking its toll* on his body.

Appearing at the Cannes Lions international festival of creativity four months ago, Reed remarked on his increasing frailty. "How could time go that quickly? It never ceases to amaze me," he said. "The other day I was 19, I could fall down and get back up. Now if I fall down you are talking about nine months of physical therapy."

Lou Reed, the lead singer of the Velvet Underground is quoted indirectly in the metaphor – *old age was taking its toll on his body* – about the physical change in old age. In it, AGEING is conceptualised as paying a price for something and the price is "frailty", e.g., falling down, making 'old age' as a possessor of frailties hence "age takes its toll" (Näslund 2017:28-35). The two examples above show that there is a certain degree of anxiety surrounding old age. Furthermore, fear of OLD AGE can build up to the point that people seek to *escape* from it indicated in the news headline in *The Guardian* (2015):

(30) EN

After Electra review - fear, resentment and brutality in this vengeful family drama;
Tricycle, London as an 81-year-old artist announces that she plans to kill herself, April de Angelis asks: is old age a *curse* from which we are entitled to *escape*?

The text above (30) introduces a review for the play *After Electra* by April de Angelis. The idea is that through her play, the author de Angelis posits the question: what if OLD AGE is a CURSE? In her play, this is explored by her central figure trying to commit suicide to avoid the "penalties of age" as it is mentioned in the article. In the headline, the plan "to kill herself" is used as the way of escaping. It is implied that perceiving OLD AGE as a CURSE prompts the escaping mindset. Of course, this is a review of a play so that the perception in

this example is not directly linked to personal ageing experience but is in the art as a theme under discussion.

Similarly, the example below (31) conceptualises OLD AGE as a potentially DANGEROUS THING according to the meaning of *impending* “of evil, danger, etc.: that impends or is about to fall or happen” (*OED*). Like extract (30), text (31) concerns the thoughts of old age drawing on the story of the main characters Nick and Meg in the film *Le Week-End* by Hanif Kureishi, which “meditates on the age-old problem of marriage and desire”.

(31) EN

Time and health are running out for them as they [Nick and Meg] consider their *impending old age* and wonder what sort of future they might want, either together or apart ...

The example suggests that *old age* is associated with two notions: life comes to an end and health is gone. This way, OLD AGE is imagined as a DANGEROUS THING that can emerge unpredictably. Meanwhile, we see that *impending* tends to collocate with death as in “Angus was unable to speak with his first wife about her *impending death*” (Mowat 2005), which reveals that basically old age is as scary as death.

The next example (32) involves the idiomatic phrase *double whammy*.

(32) EN

Old age is a challenge for everyone but even more so for the estimated one million Britons over 55 who are lesbian, gay or bisexual (LGB). They face the *double whammy of old age* plus homophobia.

Whammy refers to “an evil influence or ‘hex’” (*OED*) and *double whammy* can mean something effective, powerful, problematic, etc. In the example, the two powerful and problematic influences are understood as homophobia and old age. The characteristics associated with *double whammy* – effective and problematic – emphasise that OLD AGE is a big potential evil influence. Further to acknowledge this, the verb *face* also implies there is “danger, an enemy or anything unpleasant” (*OED*).

In sum, the analysis of this category of instances totalling six, i.e., SCARY, EVIL and DANGEROUS THINGS, amounts to suggest that ‘old age’ causes fear and anxiety. Conceptualising old age as danger/evil in arts, as shown in the examples (31-32) may project a reality to which people refer when they are facing old age in their daily life. In some cases, individuals would choose to avoid old age as in “old age is not only hard to endure, it is hard to watch”. It is worth further investigating to what extent the narrative – OLD AGE IS A THING THAT IS EVIL/DANGEROUS – affects the perceptions of old age by ageing individuals. Alternatively, old age can be felt closely by perceiving it as a thing that lives or has a life, which is discussed in the next section.

8.2.6 A LIVING THING

There are five instances in this category, which reveals that ‘old age’ is conceptualised as a LIVING THING, i.e., ‘old age’ has a life. For instance, like a person, ‘old age’ also has *toddlerhood* in (33) and *youth* in (34).

(33) EN

Although *On Chesil Beach* was acclaimed for its McEwanesque combination of forensic elegance and creeping disquiet, reviews of his most recent books, *Solar* and

Sweet Tooth, have been more muted; some have wondered if his writing still has the same bite or vehemence. Novelist John Banville used the dread word "*mellowness*" in a review of *Saturday*. [...] "Writers are a bit like politicians - they never quit while they're ahead, they have to fail and then quit. But I doubt it. Not unless I go completely nuts." There is a touch of defiance in his tone. "I'll be retired - it won't be an active choice. Anyway, I'm in *the toddlerhood* of old age."

The quotations by the writer Iain McEwan in response to reviews to his books that indicate he is getting old, e.g., "*mellowness*", demonstrate his "*defiance*" to be considered old. By contrast, McEwan conceptualises 'old age' as an ongoing process by saying he is in the *toddlerhood of old age*, meaning beginning to get older. *Toddlerhood* belongs to the semantic field of a 'lifespan' and it is followed by *teenage* and *adulthood*. Thus, there is something to which the ageing individual can look forward. Technically speaking, old age and toddlerhood are two stages within the same domain. Nevertheless, toddlerhood here has a metaphorical meaning as the source concept for the beginning of the (target concept) 'old age'. Hence this process not only personifies old age but also brings humour to the discourse because old age and toddlerhood are almost the opposites of the lifespan. The next example also attests to this perception.

(34)

"Forty is the *old age of youth*; 50 the *youth of old age*," chipped in Victor Hugo.

The above quotation is from a passage in *The Guardian* (January 1st 2015) inviting readers to recommend song lyrics that "make reference to being any age". Therefore, the chosen songs can be understood as representations of the persons' perceptions of the ages. This

quote in (34) is basically saying that *old* and *young* are relative. The first “old age” is used figuratively to mean forty is the end of ‘youth’ just as the way the following “youth” is used to mean an early phase of old age. This way, old age is conceptualised as a process like example (33) and is given human characteristics. Such perceptions view ageing in a more positive way than other domains in the preceding analysis, for example, DISEASE and EVIL THINGS because the focus is on the process of ageing rather than some unwanted aspects that can happen in old age.

Yet, in this domain, LIVING THINGS, there are also tokens to show that ‘old age’ is rivalry.

(35) EN

I'm having a tough few weeks, emotionally, because soon I'll be off on my first holiday for 10 years [...] You keep calm, find some in your size, go into the changing room, take all your clothes off and try them on surrounded by giant mirrors. That's the bit I don't like. I never have. "You are uptight," some chap sneered at me in the 60s. But now I'm more *down-loose*, and *old age is glaring back* at me. I don't have to see it at home: I just avoid mirrors. But here, in the wrestling in a shop cubicle, I have to face it.

Glare has the meaning “to look fixedly and fiercely” (*OED*). In the extract (35), the author is lamenting how old age is off-putting. In comparison to “uptight”, the author uses “down-loose” wittily – *up* and *down* are antonyms so are *tight* and *lose*, because the metaphorical sense is embedded in the literal comparison. DOWN and LOOSE imply the physical decline with ageing. Furthermore, the author conceptualises OLD AGE as a fierce looking LIVING THING in front of author and “glaring back”, which can be intimidating and implies the discomfort of feeling old.

Extract (36) is from a review of *A BLAZE OF AUTUMN SUNSHINE: THE LAST DIARY* by Tony Benn (*The Guardian* 2013).

(36) EN

In these diaries, old age is clearly *catching up with him*. 'I'm feeling extremely tired all the time, and I just wonder how long I'll be able to stay in this huge house... And, to be quite candid, who really wants to read all the junk I'm collecting?'

The phrase *catch up* by definition means "to succeed in reaching a person who or thing which is travelling in a particular direction; to draw level" (*OED*). In this context, that means OLD AGE is conceptualised as moving thing and is reaching the ageing person, i.e., Tony Benn. By which, it is illustrated in the following sentence about the physical tiredness and reflecting on how long he would be able to live. That is to say, Tony Benn is acknowledging old age. From the author's perspective, OLD AGE is an active and opposing role influencing Tony Benn's behaviours and thoughts.

(37) EN

And before we knew it that time came. Old age is too *grim to contemplate* and then it is upon you.

In instance (37), the author of the article mentions that their mother did not want to talk about a care plan because old age is too *grim* to think about. *Grim* bears the meaning of "stern, unrelenting, merciless" (*OED*) which are personal attributes. Thus, here, 'old age' is perceived as a figure that a person would want to avoid. However, 'old age' is so fast and so fierce that the ageing person does not want to face it, i.e., making a care plan.

In sum, our investigation into examples (32)-(37) reveals that 'old age' can be perceived as an animated thing that has its life stages (32)-(34), that has an intimidating look (35) and

(37), and that can be competitive (36). Unlike disease or a scary/evil thing, a living thing is not inherently positive or negative. Thus, it is up to an individual in a certain context, society exactly, to make sense of it.

8.2.7 FRUIT

This section discusses two tokens, *ripe old age* and *mellow*. There are seven frequencies which are used for two purposes. According to the dictionary, *ripe old age* means “advanced, far on in years” (OED). *Ripe* denotes that the source concept is FRUIT, and it symbolises “having developed to the point of readiness for harvesting and eating” (OED). Hence, this can be considered the prime time of one’s life. In that case, ‘old age’ is perceived as the peak of life stage, achieved by living through the years. Such as:

(38) EN

[...] At one point I asked him when he (former musician Lou Reed) intended to die. “I would like to live to a *ripe old age* and raise watermelons in Wyoming [...]

In, (38) Lou Reed used *ripe old age* to mean the peak of his life, which is one of the examples that the idiom is used to mean an advanced age that comes with value. In other cases, the aspect of ‘old’ is not necessarily reflected as Vincent (2007: 944) states that “meanings of ‘old’ are communicated in concrete situations using mutually comprehensible linguistic and cultural resources”. Such as:

(39) EN

The most remarkable English classical musician since the celebrated Beecham. Rattle has scaled the highest peaks. Appointed CBE at *the ripe old age* of 32, he was

knighted seven years later, and elected principal conductor of the Berlin Philharmonic, the world's most formidable orchestra, at 44.

As example (39) shows, being appointed CBE (Commander of the Most Excellent Order of the British Empire) demonstrates the musician's achievement because the honour is awarded for exceptional achievement or service. When the actual age is 32, the term *old age* is certainly not used literally. Therefore, *ripe old age* in this case is not aligned with the dictionary meaning, i.e., "advanced, far on in years". In fact, the opposite meaning is implied. That is, at a young age of 32, Rattle has "scaled the highest peaks".

In the data, there are three other instances like example (39) in which *ripe old age* is used to refer to someone with an outstanding achievement at a young age. They all function within ironical utterances as hyperbolic expressions in the opposite direction of the literal meaning. The rest four cases of *ripe old age* preserve the dictionary meaning.

Another instance in this category is *mellow*.

(40) EN

If you thought that Robert De Niro had *mellowed in his old age*, think again. His new film with Luc Besson is feistily violent and he still hankers after making a sequel to *Taxi Driver*.

Mellow in (40) is also associated with fruit, meaning to "ripen or soften" (OED online), or about food becoming milder in taste. The sentence suggests that old age can be considered as an element that shifts a person's personality. The actor Robert De Niro³⁰, who is famous

³⁰ McNiece, M. (2020). Robert De Niro What I Know Now. *People*, 93(4), 55–57.

for playing tough characters in crime movies (e.g., *Taxi Driver* in 1976), has changed his career trajectory to making comedies³¹. Such a career shift co-occurs in his old age. In this case, the past perfect tense *If you thought Robert De Niro had mellowed* in example (40) suggests that you might have linked the two facts together allowing old age to be the stereotypical reason of the change. Hence, Robert De Niro might be thought to become milder or to have softened in his acting because he is old now. This assumption is subsequently rectified in example (40) because it mentions that Robert De Niro still thinks about getting a sequel to *Taxi Driver* to be made, indicating that he is not becoming softer because of his old age.

8.2.8 Summary

Based on our data, we find that ‘old age’ seems to be associated with a range of source domains, including JOURNEY, CONTAINER, VIOLENCE, DISEASE, a SCARY, EVIL and DANGEROUS THING, A LIVING THING and FRUIT. Some of these conceptualisations encourage an avoidance attitude towards old age. The DOWNWARD movement (e.g., *tip into old age*) in the JOURNEY domain is used for understanding the direction of the ageing progress in old age. Besides, OLD AGE IS AN ADVERSARY THAT HOLDS POWER OVER THE AGEING PERSON in the VIOLENCE domain or OLD AGE IS A DISEASE in the DISEASE domain. We find that most of the source concepts evoke a negative attitude (i.e., focusing on the physical loss) to ‘old age’:

- a) GETTING OLD IS GOING DOWNWARD (e.g., *descend into an infirm old age*) highlights the bodily changes as decline in later years.

³¹ SINHA-ROY, P. (2020). Robert De Niro: Killer Comedian? *Hollywood Reporter*, 426(3), 60–61.

- b) OLD AGE IS A POWERFUL OPPONENT (e.g., *succumbs to old age*) views OLD AGE as a powerful figure which creates a hostile relationship between the ageing person and OLD AGE.
- c) OLD AGE IS A DISEASE (e.g., *we can't wait for a miracle cure for old age*) ignores other aspects of life as an older adult emotionally and intellectually by treating old age and certain diseases synonymously.
- d) OLD AGE IS A SCARY, EVIL and DANDEROUS THING (e.g., *their impending old age*) facilitates the mentality to avoid old age.

We contend that the reluctance to face old age seems to be well reflected in English. That being said, there are some aspects from these two conceptual metaphors that provide constructive and alternative views: OLD AGE IS A CONTAINER OBJECT (e.g., *to get what they wanted out of their old age*), and OLD AGE IS A LIVING THING IN TERMS OF LIFE STAGES (e.g., *the toddlerhood of old age*). The CONTAINER OBJECT concept focuses on substance in the CONTAINER, hence something to be gained by the person experiencing old age. The LIFE STAGE concept stresses the aspect that that getting old is a process just like a person who has different life stages, which offers a refreshing perspective in comparison to the one that links old age and death together.

It should be pointed out that it is difficult to classify the instances neatly into one source domain rather than another, especially among these: a SCARY, EVIL and DANGEROUS THINGS vs a LIVING THING. Provided that we are not committed to the differentiation of the conceptual system, we will leave them as they are to allow our analysis to bring forward the perceptions of OLD AGE in coherent domains. Meanwhile, it is important to bear in mind

that these perceptions of OLD AGE often reflect societal expectations rather than individuals' subjective ageing experience. For instance, OLD AGE is characterised by inactivity and softness (see the examples under the CONTAINER domain). That is, being active is valued in the society. Hence the token *remain active in old age*, which is in congruence with what the notion of *successful ageing* promotes, i.e., healthy, positive, happy and involved (Benczes, Burridge, Sharifian, and Allan 2017:615). That means, people might combine social expectations with their living experiences. If so, the source concepts mentioned above that are associated with negative views on OLD AGE reveal that English-speaking societies' prevalent view of OLD AGE is indeed negative.

In the following section we offer an analysis of the Chinese conceptualisations for comparison to the English conceptualisations of OLD AGE.

8.3 Conceptualising 'old age' in Chinese

Having seen that 'old age' is in fact a multi-faceted term in English, we seek to find out whether or not the Chinese perceptions differ. In the *Contemporary Chinese Dictionary*, *laonian* 'old age' is defined as "*60 sui yishang de nianji*, 60 year above DE age, 'person over 60 years of age'" (CCD 2002:1159), which sounds a more clear-cut definition but seems to confuse 'old age' with 'old people', which leaves even more space for us to explore the meaning of 'old age'. In this section, we examine three main source concepts, CONTAINER, LOCATION and A LIVING THING followed by a summary. Our investigation finds that the prevalent conceptualisation is the CONTAINER metaphor, with 52 frequencies out of 77 in total. The essential purpose of the CONTAINER and LOCATION metaphors seems to be to categorise the person. Not only do the data capture the manner of moving into the

CONTAINER of old age based on the verb phrases *bu ru* 'step into', *jin ru* 'enter into', and *mai ru* 'stride into', etc., but also shows the substance inside the CONTAINER, for which two scenarios are discussed in the following analysis.

8.3.1 A CONTAINER WITH UNDESIRABLE CONTENTS

The awareness of categorizing people being old or not is evoked by recognizing the contents in the CONTAINER. 80% of these referring to 'old age' as a CONTAINER that a person enters, e.g. *bu ru lao nian de biao zhi*, step into old age DE sign (a sign of stepping into old age).

There are nine instances tying 'old age' to forgetfulness, sleep loss and solitude. Indeed, these are features of physical changes but are mostly articulated in a playful way by younger people. This, then, reflects general beliefs about what it is like in being old rather than real experience of old age. Examples below describe how these old age-related features are brought up.

(41) CN

*Xianzai tebie xiang yinju shanlin!!! Wo zhe shi tizao bu ru
laonian de jiezou ang!!!*

Now especially want hide-live mountain-forest!!! Me this is ahead-of-time step into
old age DE rhythm INTERJECTION!!!

'Now I really want to live in woods like a hermit!!! Is this a sign of getting old in
advance?'

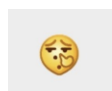
Living in a secluded place means to withdraw from the society. Linking this with old age illustrates the relationship between older people and the society. In old Chinese, the

idiomatic expression *gao lao huan xiang*, ask old return hometown, ‘retire and return to one’s hometown’, bears this meaning. In a broader sense, it is used to mean that one requests “to be released of government duties and retire on the account of age” (CCD 2002:648). In particular, *yinju*, hide live, ‘withdraw from official positions and live in a secluded place because of world-weariness or dissatisfaction toward the establishment’ (CCD 2002:2294) manifests the perception of self and the society in old age. The exclamation marks exhibit the emotional response to such a thought and the lexical unit *ang* ‘high pitched’ is an interjection (CCD 2002:17), which can express surprise, cheekiness, humour, and cuteness. In the dictionary, it has the meaning “of voice, sound, etc., high-pitched” as in the compound word *gaolang* ‘high pitched’ (CCD 2002:17). This is a non-old person, see *tiqian* ‘in advance’, making the link between old age and the thought of a secluded life. That implies living in isolation is one of the features as being old. Another attribute is believed to be sleep.

(42) CN

[...] *ranhou zenme dou shui bu zhao zhe shi yao tiqian bu ru laonian de jiezou*
me [pick nose]

[...] Then how all sleep not AUX this is will in-advance
step into old age DE rhythm AUX[pick nose emoji]



‘[...] then no matter how [I tried], [I] could not fall asleep. Is this a
 sign of *entering old age* ahead of my time?’

(43) CN

zong shi zheme zao jiu xing le, zhe shi bu ru lao nian de jiezou ma ?
 Always is this early then awake AUX, this is step into old age DE rhythm AUX?

‘I always wake up this early. Is this a sign of entering old age?’

These examples mention two sleep patterns that are believed to occur with old age, one being struggling to fall asleep and the other early wakeup. It is made explicit in example (42) that the person is not old through the phrase *tiqian*, ‘ahead of time’. The emoji face at the end of the sentence suggests the emotional stances of the speaker (Franco and Fugate 2020). Nose picking emoji face features an obnoxious thought which refers to the preceding text. It means the situation in context is unwanted or unexpected and the speaker is sceptical about the idea. According to a study about emoji faces on Twitter, all the faces can be roughly categorised into these groups: happy, unhappy/sad, undecided/sceptical (Wolny 2016). According to this, the speaker is probably sad or sceptical. In addition, the question is a rhetorical question, which is another sign to weaken the assumption of entering old age. Similarly, in (43), waking up earlier is also connected with old age. The hesitation of the thought is indicated by the question mark. Again, this shows social expectations of old age rather than personal experience of it. These instances show that LESS SLEEP IS ONE TYPE OF CONTENTS OF OLD AGE.

Another old age-related issue is memory:

(44) CN

Lao wangji dai qian wo zhe jixing shi nao na yang [heng]
yuelaiyue lan le – shi buru laonian de jiezou me?

Always forget bring money me this memory is carry-out what look ... [emoji face] AUX bad AUX – is *step into old age DE sign* AUX.

'I always forget to bring money. What is wrong with my memory? [🤔]. It's becoming worse and worse – is *this a sign of getting old?*'

Example (44) indicates that entering old age is the suspect for the cause of the incident of forgetting to take money. This example shows that old age has also to do with behaviours rather than with the chronological age only. In so doing, it stresses the physical aspect of old age, i.e., being forgetful, and treats it as a defining characteristic of old age. Indeed, this is an example of using prejudice against old age – bad memory – to explain a situation that the person encounters. Apparently, the person blames their memory in such an institution with an emoji face expressing disapproval. In this case, bad memory is conceptualised as CONTENT IN THE CONTAINER OF OLD AGE.

