



# A Study of Ecological Metaphors in the Winter Olympic Games' Promotional Film "Countdown: Beginning of Spring"

Junfang Mu<sup>1\*</sup>, Zihan Chen<sup>1</sup>, Lixin Zhang<sup>1</sup>, Jie Bai<sup>1</sup>, Guang Yang<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>School of Foreign Studies, Hebei University, Baoding, China

<sup>2</sup>The State Key Laboratory of Alternate Electrical Power System with Renewable Energy Sources, North China Electric Power University, Baoding, China

Email: \*Junfangmu@163.com

**How to cite this paper:** Mu, J.F., Chen, Z.H., Zhang, L.X., Bai, J. and Yang, G. (2023) A Study of Ecological Metaphors in the Winter Olympic Games' Promotional Film "Countdown: Beginning of Spring". *Open Access Library Journal*, **10**: e9744. <https://doi.org/10.4236/oalib.1109744>

**Received:** January 10, 2023

**Accepted:** February 20, 2023

**Published:** February 23, 2023

Copyright © 2023 by author(s) and Open Access Library Inc.

This work is licensed under the Creative Commons Attribution International License (CC BY 4.0).

<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>



Open Access

## Abstract

With the help of filmmaking techniques, promotional films use multiple modalities such as image, sound, color, composition and text, which can highlight the characteristics of the thing being promoted and help audiences understand its connotation. Based on the multimodal metaphor theory, the article analyzes the ecological metaphor of the opening ceremony promotional film of the Beijing 2022 Winter Olympic Games "Countdown: Beginning of Spring" and finds that the promo integrates the traditional Chinese culture of the twenty-four solar terms, the spirit of the Winter Olympics Games and ecological elements to express the positive natural ecological significance and social ecological significance, from this the promotional film constructing a harmonious national ecological image.

## Subject Areas

Linguistics

## Keywords

Promotional Film "Countdown: Beginning of Spring", Ecological Metaphor, Twenty-Four Solar Terms, National Ecological Image

## 1. Introduction

The rapid development of the media has made images appear in the public eye in a variety of ways, and the media environment uses media as a carrier to help humans establish the structure of perceptual systems [1], including creative

techniques such as television dramas, films, promotional films and documentaries, among which, promotional films involve a number of shooting techniques, composition principles and other visual effects. Its multimodal forms of moving images, sounds, symbols and structures are rich in traditional culture and features, and can express the real characteristics of the thing being promoted, becoming a powerful means of expression to build the national image. In recent years, China has been actively hosting various international sports events, and the sports promotional film combines the excellent Chinese traditional culture and sports spirit, which is crucial to the construction of the national image.

As an important issue in today's world, the ecological environment has received a lot of attention from various media. In the report of the 20th National Congress of the Communist Party of China, General Secretary Xi Jinping explicitly proposed to "protect nature and the ecosystem like protecting our eyes" and "inherit Chinese civilization" [2]. Promotional films can use some expressions to reflect their implied meaning, and the metaphor exists not only in discourse but also in people's real life, influencing the audience's cognition and thoughts. After more than 40 years of research, although the academic community generally agrees that the essence of metaphor is to understand and experience another thing on the basis of the thing ([3], p. 126), it is a systematic symbolic expression. However, the study of monomodal metaphor is not comprehensive. In order to expand the new paradigm of metaphor research, Forceville combined multimodality and metaphor [4], and proposed the research paradigm of multimodal metaphor, which provides a new research perspective for the development of metaphor, at the same time, the cognitive mechanism of multimodal metaphor is of great significance for the creation of promotional films. Therefore, this study intends to analyze the ecological metaphor of the opening promotional film of the Beijing 2022 Winter Olympic Games, "Countdown: Beginning of Spring", from the perspective of multimodal metaphor, in an attempt to propose an analysis framework suitable for this type of promo, analyzing the multimodal meanings contained in the promo, in order to help the audience recognize the deeper connotations conveyed by the multimodal meanings, this will further explore the national ecological consciousness and the ecological image of the country.