The instances (41-44) mainly engage with the perceptions of 'old age' from a first-person's perspective. The rest of the examples are seen to be employed to categorise others although the categorising does not connote an evaluative assessment of 'old age'.

(45) CN

Ta [...] *que yi shi ge 50 sui chutou, bu ru lao nian de ren le, ta etou shang de zhouwen jizai le ta du-guo de cangsang suiyue.*

She [...] But already is CLF 50 year out-head, *step into* old age DE person AUX, her forehead on DE wrinkle record AUX her live-past DE vicissitudes years
'She [...] is already over 50 years old, *approaching her old age*. The wrinkles on her forehead are records of the many vicissitudes of life she has experienced.'

Example (45) categorises the person who is in her 50s as an old person. It is presumably based on two measurements, one being the chronological age which is 50 and the other being the person's appearance. Categorising 50 years of age into old age would be unusual. Therefore, the basis of the categorisation seems to be the appearance, i.e., *zhouwen* 'wrinkles', which is a sign of physical changes that come with ageing. It expresses the author's sympathy with the woman described. In this case, her wrinkles are used to symbolise hardships in life as well as ageing signs.

In summary, based on the examples in this group, we can identify the scenario of UNDESIRABLE CONTENTS under the conceptual metaphor OLD AGE IS A CONTAINER, which plays a role in categorising the speakers themselves. The CONTENTS are mentioned in terms of isolation, less sleep, worse memory, and wrinkles, which are commonly assumed to be signs of mental and physical changes in old age. This shows the acknowledgement of these changes being a norm of old age. Notice that the change is not conceptualised as DOWNWARD movement of a person (e.g., *tip into old age*) in the examples, but as a part of the biological ageing process (e.g., appearing *zhouwen* 'wrinkles'). Normalising physical changes facilitates the notion that – from the life cycle's perspective – old age is an equally important and valuable part of the life. The following section explains this.

8.3.2 A CONTAINER WITH DESIRABLE CONTENTS

As a CONTAINER, 'old age' can also be filled with contents that can bring positive experiences.

(46) CN

ta-de lao nian yiding chong man zhe xingfu

His old age certainly *fill* full AUX happiness

‘His old age must *be full of happiness*’

In the above example, *happiness* is the substance in the CONTAINER, i.e., ‘old age’. The statement is about the speaker’s belief in someone else’s old age being happy and the adverb *yiding* denotes certainty of it, which signals the judgement that old age can be valuable.

(47) CN

*Dang yi ge gengyun-zhe, jin ru lao nian de fenghsou jijie shi, jianyue ziji sa xia
hanshui de xinqin guoshi, yangyi zhe yi zhong xiyue*

When one CLF plougher, move forward *enter old age DE harvesting season* when,
check self sow down sweat DE working-hard fruit, *vast over-flow AUX* one CLF joy

‘When a plougher *enters his harvesting season*, i.e., old age, looking at the fruit of his
hard labour, *[he] is permeated with/overflowed with joy.*’

In example (47), there are two conceptual metaphors involved. The first one is that ‘old age’ is compared to a CONTAINER as with *jin ru* ‘enter into’. The second one perceives ‘old age’ as the SEASON OF HARVESTING. The phrase *yangyi zhe*, ‘permeate AUX’, does not have an immediate subject. The possibility is that the person who is compared to a PLOUGHER in the sentence is also conceptualised as a CONTAINER based on the verb phrase *yangyi zhe*, vast overflow AUX ‘be permeated with’, in particular *yi* conveys the meaning of ‘full of’. Thus, not only is old age a CONTAINER, but also a SEASON OF HARVESTING, hence, achievement. Possibly, it implies that ageing brings forward gains. This sentence is part of a comment on the former novelist, Jin Yong. According to the context, the plougher in the example refers to Jin Yong and his “fruit of labour” means the fictions he had written. This instance also

showcases that within the CONTAINER of OLD AGE, the CONTENTS consist of joy derived from career achievements. The following example echoes the satisfying aspect of a CONTAINER.

(48) CN

Gaige kai fang, shi bu ru lao nian de Zong Qi Xiang xiansheng huanfa le yishu de qingchun.

Reform open up, make *step into old age* DE Zong Qi Xiang sir glow AUX art DE youth.

'Reform and opening up has helped Zong Qixiang, *who's in his old age*, boost his art career.'

The focus in example (48) is on the achievement in art in the person's later life. The word *qingchun* ('youth') highlights the start of his art career. The benefit is perhaps twofold. Firstly, it shifts the focus from the person's old age to the youth of his art life. Secondly, the term *youth* invokes the concept of life as a complete course rather than just the end part of life. Together with examples (46)-(47), these instances demonstrate that the CONTAINER of OLD AGE can be filled with desirable contents, such as happiness and professional achievements. Therefore, how to fill the CONTAINER is an open question for everyone:

(49) CN

Wo gai zenme zuo caineng rang mama qingsong yidian, rang ta zai jianjian bu ru lao nian de suiyue li chong man huanle er bu shi youchou?

I should how do can let mum relax a bit, let her in gradually *step into old age* DE time in fill full joy instead.of not is sadness?

‘What should I do to let mum relax, and let the time when *she slowly approaches old age* be filled with joy instead of sadness?’

As (49) indicates, what will be in one’s old age depends on what people do for it, making old age as a flexible concept, i.e., a malleable CONTAINER.

In summary, we find that the conceptual metaphor OLD AGE IS A CONTAINER in itself is indiscriminate in the sense that the substance in it can be either desirable (e.g., *professional achievement*) or undesirable (e.g., *worse memory*). We argue that the recognition of the biological change in old age indicates acceptance, which perhaps gives old age a balanced description. This section shows that CONTAINER as a source domain on its own does not carry a value judgment. Because for a container, what contents it has inside can vary from person to person.

So far, we have discussed the prevalence of the CONTAINER source concept concerning two scenarios with the following mappings:

- a) OLD AGE IS A CONTAINER (e.g., *bu ru laonian*, step into old age [getting old]).
- b) THERE ARE UNDESIRABLE CONTENTS THAT FILL THE CONTAINER. For example, less sleep or worse memory. There are undesirable contents that fill the container naturally.
- c) THERE ARE DESIRABLE CONTENTS IN THE CONTAINER. This is subject to individual’s choices.

We find that the data from the social media platform *Weibo* provide more instances about personal experience (see 41-44) than from the newspapers (see 45-49). However, the

Weibo examples are all used as assumptions of getting old by non-older adults and are expressed in a playful way. It is likely that this is because *Weibo* is a platform for younger people. As such, it arguably shows that norms or beliefs of old age conform to stereotypical features, such as sleep problems. These features appear to be so entrenched that they have also impacted younger generations.

8.3.3 A LOCATION ON THE PATH OF LIFE CYCLE

We have argued in the previous chapter that there is a central metaphor that operates in both cultures: AGEING IS A JOURNEY. One of the mappings is DIFFERENT AGES ARE DIFFERENT PLACES WHERE THE AGEING PERSON PASSES. Following this mapping, we find that with 'old age', the concept of PATH is also strongly manifested in the Chinese data. It is suggested by the phrase *qi dian* (starting point) and *cong... dao...* (from...to...) as in the examples:

(50) CN

[...] *chang yi 65 sui wei lao nian de qi dian.*

[...] often consider 65 year as old age *DE starting point*.

'[...] 65 years old is often considered as the *starting point of old age*.'

(51) CN

cong zhong nian zou dao laonian de menkan

From middle age walk arrive old age *DE* doorstep

'Walked from middle age to the doorstep of old age.'

In (50), not only is old age a location but it is also a building as it has a doorstep. This is to say old age is conceptualised as a building into which one walks as they get older. Thus, not

surprisingly, it runs into the CONTAINER source concept, demonstrating how pervasive the CONTAINER concept is. This way of conceptualising ‘old age’ underlines the overarching concept of ‘age’, as perceived in Chinese.

Furthermore, the instances signal a strong tendency that OLD AGE occurs together with other life stages as LOCATIONS/PLACES. Based on the 16 instances in this group, ‘old age’ is conceptualised as a LOCATION/PLACE that the ageing person is walking toward and is associated with spirited life. It is a stage where people tend to reflect on the whole life, so that a sense of a complete life is shown. For example, the following instance (52) illustrates what is expected in old age. It also reflects the perceived relationship among the ageing party, old age and the concept of life. In the meantime, the idea of what one’s old age looks like demonstrates what the society treasures about old age, such as health.

(52) CN

*zai nianqing de shihou zhongshi ming li yu jinqian, hulue le ziji de shenti jiankang; dao
le zhong nian, laonian de shihou que xiang yong yongyou de mingli yu
jinqian liu zhu jian kang he shengming*

at young DE time value fame-and-gain and money, ignore AUX self DE body
health; arrive AUX middle age, old age DE time however want use have DE fame-
and-gain and money keep AUX health and life.

‘when we were young, [we] valued fame and money but ignored our health; when
[we are] in our middle age and old age, [we] want to change the fame and money for
health and life.’

In (52), OLD AGE is viewed as a place where health is the most important thing in comparison to a younger age. The preposition *zai*, ‘to be at/in’, and the verb *dao le*, arrive AUX, ‘arrived’, suggest that OLD AGE, like time, is perceived as a PLACE. Given that there are different places are involved, it shows a life trajectory and brings up the PATH concept. Indeed, good health in old age seems to be held as a goal for life. Tea consumption is perhaps one of the commonly understood healthy lifestyles. The following example gives a picture of what lifestyle is like in old age. Basically, these elements are involved in talking about old age: tea and flowers.

(53) CN

he cha, yang hua. Wo zai laonian de lu shang yue zou yue yuan.

Drink tea, raise flowers. I am *old-age DE road on* more walk more far.

‘I am drinking tea and keeping flowers. I’m *further and further on the road of old age.*’

The instance (53) implies that drinking tea is a life habit of old people. This is not unfounded, given that tea consumption is indeed common among older adults in China. Gardening, too, is believed to be associated with old age. Here, old age is a PATH – by the text *laonian de daolu*, old age DE road, ‘the road of old age’ – that the person is walking along. This way, OLD AGE is viewed as a process. The word *yuan* ‘far’ means far away from the person, which only indicates that the ageing path has a direction that is away from the person themselves as opposed to the up or down orientation.

Not only is OLD AGE a LOCATION but also a CONTAINER. See the following example:

(54) CN

Rensheng chang tu zhong, zong you bu ru laonian de shiqi, nian yu shi chi, shijian jinpo.

Life long way middle, after-all have step into old-age DE time, age with time gallop, time tight urgent.

‘On the long road of life, after all there will be the time of *stepping into old age*. Time flies and there is not much time left.’

As we have argued in the previous chapter, ‘age’ is conceptualized as an CONTAINER OBJECT that moves while the ageing person also moves. In example (54), the elements of ‘life’, ‘old age’, and ‘time’ are blended together. The governing source domain is JOURNEY and LIFE IS A JOURNEY according to the first clause: *rensheng chang tu zhong*, life long way middle ‘on the long road of life’. *Bu ru*, ‘step into’, indicates that *laonian*, ‘old age’, is a CONTAINER as well as a LOCATION. The OBJECT aspect of OLD AGE is seen from the text *nian yu shi chi* age with time gallop, ‘time flies’. This instance projects a situation where people will at last get old indicating some mental preparedness for old age.

We do not know if the instances (50-54) in this group are expressed by older people.

Nevertheless, the examples show that ‘old age’ is viewed as a location although there is a lack of further information about what kind of location it is. Thus, it would be premature to decide if there is value judgement with this conceptual metaphor, i.e., OLD AGE AS A LOCATION ON THE PATH OF LIFE CYCLE. That being said, we propose that the life cycle perspective is important because the discourse is not illness-oriented when thinking about old age. In other words, ‘old age’ is perceived as a LOCATION but more importantly, there is a whole PATH that one travels along, blending youth, middle age and old age together.

Therefore, the experience of life is not just reduced to old age in terms of the bodily changes. The complete life cycle's perspective continues to be much pronounced in the next section.

8.3.4 A PERSON/LIVING THING

The data suggest that 'old age' can also be seen as a LIVING THING in the sense that it grabs, moves, and even embodies the features of a person. In this section, we show that the impact of old age is indeed felt by individuals. For instance, there is evidence to imply that 'old age' wields power over the ageing party, e.g., old age is conceptualised as a predator whose hands have grabbed the ageing person:

(55) CN

*zi gu yingxiong chu shaonian, [...], er wo zao yi bei lao nian de shou jinjin
zhuai zhe le.*

From old-times hero out-of young-person, [...], whereas I early *already AUX old-age DE hand firm firm grab AUX AUX*.

'Since ancient times heroes come out of young men, [...], but I've already been *grabbed by old age's hands*.'

From the text above, we see youth and heroes are tied together. 'Heroes' can be understood as life goals or achievement, but OLD AGE is conceptualised a LIVING THING with hands that have firmly taken hold of the ageing person. Therefore, OLD AGE acts like a predator and the person as a captive.

Not only does OLD AGE have hands, but also it has legs presented in the next example (56) which activates these conceptual elements: evening, sunset, loneliness, frustration, home and old age's footsteps. In this case, again the unidirectional relationship between source and target concepts does not work. Instead, the Blending Theory (Fauconnier 2003) can be helpful here. Each of the elements is an input of a mental space and they combine together to create a new unit of conceptualisation: a friendly relationship between the ageing person and old age.

(56) CN

Dong yi mo hunghun xieyang zhi xia de ren de guji yu wunai,
suoyi, ta-men yingzao yi ge jia, rang laonian de jiaobu jin ru ...

Understand one CLF evening sunset AUX under DE person DE loneliness and frustration, Therefore, they build one CLF home, let *old age DE footsteps enter* in ...
 'They understand the loneliness and frustration of old age. Therefore, they built a home to let *old age's footsteps come in*. '

Using the image of footsteps entering a home creates the sense that they embrace old age just as they welcome a person to their home. According to the context, *home* refers to a care home for older people with the name of *Ai wan ting jing lao yuan*, love evening pavilion, 'respect old home'. The pronoun *they* refers to the founders of the care home. It is acknowledged that old age arrives with unwanted characteristics, e.g., loneliness and frustration. This does not necessarily become a threat to individuals. The solution is acceptance because they, *rang laonian de jiaobu jin ru*, let old age DE footsteps enter in, 'let old age's footsteps come in'.

Alternatively, changes in old age can be mentally prepared by people at a younger age. See the celebratory line below:

(57) CN

zhi ni wo zhong jiang dao lai de laonian

To you me finally will arrive come DE old.age

‘To our old age that will finally arrive ‘

The term *zhi* ‘to’ displays a welcoming attitude to old age as it is normally used to express respects or good wishes (CCD 2002:2475). In the meantime, the adverb *zhong*, ‘at last/in the end’ shows that the arrival has been expected. The following example illustrates specifically what is expected to arrive with old age:

(58) CN

Wo haishi zai.xiwang zhe wo-de laonian de lai lin, wo xiwang, zai wo lao de shihou, yijing wanquan dongde le zizai shunyi

I still AUX hope AUX my old.age DE come arrive, I hope, at I old DE when, already completely understand AUX at-ease satisfactory.

‘I’m still looking forward to *the arrival of my old age*. I hope, when I’m old, I would understand a satisfying life with ease. ‘

As seen above, in one way or another, old age is expected to arrive and is attached to the expectation of a comfortable and easy life. Notice this is articulated by someone who is not old yet but looks forward to old age if it is fine. Even a far more optimistic view on old age’s arrival is detected:

(59) CN

Huoli he meili de qingnian yo, ni zhidao zai ni yihou dao lai de laonian, ye you zhe tongyang de youmei, huoli, he meili me?

Lively and charming de youth AUX, you know PRE ni after arrive come DE old .ge, also have AUX same DE elegance, vitality, and charm AUX?

‘Lively and charming youth, do you know that old age that arrives after you also has the same elegance, vigour and charm as you do?’

It appears that, contrary to younger speakers, older speakers tend to mention the concept of youth, and the common thread is that they explicitly value their old age-associated meanings, like knowledge. In the example above, OLD AGE is obviously praised for been as *elegant, robust, and charming* as YOUTH is. It is even placed directly after youth, which is odd as it seems to have skipped middle age. This is another example of mentioning old age with other life stages.

The following instance also attests to life course perspective of old age. It instantiates the life course perspective as we proposed in the previous chapter: the ageing process tends to be viewed from a birth perspective; thus, the concept of an end is placed in a broader context, which facilitates the appreciation of life as a whole:

(60) CN

nianqing de yiqifengfa, zhongnian de manbu jingji, laonian de xianghe chenjing, sihu mei ge ren dou wu fa yuyue.

Youth DE high-spirited-and-vigorous , middle-age DE full spread thorn, *old-age DE auspicious-and.-peaceful calm*, seems every CLF person all not way go.beyond
 'It seems that no one can bypass the high-spirited and vigorous youth, the middle age full of difficulties, *the peaceful and calm old a ge.*'

Like (59), example (60) provides us with perceptions of each life stage in terms of the attributes of a person in youth, a path in middle age and a person again at old age. In the sentence, the speaker shifts their highlights for each life stage. For youth, the conception captures the physical strength – based on *yiqifengfa*, 'high-spirited and vigorous'; for middle age, pressures and obstacles from career and life drawing on the figurative meaning of *jingji* 'thorn', and for old age, the physical and mental capacity is picked up as an older person can look peaceful and acts calmly. It is easy to identify that this instance perceives 'old age' in a predominantly optimistic way by emphasising the desirable traits of a person, with eight more such instances being identified.

In sum, this section observes that as a LIVING THING, 'old age' can display predatory features alongside its friendly, attractive, and relaxing character. On the one hand, the downside of getting old is acknowledged. On the other hand, the impact from the downside of old age – for instance, *loneliness* – is accepted and understood. Besides, 'old age' is even attributed with appealing characteristics, such as *calm*. Thus, the conceptualisation is even-handed, framing old age partly by unwanted traits (i.e., less sleep) and partly by attractive aspects (i.e., as elegant as youth). In this regard, the LIVING THING domain echoes the CONTAINER domain that old age does not have inherent negative connotations, and how old age is viewed is dependent on how the ageing person makes of it.

8.3.5 Summary

Our analysis shows that, on the one hand, ‘old age’ is used as a measurement for categorizing people by conceptualizing it as a CONTAINER or a LOCATION; on the other hand, ‘old age’ is personified as it carries human attributes. The following central mapping correspondences are illustrated.

- a) OLD AGE IS A CONTAINER INTO WHICH THE AGEING PERSON ENTERS. Example: *bu ru laonian*, step enter old age, ‘step into old age’.
- b) OLD AGE IS A LOCATION. Example: *dao le laonian*, arrive AUX old age, ‘arrived at old age’.
- c) OLD AGE ITSELF ALSO MOVES AS A LIVING BEING. Example: *rang laonian de jiaobu jin ru*, let old age DE footsteps enter in, ‘let old age’s footsteps come in’

The CONTAINER and JOURNEY metaphors are so fundamental that they are almost irreducible as part of everyday discourse. They contribute to our understanding of ‘old age’ in a coherent way with the concept of ‘age’. The data also show that there is the tendency of viewing ageing as a biological process from birth and old age as an important part of it (see text examples in 8.3.3).

We have found two scenarios under the CONTAINER source concept that are worth noticing: the UNDESIRABLE CONTENTS scenario and the DESIRABLE CONTENTS scenario. For the former, the instances are mostly about whether or not an everyday situation – like suffering from sleep – is related to getting old, which activates the awareness of biological changes with ageing. For the latter, what fills ‘old age’ can be selective. For instance, old age is tied with

quietness based on the thought of living as a hermit, and there are also examples of linking old age with *chendian*, ‘accumulation’, i.e., wisdom.

In terms of the LOCATION source concept, the illustration of the concept is through the expressions of movement *to arrive* and terms like *road*. They are less value-loaded than the CONTAINER domain, which is categorised as having desirable or undesirable contents. It is unknown from the data what kind of location ‘old age’ is. Furthermore, there is evidence showing that ‘old age’ is a path rather than just a point, i.e., *laonian de do lu shang*, old age DE road on, ‘on the road of old age’. That is, OLD AGE is viewed as a process as opposed to an end point.

It should be pointed out that the data predominantly show general norms about ‘old age’ in the Chinese community. Often it is associated with less sleep and forgetfulness; older people prefer quietness, or they are milder. In the meantime, ‘old age’ is also associated with wisdom and high achievement. Therefore, the perceptions tend to focus on the spiritual mindset or pursuit rather than just the physical changes in old age. However, this is not to claim that health in old age is not flagged up. As a matter of fact, health-related discourse surrounding ‘old age’ occurs frequently.

We argue that the Chinese dataset demonstrate mental preparedness for old age, not only because the concept of ‘old age’ occurs in the discourse of younger people in a playful tone and it is socially acceptable to categorise adults as old (or not), but also because there are examples that insinuate an attitude of acceptance by acknowledging the presence of old age in life, see examples (55)-(56).

8.4 A cultural comparison: avoidance versus acceptance/adaptiveness

To start with, we find the dictionary definitions of 'old age' differ greatly from English to Chinese:

English: "the later part of life; the period of life after youth and middle age; the state of having existed for a relatively long time, usually with reference to deterioration"
(*OED online*)

Chinese: *60 sui yishang de nianji*, 60 year above DE age, 'ages over 60 years of age'
(*CCD 2002:1159*)

Unlike the Chinese definition, the English one does not give a specific age to count as old age, but it does mention the connotation of "deterioration" which the Chinese definition does not include. To illustrate both the similarities and differences in the conceptualisation of 'old age', the table below presents an overview on the source domains that are used to talk about 'old age' (EN for English, CN for Chinese, the symbol √ means the domain can be identified in the relevant language and x means otherwise).

Table 2 Source domains examined

Source domain	EN	CN
LOCATION/PATH	√	√
CONTAINER	√	√
VIOLENCE	√	X
DISEASE	√	X
A DANGEROUS THING	√	X
A LIVING THING	√	√
FRUIT	√	X

The English data show that structural elements of ‘old age’ as the target concept involve bodily changes (e.g., *health issues*) found in the DISEASE domain, feelings (e.g., *loneliness*) reflected in the LOCATION, VIOLENCE and A DANGEROUS THING, personality or behaviour (e.g., *tough or mild*) in the CONTAINER domain, life habits (e.g., *inactive*) in the CONTAINER domain. These conceptualisations demonstrate images of social stereotypes of ‘old age’, e.g., OLD AGE IS A DISEASE. It is important that these stereotypes should be investigated critically because they are the representations of older adults. As Lakoff points out “social stereotypes can be used to stand for a category as a whole” (1987:85), e.g., in this case that conceptualisations help people make rapid judgements of older adults.

In Chinese, the structural elements mentioned are also reflected in the conceptualisation but mainly in the three concepts, i.e., LOCATION, CONTAINER and LIVING THING. The first two are commonly used for categorisation, and the LIVING THING concept is employed to express feelings and to embody human traits such as *laonian ye you youmei, huoli, he meili* ‘old age also has elegance, vitality, and charm’.

Let us see the shared conceptual metaphors in both languages displayed in Table 3 below:

Table 3 Conceptual metaphors in both languages

	EN examples	CN examples
OLD AGE IS A LOCATION	<i>old age is a different country, reaching old age, or at the grand old age</i>	<i>dao le laonian</i> arrive AUX old age 'arrived at old age'; <i>cong zhong nian zou dao laonian de menkan</i> , from middle age walk arrive old age DE doorstep 'walked from middle age to the doorstep of old age'
OLD AGE IS A CONTAINER	<i>mellowed in his old age; helping people to get what they wanted out of their old age</i>	<i>bu ru laonian</i> step enter old age 'step into old age'
OLD AGE IS A LIVING THING	<i>the toddlerhood of old age</i>	<i>laonian de jiaobu</i> old age's footsteps 'old age's footsteps'

As Table 3 shows, on a highly abstract level, some metaphors tend to cut cross two cultures, i.e., OLD AGE IS A LOCATION and OLD AGE IS A CONTAINER. The remainder of the metaphors, mostly complex metaphors, occur only in the English data:

- OLD AGE IS VIOLENCE. Example: [...] *succumbed to old age*.
- OLD AGE IS AN ILLNESS Example: *we can't wait for a miracle cure for old age*.
- OLD AGE IS EVIL/DANGEROUS: [...] *the impending old age*.

On the other hand, the following conventional metaphors are still prevalent in Chinese: OLD AGE IS A LOCATION/PATH and OLD AGE IS A CONTAINER. Different scenarios are found under these central mappings. For instance, with the LOCATION, the concept of a LIFE CYCLE

is present, contributing the metaphor OLD AGE IS A LOCATION ON THE PATH OF A LIFE CYCLE. In this way, the PATH perspective views old age as a process rather than an endpoint.

Ageing is not only universal but also cultural. For instance, the aspect of bodily change in old age is perceived as DOWNWARD MOVEMENT (e.g., *descend into an infirm old age*), DISEASE (e.g., *artificially prolonged old age is the new malady*) in English, whereas in Chinese, the physical changes are part of the contents in the CONTAINER of OLD AGE. Thus, we contend that there is a main conceptual-attitudinal contrast between *avoidance* in English vs *acceptance* in Chinese. In both languages, 'old age' is associated with group categorisation, but identity labelling seems to be more acceptable in Chinese.

In English, *avoidance* is reflected through these domains: LOCATION, VIOLENCE, DISEASE, A SCARY/EVIL/DANGEROUS THING and A LIVING THING. These conceptual elements turn out to be the linguistic evidence for the long existing cultural perception that oldness tends to have negative connotations in "Western culture" (Jones 2006: 80). We argue that these conceptualisations take a negative evaluative stance toward old age, though whether it is the case across Western culture is questionable. Because VIOLENCE (e.g., *surrender to old age*) and DISEASE (e.g., *old age is the new malady*) victimise the ageing individuals, 'old age' becomes an adversary to be avoided. Equally impactful as VIOLENCE, a SCARY/EVIL/DANGEROUS THING (e.g., *impending old age*) can make people feel threatened. Ageing research on discourses in the Scottish society also finds that "ageing is most commonly seen as something to be feared and rejected" (Mowat 2005). Thus, this problem-based discourse has as its underpinning assumption that old age is bad, which is perhaps

rooted in the “wish to avoid the realities of ageing and death” (Mowat 2005). Vincent (2007) argues that metaphors constructing older people as the defeated – e.g., the VIOLENCE metaphors in the current project – can reinforce the fear of ageing and death. We contend that such conceptualisations alienate the concept of ‘old age’ from ageing individuals. In Chinese, in contrast, we see and the attitude of *acceptance* and *adaptiveness* for old age. Indeed, the biological change in old age is recognised, such as loss of sleep and worse memory, which is manifested in the CONTAINER domain in the UNDESIRABLE CONTENTS scenario. The fact that such ageing signs are reflected by non-older adults implies that younger people are checking in on their ageing progress, which can be a sign of adapting the ageing process. Apart from the recognition of bodily changes, fear of ‘old age’ is expressed in a literal way (see examples in 8.3.4) instead of using the concepts of DISEASE, VIOLENCE or DANGEROUS THINGS. Furthermore, we have identified the OLD AGE AS A CONTAINER WITH DESIRABLE CONTENTS (e.g., *lao nian chong man huanle*, old age fill full joy, ‘old age full of joy’), which is unparalleled in the English data.

Overall, the phenomenon of biological changes with ageing is reflected in both languages. It is the attitudes to it that differ in English and Chinese. In English, the decline is manifested through concepts like DISEASE, or LOCATION on the downside of the life PATH. Whereas in Chinese, the decline is expressed in terms of factual biological changes by conceptualising them as CONTENTS – such as sleep and memory – in the CONTAINER of ‘old age’. Previous research has claimed that Chinese people tend to value social functioning over physical functions (Shweder 1998). As a result, they are quicker to accept the physical decline in old age. The Chinese conceptions are more intuitive and primitive because ‘old age’ is conveniently conceptualised as a CONTAINER and LOCATION to categorise people. This is

possible when 'old' is not stigmatised in the culture. However, the general ageing stereotypes in Chinese culture – which used to be mostly positive – are changing in urban communities. Urban Chinese people do have similar negative stereotypes as their Western counterparts because of modernisation and globalisation (Liang 2017).

From a linguistic perspective, we can see that there are other contents in the CONTAINER of 'old age' which may alleviate the stress about physical changes. Therefore, source domains that point to beneficial ways of conceptualisations – which can facilitate beneficial perspectives to old age in English – may come from these choices:

- OLD AGE IS A CONTAINER over OLD AGE IS A LOCATION ON THE DOWNSIDE. For example, *entering old age* would be preferred to *approaching old age*.
- OLD AGE IS A LIVING THING over OLD AGE IS A LOCATION ON THE DOWNSIDE. For example, *at the toddlerhood of old age* over *descend into old age*.

We must point out that our corpora do not produce an exhaustive list of source concepts. For instance, like English, FRUIT is also identified in Chinese among the dictionary entries but not in the BCC corpus used in the current chapter. Nevertheless, this chapter still presents a general overview of the conceptualisations of 'old age'. Conventional metaphors, i.e., OLD AGE IS A LOCATION, OLD AGE IS A CONTAINER, OLD AGE IS A LIVING THING are common in both languages and allow us to understand 'old age' as a universal biological phenomenon. Complex metaphors mostly in English permit us to think about 'old age' critically, which explores the richness of the concept in a time that new technologies can intervene in our lifespan, making our understanding of 'old' more diverse than ever (see

examples in 8.2.3-8.2.6). For further research, it is urgent to examine how more other creative or complex metaphors are employed to promote positive or negative attitudes towards ageing.

Chapter 9 Discussion

9.1 Introduction

This chapter starts with an overview of the findings reported in the preceding two chapters. Following that is a section dedicated to the argument on the body-related experiential basis. We then move on to discuss the cultural variation identified in the results. The conclusion consists of a categorisation of the conceptual metaphors expressing cultural attitudes towards ageing and a critical reflection on the application of the Conceptual Metaphor Theory (CMT) in the present project.

Our discussion focuses on the long-debated areas of experiential basis and cultural variation within the realm of CMT. We highlight that while some physical experience in the conceptualisations of ageing seems to be shared in English and Chinese, we still see major cultural differences in making sense of ageing overall. Therefore, in general, our study suggests that the conceptualisations of ageing are similar in English and Chinese on a highly abstract level with specific cultural differences revealing cultural attitudes towards ageing. Given these findings, we reflect on our methodology and theoretical stance and contend that to complement CMT, Metaphor Scenario Theory (Musolff 2006, 2010, 2016, 2021) is a suitable analytical tool in cross-cultural studies of using conceptual metaphors.

9.2 A summary of the findings

In Chapter 3, we set out to investigate these questions:

- 1) What are the source domains in conceptualising ageing in English and Chinese?

- 2) What are the similarities and differences in selecting properties of the source domains for the conceptualisation?
- 3) Do the similarities and differences connect with positive and negative attitudes towards ageing?

We use a corpus-based approach, benefitting mainly from Lakoff and Johnson's Conceptual Metaphor Theory (1980/2003) and Metaphor Scenarios (Musolff 2004, 2006, 2016a, 2020). We have identified source concepts for talking about 'age' and 'old age'. To summarise our findings, the tables below give a brief overview of the conceptualisations for both 'age' and 'old age'.

Table 1 Conceptual metaphors of 'age' in English and Chinese

English	Chinese
AGEING IS A PERSON WHO TRAVELS ALONG A PATH.	AGE IS AN OBJECT.
AGEING IS A GOAL-ORIENTED PATH.	AGE IS A LOCATION.
GETTING OLD IS GOING DOWNWARDS	AGE IS A CONTAINER.
	GETTING OLD IS AGE ITSELF GOING UPWARDS.

Table 2 Conceptual metaphors of ‘old age’ in English and Chinese

English	Chinese
OLD AGE IS A LOCATION ON THE DOWNSIDE OF THE AGEING PATH	OLD AGE IS A LOCATION ON THE MATURATION PATH OF THE LIFE CYCLE
GETTING OLD IS GOING DOWNWARD	GETTING OLD IS GOING UP
OLD AGE IS A CONTAINER	OLD AGE IS A CONTAINER WITH DESIRABLE/UNDESIRABLE CONTENTS
OLD AGE IS AN OPPONENT	OLD AGE IS A LIVING THING (OLD AGE ITSELF ALSO MOVES AS A LIVING BEING).
OLD AGE IS A DISEASE	
OLD AGE IS A SCARY, EVIL, and DANGEROUS THING	
OLD AGE IS A LIVING THING	

Drawing on the conceptual metaphors identified, our main findings are:

- a) The SOURCE-PATH-GOAL schema is central in English, as in THE AGEING PROCESS IS A PERSON WHO TRAVELS ALONG A PATH WITH A GOAL. Whereas in Chinese, the OBJECT schema is the dominant frame, which means ‘age’ is an autonomous object – or a traveller on the ageing path – that expands and goes up as a person gets older (for details, see 7.4).
- b) The two different schemas allow us to see that physical experience is not the only basis for conceptual metaphors given that OLD AGE IS UP in Chinese, but OLD AGE IS DOWN in English.
- c) For ‘old age’, more source concepts emerge from the data in English than in Chinese. Generally, they showcase a relatively more negative attitude towards ‘old age’. For instance, OLD AGE IS AN OPPONENT (e.g., *surrender to old age*) under the VIOLENCE

domain or OLD AGE IS A DISEASE (e.g., *a miracle cure for old age*), which are not present in the Chinese data.

- d) The results identified in the dictionary entries are only partly applicable in the media corpora. The ANIMAL and BODY domains are not seen in the media data. The PLANT domain can be compared to the FRUIT domain in English. However, we do see the JOURNEY domain appear consistently in the two datasets in both languages.

Next, we discuss the aspects of BODY as an experiential basis with cultural variations, aiming to bring insights to the topic in question within the theoretical framework. That is, we explore in more detail the two factors that influence these conceptualisations: body and culture.

9.3 The BODY as experiential basis

A broad definition of experiential basis is put forward by Ziemke and Frank (2008:1) which is “the bodily and sensorimotor basis of phenomena such as *meaning, mind, cognition* and *language*”. This means, the role of body in meaning making is crucial. We now explore this idea further, focusing on the topic of ageing which by nature concerns the change of the body. The Chinese data suggest that OLD AGE is thought of in the UP direction on the ageing path, e.g., *shang nianji*, up age, ‘older’. This conceptualisation seems to apply the metaphor MORE IS UP. For UP, the possible bodily basis rests in the experience of quantity and vertical elevation (see L&J 1980/2003, Grady 1997). By contrast, in English we have identified the conceptual metaphor GETTING OLD IS GOING DOWN (e.g., *tip into old age*), which seems to correlate with BAD IS DOWN relating to personal well-being (and L&J 1980/2003:16), with

DOWN representing bad well-being. Therefore, our project, agreeing with constructionists (Kövecses 2000,2005,2019, Musolff 2016a, 2020, Yu 2008), argues against the universalist bias of conceptual metaphor theory and thus eschews the belief that conceptual metaphors are generated exclusively or mainly by universal bodily experiences. We have mentioned in Chapter 2 that, so far, there is no unified view on the basis for producing conceptual metaphors. Our discussion further shows that the similarity of experiential bases is small, but the cultural differences are large and vital on the topic in question.

To point out what kind of experience, i.e., bodily responses to the environment is involved, we use linguistic patterns for the generalising mental representations of bodily experiences. For example, the concept of JOURNEY is thought of as a source concept for ageing. Some aspects of the JOURNEY concept are used in the following way:

- the traveller is the source and the person who ages is the target.
- passing different locations on a path is the source and passing different ages is the target.
- The destination of a journey is the source and old age/death is the target.

Thus, when we talk about the experiential basis of the conceptual metaphor AGEING IS A JOURNEY, we try to analyse the correlation between some aspects of the two experiences, i.e., ageing and travelling. We question whether or not the conceptualisation of ageing can be based on this physical experience in both English and Chinese. It should be pointed out that AGEING IS A JOURNEY is the metaphor identified in the dictionary data as well as in the media, which again shows the endurance of the correspondences between the conceptual elements in the target concept and the source concept. The salient elements identified from the travelling experience include LOCATION, PATH and DESTINATION. In what follows we

demonstrate how these elements are employed in the conceptualisation of ageing in the two languages.

9.3.1 AGE IS A LOCATION

We have seen that the AGE IS A LOCATION metaphor is common to both the English and Chinese datasets. We have found that the overarching metaphor in both languages appears to be the complex metaphor AGEING IS A JOURNEY (for a detailed account, see Chapter 7, sections 2 and 3), with some specific aspects in the JOURNEY domain being used similarly or differently, on which we reflect regarding the suitability of CMT. This adds to the literature that JOURNEY is a source domain that can be applied in different target domains like LIFE and LOVE (Kövecses 2005:6). Kövecses (2005:4-5) explains that “complex metaphors maybe potentially or partially universal” and also “metaphors are not necessarily based on bodily experience – many are based on cultural considerations and cognitive processes of various kinds”. The current study aligns with Kövecses’ statement given the fact that the complex metaphor AGEING IS A JOURNEY is shared by both cultures, but the elements of TRAVELLER and the DIRECTION of the motion are culture-specific.

In English, as shown in Chapter 7, the conceptualisations of AGE – as expressed by prepositions such as *at*, *over*, *under*, *above* – largely draw on the spatial experiences of locations and the experience of moving along a path toward a destination, hence the SOURCE-PATH-GOAL schema. Thus, the experiential basis of ageing can be described as a person’s experience of moving through space from one location to another, and ultimately toward a spatial goal. Hence the expressions for location: *at my age*, path: *from the age of*

40 onwards and goal: *get to an age*. This reminds us of Johnson's (1987:115) discussion of the motivation for the metaphor PURPOSES ARE DESTINATIONS:

Consider the common goal of getting to a particular location. From the time we can first crawl, we regularly have as an intention getting to some particular place, whether for its own sake, or as a subgoal that makes possible some other activity at that place. There may well be no intention satisfied more often than physical motion to a particular desired location. In such cases, we have a purpose—being in that location— that is satisfied by moving our bodies from a starting point A, through an intermediate sequence of spatial locations, to the end point B. (Johnson 1987: 115).

Johnson in the above statement highlights the role of the goal in motivating movement from one location to another. Thus, the metaphor PURPOSES ARE DESTINATIONS elucidates the influence of PURPOSES. In our case, according to the linguistic evidence, reaching OLD AGE becomes the PURPOSE or GOAL of the life's JOURNEY.

In Chinese, on the other hand, the LOCATION, i.e., AGE, and GOAL of the ageing path do not show a straightforward link, which is one of the marked differences under the shared conceptual metaphor OLD AGE IS A LOCATION. Another aspect is about the position of the LOCATION in later years as ageing progresses, i.e., down or up, which is explained below in the AGING IS A JOURNEY METAPHOR. In Chinese, the association between AGEING and a JOURNEY is lexicalised mainly through the collocations that pair with the search term *nianji*, 'age', including *dao le*, arrive AUX, 'arrived at', *guo le*, pass AUX, 'passed', *zou xiang*, walk towards, 'walk towards', and *bu ru*, step enter, 'step into'. These lexical items are commonly used in the context of traveling. Therefore, we may conclude that the experiential basis for

the metaphor AGE IS A LOCATION is the experience of traveling, leading to the conceptual metaphor AGEING IS A JOURNEY.

Rather than stating that one conceptual metaphor is universal, it seems to be more likely that some elements related to a domain are universal. For instance, the basic elements LOCATION, PATH, TRAVELLER, DIRECTION, which all come under the JOURNEY domain, exist in both languages. However, these aspects are dynamic in each culture. They do not always imply the same scenario across cultures, concerning where the LOCATION is positioned, whether the PATH has an end and where it is oriented, and who the TRAVELER is. All these elements carry cultural perceptions and may be assembled into widely different conceptual metaphors, such as OLDER IS UP (CN) and OLDER IS DOWN (EN).

As our analysis in Chapters 7 and 8 shows, the evaluations of ageing through the traveling experience about OLD AGE appear in both languages in terms of the two aspects: traveller and the direction of the movement. See the table below.

Table 3 AGEING IS A JOURNEY

Conceptual aspects	EN	CN
LOCATION	Old age is a lower location	Old age is a higher location
PATH	Old age is approaching the end	Old age itself can be a path
TRAVELLER	The ageing person	The ageing person and age itself
DIRECTION	Old age is downward orientated	Old age is upward orientated

As Table 3 above shows, the evaluative scenarios can be seen in the DOWNWARD-UPWARD contrast, i.e., GETTING OLD IS THE AGEING PERSON GOING DOWN in English), and GETTING

OLD IS AGE GOING UP in Chinese. This comparison suggests that the experiential basis differs in relation to the respective cultural context. Thus, we find that there are some striking differences in viewing ageing even at an experiential level. It involves the concept of VERTICALITY with a bias towards the direction in Chinese UP. The mapping is supposed to be between amount or quantity and verticality. This correspondence leads to conceptual metaphors MORE IS UP and LESS IS DOWN. We have argued in Chapter 7 that our Chinese data reflect the conceptual metaphor OLDER IS UP (*shang dian nianji*, up bit age, 'old/older') which correlates with MORE IS UP. MORE refers to more of age, i.e., older. UP connects OLD AGE with elevation. If the mapping came from bodily experience and if bodily experience triggered universal conceptual metaphors, we would expect to see the same conceptual metaphor appear in English.