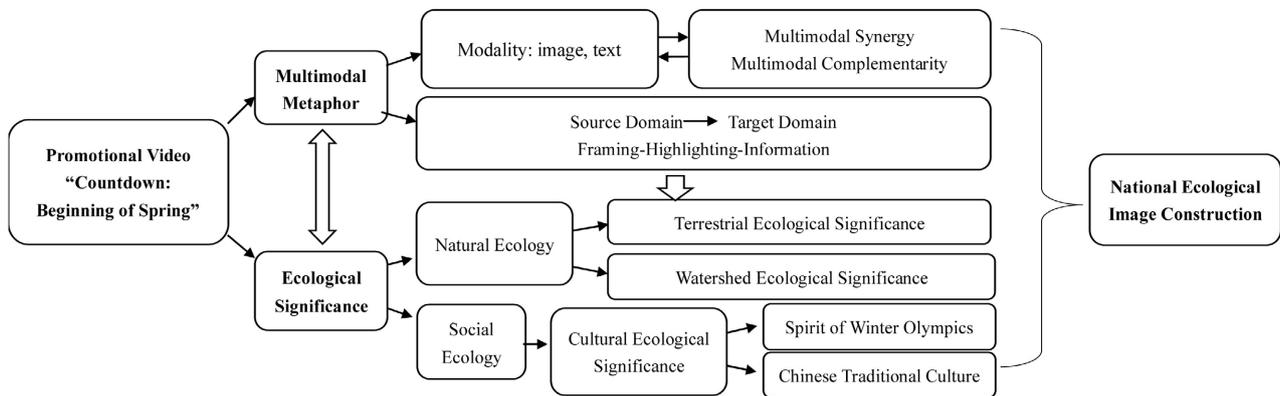
## **2. Multimodal Ecological Metaphor and Promotional Film "Countdown: Beginning of Spring"**

Multimodal metaphor can analyze the metaphorical phenomena of multiple modalities such as text, image, sound and gesture, and it usually conveys a series of deeply content embedded in the promotional film through the synergy and complementarity of multiple modalities. The source domain and the target domain are the two basic elements of multimodal metaphors and the basis of their analysis, which belong to different cognitive domains. The interaction between them forms a mapping relationship, specifically, this mapping relationship is to substitute certain characteristics of the source domain into the target domain in

order to understand the essential characteristics of the target domain. Since the late 1990s, scholars at home and abroad have started to study multimodal metaphors from different perspectives. Multimodal metaphors involve not only words and pictures, but also sounds and structures, etc. Forceville demonstrated the creativity of multimodal advertising metaphors through a large number of examples ([5], pp. 113-132) and focused on the role of music and nonverbal sounds in multimodal metaphors ([6], pp. 383-400). Forceville's research laid the foundation for the applicability of metaphors in multiple modalities. Since then, experts and scholars have used multimodal metaphor theory to study different types of promotional films, such as Xi'an city promotional film [7], Fujian promotional film [8] and China-US military recruitment promotional film [9], which broaden the scope of multimodal metaphor research for promotional films.

Ecology as a social hotspot frequently appears in films [10] [11], promotional films [12] and documentaries [13] [14] and other subjects, which can convey a certain ecological significance and thus awaken the ecological consciousness of the audience. Among them, promotional films can show the ecological meaning more intuitively, and analyzing the ecological metaphorical phenomenon in promotional films can reveal the impact of promotional films on ecology (nature and culture), raise people's ecological awareness, and promote the harmonious development of society. However, few scholars have explored the ecological metaphors in sports promos. Therefore, this paper takes the Beijing 2022 Winter Olympic Games sports promo "Countdown: Beginning of Spring" as an entry point and constructs an ecological metaphor analysis framework using multimodal metaphors as a theoretical basis, as shown in **Figure 1**.

According to **Figure 1**, the analysis framework of this study starts from image and text modalities, and analyzes the ecological metaphor phenomenon in the promotional film based on multimodal synergy and multimodal complementarity, conveying meaning by analyzing the mapping process of multiple modalities from the source domain to the target domain and providing framing, highlighting the characteristics of things and conveying information. Specifically, the promotional film "Countdown: Beginning of Spring" contains two ecological significances: first, the natural ecological significance, which refers to the natural ecological scenery in the promo, such as flowers, glaciers, lakes, deer and other flora and fauna; second, the cultural ecological significance, which refers to the traditional Chinese culture of the twenty-four solar terms and the customary characteristics of each solar term, as well as the spirit of the Winter Olympic Games mentioned by General Secretary Xi Jinping (respectively, being open-minded, being confident and open, facing up to difficulties, pursuing excellence, and creating the future together). This study intends to analyze these ecological significances that appear in the promotional film "Countdown: Beginning of Spring" by means of multimodal metaphors, and to explore the national ecological image constructed in the promo.