In Chapter 7, we argued that the ageing path in English was an arc with OLD AGE on the downside of the slope (*over a certain age*). In Chapter 8, we found that OLD AGE in English was associated with the DOWNWARD movement (*tip into old age*). Thus, OLD AGE correlates with the DOWNWARD direction. This is so when the TRAVELLER is the ageing person. The experience of going downward is used to understand the meaning of getting old. This verticality experience (the body going downwards) does not share the same experience as that in Chinese (seeing the quantity of some substance rising). That is to say, there are probably different senses involved in the conceptualisations of getting old in the two languages.

In Chapter 7, we also argued that the prevailing SOURCE-PATH-GOAL schema provided a GOAL-oriented basis for the conceptualisation: *from the age of...to* (SOURCE, PATH), *get to*

the age of (DESTINATION), *decline with age* (DIRECTION). Adding to the schema, in our case, approaching the GOAL, i.e., end of life, is a movement of going downwards. Lakoff (1987:275) lists these structural elements: “A SOURCE (starting point), a DESTINATION (end point), a PATH (a sequence of contiguous locations connecting the source and the destination), and a DIRECTION (toward the destination)”. As we have shown, the destination (OLD AGE) is on the downside of the ageing path, hence the downward movement. Given that BAD IS DOWN and LOW STATUS IS DOWN in English (L&J 1980/2003), using the downward movement to describe getting old may well project pejorative attitudes to old age.

According to Yu (2016), the spatial dimensions *shang*, ‘up’, and *xia*, ‘down’, represent respectively the positive and negative valence. Using Chinese data, Yu (2016) argues that *xia*, ‘down’, often collocates with *di*, ‘low’, as in *dixia*, low down, ‘immoral’. Thus, *xia*, ‘down’, is involved in the conceptualisation of immorality. The fact that the DOWN direction is not used as a daily term to talk about getting old in Chinese based on our data can be understood as one reflection of avoiding linking ‘old’ and ‘immoral’ together. Even though it is common to hear that *shenti zou xia po lu*, body walk down slope, ‘the body is getting weaker’, we can see the agency of the downward movement is the physical body instead of the person, which effectively separates the person and the body. In a similar way, we have argued in Chapter 7 that conceptualising AGE as an OBJECT that moves up when the person ages, distances the person from the ageing process. Therefore, we can already see some differences in the application of body as the experiential basis.

Based on the current linguistic patterns, we argue that the experiential basis for the conceptualisations of ageing may be the traveling experience. That is, to describe the ageing

process, the traveling experience of arrival and continuation is at the centre of the conceptualisation in both languages. There is a certain degree of overlap in this traveling experience in the two languages, i.e., AGE IS A LOCATION and ageing is the movement passing different locations. However, the sharp contrast of the different applications of VERTICALITY reflects cultural evaluations of the ageing process.

9.3.2 AGE IS A CONTAINER

We understand our bodies in terms of containers and we constantly experience the conceptual properties – interior, boundary, exterior – in our daily life (Johnson 1987:271-272). This attests to the assumption that the CONTAINER concept is experienced daily, making it an essential source for talking about abstract concepts, such as EMOTIONS (Kövecses 2000, 2005, Yu 1995). Our data suggest that such experiences of going in and out of a container are used to understand changing of age through prepositions *in* or *into* (e.g., *stay physically active into their old age*).

In Chapter 7, we showed that AGE in Chinese was also conceptualised as a CONTAINER. For instance, the phrase *50 kai wai* 50 open out ‘over 50’ displays the IN-OUT dimensions. Not only AGE, but also OLD AGE was viewed as a CONTAINER. In Chapter 8, we stressed that the metaphor OLD AGE IS A CONTAINER was also found in English. We have argued in Chapter 8 that the CONTAINER concept can be an optimal source for talking about old age by focusing on the content aspects of the CONTAINER, just like this example in English: [...] *of helping people to get what they wanted out of their old age rather than just "writing them off" by assuming they had to [...]*.

We noticed, however, the manners of moving into OLD AGE as a CONTAINER in English and Chinese seemed to be different by comparing the verb phrases which revealed the way of transitioning to old age. See a comparison below:

Table 4 Transition into old age

EN	CN
<i>tip into old age</i>	<i>bu ru laonian</i> 'step enter old age' (getting old)
<i>lapsed into comfortable old age</i>	<i>jin ru laonian</i> 'move forward enter' (getting old)

As Table 4 shows, English *tip* and *lapsed* imply that the CONTAINER, i.e., old age, is in a lower position in comparison to the previous age, which is not the case in the Chinese instances. The prevalent phrase in Chinese is *bu ru*, 'step enter', with one instance of *jin ru*, 'move forward enter', neither of which indicates a downward movement. This comparison allows us to see different manners of transitioning into old age in the datasets, of which we consistently see that GETTING OLD IS GOING DOWN in English.

9.3.3 Summary

We argue that the experiential basis of ageing may be the traveling experience and going in and out of a container. Hence, AGE IS A LOCATION and AGE IS A CONTAINER. However, even though these source concepts are identified in both languages, there are differences in the

conceptions under each superordinate domain. By bringing the metaphorical instances in two languages for a comparison, we are starting to address the research questions:

Q1: What are the source domains in conceptualizing ageing in English and Chinese?

Q2: What are the similarities and differences in selecting properties of the source domains for the conceptualisation?

Exploring these questions sheds light on the possibility that the conceptualisations of ageing are more culture-dependent than the process of a physical experience. Gibbs (2005:40) states that “all of our cognitive mechanisms and structures are grounded in patterns of bodily experience”. Findings from the current study suggest that this argument should be contested. The interpretation and use of language is far more than an unconscious cognitive process. Therefore, we argue that even though the body is crucial for understanding language, the link between the body and language is culturally situated. The following sections present a detailed discussion of the cultural similarities and disparities.

9.4 Cultural similarities and differences

In this section, we seek to discern the cultural similarities and differences in conceptualising ageing – mainly surrounding ‘old age’ – in English and Chinese in their corresponding cultural context. We hope to ascertain that culture can impact the perceptions of ageing both on a linguistic and conceptual level.

9.4.1 Similarities - OLD AGE IS A LIVING THING

In addition to the conventional JOURNEY and CONTAINER domains which we have discussed regarding the experiential basis, we also found the concept of a LIVING THING used as a

source concept to talk about 'old age' in both corpora. The difference between the two cultures in this category is that in English the LIVING THING tends to display more aggressive features, whereas in Chinese the perceptions are more neutral. That is to say, the LIVING THING can be an aggressive one as well as a friendly one in both languages. See examples below.

(1) EN

But now I'm more down-loose, and *old age is glaring back* at me.

(2) CN

Huoli he meili de qingnian yo, ni zhidao zai ni yihou dao lai de laonian, ye you zhe tongyang de youmei, huoli, he meili me?

'Lively and charming de youth AUX, you know PRE ni after *arrive come DE old .ge*, also have AUX same DE elegance, vitality, and charm AUX?'

(Lively and charming youth, do you know that old age that arrives after you also has the same elegance, vigour and charm as you do?)

(3) CN

er wo zao yi bei lao nian de shou jinjin zhua zhu le.

'whereas I early already AUX old-age DE hand tightly grabbing firmly AUX.'

(but I've already been grabbed by the hands of old age)

In both English and Chinese, OLD AGE is thought of as a LIVING THING, i.e., alive, not dead (OED). More specifically in common, OLD AGE can be an opponent as *glaring* in (1) and *zhua*

zhu (grabbed firmly) in (3) show. The difference is that example (2) in Chinese also indicates that OLD AGE it is a friendly animated thing. Therefore, arguably, perceiving old age as a living thing is not inherently good or bad. The concept of a LIVING THING itself is not necessarily evaluative. In English, however, of the four instances in this category (see 8.2.6), three capture these features of the LIVING THING: fierce (*glare*, *grim*) and fast (*catch up*). With the Chinese data, example (3) is a single case, with the rest being:

(4) CN

a. laonian de jiaobu 'old age DE footsteps' (old age's footsteps) that is welcomed to the home.

b. dao lai de laonian 'arrive come DE old age' (arrival of old age) in the context of being welcomed.

c. laonian de lai lin old age DE 'arrive forward' (arrival of old age) associated with a satisfying life with ease

d. laonian de xianghe chenjing 'old-age DE auspicious-and.-peaceful calm' (the peaceful and calm old age)

This comparison indicates that under the same domain of LIVING THING, the two cultures still perceive OLD AGE differently by ascribing relatively positive (Chinese) or negative (English) characteristics to it. In return, this difference likely brings on correspondent accepting or avoiding attitudes in Chinese and English respectively. The following section presents the elaboration of the distinct cultural differences.

9.4.2 Differences

If conceptual metaphors begin from the early experience of the environment (Johnson 1987, Grady 1997), and children are primed by their pre-linguistic experience to understand MORE IS UP (which is then reinforced throughout life), this MORE IS UP mapping should still be consistent and prevalent. Therefore, it would make sense to understand MORE AGE (i.e., older) IS UP. However, we have not found this mapping in the English data. Thus, when Lakoff and Johnson (1980/2003:14) claim that orientational pairs like UP-DOWN are physical in nature, they do not take culture into consideration as they do for FRONT-BACK. Lakoff and Johnson (1980/2003:24) claim that “in general the major orientations up-down, in-out, central-peripheral, active—passive, etc., seem to cut across all cultures, but which concepts are oriented which way and which orientations are most important vary from culture to culture”. However, it is not the case that metaphors like MORE IS UP with the clearest physical basis always take priority in all cultures, given that MORE IS UP is the metaphor behind the reasoning of OLD IS UP in the Chinese data, but not in the English data.

As we have demonstrated in the previous sections 9.3.1 and 9.3.2, even with the TRAVELING and CONTAINER experiences, ‘old age’ seems to be viewed differently. In this section, we discuss the distinct cultural variations, aiming to address the question what disparities there are in conceptualising ageing and old age. So far, we have discussed how ‘age’ was conceptualised mainly regarding the experiential basis. It is interesting to see the focus of the cultural differences is mainly on ‘old age’ in section 3 above. We shall now contrast the unique and most distinct source concepts and scenarios in both cultures.

9.4.2.1 VIOLENCE - OLD AGE IS AN OPPONENT

'Old age' appears to be comparatively violent and aggressive only in English. This is lexicalised by these items: *defence, surrender, beats, tackle, beats, propelled* and *a shock*. Such examples show that 'old age' is conceptualised as a powerful party and the ageing individual as the powerless one. In this way, the experience of ageing turns into a physical struggle in the sense that OLD AGE IS AN OPPONENT THAT HOLDS POWER OVER THE AGEING PERSON, OLD AGE IS A FORCE THAT INFLUENCES THE AGEING PERSON. The VIOLENCE concept involves elements of a strong party/winner, a weak party/loser/victim. Therefore, the ageing individual ends up being the loser or victim. See the example below (also in 8.2.3).

(5) EN

World's oldest person dies aged 116. [...] Jiroemon Kimura, from Kyotango in Japan, *succumbs* to old age after seeing four emperors and 61 prime ministers come and go.

Conceptualisations in this category need special attention because these metaphors put the ageing body in the object position of the violent actions, i.e., the receiver of violent actions. Furthermore, if the weak party or loser or victim is the ageing individual, linking old age and death directly, which can trigger stress and anxiety. Indeed, in another study, the VIOLENCE metaphor (e.g., *fight, tackle, hit*) is identified as the most frequent metaphor to talk about end of life with cancer (Demmen et al. 2015:214). As such, the metaphor implies the mental state of the individual experiencing the ageing process, which is by no means enjoyable. By contrast, the VIOLENCE source concept is not identified in the Chinese corpus.

We argue that conceptualising OLD AGE as an OPPONENT or FORCE in English elucidates the powerless situation of the ageing person, which legitimises the fear of 'old age'.

9.4.2.2 OLD AGE IS A DISEASE

Similarly, a disease-based view of 'old age' appears to be another feature identified only in the English data. Instances include *a miracle cure for old age*, *artificially prolonged old age is the new iatrogenic malady* – from our data reflect, and again this is only found in the English corpus. It is worth mentioning that incorporating the conception of old age and disease is frequently seen in Shakespeare. Covey (2000:169) points out that Shakespeare's plays portray the ageing process as disabling and "old age as a time when individuals lost some abilities of function, particularly when it came to mental capacity and physical mobility".

Also, Shakespeare uses references to old age as an insult in some of his works. For example, in *Henry IV*, Part 2 (Act 1, Scene 2, 155–156), he writes "You [Chief Justice referring to Falstaff] are as a candle, the better part burnt out." This is one of the examples to show that Shakespeare makes explicit links between physical decay and ageing.

Admittedly, Shakespeare's works mirror the negative attitudes to ageing in his time, and therefore may not be relevant to the conception of ageing today (Covey 2000:169). Yet, our data also display such a level of emphasis on the physical loss in old age for present-day English. It seems to be the case that expressions for the experience of ageing in English generally highlight the disfunction of the body in old age. Such a focus on disease and disfunction intensifies the fear for old age, which is also expressed in the feelings of transitioning into old age. Hence the metaphorical token *old age is a shock* (analysed in

8.2.3). Consequently, such perceptions of ‘old age’ warrant attention on the declining part of the body, which ignores the healthy and joyful aspects of old age.

It is interesting that the OLD AGE IS A DISEASE metaphor is absent in the Chinese data. The implication is that Chinese data do not attach disease as one of the core elements of old age. This absence attests to the assumption that such a pejorative conceptualisation of old age is not only the reflection of a biological process but also a cultural act.

9.4.2.3 OLD AGE IS A RIPE FRUIT in English

Our data show that in English, the idea of FRUIT is present for understanding OLD AGE, specifically the ripe stage of a fruit. This observation is drawn on the examples *mellow in old age* and *ripe old age* (see Chapter 8 section 8.2.7).

(6) [...] At one point I asked him when he (former musician Lou Reed) intended to die. “I would like to live to a *ripe old age* and raise watermelons in Wyoming [...]

(7) If you thought that Robert De Niro had *mellowed in his old age*, think again. His new film with Luc Besson is feistily violent and he still hankers after making a sequel to *Taxi Driver*.

Ripe in (6) is in its dictionary “advanced in years” symbolising “of grain, fruit, etc.: having developed to the point of readiness for harvesting and eating, or for the dispersal of seed for propagation” (*OED*). This figurative use of *ripe old age* for matureness can be seen from the 12th century as in “he lived to the ripe old age of ninety-five” (Kirkpatrick and Schwarz, 1982:301). In (6) then, *ripe old age* is understood as the prime time of one’s life so that it is desirable suggested by the modal verb phrase *would like*. In present day, *ripe old age* as an idiomatic term is often used with a sense of irony as in *at the ripe old age of 32*. We follow

the definition that irony is “an utterance with a literal evaluation that is implicitly contrary to its intended evaluation” (Burgers et al., 2011: 190) and one of the features is its role of expressing attitudes (Wilson 2013).

In example (7), *mellow* invokes the fruit source domain as it means “ripen or soften” (*OED*).

This example reflects the social expectation of old age in terms of its effect on people’s personality. This is not the case with Robert De Niro, as the examples tries to show, who still takes leading roles in violent films in his old age.

Given that the Chinese data do not provide the ripeness-related conceptualisation about old age, it seems to be a cultural preference in English.

Here are some implications suggested in the FRUIT domain. Firstly, we want to point out that the use of *ripe old age* in English recognises the value of old age. Secondly, the fact it is also often used with a level of irony suggests that the aforementioned usage of *ripe old age* adds humour to the discourse by referring to a young age, which can be understood that understanding of old age in the culture is changing. The example of *mellow* then implies the softness of old age which can be interpreted either positively or negatively depending on the context. We further mentioned that the Chinese data do not include such a conception. Next, we discuss how the fear of old age is expressed through conceptual metaphors in English.

9.4.2.4 A SCARY, EVIL, and DANGEROUS THING

We maintain that this source concept reflects the negative evaluation of old age. In the previous chapter, section 8.2.5., we argued that conceptualising OLD AGE AS A SCARY

THING causes fear and anxiety, as does OLD AGE IS A DISEASE. The examples link old age with a horror film (old age was *like starring in a low-budget horror film, saving the worst till last*), or projects the concept that old age has a price for which the body needs to pay (e.g., *old age was taking its toll on his body*). The fear is present especially in the instance *is old age a curse from which we are entitled to escape* shown by *curse* and *escape*. This implies old age is evil and one would want to avoid.

Again, we have not identified OLD AGE AS A SCARY THING in the Chinese corpus. However, it is worth noticing that there is a degree of fear in the Chinese data insinuated in the description of the physical changes in the conception of CONTAINER with undesirable contents, which includes worse sleep, memory, and a detachment from the society (see 8.3.1). The difference is that these feelings are articulated by people who are not yet old while the fear in the English data is expressed by individuals who are experiencing old age. For instance, conceptualising old age as a cheap flight to death (see 8.2.1.3). Therefore, the imagined unwanted manifestations of old age are technically not the same as the fear genuinely expressed by individuals.

Next, we attempt to show that, by contrast, conceptualising 'old age' from a life cycle's perspective and separating 'age' from 'the ageing body' are the striking features in Chinese. This way, we argue that the social meaning of 'age', which is exemplified in the Chinese conceptualisations can play a bigger role than the biological age.

9.4.2.5 OLD AGE IS PART OF A PROCESS OF MATURATION in Chinese

We have mentioned that there was the parallel metaphor OLD AGE IS A LOCATION in both languages. However, the ways of approaching the LOCATION are different. In the English data, transitioning into OLD AGE is understood as a DOWNWARD movement (e.g., *tipped into old age*). Thus, OLD AGE IS A LOWER LOCATION than its preceding life stage. In Chinese, because of the perception that AGE IS AN OBJECT (e.g., *zhe me da nianji*, this big age, 'such an old age') with its autonomy of going up, OLD AGE emerges as a CONTAINER that grows taller and fuller, which is unparalleled in English (for a detailed account see Chapter 7, 7.3.1-7.3.3).

We argue that this can be traced back to perceptions of adulthood by Confucius, which promotes the view of a complete life within the life cycle. According to Confucius, youth, manhood and old age are considered as equally significant stages of life and three integrated aspects of adulthood (Tu 1976). Ageing begins from birth and human growth is a holistic process which "begins in early childhood and does not even end with old age" (Tu 1976). To give one example from our data:

(8) CN

cong zhong nian zou dao laonian de menkan

From middle age walk arrive old age DE doorstep

'Walked from middle age to the doorstep of old age.'

As (8) shows, old age is thought of together with middle age, which arguably is different from bringing old age together with death. This perception suggests that old age is a

continuation of the maturing process, which allows a fulfilling view to old age. Thus, going back to the Confucian tradition, “although old age must be recognised as a delicate situation at times even confronted as a difficult problem, it is intrinsically valuable as a concluding chapter in man’s self-realisation” (Tu 1976:113). The author also points out that:

Old age in itself commands little admiration. Respect for the old is based on the assumption that, in the long and unavoidable journey of self-improvement, an old man ought to have forged way ahead in furnishing his life with inspiring contents. Ideally, therefore, being advanced in age is a sign of wisdom and resourcefulness as well as of experience and perseverance. But this hardly implies that in practice seniority of age automatically becomes an undisputable value. Simply ‘being old and not dying’ does not get one far (Tu 1976:114).

Confucian values are still relevant to the Chinese society today. Some scholars argue that such norms are changing because family structures are changing (Chao and Roth 2000; Zhan and Montgomery 2003). However, some scholars argue that seniority of age and respect for the older adults root in the filial piety culture, which is still the unshakable mainstream in Chinese society (e.g., Qi 2015). Such social values of ageing can potentially have an impact on a personal level in terms of the views of old age.

Indeed, ‘old age’ is not intrinsically positive in Chinese but an equally valuable stage as childhood and youth. What is worth noticing of the Confucian view of ageing is that it does not heavily focus on physical decay or illness. Nor are there strong warnings to younger generations about how undesirable old age is. We have found in our data that ‘old age’ often emerges as a LOCATION equally valuable as other life stages when reflecting on life,

(see Chapter 8, 8.3.3). Thus, viewing ‘old age’ as a process of maturation and a promise of reconciliation ascribes ‘age’ more social value.