**Figure 1.** Framework of ecological metaphor analysis of the promotional film “Countdown: Beginning of Spring”.

The innovative implications of this study are twofold: First, the research method is well-structured, and this research is based on multimodal metaphor, the mapping process between source and target domains was used to analyze the ecological and social significance of “Countdown: Beginning of Spring”; Second, the theme was innovative and operability, this study chose the social hot spot of the Winter Olympics. In the promo film “Countdown: Beginning of Spring”, the solar term blends Chinese traditional culture and customs, and displays the national image to the world, this study combines the spirit of the Winter Olympics and Chinese traditional culture to explore its ecological significance.

### 3. The Ecological Metaphor Analysis of “Countdown: Beginning of Spring” from the Perspective of Multimodal Metaphors

The twenty-four solar terms in the film “Countdown: Beginning of Spring” are ordered according to the Chinese lunar calendar time of each season, but the sequence is presented in a flashback. The solar term of *Beginning of Spring* is displayed at the end of the show, which corresponds to the number “1”, signifying the smooth start of the Winter Olympics. Therefore, the first part of the promo is to show the solar term of *Rain Water*, counting down to “24”, from the *Awakening of Insects* to the *Beginning of Spring*, one by one display in the promotional film. This part will take the four seasons of spring, summer, autumn and winter as reference, and select three most representative solar terms for each season to explain.

#### 3.1. Spring Solar Terms

In this section, we will explore the most representative solar terms in spring festivals, namely, *Rain Water*, *Awakening of Insects* and *Spring Equinox*. *Rain Water* is in the second solar term of the 24 solar terms, representing that the temperature begins to rise and the precipitation gradually increases. In the background image of the *Rain Water* solar term in “Countdown: Beginning of Spring”, nine athletes form a circle, the close-up view is the sweat dripping from

the athletes, and the building above the athletes' heads is also shown as a circle. The frame formed by the image symbolizes the excellent Chinese tradition of unity, mutual help, fraternity and the Winter Olympics spirit of being confident and open as well as rising up to difficulties. The background text that accompanies *Rain Water* is the famous line from Du Fu's "Happy Rain on a Spring Night": "With wind it steals in night, Mute, it moistens each thing", which reflects the characteristics of this solar term while constructing metaphorical imagery with the video, that is, the athletes' efforts are like the silent spring rain, which will eventually be rewarded, reflecting the positive cultural ecological significance. The *Awakening of Insects* is the third solar term in the 24 solar terms. This solar term is reflected by the warmer weather, and the sound of spring thunder has disturbed the insects in the field, and the plants begin to grow under the moist of the rain. In the image, the *Awakening of Insects* shows the Chinese High-Speed Rail, several high-speed rails moving forward in the shape of arrows, which are signs of upward movement. The poem at the bottom of the image, "Spring thunder rises, everything grows", corresponds to the characteristics of the *Awakening of Insects*. The "grow" in the verse corresponds to the "arrow" shape of the high-speed rails, highlighting the good wishes of Chinese athletes to pursue excellence, to break through and create miracles in the Winter Olympics Games, and at the same time, the Chinese high-speed rails show the speed of China, representing the speed of Chinese athletes in winning the championship and the speed of China's development level increases.

*Spring Equinox* is divided into the fourth solar term among the 24 solar terms. On this day, the day and night in the northern and southern hemisphere are evenly divided. This solar term represents a sunny and mild climate, which is the season for sowing crops. In the "Countdown: Beginning of Spring", the background image of the *Spring Equinox* is taken from the ancient poplar tree arena complex in Zhangjiakou, the Winter Olympic Games, and seven ice athletes with glow sticks draw the symbol of "2022" in the air. Meanwhile, the background text in the promo is from Yuan Mei's "Spring Breeze", which means that the spring breeze is like a noble guest, and everywhere it comes, it immediately becomes prosperous and lively. The two together metaphorically represent the spirit of the Winter Olympics of being confident and open and creating the future together, implying that the 2022 Beijing Winter Olympic Games Zhangjiakou competition area welcomes the arrival of sportsmen and women from all countries, and works together with all countries to climb the peak of sports in a harmonious ecological spirit. In the promotional film "Countdown: Beginning of Spring", the spring festival images and the background text together construct the source domain, while the target domain is interpreted as an abstract concept, and the mapping relationship from the source domain to the target domain is shown in **Table 1**.

The most representative of the spring festivals, *Rain Water*, *Awakening of Insects* and *Spring Equinox*, use both image and text modalities to construct a

**Table 1.** Ecological metaphors of spring solar terms in “Countdown: Beginning of Spring”.

Source Domain	⇒	Target Domain
The circle formed by the athletes		Unity, mutual help and fraternity
The athletes dripping sweat and background text		The athletes’ efforts and perseverance
High-speed rail “arrow” shape and background text		Athletes strive for excellence
High-speed rails		Chinese speed
Athletes painting “2022” action and background text		Harmonious ecological spirit

multimodal metaphor, and the mapping relationship from the source domain to the target domain conveys the message of the athletes’ perseverance, unity and struggle and other Chinese national spirit, following a positive cultural ecological meaning.

### 3.2. Summer Solar Terms

In this section, the most representative summer solar terms, *Grain Buds*, *Grain in Ear* and *Summer Solstice* are selected for analysis. *Grain Buds* is the eighth solar term of the 24 solar terms. This solar term represents a rising temperature, with heavy rain beginning in the south and full wheat grains in the north. In the “Countdown: Beginning of Spring”, the background image of *Grain Buds* is a happy and warm picture, where a father is holding his child and looking at a cake, with a smile on their faces, which means reunion. In the middle of the image is a birthday cake with a house covered with ice and snow, which is a metaphor for the main event of the Winter Olympics related to ice and snow. The sunglasses that the child is holding with both hands is precisely the ice sports sunglasses worn by skiers, conveying the message to the audience that the new generation of Chinese children are eager to pursue ice and snow sports. The text in the background of the image, “When crops reach this point, they become full”, is from the poet Wu Cheng’s “The Seventy-two Hieroglyphs of the Moon”, meaning that summer crops have begun to fill up, but are not yet ripe, presenting the development of crops during the *Grain Buds*, and metaphorically showing that Chinese ice and snow athletes are ready to start.

*Grain in Ear* is the ninth solar term of the 24 solar terms, indicating that the temperature increases significantly and the rainfall is abundant, starting to cultivate crops in the south and the north starting to harvest crops. In the image, the red color is used as the main background color for the *Grain in Ear*. Red not only represents high temperature, but also fire and passion, signifying the spirit of our sportsmen and women who are not afraid of difficulties and are indomitable. The figure in the center of the image is wearing a red top and holding a mold in the shape of a “dragon head” behind him, and on the left side of the

image is an ice skater running forward, the “dragon” represents China, and the arrangement of the image and the “dragon head” frame implies that our country will lead the Winter Olympics smoothly and lead the sportsmen and women all the way to the top, conveying the ecological significance of the excellent Chinese culture. The text in the background of the image is from Lu You’s “The Rain of the Time”, “The rice of wheat is delicious, the song of water caltrop is constantly” depicts that the *Grain in Ear* is the season of planting rice seedlings and wheat, which represents a good harvest, and corresponds to the hot atmosphere in the image, signifying the smooth holding of the Beijing Winter Olympics.