9.4.2.6 Summary

In sum, we presented the distinct perceptions identified in the English and Chinese data to ascertain the point that the conceptualisation of ageing is more of a cultural experience. Yu (2008:257) argues that our body is potentially a universal source for conceptual metaphors, but “culture plays a crucial role in linking embodied experiences with subjective for metaphorical mappings”; therefore, “the choice of one aspect from a range of possible bodily experience for a target concept is a matter of cultural preference”. Regarding the ageing process, the Chinese conception of ‘age’ seems to have a more direct bodily basis – resting on the MORE IS UP mapping – so that the correlation between amount and verticality has an upward bias, i.e., OLDER IS UP. However, this relationship is not reflected in the English data. Fundamentally, this contrast reveals how the two cultures perceive age: physical loss-oriented in English and a continuous maturation process-oriented in Chinese. Thus, we see the following source concepts in English: VIOLENCE, DISEASE and DANGEROUS THING, which may foster an attitude of avoidance to old age. Through a cross-culture study, our project adds to the research into the cultural variation of conceptual metaphors and about the importance of culture (Kövecses 2005, 2015; Musolff 2006, 2020). We argue that the ageing experience is not only biological but also cultural to the point that the experience of it may largely vary from one culture to another. Next, we want to elaborate on the possible positive and negative evaluations of these conceptual metaphors in the concluding part of this chapter.

9.5 Conclusion: cultural attitudes and theory reflections

We have reviewed the findings of this project which address these research questions: RQ1:

What are the source domains in conceptualising ageing in English and Chinese?

RQ2: What are the similarities and differences in selecting properties of the source domains for the conceptualisation?

RQ3: Do the similarities and differences connect with positive and negative attitudes towards ageing?

The previous two chapters have addressed RQ1 and sections 9.3 and 9.4 have answered RQ2.

What follows is a discussion that tries to deal with RQ 3.

9.5.1 Cultural attitudes towards ageing

While we argue that metaphors for ageing are in principle both universal and culture-specific, our findings seem to align with scholars who value cultural factors and contexts (Kövecses 2005, 2015; Musolff 2016a, 2020). Our findings thus seem to be against the universalist bias of Conceptual Metaphor Theory, i.e., the stance that universal bodily experience should produce universal conceptual metaphors (L&J 1980/2003; Gibbs 2005; Lakoff and Turner 1989). We support the idea that cultural variations are fundamental rather than secondary extensions of physical experience, given that we have found cultural preferences in relation to bodily experiences on the topic in question. For example, we notice that in Chinese, MORE IS UP is the preferred mapping for conceptualising getting older, which explains the conceptual metaphor we identified: OLDER IS UP; whereas in English, the physical health of the body seems to be the experiential basis given that OLDER

IS DOWN is favoured. As such, the differences help to form the viewpoint that the conceptions of 'old age' are largely cultural. The third question we try to address concerns an evaluation of the conceptualisations, i.e., whether or not they reflect a positive or negative attitude towards ageing or even a more complex understanding of the meaning of ageing. The following tables attempt to give an overview.

Table 5 Attitude towards 'old age' in English

Conceptual metaphor	Attitude
OLD AGE IS A LOCATION	Only when it involves the downward direction (e.g., <i>tip into old age</i>) as negative because it triggers the awareness of physical losses.
OLD AGE IS A CONTAINER	Neutral
OLD AGE IS AN OPPONENT	Negative as it is associated with challenges
OLD AGE IS A DISEASE	Negative as it is associated with physical loss
OLD AGE IS A DANGEROUS THING	Negative as it is associated with fear
OLD AGE IS A LIVING THING	Often negative as it is associated with fear
OLD AGE IS A FRUIT	Neutral

Table 6 Attitude towards 'old age' in Chinese, as reflected by the conceptual metaphors

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Conceptual metaphor	Attitude
OLD AGE IS A CONTAINER	Neutral
OLD AGE IS A LOCATION ON THE PATH OF MATURATION	Positive as it is associated with optimism that directs the attention away from the focus of physical loss
OLD AGE IS A LIVING THING	Neutral

To illustrate the positive and negative attitudes, we draw on studies in gerontology, psychology and health on the topic of ageing. Negative perceptions of ageing are understood to be associated with physical losses, fear and challenges (Steverink et al., 2001, Wurm and Benyamini 2014). In the current project, conceptual metaphors with a focus on physical loss and challenges are deemed to be evidence for negative perceptions of old age. Conceptual metaphors that promote optimism are considered as positive perceptions of ageing, i.e., promoting acknowledging challenges of old age, yet offering ways to counter the negative perceptions. In particular, the aim is to highlight conceptual metaphors that display a strong link between physical loss and challenges in old age.

As Tables 5 and 6 show, conceptual metaphors such as OLD AGE IS A LOCATION and AGE IS A CONTAINER are normally not categorically evaluative. Yet, more conceptual metaphors in English are associated with physical loss and fear of old age. In both datasets, there are conceptual metaphors that can be either positive or negative depending on the specific context. Take OLD AGE IS A LIVING THING for example. There are more English stances for

this metaphor that indicate a negative view on old age (see 9.4.1); in Chinese the metaphor appears to be neutral because the instances are not physical loss or fear orientated.

The two tables (5 and 6) show that almost all the negative conceptions old age are found in the English data. These results attest to our main hypothesis, i.e., that the English perception of ageing is physical decline-oriented, whereas the Chinese perception is maturation and social value-oriented. As such, this comparison strongly suggests that the conceptualisation of ageing is culture-specific.

Indeed, for the characteristics identified above, we have found relevant cultural associations. For instance, in English, in describing old age, the focus of physical loss is common in important culture artefacts, including the English *Bible* and Shakespeare's works. A study (Barak and Archiron 1998:275-278) has found hundreds of *old age*- and *elder*-associated instances in the *Bible*. The authors show that these instances pay special attention to the neuropsychiatric disorders associated with old age, i.e., physical and mental changes, including features of "gray hair, stooped posture, changed skin tone and wrinkles". When Shakespeare describes old age, he frequently uses the adjectives *wrinkled* and *withered* (Cox 1942:45). Perhaps the anxiety of old age is rooted in the fear of death because old age is the "leading up to it" (Benczes, Burridge, Sharifian, and Allan 2017:614) or the "pursuivants of death" in Shakespeare's *Henry VI* (II, 5, 5-7). Such negative perceptions toward old age are thought to trigger fear and anxiety in old age which impact individuals' health outcomes because conversely attributing health issues to ageing is found to be connected with mortality (Stewart, et al., 2012). That is why we seek to highlight such relevant conceptual metaphors.

Alternatively, the Chinese data reveal an attitude to ageing that focuses less on the physical loss and offers comparatively positive constructions – e.g., OLD AGE IS A PROCESS OF MATURATION – and even coping mechanism for our consideration. On the positive outlook of ageing, in section 9.4.2.5, we have considered aspects of the Confucian value of old age, i.e., an equal status vis-a-vis other life stages. In addition, in the chapter of analysing dictionary entries, we found that there were idioms where old age or old people were represented positively. See the example list below:

(9) CN

bao dao bu lao

good sword not old

‘elderly persons still at the height of their skills’

Also, in the Literature Review chapter, we mentioned that the physical decline was less of a focus in the conceptualisation of old age in Chinese. It seems that the conceptualisation of ageing, old age in particular, reflected in the linguistic patterns – i.e., OLDER IS UP – is indeed endorsed by the cultural value of old age in Chinese, i.e., older is continuity of the maturing process.

Therefore, we argue that conceptualisations from the Chinese data display a level of optimism by distancing the ageing individuals from the physical loss that causes fear and anxiety. Borrowing the term “coping mechanism” from psychology (Bennett and Gaines 2010), there are mechanisms value the role of optimism, among which is “Externalisation”. Namely, “views of ageing do not necessarily have a negative effect because they can be used to normalize experiences of old age. Thus, they facilitate adjustment to such experiences by providing more flexibility in evaluating them” (Wurm and Benyamini

2014:834). The conceptual metaphors identified in Chinese could potentially function as the linguistic tool to realize this mechanism that channels optimism.

9.5.2 Reflections on Conceptual Metaphor Theory (CMT)

Before we conclude this chapter, we offer some reflections on CMT. Theoretically, this project further clarifies two aspects for the study of CMT. Firstly, the conventional embodiment view (L&J 2003; Gibbs 2005; Lakoff and Johnson 1999) on the role of body in governing language seems to be mainly focusing on English, which ignores other languages and cultures. This brings us to the second point, that the culture factor in the forming of conceptual metaphors is equally important if not more than the body (Kövecses 2005,2015; Sharifian 2017; Yu 2008), and we need a more nuanced analytical tool than CMT, that is, Metaphor Scenario Theory (Musolff 2004, 2016,2021), building on the distribution of the conceptual elements combined with cultural evaluations.

In the current study, we stress that even when there are shared source domains, e.g., JOURNEY, we cannot generalise that the conceptualisation between the source (JOURNEY) and the target (AGEING) is the same in both cultures. We therefore argue that conceptual elements within a domain are dynamic rather than static in the mappings. For instance, LOCATION in the JOURNEY domain exists in both English and Chinese data but it engages with the target domain 'old age' differently in terms of the position of the LOCATION on the ageing path, with the distinct metaphor OLD AGE IS A LOCATION ON THE DOWNSIDE OF THE AGEING PATH in English (see chapter 8). This is where the role of culture comes into play: based on the cultural assumptions, the prototypical JOURNEY can be taken apart into

different narratives, which points us in the direction of Metaphor Scenario Theory. Thus, treating conceptual metaphor in general as dynamic processes provides a realistic understanding and flexible interpretation of the target domain. In our case, the data suggest the Chinese conceptualisations favours an UPWARD-orientated path of ageing, whereas the English data indicate a preference towards the DOWNWARD path. Besides, these observations of the different scenarios are based on the conceptual elements arising from the respective corpora. To illustrate, in English:

- a) AGEING PERSON IS A TRAVELLER ALONG THE AGEING PATH
- b) THE AGEING PATH IS AN ARCH WITH OLD AGE ON THE DOWNSIDE OF THE SLOPE.
- c) GETTING OLD IS GOING DOWNWARDS.

In contrast, in Chinese, the narratives become:

- a) THE AGEING PERSON AND AGE ARE THE TRAVELLERS ALONG THE AGEING PATH.
- b) THE AGEING PATH IS UPWARD ORIENTED.
- c) GETTING OLD IS AGE GOING UP.

The drive behind the differences are cultural preferences. The conceptual materials such as LOCATION, PATH, MOVEMENT and TRAVELLER carry different meanings because the cultural attitudes towards ageing are different, as we already discussed in 9.5.1.

Contrasting the conceptualisation of ageing helps to identify the different scenarios situated in the respective corpus data and further clarifies the view that Metaphor Scenario Theory can be practical in marrying CMT and culture on gaining an in-depth understanding of a specific topic, with the advantage of keeping the interpretation of the conceptual metaphors flexible and thus making room for the role of cultural values.

9.6 Conclusion

To conclude, throughout the discussion, we have presented a detailed account of the similarities and differences in the conceptualisations of 'age' and 'old age' in English and Chinese. We have proposed that some conceptualisations reflect negative attitudes toward ageing – more pronounced in English – and some may not, which addresses research question 3. Our discussion further points out that Metaphor Scenarios can be a suitable framework for analysing conceptual metaphors in cultural settings. In the following chapter, which brings the study to an end, we shall again briefly present our findings and our reflections on the topic in question and methodology for a clear picture of the strengths and limitations of the present project.

Chapter 10 Conclusion

The purpose of this project is to reveal the perceptions of ageing in English and Chinese in the hope of identifying optimal linguistic models for shifting negative perceptions of old age. It combines a heuristic study of *age* and *old*-related dictionary entries in both languages and a corpus-based analysis of ‘age’ and ‘old age’, using mainly Conceptual Metaphor Theory (L&J 1980/2003) to identify the source domains that are employed to make sense of ageing. During the process of the analysis, it has become clear that Conceptual Metaphor Theory (CMT) is limited in analysing the links between our target concept, i.e., ‘ageing’, and source domains (e.g., JOURNEY). To complement it, metaphor scenario theory (Musolff 2004, 2006, 2010, 2016, 2021) has been used as an analytical method highlighting the cultural differences.

This is a corpus-based a study, but we have used dictionary entries for obtaining a heuristic view of conventional perceptions of ageing in English and Chinese. Thus, the project started with an investigation into the representation of ‘old’ in idiomatic phrases in the *Oxford English Dictionary* and *Xiandai Hanyu Cidian* [*The Contemporary Chinese Dictionary*] (2002). 24 English entries and 30 Chinese entries are analysed. Subsequently, we used corpus data for a close examination of ‘age’ and ‘old age’ in the media followed by a discussion of *body* as an experiential basis for conceptual metaphors and cultural variations. In this chapter, we have summarized our main findings of the project addressing the research questions; we have also indicated the contribution and limitations of the project; finally, we have proposed directions for future research.

10.1 Major findings of the project

We have summarised our main findings in four sections comprising a cross-cultural perspective to conceptual metaphor study, the discussion of embodiment within CMT, the strengths of Metaphor Scenario Theory, and the perceptions of ‘age’ and ‘old age’.

10.1.1 A cross-cultural perspective to the study of conceptual metaphors

This project essentially serves as a cross-cultural perspective on the study of conceptual metaphors, which firstly answers the research question: what are the source domains in conceptualising ageing in English and Chinese?

Our analysis has gone through two stages including dictionary entries (see Chapter 4) and corpus data (see Chapter 7 and 8). We have observed that one conceptual metaphor AGEING IS A JOURNEY emerge in both dictionary data (e.g., *over the hill*) and media data albeit with variations. Some source domains only appear in the dictionary entries. For instance, the ANIMAL domain (e.g., *old dragon*) in both languages was not identified in the media data. However, we do not rush to state that the absence of such source domains in the media shows the disappearance of the source concepts. We believe that the dictionary entries with metaphorical senses prove their value by making us aware of the source domains, which enriches our understanding of ageing. The dictionary terms and media discourses together show that ageing discourses are full of metaphors and communication is complex and ambiguous rather than simple perceptions, for instance, old age is a biological decline (Katz 2011). And we hope that we can have a more comprehensive picture of the conceptions to add to the phenomenon that it is only in English that *age* nowadays connotes the meaning of *old age*.

Here is a summary of the major findings from both stages:

a) OLD PEOPLE AS AGED ANIMALS (dictionary entries only, English and Chinese)

EN: *old trot*; CN: *lao ma shi tu* old horse know way 'old thus experienced'

b) AGEING AS A JOURNEY (Dictionary and media corpora, English and Chinese)

EN: *Getting on in years, I am afraid of the run-up to death [...]*;

CN: *nian mai* old stride 'old'; *cong zhongnian zou dao laonian de menkan*

from middle age walk arrive old age DE doorstep 'walked from middle age to the doorstep of old age'

c) GETTING OLD AS A DOWNWARD MOTION (Dictionary and media corpus, English only)

EN: *Over the hill, tip into old age.*

d) OLD AGE AS AN AGED BODY (Dictionary, English and Chinese)

EN: *old-faced.*

CN: *lao lian* old face 'reputation'

e) OLD AGE AS PLANTS (Dictionary and media corpus in English, dictionary entries only in Chinese)

EN: *ripe old age, mellowed in old age*

CN: *lao xiu* old rotten 'myself (old man)'

In our view, the dictionary data function as a reference point for our media data with the latter being the focus of our analysis. The analysis of the media data started with the conceptualisations of 'age' and then progressed to 'old age'. With 'age', we have found these common features as well as some cultural highlights.

First, AGEING IS A JOURNEY seems to be the shared conceptual metaphor as a blueprint. For ‘age’, in English, these source concepts emerge: LOCATION (prepositional phrases, e.g., *at the age of 62*), PATH (e.g., *between the ages of*), GOAL (e.g., *get to the age of*); and in Chinese, we have also found the concept of LOCATION (*dao le 50 duo sui de nianji*, arrive AUX 50 more years DE age, ‘over 50 years of age’).

Second, conceptualising ‘age’ as a CONTAINER (e.g., *50 kai wai de nianji*, 50 open out DE age ‘over 50 years of age’ seems to appear in Chinese only.

Third, OBJECT (e.g. *zheme da nianji de lao ren* such big age DE old person ‘an old person’), appeared specifically in Chinese.

We argue that the English conceptualisations of ageing are subject to the SOURCE-PATH-GOAL schema and that the ageing path is an arch, with ‘old age’ on its slope on the downside, whereas in Chinese it is the OBJECT schema that underlies the conceptual mappings (see Chapter 7 section 7.4). Old age means ‘age’ as an OBJECT has moved upwards on the ageing path, hence the metaphor GETTING OLD IS GOING UP. That is, in Chinese, AGE is an OBJECT and hypothetically the MORE IS UP metaphor (L&J 2003:24) may be behind the mapping.

These observations imply that ‘old age’ seems to be on different ageing paths in two cultures. Through the comparison, we begin to see AGEING IS A JOURNEY cater to different cultural interpretations. Similar to what we have seen in the analysis of the dictionary entries, in English, the metaphor GETTING OLD IS GOING DOWNWARDS appear consistently in the media data. Moreover, we find that in contrast, the ageing path in Chinese is upward-orientated in the sense that AGE itself can be the TRAVELLER. Eventually it becomes clear

that the English ageing process perhaps stresses the shrinkage of the body (Thomas and Adam 2014).

The conceptualisation of OLD AGE in the media corpora brings more source domains to light, especially in English. They include JOURNEY (*e.g., old age is a different country*), CONTAINER (*e.g., stay sharp as a tack in their old age*), VIOLENCE (*e.g., succumbed to old age*), DISEASE (*e.g., a cure for old age*), a SCARY, EVIL and DANGEROUS THING (*e.g., the curse of old age*), LIVING THINGS and FRUIT (*e.g., mellowed in old age*). Among these, VIOLENCE, DISEASE, a SCARY, EVIL and DANGEROUS THING and FRUIT are not found in the Chinese data.

Drawing on these findings, we have synthesised the commonalities and disparities in the conceptualisation of old age in the two languages in chapter 9. The results suggest that in English the negative attitude towards ageing is linguistically manifested, whereas in Chinese we see a more neutral-to-positive attitude reflected.

Our findings point to the phenomenon that the same bodily experience, i.e., ageing, is apparently conceptualised only partially similarly in the two cultures, but mostly differently. This finding puts the argument that the universal bodily experience produces the universal conceptual metaphors into question. As we have shown, 'old age' as a LOCATION is perceived in a completely different direction of the ageing PATH in English (on the downside) and Chinese (on the upside). That is why we propose a new framework of two culture-specific AGEING AS JOURNEY scenarios (see Chapter 9, section 9.5).

10.1.2 Embodiment

In Chapter 9 we have discussed the role of body as an experiential basis and pointed out that given the fact we have identified shared source concepts (e.g., LOCATION), bodily experience does correlate with the same conceptual elements for the understanding target concepts 'age' and 'old age'. The bodily experience may well be the motivator of the elements. However, the conceptual elements alone cannot help us make sense of the target. Take for instance, OLD AGE IS A LOCATION. It is a shared mapping, but the LOCATION is positioned differently in the two languages, being on the downside of the ageing path in English and the upside of the path in Chinese (Chapter 9, section 9.3.1). We argue that while we cannot ignore the role of body as an experiential point on one the hand, we must acknowledge that culture plays a crucial role in assembling the conceptual elements to form conceptual metaphors and bringing along culturally marked perceptions. Hence, the range of source domains we have identified can help us understand 'old age' with culture-specific preferences.

10.1.3 Metaphor scenarios as a useful tool to study cultural contrasts in ageing

To acknowledge and value the role of culture in the mapping process, in further research we propose that Metaphor Scenario Theory (Musolff 2004, 2006, 2010, 2021) would be suitable for organising cultural differences in the conceptualisations (Chapter 9 section 9.5.2), for its flexibility in capturing dynamics. Across linguistic communities, scenarios transcend the source and target mapping binary, allowing us to make cultural assumptions based on the distribution of the conceptual elements. It can be a useful tool in carrying out cross-cultural analysis of conceptual metaphors as shown in the present project. For instance, animals are culturally embedded, it would be more realistic and accurate to speak of diverse OLD

PEOPLE AS AGED ANIMALS scenarios instead of one OLD PEOPLE AS AGED ANIMALS metaphor, allowing different interpretations of the same animal (e.g., horse) in the two cultures.

The analytical strength of metaphor scenario theory can also be demonstrated in the case of AGEING AS A JOURNEY scenario, suggesting different narratives in the two languages about ageing by using elements in the JOURNEY domain (Chapter 9 section 9.5.2). We clarified that the Chinese data revealed a preference toward an up-going path of ageing but a downward going path in the English conception of ageing. In so doing, we are not under pressure to choose whether or not the conceptual metaphor AGEING IS A JOURNEY roots for a universal conceptualisation. Therefore, the analysis stays being data-based which pulls our attention to cultural values.

10.1.4 Perceptions of ‘age’ and ‘old age’

The present project continues to show evidence that ‘old age’ in English is indeed represented quite negatively (i.e., physical loss-focused), which dismays many people and “old age comes as a ‘shock’” (Kellehear 2007:221). We see GETTING OLD IS GOING DOWNWARDS from dictionary entries to corpus data (see 10.1.1). That being said, we only partially agree with the argument that “current cultural narratives about aging are often stereotyping and demeaning, being based on either a decline ideology or an age-defying ideology” (Laceulle and Baars 2014:34). Because the “current cultural narratives” seem to have excluded Chinese culture. Our results show that source scenarios such as VIOLENCE, DISEASE, A SCARY and DANGEROUS THING, which highlight physical loss, exist in the English data but not in the Chinese data. Thus, our Chinese data show significantly less physical-loss

focus in the perceptions of 'age' and 'old age', and are unlikely to be based on negative narratives about ageing. Instead, ageing can be an externalised process about the concept of 'age' that increases over the course of life, for which the source concept of OBJECT is used in the Chinese data.

Given that *age* in English can be a euphemistic term for *old age* (OED) and the general media representations of 'old age' in English tend to be negative, the conceptualisations in English are becoming increasingly problematic as research has shown a correlation between perceptions of ageing and the health outcomes of older adults (e.g., Bennett and Gaines 2010). For instance, the negative stereotypes - especially when they are self-relevant - can impact individuals' cognitive performances (e.g., memory performance) by levelling up their anxiety or lowering their motivation. It is encouraging to see that a shift of discourses has been brought up (Kornadt et al. 2020), i.e., replacing negative or positive view of old age with a lifespan perspective. However, the change of discourse is a long ongoing process, and it needs to be based on a comprehensive understanding of existing perceptions. Thus, to some extent, outcomes of the current research help to pinpoint the linguistic manifestations of the generally positive, neutral, and negative perceptions; by extension they can be useful tools for ageing-related communications.

10.2 Strengths of the study

The present study has uncovered the general conceptual metaphors of 'age' and 'old age' and the cultural variations. It identifies source concepts, schemas and mappings and scenarios from dictionaries entries and corpora. It contributes a new set of data and a new

angel to cultural linguistics (Kövecses 2005; Musolff 2010, 2017, 2021; Sharifian 2017), specifically, in English and Chinese.

Firstly, complimenting existing research (Maalej and Yu 2011; Yu 1998, 2008, 2009; Yu, Yu and Lee 2017), the current study confirms that while there are similar conceptual metaphors in both languages, some conceptual metaphors that emerge in English are not applicable in Chinese. For instance, OLD AGE IS AN OPPONENT or GETTING OLD IS GOING DOWNWARDS.

Secondly, a new angle lies in its interdisciplinary potential of bridging language use and studies of ageing together. Existing research on ageing has started to engage with CMT (Benczes, Burrage, Sharifian, and Allan 2017:608-620; *Journal of the American Geriatrics Society*³² 2017,2020; Katz 2006, 2011; Wijngaarden et al. 2019). However, they either do not focus on the linguistic patterns or are not informed by a cross-cultural perspective. The current project fills the gap. We identified conceptual metaphors from idioms and fixed terms and corpora data in order to gain an initial understanding of the representation of ageing in each culture. It demonstrates that *age*-related as well as *old age*-related dictionary entries and in corpora can yield insights into the perceptions of ageing in English in contrast with Chinese equivalents. We find the prepositional phrases in English and the *DE* (of) construction in Chinese are metaphorically rich in linking the target concept of 'ageing' and source concepts together.

³² See [Author Guidelines - Journal of the American Geriatrics Society - Wiley Online Library](#)

Last but not least, given the important role of media, which address a wide range of readers as part of their daily reality, the project makes a valuable contribution to the discussion of ageing in a time that individuals are living in a complex societal and cultural context.

10.3 Limitations and future research

In discussing the role of body in generating conceptual metaphors, we stress that a portion of shared conceptual elements seem to display the influence of the body, i.e., the body serves the experiential basis to some extent. Yet, the project did not engage in the discussion about how the interplay of culture and body gives rise to conceptual metaphors (Maalej and Yu 2011; Yu, Yu and Lee 2017; Yu 1998, 2008, 2009). In this sense, the present project is limited to its focus, understanding how two cultures make sense of ageing and identify similarities and differences.

In addition, the current project did not take into account the social variables that could affect conceptualisations of ageing. For instance, gender and age, on which Littlemore's (2019) recent works touches. For instance, Littlemore finds that metaphors are used differently over the course of a lifespan. Among children the author finds that age is a factor of the timeline metaphor. Littlemore herself (2019:102) notes that "there is very little research into the ways in which older adults experience and use embodied metaphor". This also indicates the need for future research into metaphor and ageing.

Methodologically, the counting of texts and frequencies of the instances are not carried out in a strictly quantitative manner. The English corpus data cover two years of time between 2013 and 2015 and the Chinese data span the period from 1945 to 2015. Benczes, Burrridge,

Sharifian, and Allan (2017:621) report that there is a major reconceptualisation of ageing ongoing in Australian English through “novel cultural categories”, “category extensions” and “schemas”. Research also claims that general ageing stereotypes in Chinese are changing with negative perspectives arising especially in urban communities due to modernisation and globalisation (Liang 2018). Therefore, in order to capture a more-up-to-date picture of the conceptualisations of ageing, a diachronic approach in each culture is needed.

Given that the current identified conceptual metaphors and scenarios are not exhaustive, the current method can be employed to study other types of data and other cultures seeking out the conceptual constructions with positive, neutral and negative attitudes towards ageing. Finally, the practical impact these constructions can bring lies in empirical (e.g., interview) and statistical (e.g., questionnaires) studies to help implement the findings in real settings. For instance, if the conceptual metaphors that individuals use align with how they experience ageing, and if positive (or even neutral) perceptions can reduce ageing anxiety, manipulating the attitudinal conceptual metaphors and scenarios in interviews and questionnaires might counter the negative perceptions of ageing. Can exposing older adults to distinct metaphors from another culture promote optimism for ageing? Can reducing the use of scenarios that bring about negative attitudes (e.g., OPPONENT and DISEASE in English) help to counteract negative perceptions of ageing? It is urgent to explore these questions. If linguistic patterns can be deployed in our everyday life for the benefit of our general well-being, it will indirectly adjust medical intervention in our later life.

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Corpora

Beijing Language and Culture University Centre (BCC): <http://bcc.blcu.edu.cn/>

LexisNexis: <https://advance.lexis.com/firsttime?crid=401dbab6-de7d-45a0-9c75-20394eae6959>

Appendices

Altogether three appendices are compiled here.

Appendix 1 List of tables

Chapter 4 Tables

Table 1 Age in English and Chinese dictionaries

English	Chinese
d. the period of existence or of time e. to grow old f. the later part of life when the physical effects of protracted existence become apparent	a. <i>nianji</i> year record 'age' (CCD 2002:1410) b. <i>nianling</i> year number 'age' (CCD 2002:1410) c. <i>nianshi</i> year thing 'same as <i>nianji</i> ' (CCD 2002:1141) d. <i>suishu</i> year number 'age, years' (CCD 2002:1839)

Table 2 Source domains from English dictionary entries

Source domain	Examples	No. of entries
BODY PART	<i>old-hearted, old-grey, greybeard, hoary, old hand, old head, old-faced, old-bone</i>	8
MOTION-FORCE	<i>disintegrated, crumbling, broken-down, worn out, decay</i>	5
JOURNEY	<i>getting on (in years), over the hill, long-lived, past one's prime, advanced in one's years</i>	5
ANIMAL	<i>old trot, old serpent, old dragon, old trout</i>	4
PLANT	<i>ripe, to grow old</i>	2
Total		24

g. Table 3 Source domains from Chinese dictionary entries

h. Source domain	i. Example	j. No. of entries
k. ANIMAL	l. <i>lao ma shi tu</i> m. old horse know way	n. 'old and experienced' o. 10
p. BODY PART	q. <i>lao lian</i> r. old face	s. 'reputation' t. 8
u. JOURNEY	v. <i>lao mai</i> w. old walk/step	x. 'doddering' y. 5
z. PLANT	aa. <i>jiang gui zhi xing, dao lao yu la</i> bb. the older the ginger and cinnamon become, the more pungent their flavour.	cc. 5 e) 'the older, the blunter'
dd. WEAPON/BATTLE	ee. <i>bao dao bu lao</i> ff. a good sword never gets dull	g) 'old yet still strong and competitive' gg. 2
		g) Total hh. 30

ii. **Table 4 Symbolic meaning of the body parts**

jj. Old-	kk. EN	ll. CN
mm. Head	nn. emotion/personality/characteristics	oo. reasoning/mental spirits
pp. Hair	qq. greyness with age	rr. greyness with age for self-effacing
ss. Face	tt. lit. having a face with characteristics of age	uu. fig., dignity
vv. Hand	ww. fig., experience	xx. fig., experience
yy. Torso/body	zz. N/A	aaa. Self [of woman]
		ddd.
bbb. Bone	ccc. lit. to mature with old bones	eee. it exists in colloquial language used as self-effacing
fff. Heart	ggg. fig., having characteristics of an old person	hhh. N/A
iii. Beard	jjj. greyness	kkk. N/A

Chapter 5 Tables

Table 1 Search terms in English and Chinese for a trial data collecting

English	Chinese
<i>age and I</i>	a. <i>nianji</i> 'age' b. <i>suishu</i> 'age'
<i>old and I</i>	c. <i>lao and wo</i> 'old and I'

Table 2 Metaphor instances out of 100 citations in English

Citations	Source concept	Frequency
<i>at ...age (of)</i>	LOCATION	9
<i>middle-aged</i>	LOCATION	2
<i>aged over</i>	LOCATION	1
<i>before the age of</i>	LOCATION	1
<i>under-age</i>	LOCATION	1
<i>from ...age</i>	PATH	1
<i>by the age of</i>	PATH	1
<i>aged over</i>	LOCATION	1
<i>in middle age</i>	CONTAINER	1
<i>showing his age</i>	A THING	1
<i>after the age of</i>	LOCATION	1
		Total :20

Table 3 Citations in Chinese

Search term	<i>People's Daily</i>	<i>Wenhui Newspaper</i>	Total
<i>nianji</i> 'age'	2706	1803	4509
<i>suishu</i> 'age'	138	112	250

Table 4 Metaphor instances out of 200 citations in Chinese (*Wenhui Newspaper*)

III.	Collocates of <i>nianji</i>	Source concept	frequency
mmm.	<i>nianji-da</i> age big, 'old/older'	nnn. OBJECT	ooo. 43
ppp.	<i>Xiaoxiao nianji</i> , small small age, 'young'	OBJECT	16
qqq.	<i>Nianji xiao</i> age small '(young'	OBJECT	10
rrr.	<i>Nianji qingqing</i> age light light, 'young'	OBJECT	5
sss.	<i>Nianji qing</i> age light 'young'	OBJECT	5
ttt.	<i>zhe ba nianji</i> this handful age 'old'	OBJECT	5
uuu.	<i>shang nianji</i> up/above age 'old/older' ³³	OBJECT	4
vvv.	<i>Nianji buxiao</i> age not small, 'not young'	OBJECT	3
			Total:91

³³ This is an example that in Chinese the adjective *shang* 'up' functions as a verb which means *nianji* 'age' should be treated as the subject. Hence age is perceived as an object that rises. This is laid out in section 3.8.4.

Table 5 Metaphor instances out of 200 citations in Chinese (*People's Daily*)

www. Collocates of <i>nianji</i>	Source concept	frequency
xxx. <i>Nianji da</i> age big 'old'	yyy. OBJECT	zzz. 77
aaaa. <i>Nianji xiao</i> age small 'young'	OBJECT	17
bbbb. <i>Yi ba nianji</i> a handful age, 'old'	OBJECT	10
cccc. <i>Dao le [...]</i> <i>nianji</i> arrived at [years of] age, 'get to the age of'	LOCATION	4
dddd. <i>Shang nianji</i> up age, 'old/older'	OBJECT	1
eeee. <i>Nianji qing</i> age light 'young'	OBJECT	6
		Total:115

Table 6. Metaphor candidates for *old age* in the test run

Grammatical categories	Examples
Prepositional phrases	<i>a contraption that transports you into old age</i> <i>the threshold for older age</i> <i>the threshold of old age</i> <i>as one long slippery slope, ending in the crash of old age</i> <i>that can flower in old age</i> <i>the journey into old age</i> <i>at the ripe old age of 68</i> <i>in the winter of old age</i>
verb Be with <i>old age</i> as subject	<i>old age is all the rage</i> <i>old age is just plain tough</i>
verbs with <i>old age</i> as subject	<i>old age can liberate us</i>
verbs with <i>age</i> as object	<i>she vowed to fend off age...</i>

Table 1 Nexis1 Structure (1/5/2013 -1/5/2015)

Newspapers	Texts	Words
<i>ffff. The Times (London)</i>	<i>gggg. 6357</i>	<i>hhhh. 87712</i>
<i>iiii. The Evening Standard (London)</i>	<i>jjjj. 1632</i>	<i>kkkk. 21200</i>
<i>llll. The Daily Mail and Mail on Sunday</i>	<i>mmmm. 4215</i>	<i>nnnn. 61804</i>
<i>oooo. The Guardian</i>	<i>pppp. 7311</i>	<i>qqqq. 125846</i>
<i>rrrr. Total</i>	<i>ssss. 19515</i>	<i>tttt. 296562</i>

Table 2 BCC 1 Nianji 'age'

	MEs	Citations	Words
<i>v*de nianji</i> verb ... DE age 'verb [...] age that'	88	186	14883
<i>nianji de</i> age DE 'age of'	149	297	20998
<i>de nianling-</i> DE age 'age of/that'	138	1000	54492
Total	375	1483	90373

Table 3 BCC1 *laonian* ‘old age’

	MEs	Citations	Words
<i>lao nian de</i> old age <i>DE</i> ‘of old’	90	723	44338
<i>de laonian</i> DE old age ‘old age of/old age that’	11	1456	80256
	101	2179	124594

Table 4. Example of the source concepts for the conceptualisations of ‘old age’ in Nexis1 and BCC1.

Source domains	Metaphorical expressions in English	Metaphorical expressions in Chinese
VIOLENCE/OPPONENT	<i>launched a passionate defence of old age surrender to old age succumbs to old age</i>	N/A
JOURNEY - LOCATION	<i>descend into an infirm old age; tip into old age; lapsed into comfortable old age</i>	<i>jinru</i> enter-in ‘enter’ <i>zouxiang</i> walk towards ‘walk towards’ <i>mairu</i> stride in ‘stride to’ <i>buru</i> step in ‘step in’
JOURNEY-TRAVELLER	N/A	<i>Zhong jiang daolai</i> DE <i>laonian</i> finally will arrive-come DE old age ‘old age will eventually arrive’

Table 5 Frequency of Metaphorical Expressions (MEs) in the Corpora

Concepts	Frequency of MEs in English Nexis1	Frequency of MEs in Chinese BCC1
'age'	591	321
'old age'	66	77
Total	657	397

Table 6 The source domains that are found to understand the concept of 'age' in English and Chinese

Source domain	Frequency in English	Frequency in Chinese
LOCATION	435	112
PATH	122	0
OBJECT	27	178
MOVEMENT-ORIENTATION	2	31
GOAL	5	0
Total	591	321

Table 7 The source domains that are found to understand 'old age' in English and Chinese

Source domain	Frequency in English	Frequency in Chinese
JOURNEY	16	19
VIOLENCE/OPPONENT	13	0
CONTAINER	10	52
FRUIT	5	0
ILLNESS/DISEASE	4	0
A SCARY, EVIL, DANDERIOUS THING	5	0
A LIVING THING	5	6
Total	66	82

Chapter 7 Tables

Table 1 Lexical items for ‘age’ in English – the LOCATION source concept

Preposition	Frequency	Example
<i>At</i>	332	<i>At the age of 62</i>
<i>Over</i>	72	<i>Over the age of 50</i>
<i>Under</i>	27	<i>Under the age of 40</i>
<i>Above</i>	2	<i>Above the retirement age</i>
<i>Below</i>	2	<i>below the official age for receiving a full old-age pension</i>

Table 2 Lexical items for ‘age’ in English – the PATH source concept

Preposition	Frequency	Example
<i>By</i>	45	<i>by the age of</i>
<i>from...to...</i>	35	<i>from the age of...to...</i>
<i>Between</i>	30	<i>between the ages of</i>
<i>Beyond</i>	5	<i>beyond the age of</i>
<i>get to ...</i>	6	<i>get to... age</i>

Table 3 Source domains for ‘age’

Source domain	Frequency	Example
OBJECT	173	<i>da nianji de lao ren</i> big age DE old person ‘an old person’
LOCATION	113	<i>dao le ren lao zhu huang de nianji</i> arrive AUX person old pearl yellow DE age ‘he arrived at an old age’
VERTICALITY	31	<i>Shang le nianji,</i> up AUX age ‘old’
CONTAINER	6	<i>50 kai wai de nianji,</i> 50 open out DE age. ‘over 50 years of age’

Table 4 LOCATION tokens

Token	Frequency
<i>dao le</i> , arrive AUX ‘arrived at’	56
<i>guo le</i> , pass AUX ‘passed’	43
<i>bu ru</i> , step enter ‘step into’	6
<i>zou xiang</i> , walk towards, ‘walk towards’	4

Chapter 8 Tables

Table 1 Conceptual elements and the lexemes for the JOURNEY domain

Conceptual elements	Lexemes
LOCATION	<i>at the grand old age, a different country, on the frontier of, on the road to, reaching, approaching, the boundaries of...</i>
DOWN	<i>descend into, tip into, lapsed into</i>

Table 2 Source domains examined

Source domain	EN	CN
LOCATION/PATH	✓	✓
CONTAINER	✓	✓
VIOLENCE	✓	X
DISEASE	✓	X
A DANGEROUS THING	✓	X
A LIVING THING	✓	✓
FRUIT	✓	X

Table 3 Conceptual metaphors in both languages

	EN examples	CN examples
OLD AGE IS A LOCATION	<i>old age is a different country, reaching old age, or at the grand old age</i>	<i>dao le laonian</i> arrive AUX old age 'arrived at old age'; <i>cong zhong nian zou dao laonian de menkan</i> , from middle age walk arrive old age DE doorstep 'walked from middle age to the doorstep of old age'
OLD AGE IS A CONTAINER	<i>mellowed in his old age; helping people to get what they wanted out of their old age</i>	<i>bu ru laonian</i> step enter old age 'step into old age'
OLD AGE IS A LIVING THING	<i>the toddlerhood of old age</i>	<i>laonian de jiaobu</i> old age's footsteps 'old age's footsteps'

Chapter 9 Tables

Table 1 Conceptual metaphors of 'age' in English and Chinese

English	Chinese
AGEING IS A JOURNEY OF A PERSON AGE IS A LOCATION OLDER IS DOWN	AGEING IS A JOURNEY OF A PERSON AND AGE AGE IS A LOCATION AGE IS AN OBJECT AGE IS A CONTAINER OLDER IS UP

Table 2 Conceptual metaphors of ‘old age’ in English and Chinese

English	Chinese
OLD AGE IS A LOCATION ON THE DOWNSIDE OF THE AGEING PATH GETTING OLD IS GOING DOWN	OLD AGE IS A LOCATION ON THE MATURATION PATH GETTING OLD IS GOING UP
OLD AGE IS A CONTAINER	OLD AGE IS A CONTAINER
OLD AGE IS AN OPPONENT	OLD AGE IS A LIVING THING
OLD AGE IS A DISEASE	
OLD AGE IS A SCARY, EVIL, and DANGEROUS THING	
OLD AGE IS A LIVING THING	
OLD AGE IS A FRUIT	

Table 3 AGEING IS A JOURNEY

Conceptual aspects	EN	CN
LOCATION	Old age is a lower location	Old age is a higher location
PATH	Old age is approaching the end	Old age itself can be a path
TRAVELLER	The ageing person	The ageing person and age itself
DIRECTION	Old age is downward oriented	Old age is upward oriented

Table 4 Transition into old age

EN	CN
<i>tip into old age</i>	<i>bu ru laonian</i> ‘step enter old age’ (getting old)
<i>lapsed into comfortable old age</i>	<i>jin ru laonian</i> ‘move forward enter’(getting old)

Table 5 Attitude towards 'old age' in English

Conceptual metaphor	Attitude
OLD AGE IS A LOCATION	Only when it involves the downward direction (e.g., <i>tip into old age</i>) as negative because it triggers the awareness of physical losses.
OLD AGE IS A CONTAINER	Neutral
OLD AGE IS AN OPPONENT	Negative as it is associated with challenges
OLD AGE IS A DISEASE	Negative as it is associated with physical loss
OLD AGE IS A DANGEROUS THING	Negative as it is associated with fear
OLD AGE IS A LIVING THING	Often negative as it is associated with fear
OLD AGE IS A FRUIT	Neutral

Table 6 Attitude towards 'old age' in Chinese, as reflected by the conceptual metaphors

Conceptual metaphor	Attitude
OLD AGE IS A CONTAINER	Neutral
OLD AGE IS A LOCATION ON THE PATH OF MATURATION	Positive as it is associated with optimism that directs the attention away from the focus of physical loss
OLD AGE IS A LIVING THING	Neutral

Appendix 2 List of examples

Chapter 3 Examples

(1) EN

My approaching old age will be fine.