The *Summer Solstice* is the tenth solar term of the 24 solar terms, meaning the hot summer and the humid climate. The background image of the *Summer Solstice* shows three skaters skating across a cracked and dangerous ice surface, with whales moving underneath the ice surface at the same time as the three athletes, with a dark blue background highlighting the cracks in the ice surface. The whale under the ice is a metaphor for the infinite power contained in the athletes’ bodies, and the cracks on the ice symbolize the difficulties and dangers encountered by the skaters, who overcome the difficulties one by one with their confidence and internal strength, and skate across the ice without a trace of hesitation, reflecting the Winter Olympic spirit of ice skaters facing up to difficulties, pursuing excellence. The background text corresponding to the image is “The green peony still contains powder, the round lotus begins to spread fragrance”, a poem from Wei Yingwu’s “Summer Solstice Sheltering North Pond” of the Tang Dynasty, meaning that the lotus leaves already begin to emit fragrance when the green peony is still a little pink, indicating that the natural environment where it grows is sunny and fertile, conveying the harmonious natural ecological significance. In the promotional film “Countdown: Beginning of Spring”, the metaphorical mapping relationship of the summer festival constructs is shown in **Table 2**.

**Table 2.** Ecological metaphors of the summer festivals in “Countdown: Beginning of Spring”.

Source Domain	⇒	Target Domain
Father holding his child		Reunion
Both hands pick up ice sports sunglasses		The desire for snow and ice sports
“When crops reach this point, they become full”		Athletes are ready to go
Red background		Enthusiasm for the Winter Olympics
Red top figure and “dragon’s head” mold		Chinese athletes leading the way
“The rice of wheat is delicious, the song of water caltrop is constantly”		The Winter Olympics went well
Whales under the ice		The strong heart of the athletes
Cracks in the ice		Difficulties and obstacles

The summer festival images and poems metaphorically illustrate the ecological characteristics of traditional Chinese cultural customs and interpret the general features of the summer festival among the Chinese traditional culture twenty-four solar terms. In addition, the characters in the images convey the connotation of the spirit of the Winter Olympics, reflecting the positive natural ecological significance and cultural ecological significance.

### 3.3. Autumn Solar Terms

In this section, we select the most representative autumn solar terms, namely, *Beginning of Autumn*, *End of Heat* and *White Dew* for analysis. *Beginning of Autumn* is the thirteenth solar term of the 24 solar terms. It is the beginning of autumn and the season of harvest. In the “Countdown: Beginning of Spring”, the background image of the *Beginning of Autumn* is the Cowherd and the Weaving Maiden, with the male representing the Cowherd at the bottom right of the image and the female representing the Weaving Maiden at the top left of the image, both of them reaching out their hands and approaching each other. The background text is from Du Mu’s “Autumn Sunset”, in which “the star of the Cowherd and the Weaving Maiden” echoes the image, signifying the traditional Chinese festival of Qixi Festival, and the image and background text metaphorize the implied love characteristics of Qixi Festival, thus influencing the audience’s perception. The “star” in the verse corresponds to the starry sky in the image, conveying the ecological message of sunny weather and good air environment. This solar term is a metaphor for China’s commitment to spreading the excellent traditional culture of the Chinese nation to the world, showing China’s cultural confidence and showing positive cultural and ecological significance.

*End of Heat* is the fourteenth solar term of the 24 solar terms, representing the end of the hot weather, the background image of the *End of Heat* solar term is taken from a sweltering training rink with a coach and several young athletes who have been practicing their skating moves while the coach is giving them professional skating instruction. In the promo, although the young athlete’s hair is wet with sweat and the sweat is dripping down his cheeks, his expression is firm and calm, which symbolizes the Chinese athletes’ spirit of striving for excellence and the Chinese national spirit of breaking through and creating miracles. The background text in the promo, “spring planting a grain of millet, and ten thousand seeds are harvested in autumn”, is from Li Shen’s “Mercy for the Farmers”, the poem and the image together complete the mapping process from the source domain to the target domain. Autumn harvest means fertile land and excellent ecological environment, and also means that the athletes start to work hard for the games when they are still young, only to achieve the final victory.

*White Dew* is the fifteenth solar term among the 24 solar terms. It is an important solar term reflecting the growth of cold air in nature. In the image, the

yellow moon model in the center is the foreground, signifying the Mid-Autumn Festival in the midst of *White Dew* solar term. In front of the model is a snowboarder doing a snowboard grab action, and the athlete is wearing a red jacket, which means he is a Chinese athlete. Behind the lunar model is a number of skyscrapers, signifying that China is developing rapidly in all aspects and is at the forefront of the world. Some of these people are wearing red jackets with the word “CHINA” printed on them, and the poem “The dew is white tonight, the moon is bright in the hometown”, corresponds to the moon in the image, it also refers to the Mid-Autumn Festival. This solar term contains two metaphors: firstly, the athletes watch the skiing performance together during the Mid-Autumn Festival, which means that the Chinese athletes are mindful of the Winter Olympic Games, mindful of their peers, collaborative and close together, and follow the spirit of creating the future together; secondly, the healthy ecological environment, which is why the patterns on the moon can be clearly seen, and the bright moon is a metaphor for clean air. In the promotional film “Countdown: Beginning of Spring”, the mapping relationship of the metaphors constructed by summer festivals is shown in **Table 3**.

The autumn festival contains information on the characteristics and traditional customs of the traditional Chinese festivals of Qixi and Mid-Autumn Festival, highlighting the perseverance, courage and fearlessness of Chinese athletes, and integrating them with the 24 solar terms to spread the excellent Chinese traditional culture and convey the positive natural and cultural ecological significance.

### 3.4. Winter Solar Terms

In this section, the most representative winter solar terms, namely, *Beginning of*

**Table 3.** Ecological metaphors of the autumn solar terms in “Countdown: Beginning of Spring”.

Source Domain	⇒	Target Domain
Image interaction and poem		Qixi Festival, Love
Young athletes persist in training with determined expressions		The spirit of the Winter Olympics of facing up to difficulties, pursuing excellence
Poem “Mercy for the Farmers”		The athletes are not afraid of hard work only for the final victory
Lunar model		Mid-Autumn Festival, Ecological Harmony
Skyscrapers		Rapid development in China
Red clothes and the “CHINA” seal		Chinese athletes
Athletes watch ski show together		Unity, the spirit of the Winter Olympics

*Winter*, *Winter Solstice* and *Beginning of Spring*, are selected for analysis. Since *Beginning of Spring* is the countdown “1”, the promotional film puts it together with the winter solar terms, which is used to illustrate the departure of winter and the opening of the Winter Olympics, so this section will also put it in the winter solar terms for analysis.

*Beginning of Winter* is the nineteenth solar term among the 24 solar terms. It is the beginning of winter. In the “Countdown: Beginning of Spring”, the background image of the *Beginning of Winter* is a snowy scene, with white as the background color, creating a foggy image. The white color occupies most of the image, while the human houses occupy a small part. The house in the center of the image looks extremely small in front of the mountain, which symbolizes the huge power of nature. The arrangement of nature and human houses warns us to protect nature, respect nature, and put ecological protection in the first place in order to continue to carry forward the spirit of the Winter Olympics and inherit traditional Chinese culture.

The *Winter Solstice* is the twenty-second solar term among the 24 solar terms. Compared with the summer solstice, this solar term indicates the arrival of the coldest season of the year. In the image, the *Winter Solstice* uses white as the main color of the image to correspond to people’s perception of snow and cold, highlighting the arrival of the coldest season of the year. There is a group of deer running in the image, the dark brown deer and the white background color bring visual contrast to the audience, placing the animal in the center of the image as the main highlight, combining the cultural and ecological imagery together, metaphorically emphasizing the harmony of ecology in China, this is a metaphor for the importance of ecological harmony in Chinese traditional culture, and reflects the de-anthropocentrism.

*Beginning of Spring* is the first solar term of the 24 solar terms, representing the beginning of spring and the rise in temperature. The background image of the *Beginning of Spring* uses plants as the foreground, and the camera pans over a small bird flying from a branch, reflecting the message of ecological harmony in the scene and metaphorically the harmonious and beneficial ecological meaning of spring. At the same time, *Beginning of Spring* represents the blossoming of spring and the revival of everything. The *Beginning of Spring* as Countdown “1” metaphorically represents the opening of the Winter Olympics, and the image echoes the characteristics of the solar term, It shows the importance of harmonious ecological environment in China’s Winter Olympic Games. The mapping relationship between the source domain and target domain of winter solar terms in the promotional film “Countdown: Beginning of Spring” is on is shown in **Table 4**.