(2) CN

Ta ershi sui.

She twenty year (of age)

‘She (is) twenty years (old)’.

(3) EN

“White hair flying, hands never still”

(4) EN

“Teddy (Danny Glover) and Waller (Tom Waits) - all three were known as the, ho-ho,

Over the Hill Gang.

(5) EN

on the cusp of turning 74...

Chapter 4 Examples

(1) EN

Old serpent

Old dragon

(2) CN

lao tai long zhong

old look dragon chime

‘doddering’

(3) EN

Old trout

(4) CN

Lao bang sheng zhu

Old mussel bear pearl

‘an old person becomes a new parent’

(5) CN

a) *lao huang niu* old yellow ox ‘willing ox, person who is diligent and conscientious in work’ (CCD 2002:1158)

b) *lao niu po che* old ox a broken cart ‘making slow progress’ (CCD:1160)

c) *lao niu shi du* an old cow licking her calf ‘parents doting on his or her child; parental love; dote on one’s children’ (CCD 2002:1160)

(6) EN

Old trot

(7) CN

a) *lao ji fu li*

old horse bend-over stable

‘old people may still cherish high aspirations’

b) *lao ma shi tu*

old horse know way

‘old and experienced’

a) *lao ma si feng*

old horse whinnying wind

‘an old horse craves for action’

b) *lao ma wei ju*

old horse as pony

‘treating an old person as a child (not showing respect to old people)’

(8) CN

lao xiong dang dao

old bear in the way

‘a powerful general blocks a main road in the battlefield’

(9) EN

The ham sandwich is waiting for his check.

(10) EN

a) *old grey* obsolete old man, greybeard

b) *greybeard* a man with a grey beard; an elderly or old man.

c) *hoary* having white or grey hair, grey-haired.

d) *old-hearted* denoting an attribute which is or appears old, or is characteristic of an

old person

e) *old-faced* having a face characteristic of age

f) *old head* an old or experienced person

g) *old hand* a person who has been employed for a long time or who has experience in a business, or who is skillful in doing something

h) *old-boned* obsolete manured with old bones.

(11) CN

a) *lao shen* old body/torso ‘I myself [of an old lady]’ (CCD 2002:1161)

b) *lao tou’r* old head-PRT ‘old chap, a familiarity’ (CCD 2002:1162)

c) *lao tou-zi* old head-PRT, ‘old fogey, usually used by a wife/children as familiarity’

d) *lao lian* old face ‘reputation’ (CCD 2002:1159)

e) *hong yan an lao* red face dim old ‘one loses charm with age (female)’ (CCD 2002:805)

f) *lao cang* old grey ‘old hoary’ (CCD 2002:1158)

g) *nian lao se shuai* year old colour decline 'one loses charm with year (female)' (CCD 2002:906)

(12) EN

- c) ripe
- d) to grow old

(13) CN

- a) *lao xiu* 'old rotten myself [of man]'
- b) *he lao ju ku* Chrysanthemum old lotus withering 'a woman is no longer young'
- c) *Lao dang yi Zhuang* old should [be] stronger 'one gets more capable with age'
- d) *lao cheng diao xie* old complete wither 'used in obituary for an aged well-regarded person'
- e) *jiang gui zhi xing dao lao yu la*, ginger and cinnamon PRT nature, arrive old more spicy 'the older one gets, the more honest and blunt they become'

(14) EN

- a) *disintegrated*,
- b) *crumbling*,
- c) *broken-down*,
- d) *worn out*.

(15) EN

- a) *to get on (in years)*
- b) *over the hill*
- c) *long-lived*
- d) *past one's prime*

e) *advanced in one's years*

f) *Decayed*

(16) EN

- | | | | |
|----|--------------------------|----------------------------|--|
| a) | <i>lao mai</i> | old walk/step | 'doddering' |
| | | | 'experienced by being there long' |
| b) | <i>lao jiang hu</i> | old river lake | |
| | | | 'old age goes away and youth comes back' |
| c) | <i>fan lao huan tong</i> | return old come child | |
| | | | 'old age is about to arrive' |
| d) | <i>lao zhi jiang zhi</i> | old about to arrive | |
| | | | 'old age goes away/be young again' |
| e) | <i>huan nian que lao</i> | return year get rid of old | |

(17) EN

- c) *bao dao bu lao* good sword not old 'a good sword never gets dull',
d) *jian lao wu mang, ren lao wu gang* blade/sword old no sharpness, person old no firmness 'one gets old and loses his skills'

Chapter 6 Examples

(1) EN

“[...] generally far more mature than men *from an early age*, run out of time physically [...]”.

(2) CN

ke ta ye dao le feng yu piao yao de nianji

but he also arrive PRT wind rain windy sway DE age

‘but he has also reached an old age’

(3) CN

shang le *sishi sui nianji de ren* [...]

Up PRT forty year age DE people

‘People over forty years old’

Chapter 7 Examples

(1)

a) a mother to Lisa, 49, and has a 16-year- old grandson.... I know I've been hired because I can appeal to other older women, and I'm proud of that. </s><s>

Modelling *at this age* isn't about being gorgeous, though you do need to be able ...

(*Daily Mail*, Jul 2014)

b) of all the desperate ideas Labour has cooked up over the course of this interminable election campaign, giving 16-year-olds the vote is the most cynical. Good grief, even my husband currently the Conservative Chief Whip was a Socialist *at that age*. (*The Mail on Sunday*, April 2015)

c) People aged 50 upwards are looking for a type of exercise that suits running are not going to be beneficial to most in that age group. </s><s> Ballet helps refine

balance, flexibility and core strength. </s><s> These are key to maintaining anyone's health, but are especially important *at that age*. (*Daily Mail*, Mar 2015)

2)

a) ... says he can't go out and "hit" on women like he used to because it "just doesn't feel right *at my age*" ... (*The Times*, Jan 2015)

b) No point in marrying *at my age*. Maureen Lipman says she "can't really see the point" in remarrying despite having found love again. </s><s> The 68-year- old, whose husband Jack Rosenthal died 10 years ago (*Daily Mail*, Jul 2014)

c) told me he didn't expect to be playing Mercutio '*at my age* ', though he and Branagh pointed out that Mercutio's age is never mentioned.... .. The 76-year- old theatrical knight has been persuaded by Kenneth Branagh to play Romeo's ... (*Daily Mail*, Jul 2015)

(3)

a) although the number of people saving enough increases *above the age of 50*, only 53% do save enough (*The Guardian*, Jun 2013)

b) ... last three years where children under 10, who are *below the age of* criminal responsibility and cannot be prosecuted, are believed to have ... (*The Evening Standard*, Oct 2013)

(4)

a) what I'm doing and that I'm showing women *over a certain age* don't have to hide. (*The Daily Mail and Mail on Sunday*, Apr 2014)

b) The number of men *over the age of 50* suffering from severe loneliness in England will increase to... (*The Guardian*, Feb 2015)

(5)

John travelled *from* England through the tunnel *to* France.

(6)

a) ... 50 pupils were said to have topped 16 stone *by the age of 11* last year and...(*The Daily Mail and Mail on Sunday*, Aug 2013)

b) ... hoping to have set up home *by the age of 30* compared to 28 for women...(*The Daily Mail and Mail on Sunday*, Nov 2014)

c) ... One in four children has tooth decay *by the age of five*... (*The Times*, May 2013)

(7)

a) ... accepts its first nursery students *from the age of three* (*The Daily Mail and Mail on Sunday*, Nov 2013)

b) ... generally far more mature women than men *from an early age*, run out of time physically. (*The Daily Mail and Mail on Sunday*, Jan 2014)

c) ... by as much as 10 percent per decade *from the age of 40 onwards*, so don't set yourself ... (*The Times*, Sep 2013)

d) ... freedom to access your retirement savings *from the age of 55, rising to 57* in 2028 ... (*The Times*, Mar 2015)

(8)

a) ... people in good enough shape to play tennis *beyond the age of 100* ... (*The Times*, Jan 2015)

b) ... in an attempt to remain in the game *beyond the age of 65* ... (*The Times*, Jan 2015)

- c) ... with a 5 per cent increase in the odds for living *beyond the age of 95* ... (*The Times*, Aug 2014)

(9) *get to*

- a) ... over-50s are sensible drinkers and you don't *get to a certain age in life* without knowing your limits. (*The Daily Mail and Mail on Sunday*, Jan 2015)
- b) Older women fall into a black hole in broadcasting. [...] It is that they *get to a certain age*, then they find they are near the exit and they...(*The Daily Mail and Mail on Sunday*, Jan 2015)
- c) 'You *get to an age* when you're not totty anymore'; At 43, Richard Armitage thinks he's too old to be a pin-up. (*The Times*, Aug 2014)
- d) You look at the game differently when you *get to my age*. (*The Daily Mail and Mail on Sunday*, Apr 2013)
- e) She's a tough old bird [...] I can see myself in her. [...] You *get to an age* where you don't care what people think and enjoy dishing out... (*The Times*, Jun 2014)
- f) Paddy will move back into his own bedroom when he *gets to the age* he wants his own privacy. After all, have you ever heard of an 18-year-old who is eagerly still climbing into his parents' bed? (*The Daily Mail and Mail on Sunday*, Feb 2015)

(10)

- g) Optimizing sleep at an older age may help to delay the *decline in brain function seen with age* . (*The Daily Mail and Mail on Sunday*, Feb 2015)

(11)

- a) People *turn Tory with age*. (*The Guardian*, Dec 2014)
- b) She's *mellowing with age*. (*The Guardian*, Jan 2014)

(12)

[...] of invisibility that starts to settle around our shoulders *between the ages of 40 and 45* is far harder to shake off [...] (*The Times*, Jul 2014)

(13) CN

zheme da nianji de yi ge lao ren

such big age DE one CLF old person

‘an old person of such a great age.’

(14) CN

d) ... *ta yi-zai shuo yao zhua-jin mu-qian de nianji he zhuang-tai...*

... he once-again say want grab-tight eye-front DE age and shape-state ...

... ‘he repeatedly stressed that [he] should make the best of the current age and state’ ...

e) ... *diyi shi tade nianji xiao, cai ershisan sui*

...first is his age small, only 23 year

‘... firstly, he’s young, only 23 years old’

f) ... *ta ceng gantan zijide nianji qing, xiwang neng xunsu “lao” qi-lai- ...*

... he used to lament his age light, wish can quickly “old” rise-come ...

‘... he used to lament about being young and wish he got older quickly...’

(15) CN

you le yi ba nianji de ren zai chong fan xuexiao

have AUX one handful age DE person again return school

‘people of a certain age return to school’

(16) CN

Shang dian nianji de ren chang huainian 50 niandai he 60 niandai qianqi.

Up bit age DE people often reminisce 50s and 60 era early.

‘Older people often reminisce the early 50s and 60s.’

(17) CN

Kan shang qu tamen dou zai 60 sui wang shang de nianling

Look up go they all are 60 year toward up DE age

‘They all look over 60 years of age’

(18) CN

Yi wei 50 sui shang xia nianji de nanzi

One CLF 50 years up down age DE man

‘A man around 50 years old.’

(19)

Ta chuan zhe zhan-xin de huangse Menggu paozi, kan yangzi you 50 kai wai de nianji

He wear PRT brand-new DE yellow Mongolia robe, look appearance have 50 open

out DE age

‘He is wearing a brand-new yellow Mongolian robe, (he) looks over 50 years of age.’

(20) CN

zai shiq/ba sui chong man jiqing de nianji

to be at 17/18 year full of passion DE age

‘at the age of 17/18 - an age full of passion’

(21) CN

d) *Tamen shuo, dao le 50 duo sui de nianji, yi bu zai wei zheyang de xiongxin suo qushi.*

They say, arrive AUX 50 more years DE age, already not again AUX this DE ambition AUX drive

'It is said that when you are over 50, you will no longer be driven by this kind of ambition.'

e) *Jishi dao le wo zheyang de nianji, wo ye zhunbei lianxi ziji de Putonghua le.*

Despite arrive AUX me this DE age, I also prepare practise myself DE Mandarin AUX

'Despite my age, I am still prepared to practise my Mandarin.'

f) *Wo 30 sui le, suiyue ru suo, yi shun-jian wo yijing dao le yuanli qing-se zou xiang chengshu de nianling.*

I 30 years AUX, years as shuttle, one twinkling-of-an-eye, I already arrive AUX far away green-bitter walk toward ripe DE age.

'I am already 30. Time has flown, and in the twinkling of an eye I am more mature and far from being young.'

(22) CN

c) *Yi guo zhi tianming de nianji, Wang Guixin cai da shang hulianwang de kuai che*

Already passed know heaven destiny DE age, Wang Guixiang just got on internet DE express train/bus.

‘Wang Guixiang only just started to benefit from the internet when she is in her 50s.’³⁴

d) *Yi bu ru zhi tianming de nianji, Chen Deyu yuefa ren zhun le yi ge li.*

Already step enter know heaven destiny DE age, Chen Deyu more recognises precisely AUX one reasoning/way.

‘Now that he is already in his 50s, Chen Deyu believes more firmly the theory that ...’

(23)

Moran hui shou, cai faxian, yijing guo le zuo meng de nianling

Suddenly return head, just discover, already pass AUX make dream DE age

‘Looking back suddenly, (I) just realised that (I) have passed the age of pursuing dreams.’

(24) CN

c) *Yuanlai wo zao-yi guo le xin tiao jia su de nianling*

Afterall I early-already pass AUX heart beats add speed DE age.

‘Afterall I have way passed the age of being excitable.’

d) *Yijing guo le zuo meng de nianling, yijing guo le na duan feng hua xue yue de nianling.*

Already pass AUX make dreams DE age, already pass AUX that CLF wind flower snow moon DE age.

³⁴ [50] *Zhi tian ming*, know heaven destiny ‘in his 50s’ is a line by Confucius about life stages. We discussed this in Chapter 4 section 4.5.

‘I have already passed the age of pursuing dreams and being romantic or melancholic.’

(25) CN

Yiqian dou jue de 20 sui shi hao yaoyuan de nianling. Ming nian wo dou you de gen-zhe nide bufa ben san le.

Previously even feel 20 years is very far DE age. Next year I even again have to follow AUX your steps run 30.

‘I used to think that 20 is extremely far away. Next year I will be following your steps and turning 30.’

Chapter 8 Examples

(1) EN

Italian pensioner who found herself catapulted to big-screen stardom - at the grand old age of 93... There can be few actresses who have won a prize as most promising newcomer at the age of 93. (*The Times*, Nov 2013)

(2) EN

Even though in my head I’m convinced I’m not a day past 32, I will officially *reach the grand old age of 48*. Not ancient by any stretch. But *alarmingly close to 50* and a further reminder of the fact that the gap between how I think of myself and how others see me *has widened to an abyss*. (*The Daily Mail and Mail on Sunday*, Jul 2013)

(3) EN

[...] Lau is the original personal style blogger. Yet *at the grand old age of 31*, she is stepping away from the idea of putting her own style at the centre of her blog [...] (*The Evening Standard*, Feb 2015)

(4) EN

It is a blessing to *have reached old age*, so there is some luck there already. (*The Guardian*, Feb 2015)

(5) EN

She [Joan Bakewell] said " Old age is *a different country*. It feels quite different. I am *on the frontier of* old age and I know it is *a different place* from where I used to live". (*The Times*, Jan 2015)

(6) EN

"This show is trying to say that there are lots of great fun things about being old and rather than keeping struggling into your seventies racing about trying to be groovy, I think it's better to think of old age as *a new country, an exciting country*." (*The Daily Mail and Mail on Sunday*, Jan 2014)

(7) EN

How playing video games could help us stay sharp *on the road to old age* ... designed video game, based on reacting to signs while driving, improves older people's ability to multitask. (*The Times*, Jan 2014)

(8) EN

The winter of 2011 saw the road outside ... Only a handful [carers] showed me any kindness. Suddenly, it dawned on me that this could very well be my fate for the rest of my life should I be unfortunate enough to *descend into an infirm old age*. The idea filled me with cold terror. (*The Daily Mail and Mail on Sunday*, Dec 2014)

(9) EN

Get a dog. Seriously, do. Dogs not only reduce stress, lower blood pressure, force you to exercise and promote sociability you to exercise and promote sociability, but once

you *tip into* old age your preoccupations will collide perfectly because you'll both be thinking " Who is going to feed me"[...] (*The Times*, Nov 2013)

(10) EN

[...] Atwood revisits an earlier work of her own in "I Dream of Xenia With the Bright Red Teeth", where the characters from *The Robber Bride*, now *lapsed into* comfortable old age [...] (*The Guardian*, Sep 2013)

(11) EN

I am afraid of the *run-up* to death, because I have had to watch it. But I think that many of us who are on *the last lap* are too busy with the *baggage of old age* to waste much time anticipating the *finishing line* [...] (*The Times*, Jan 2015)

(12) EN

Death, according to Hamlet, is the undiscovered country, from whose bourn no traveller returns'. But old age, I suspect, is *the Ryanair flight* you have to take to get there: undignified, uncomfortable and full of hidden costs they only mention in the small print. And woe betide you if you try to take too much baggage. (*The Daily Mail and Mail on Sunday*, Sep 2014)

(13) EN

Fashion expert Gemma Champ said many women now *stay physically active into their old age*, meaning they have the confidence to carry off younger designs. ... (*The Daily Mail and Mail on Sunday*, Sep 2013)

(14) EN

Scientists find genetic clue to mental decline ... inequities - why some *stay sharp as a tack in their old age* while others are forced to give up crosswords at the age of 60. (*The Times*, Sep 2013)

(15) EN

[...] of helping people to *get* what they wanted *out of their old age* rather than just "writing them off" by assuming they had to [...] (*The Times*, Oct 2013)

(16) EN

Each generation, *entering* old age and *filling it out*, brings something new, because each generation is ... (*The Guardian*, Dec 2014)

(17) EN

In a nationwide scheme, 45 minutes helping a neighbour to eat breakfast or go shopping would earn us 45 minutes' help *in our old age*. (*The Times*, Apr 2014)

(18) EN

VETERAN broadcaster Dame Joan Bakewell *has launched a passionate defence of old age* - saying that some of the best life experiences are only appreciated with the wisdom that comes with maturity. (*The Daily Mail*, May 2014)

(19) EN

We are advised that medicine and its promise of an extended life span have given us an unprecedented opportunity: we can spin out the prime of our lives indefinitely. And if we *surrender* to old age, we are fools or worse, cowards. (*The Daily Mail*, May 2013)

(20) EN

World's oldest person dies aged 116 [...] Jiroemon Kimura, from Kyotango in Japan, *succumbs to* old age after seeing four emperors and 61 prime ministers come and go. (*The Guardian*, Jun 2013)

(21) EN

Cohabiting *beats* a lonely old age (*The Times*, Oct 2013)

(22) EN

Sir Anthony had vowed to continue working until he reached 100. At an exhibition at the Gagosian Gallery in London in June, he told The Independent: "It's what I like doing. *Old age is a shock*, but I still enjoy making the works. I look forward to going into the studio. I would be bored if I didn't do that." (*The Times*, Jun 2013)

(23) EN

[...] And then in a matter of seconds *I was propelled prematurely* into old age, and I now observe my contemporaries with deeply envious eyes - desperately wishing, to rehearse that corny old line, I could have some of what they're having [...] (*The Times*, Aug 2014)

(24) EN

a. He's buying a stairlift to heaven; Robert Plant's new album *tackles old age* and loneliness with gusto, says Will Hodgkinson (*The Times*, Nov 2013)

b. In the wake of Germaine Greer or agony aunts Irma Kurtz and Virginia Ironside, the most influential women's voices *tackling old age* tend to suggest they are contentedly post-sexual, "free at last" from erotic passion... (*The Guardian*, Aug 2014)

(25) EN

We can't wait for a *miracle cure for old age*; More funding for dementia research is welcome. (*The Times*, Dec 2013)