The images of the winter solar terms construct natural ecological features, combining snow and various creatures, focusing on the positive natural ecological meaning and shaping China’s national ecological image as a country that pays attention to ecological protection and respects nature.

**Table 4.** Ecological metaphors of the winter solar terms in “Countdown: Beginning of Spring”.

Source Domain	⇒	Target Domain
Snowy mountains		Natural environment
The contrast between the house and the snowy mountain		Human reverence for nature
White snow		The coldest season of the year arrives
Running deer		China’s focus on ecological balance
Plants, birds flying up		Ecological harmony
The beginning of spring		Start of the Winter Olympics

#### 4. The Construction of Significance of Ecological Metaphors in the Promotional Film “Countdown: Beginning of Spring”

Unlike the opening ceremony of previous Olympic Games, the opening ceremony of Beijing 2022 Winter Olympic Games, “Countdown: Beginning of Spring”, combines the Winter Olympic Games with the twenty-four solar terms, which is the oldest Chinese farming culture, and becomes a major feature of the opening ceremony of the Winter Olympic Games, and it is also an innovation and the reason for its success. From the above analysis, it is concluded that the promotional film can convey a variety of ecological meanings through the mapping relationship and mapping process of source and target domains, thus constructing a harmonious national ecological image.

Beijing 2022 Winter Olympic Games opening ceremony promotional film “Countdown: Beginning of Spring” contains various modalities such as image and text, and mainly constructs two ecological significances, on the one hand, it is the natural ecological significance, the twenty-four solar terms follow the ecological laws of nature, and the promo conveys the natural ecological significance to the world through multimodal metaphors, here the natural ecological significance includes terrestrial ecological significance and the watershed ecological significance. The sun, the snow, the trees, the flowers, the deer running, the birds flying and the birds chirping in the promotional film are all terrestrial ecology, either by highlighting, or by using information, or by using visual methods such as structured framing to carry out multimodal metaphors, so that the audience respects nature from the cognitive point of view and creates the awareness of protecting nature. Among the natural ecological features, watershed ecology is crucial, the promotional film is combined with the 24 solar terms, and the promo involving *Rain Water*, *Pure Brightness* and *Grain Buds* contain watershed ecological features such as rain or rivers, and the watershed ecology in the promo is highlighted to convey its importance and imply an excellent ecological image of China’s water resources. Therefore, the metaphorical way of terrestrial ecological significance and the watershed ecological significance in the

promotional film “Countdown: Beginning of Spring” shapes the national ecological image of China striving to write a new era of ecological civilization construction.

On the other hand, the social ecological significance of this study mainly includes the characteristics and cultural customs of the twenty-four solar terms of Chinese traditional culture. As the twenty-four solar terms contain many information on culture, customs and ecology, they can reflect the habits on clothing, food, housing and transportation during the development of Chinese society, such as the Qingming Festival around the *Grain Rain*, the Dragon Boat Festival around the *Grain in Ear* and the Mid-Autumn Festival around the *White Dew*, etc. These traditional festivals have different customs, and these habits in turn influence the audience’s perception. In addition, the promotional film “Countdown: Beginning of Spring” uses multimodal metaphors to construct the spirit of the Winter Olympics and the spirit of the Chinese nation. The images convey positive cultural and ecological significances through the depiction of internal and external messages to the characters, thus creating a harmonious national ecological image.

## 5. Conclusions

Based on the multimodal metaphor theory, the article analyzes the twenty-four solar terms into four parts: spring, summer, autumn and winter, and selects the most representative three solar terms in each part to analyze the ecological metaphors embedded in them. The ecological metaphors in the image and text are analyzed through the mapping relationship between the source and target domains as well as the metaphorical operation mechanisms of framing, highlighting and information, and it is found that the promo follows the natural ecological laws and ecological characteristics to convey positive natural ecological significances; multiple modalities are constructed on the basis of the twenty-four solar terms of Chinese traditional culture, incorporating traditional Chinese cultural customs and the spirit of the Winter Olympics, conveying a positive social ecological significance. The integration of multiple features constructs a harmonious national ecological image.