(26) EN

[...] One of Illich's arguments in those days was that medicine, despite its apparent successes, was not notably increasing life expectancy. Alas, he was wrong. *Artificially prolonged old age is the new iatrogenic malady*. (*The Guardian*, Apr 2015)

(27) EN

[...] He [Daniel Klein] wrote: "Of all the things that wisdom provides to help one live one's entire life in happiness, the greatest by far is the possession of friendship. "

And the infirmities of old age? *Moaning to your friends is by far the best medicine.*

(*The Daily Mail*, May 2013)

(28) EN

[...] Martin Amis gave a talk in which he said that old age was "*like starring in a low-budget horror film, saving the worst till last*". Pointing to the likes of John Updike and Saul Bellow as writers whose work got weaker in old age, Amis admitted that he himself, then aged 50, was finding his vocabulary shrinking. (*The Times*, Nov 2014)

(29) EN

[...] But he [Lou Reed] also admitted that old age was *taking its toll* on his body. Appearing at the Cannes Lions international festival of creativity four months ago, Reed remarked on his increasing frailty. "How could time go that quickly? It never ceases to amaze me," he said. "The other day I was 19, I could fall down and get back up. Now if I fall down you are talking about nine months of physical therapy." (*The Guardian*, Oct 2013)

(30) EN

After Electra review - fear, resentment and brutality in this vengeful family drama; Tricycle, London as an 81-year-old artist announces that she plans to kill herself, April de Angelis asks: is old age a *curse* from which we are entitled to *escape*? (*The Guardian*, Apr 2015)

(31) EN

Time and health are running out for them as they [Nick and Meg] consider their *impending old age* and wonder what sort of future they might want, either together or apart ... (*The Guardian*, Oct 2013)

(32) EN

Old age is a challenge for everyone but even more so for the estimated one million Britons over 55 who are lesbian, gay or bisexual (LGB). They face the *double whammy of old age* plus homophobia. (*The Guardian*, Jan 2015)

(33) EN

Although *On Chesil Beach* was acclaimed for its McEwanesque combination of forensic elegance and creeping disquiet, reviews of his most recent books, *Solar* and *Sweet Tooth*, have been more muted; some have wondered if his writing still has the same bite or vehemence. Novelist John Banville used the dread word "*mellowness*" in a review of *Saturday*. [...] "Writers are a bit like politicians - they never quit while they're ahead, they have to fail and then quit. But I doubt it. Not unless I go completely nuts." There is a touch of defiance in his tone. "I'll be retired - it won't be an active choice. Anyway, I'm in the *toddlerhood* of old age." (*The Guardian*, Jan 2014)

(34)

"Forty is the *old age of youth*; 50 the *youth of old age*," chipped in Victor Hugo. (*The Guardian*, Jul 2013)

(35) EN

I'm having a tough few weeks, emotionally, because soon I'll be off on my first holiday for 10 years [...] You keep calm, find some in your size, go into the changing

room, take all your clothes off and try them on surrounded by giant mirrors. That's the bit I don't like. I never have. "You are uptight," some chap sneered at me in the 60s. But now I'm more *down-loose*, and *old age is glaring back* at me. I don't have to see it at home: I just avoid mirrors. But here, in the wrestling in a shop cubicle, I have to face it. (*The Guardian*, Apr 2015)

(36) EN

In these diaries, old age is clearly *catching up with him*. 'I'm feeling extremely tired all the time, and I just wonder how long I'll be able to stay in this huge house... And, to be quite candid, who really wants to read all the junk I'm collecting?' (*The Daily Mail and Mail on Sunday*, Aug 2013)

(37) EN

And before we knew it that time came. Old age is too *grim to contemplate* and then it is upon you. (*The Times*, Jul 2013)

(38) EN

[...] At one point I asked him when he (former musician Lou Reed) intended to die. "I would like to live to a *ripe old age* and raise watermelons in Wyoming [...]" (*The Times*, Oct 2013)

(39) EN

The most remarkable English classical musician since the celebrated Beecham. Rattle has scaled the highest peaks. Appointed CBE *at the ripe old age* of 32, he was knighted seven years later, and elected principal conductor of the Berlin Philharmonic, the world's most formidable orchestra, at 44. (*The Daily Mail*, Mar 2015)

(40) EN

If you thought that Robert De Niro had *mellowed in his old age*, think again. His new film with Luc Besson is feistily violent and he still hankers after making a sequel to *Taxi Driver*. (*The Guardian*, Nov 2013)

(41) CN

Xianzai tebie xiang yinju shanlin!!! Wo zhe shi tizao bu ru laonian de jiezou ang!!!

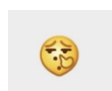
Now especially want hide-live mountain-forest!!! Me this is ahead-of-time step into old age DE rhythm INTERJECTION!!!

‘Now I really want to live in woods like a hermit!!! Is this a sign of getting old in advance?’

(42) CN

[...] ranhou zenme dou shui bu zhao zhe shi yao tiqian bu ru laonian de jiezou me [pick nose]

[...] Then how all sleep not AUX this is will in-advance
step into old age DE rhythm AUX[pick nose emoji]



‘[...] then no matter how [I tried], [I] could not fall asleep. Is this a sign of *entering old age* ahead of my time?’

(43) CN

zong shi zheme zao jiu xing le, zhe shi bu ru lao nian de jiezou ma?

Always is this early then awake AUX, this is step into old age DE rhythm AUX?

‘I always wake up this early. Is this a sign of entering old age?’

(44) CN

*Lao wangji dai qian wo zhe jixing shi nao na yang [heng]
yuelaiyue lan le – shi buru laonian de jiezou me?*

Always forget bring money me this memory is carry-out what look ... [emoji
face] AUX bad AUX – is *step into old age DE sign* AUX.

‘I always forget to bring money. What is wrong with my memory? [🤔]. It’s
becoming worse and worse – is *this a sign of getting old?*’

(45) CN

*Ta [...] que yi shi ge 50 sui chutou, bu ru lao nian de ren le, ta etou
shang de zhouwen jizai le ta du-guo de cangsang suiyue.*

She [...] But already is CLF 50 year out-head, *step into* old age DE person AUX, her
forehead on DE wrinkle record AUX her live-past DE vicissitudes years

‘She [...] is already over 50 years old, *approaching her old age*. The wrinkles on her
forehead are records of the many vicissitudes of life she has experienced.’

(46) CN

ta-de lao nian yiding chong man zhe xingfu

His old age certainly *fill full* AUX happiness

‘His old age must *be full of happiness*’

(47) CN

*Dang yi ge gengyun-zhe, jin ru lao nian de fenghsou jijie shi, jianyue ziji sa xia
hanshui de xinqin guoshi, yangyi zhe yi zhong xiyue*

When one CLF plougher, move forward *enter old age DE harvesting season* when, check self sow down sweat DE working-hard fruit, *vast over-flow AUX* one CLF joy
 ‘When a plougher *enters his harvesting season*, i.e., old age, looking at the fruit of his hard labour, *[he] is permeated with/overflowed with joy.*’

(48) CN

Gaige kai fang, shi bu ru lao nian de Zong Qi Xiang xiansheng huanfa le yishu de qingchun.

Reform open up, make *step into old age DE* Zong Qi Xiang sir glow AUX art DE youth.

‘Reform and opening up has helped Zong Qixiang, *who’s in his old age*, boost his art career.’

(49) CN

Wo gai zenme zuo caineng rang mama qingsong yidian, rang ta zai jianjian bu ru lao nian de suiyue li chong man huanle er bu shi youchou?

I should how do can let mum relax a. bit, let her in gradually *step into old age DE time* in fill full joy instead.of not is sadness?

‘What should I do to let mum relax, and let the time when *she slowly approaches old age be filled with joy instead of sadness?*’

(50) CN

[...] *chang yi 65 sui wei lao nian de qi dian.*

[...] often consider 65 year as old age *DE starting point.*

‘[...] 65 years old is often considered as the *starting point of old age.*’

(51) CN

cong zhong nian zou dao laonian de menkan

From middle age walk arrive old age DE doorstep

‘Walked from middle age to the doorstep of old age.’

(52) CN

*zai nianqing de shihou zhongshi ming li yu jinqian, hulue le ziji de shenti jiankang; dao
le zhong nian, laonian de shihou que xiang yong yongyou de mingli yu
jinqian liu zhu jian kang he shengming*

at young DE time value fame-and-gain and money, ignore AUX self DE body
health; arrive AUX middle age, old age DE time however want use have DE fame-
and-gain and money keep AUX health and life.

‘when we were young, [we] valued fame and money but ignored our health; when
[we are] in our middle age and old age, [we] want to change the fame and money for
health and life.’

(53) CN

he cha, yang hua. Wo zai laonian de lu shang yue zou yue yuan.

Drink tea, raise flowers. I am old-age DE road on more walk more far.

‘I am drinking tea and keeping flowers. I’m further and further on the road of old
age.’

(54) CN

*Rensheng chang tu zhong, zong you bu ru laonian de shiqi, nian yu shi chi,
shijian jinpo.*

Life long way middle, after-all *have step into old-age DE time*, age with time
gallop, time tight urgent.

‘On the long road of life, after all there will be the time of *stepping into old age*. Time
flies and there is not much time left.’

(55) CN

*zi gu yingxiong chu shaonian, [...], er wo zao yi bei lao nian de shou jinjin
zhuai zhe le.*

From old-times hero out-of young-person, [...], whereas I early *already AUX old-
age DE hand firm firm grab AUX AUX*.

‘Since ancient times heroes come out of young men, [...], but I’ve already been
grabbed by old age’s hands.’

(56) CN

*Dong yi mo hunghun xieyang zhi xia de ren de guji yu wunai,
suoyi, ta-men yingzao yi ge jia, rang laonian de jiaobu jin ru ...*

Understand one CLF evening sunset AUX under DE person DE loneliness and
frustration, Therefore, they build one CLF home, let *old age DE footsteps enter* in ...

‘They understand the loneliness and frustration of old age. Therefore, they built a
home to let *old age’s footsteps come in*.’

(57) CN

zhi ni wo zhong jiang dao lai de laonian

To you me finally will arrive come *DE old.age*

‘To our *old age that will finally arrive*’

(58) CN

Wo haishi zai.xiwang zhe wo-de laonian de lai lin, wo xiwang, zai wo lao de
shihou, yijing wanquan dongde le zizai shunyi

I still AUX hope AUX my old.age DE come arrive, I hope, at I old DE when,
already completely understand AUX at-ease satisfactory.

‘I’m still looking forward to *the arrival of my old age*. I hope, when I’m old, I would
understand a satisfying life with ease.’

(59) CN

Huoli he meili de qingnian yo, ni zhidao zai ni yihou dao lai de laonian, ye you
zhe tongyang de youmei, huoli, he meili me?

Lively and charming de youth AUX, you know PRE ni after arrive come DE old .ge,
also have AUX same DE elegance, vitality, and charm AUX?

‘Lively and charming youth, do you know that *old age that arrives after you also has
the same elegance, vigour and charm as you do?*’

(60) EN

nianqing de yiqifengfa, zhongnian de manbu jingji, laonian de
xianghe chenjing, sihu mei ge ren dou wu fa yuyue.

Youth DE high-spirited-and-vigorous, middle-age DE full spread thorn, old-age DE
auspicious-and.-peaceful calm, seems every CLF person all not way go.beyond

‘It seems that no one can bypass the high-spirited and vigorous youth, the middle
age full of difficulties, *the peaceful and calm old a ge.*’

Chapter 9 Examples

(2) EN

But now I'm more down-loose, and *old age is glaring back* at me.

(2) CN

Huoli he meili de qingnian yo, ni zhidao zai ni yihou dao lai de laonian, ye you zhe tongyang de youmei, huoli, he meili me?

‘Lively and charming de youth AUX, you know PRE ni after *arrive come DE old .ge*, also have AUX same DE elegance, vitality, and charm AUX?’

(Lively and charming youth, do you know that old age that arrives after you also has the same elegance, vigour and charm as you do?)

(3) CN

er wo zao yi bei lao nian de shou jinjin zhua zhu le.

‘whereas I early already AUX old-age DE hand tightly grabbing firmly AUX.’

(but I’ve already been grabbed by the hands of old age)

(4) CN

a) *laonian de jiaobu* ‘old age DE footsteps’ (old age’s footsteps) that is welcomed to the home.

b) *dao lai de laonian* ‘arrive come DE old age’ (arrival of old age) in the context of being welcomed.

c) *laonian de lai lin old age DE* ‘arrive forward’ (arrival of old age) associated with a satisfying life with ease

d) *laonian de xianghe chenjing* 'old-age DE auspicious-and.-peaceful calm' (the peaceful and calm old age)

(5) EN

World's oldest person dies aged 116. [...] Jiroemon Kimura, from Kyotango in Japan, *succumbs to* old age after seeing four emperors and 61 prime ministers come and go.

(6) EN

[...] At one point I asked him when he (former musician Lou Reed) intended to die. "I would like to live to *a ripe old age* and raise watermelons in Wyoming [...]"

(7) EN

If you thought that Robert De Niro had *mellowed in his old age*, think again. His new film with Luc Besson is feistily violent and he still hankers after making a sequel to Taxi Driver.

(8) CN

cong zhong nian zou dao laonian de menkan

From middle age *walk arrive old age DE doorstep*

'Walked from middle age to the doorstep of old age.'

(9) CN

bao dao bu lao

good sword not old

'elderly persons still at the height of their skills'

(10) EN

[...] Atwood revisits an earlier work of her own in "I Dream of Xenia With the Bright Red Teeth", where the characters from *The Robber Bride*, now *lapsed into* comfortable old age [...]

Appendix 3 Metaphorical instances of 'old age' in Chinese

Here we provide all the metaphorical instances of 'old age' identified in the Chinese corpus BCC1. The table contains more examples than the number of instances we analysed in the thesis (see Chapter 8).

#	Metaphorical instances			Source Domain
1	<i>ta ru zhi ming de laonian</i>	stepped into the old age of knowing the destiny	enter old age	CONTAINER
2	<i>laonian chongman zhe</i>	old age full of ...	an old age full of	CONTAINER
3	<i>bu ru chimu zhinian de laonian</i>	stepped into evening age's old age	enter old age	CONTAINER
4	<i>mai ru laonian</i>	stride into old age	enter old age	CONTAINER
5	<i>jin ru laonian</i>	people entering old age	enter old age	CONTAINER
6	<i>bu ru laonian</i>	you who have entered old age	enter old age	CONTAINER
7	<i>bu ru laonian</i>	stepping into old age slowly	enter old age	CONTAINER
8	<i>bu ru laonian</i>	stepping into old age	enter old age	CONTAINER
9	<i>mai ru laonian</i>	stride into old age	enter old age	CONTAINER
10	<i>jin ru laonian</i>	enter old age	enter old age	CONTAINER
11	<i>mai ru laonian</i>	enter old age	enter old age	CONTAINER
12	<i>mai ru laonian</i>	stride into old age	enter old age	CONTAINER
13	<i>bu ru laonian</i>	stride into old age	enter old age	CONTAINER
14	<i>mai xiang laonian</i>	stride into old age	enter old age	CONTAINER
15	<i>bu ru laonian</i>	stride into old age	enter old age	CONTAINER
16	<i>kua ru laonian</i>	stalk into old age	enter old age	CONTAINER
17	<i>bu ru laonian</i>	stepping into old age	enter old age	CONTAINER
18	<i>bu ru laonian</i>	stepping into old age	enter old age	CONTAINER
19	<i>bu ru laonian</i>	stepping into old age	enter old age	CONTAINER
20	<i>bu ru laonian</i>	stepping into old age	enter old age	CONTAINER
21	<i>bu ru laonian</i>	stepping into old age	enter old age	CONTAINER
22	<i>bu ru laonian</i>	stepping into old age	enter old age	CONTAINER

23	<i>bu ru laonian</i>	stepping into old age	enter old age	CONTAINER
24	<i>bu ru laonian</i>	stepping into old age	enter old age	CONTAINER
25	<i>bu ru laonian</i>	stepping into old age	enter old age	CONTAINER
26	<i>bu ru laonian</i>	stride into old age	enter old age	CONTAINER
27	<i>mai ru laonian</i>	striding into the doorstep of old age	enter old age	CONTAINER
28	<i>bu ru laonian</i>	step into old age	enter old age	CONTAINER
29	<i>jin ru laonian</i>	enter old age	enter old age	CONTAINER
30	<i>bu ru laonian</i>	step into old age	enter old age	CONTAINER
31	<i>bu ru laonian</i>	step into old age	enter old age	CONTAINER
32	<i>jin ru laonian</i>	enter old age	enter old age	CONTAINER
33	<i>bu ru laonian</i>	enter old age	enter old age	CONTAINER
34	<i>jin ru laonian</i>	step into old age	enter old age	CONTAINER
35	<i>jin ru laonian</i>	enter old age	enter old age	CONTAINER
36	<i>bu ru laonian</i>	step into old age	enter old age	CONTAINER
37	<i>jin ru laonian</i>	enter old age	enter old age	CONTAINER
38	<i>bu ru laonian</i>	step into old age	enter old age	CONTAINER
39	<i>jin ru laonian</i>	enter old age	enter old age	CONTAINER
40	<i>jin ru laonian</i>	enter old age	enter old age	CONTAINER
41	<i>jin ru laonian</i>	enter old age	enter old age	CONTAINER
42	<i>bu ru laonian</i>	step into old age	enter old age	CONTAINER
43	<i>jin ru laonian</i>	enter old age	enter old age	CONTAINER
44	<i>jin ru laonian</i>	enter old age	enter old age	CONTAINER
45	<i>bu ru laonian</i>	step into old age	enter old age	CONTAINER

46	<i>jin ru laonian</i>	enter old age	enter old age	CONTAINER
47	<i>jin ru laonian</i>	enter old age	enter old age	CONTAINER
48	<i>jin ru laonian</i>	enter old age's line/queue	enter old age	CONTAINER
49	<i>jin ru laonian</i>	stepped into the old age's line/queue	enter old age	CONTAINER
50	<i>jin ru laonian</i>	enter old age's line/queue	enter old age	CONTAINER
51	<i>jin ru laonian</i>	enter old age's line/queue	enter old age	CONTAINER
52	<i>bu ru laonian</i>	stepped into old age	enter old age	CONTAINER
53	<i>jin laonian</i>	close to old age	getting old	LOCATION
54	<i>zou xiang laonian</i>	walk towards old age	getting old	LOCATION
55	<i>zou xiang laonian</i>	walk towards old age	getting old	LOCATION
56	<i>jiejn laonian</i>	approaching old age	getting old	LOCATION
57	<i>ren dao laonian de shihou</i>	person arrive old old time	when one is old	LOCATION
58	<i>dao le zhongnian laonian de shihou</i>	arrive PRT middle age and old age	when one is old	LOCATION
59	<i>dan dao zhong laonian de shihou</i>	but arrive middle old age DE time	When one is in his middle age or old age	LOCATION
60	<i>xin li mai xiang laonian de zhengxiang</i>	mind stride toward old age DE signs	the signs when one is getting old	LOCATION
61	<i>zou xiang laonian de menkan</i>	walk towards old age DE menkan	getting old	LOCATION
62	<i>jin laonian</i>	close to old age	getting old	LOCATION
63	<i>laonian de qidian nianling</i>	old age DE starting point age	the beginning of old age	LOCATION
64	<i>laonian de qidian</i>	old age DE starting point age	the beginning of old age	LOCATION

65	<i>zhongnian zou dao laonian de menkan</i>	middle age walk arrive PRT old age DE doorstep	reached old age from middle age	LOCATION
66	<i>zhong jiang dao lai de laonian</i>	to the arrival of old age	the arrival of old age	LIVING THING
67	<i>lao nian ji jiang dao lai</i>	old age without pension is soon arriving	the arrival of old age	LIVING THING
68	<i>... daolai de laonian</i>	the arrival of old age		LIVING THING
69	<i>bei laonian de shou jinjin zhua zhu</i>	old age's hand	in old age	LIVING THING
70	<i>lao nian de lailin</i>	the arrival of old age	the arrival of old age	LIVING THING
71	<i>laonian de jiaobu</i>	the old age's steps	the arrival of old age	LIVING THING
72	<i>cong shao er dao lao nian</i>	from childhood to old age	from childhood to old age	PATH
73	<i>cong qingnian, zhongnian dao laonian</i>	from youth, middle age to old age	from youth to old age	PATH
74	<i>cong tongnian dao laonian de shuailao guocheng</i>	from childhood to old age DE decline old process	the ageing process from childhood to old age	PATH
75	<i>cong tongnian dao laonian de guocheng</i>	from childhood to old age DE process	the ageing process from childhood to old age	PATH
76	<i>laonian de dao lu</i>	old age DE road	on the path of old age	PATH

77	<i>cong younian dao laonian</i>	from childhood to old age	from childhood to old age	PATH
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