Ecological metaphor involves many aspects of theory and methods, this study needs to do further research in the following aspects: first, the study only selected the most relevant and representative image of the 12 solar terms for analysis, not all solar terms, future research can improve the study of the rest of solar terms; second, the paper only considered the Winter Olympics promotional film “Countdown: Beginning of Spring” in the text and video mode, but also to conduct an in-depth study of sound mode. The above two aspects can be used as the cut-in point of future research, on the basis of which further research on ecological metaphors of promotional films will be extended.

## Acknowledgements

The authors would like to thank Hebei Youth Top-notch Talents Project (BJ2020089), the S & T Program of Hebei Grant (21557612k) and Post-graduate’s

Innovation Fund Project of Hebei Province (CXZZSS2023011).

## Conflicts of Interest

The authors declare no conflicts of interest.

## References

- [1] Chen, Y. and Zhan, Z.S. (2022) The Ecology/Environment/Media Debate: from Media Environmentalism and Ecological Media to Ecological Media Theory. *Contemporary Communications*, **3**, 7-30.
- [2] Xi, J.P. (2022) Hold High the Great Banner of Socialism with Chinese Characteristics and Unite in the Struggle for the Comprehensive Construction of a Modern Socialist Country. *People's Daily*, 2022-10-26. <https://www.12371.cn/2022/10/25/ART11666705047474465.shtml>
- [3] Lakoff, G. and Johnson, M. (1980) *Metaphors We Live By*. University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 125-128.
- [4] Forceville, C. (1994) Pictorial Metaphor in Advertisements. *Metaphor and Symbolic Activity*, **9**, 1-29. [https://doi.org/10.1207/s15327868ms0901\\_1](https://doi.org/10.1207/s15327868ms0901_1)
- [5] Forceville, C. (2012) Creativity in Pictorial and Multimodal Advertising Metaphors. In Rodney, J., Ed., *Discourse and Creativity*, Pearson, Harlow, 113-132.
- [6] Forceville, C. (2009) The Role of Non-Verbal Sound and Music in Multimodal Metaphor. In Forceville, C. and Urios-Aparisi, E., Eds., *Multimodal Metaphor*, Mouton de Gruyter, Berlin, 383-400. <https://doi.org/10.1515/9783110215366>
- [7] Cao, Y. and Yao, Z. (2018) A Study on the Multimodal Metaphorical and Metonymical Framing in Xi'an City Image Promotional Video. 2018 *5th International Conference on Education, Management, Arts, Economics and Social Science (ICEMAESS 2018)*, Sanya, November 2018, 447-453. <https://doi.org/10.2991/icemaess-18.2018.93>
- [8] Liao, Z.Y. (2021) Cognitive Construction of Multimodal Metaphors and Metonymy in Regional Image Promotional Film—An Example of Fujian Global Promotional Film 2019. *Journal of Anhui Radio & Television University*, **192**, 57-63.
- [9] Pan, Y.Y. and Zheng, Z.H. (2017) A Multimodal Cognitive-Critical Perspective of National Defense Discourse: A Comparative Analysis of Chinese and American Military Recruitment Promotional Films as an Example. *Foreign Language Research*, **6**, 11-18.
- [10] Müller, C. (2019) Metaphorizing as Embodied Interactivity: What Gesturing and Film Viewing Can Tell Us about an Ecological View on Metaphor. *Metaphor and Symbol*, **34**, 61-79. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10926488.2019.1591723>
- [11] Zheng, L. and Hao, Y. (2022) Epic Narrative, Ecological Metaphor and Postmodernity of Transition: An Analysis of Kazakh Everyday Images in “The Pastoral of the Faraway”. *Movie Literature*, **79**, 124-130.
- [12] Shen, C. and Liu, X.B. (2022) A Study of Critical Metaphors in Multimodal Ecological Discourse: An Example of Environmental Protection Promotional Films. *Journal of Ankang University*, **3**, 103-108.
- [13] Vermenych, Y. (2020) Multimodal Metaphoric Construal of Ecology in English Documentaries. *Scientific Journal of Polonia University*, **38**, 115-122. <https://doi.org/10.23856/3815>
- [14] Li, W.R. (2017) Ecological Documentaries and the Communication Construction of Ecological China's Image. *Movie Literature*, **5**, 21-23.