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Semantic Prosody and Collocations of
Near Synonyms from a
Cross-linguistic Perspective:
English vs Chinese (Mandarin)

조선대학교 대학원
영 어 영 문 학 과
서 교 교

언어로 살펴본 영어 중국어 유의어 간의 의미운율의 차이

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Abstract

연어로 살펴본 영어 중국어 유의어 간의 의미운율의 차이

서 교 교

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화자의 태도를 반영하는 의미운율에 관련한 분야가 Louw (1993)에 의해 처음으로 소개된 이후 많은 언어학자들의 관심의 대상이 되고 있다. 그러나 대부분의 연구가 영어 데이터에서 발견하는 의미운율에 집중되어 있으며, 다양한 언어에 나타나는 의미운율에 관한 연구는 매우 부족한 실정이다. 이러한 연구 공백을 메우기 위해, 본 논문에서는 영어와 중국어의 유사어에 나타나는 의미운율의 차이에 대해서 연구하였다. 다양한 어휘군 중 HAPPEN(발생하다)류의 유사어와 EXPERIENCE(경험하다)류의 유사어를 살펴보았는데, 먼저 중국어의 HAPPEN류의 어휘 네개와 영어의 HAPPEN류의 어휘 세개를 상호 비교하고 이후 중국어의 EXPERIENCE류의 어휘 네개와 영어의 EXPERIENCE류의 어휘 세개를 상호 비교하였다. 영어 자료는 COCA(현대미국언어 말뭉치)를 근거로 조사하였으며 중국어 자료는 LCMC(랭카스터 중국어 말뭉치)를 근거로 조사하였다. 영어의 HAPPEN류 어휘 중 take place는 중립 운율로 나타났으며 happen하고 occur는 부정운율의 비율이 높은 것으로 나타났다. 중국어의 HAPPEN류 어휘 중 chan3sheng1는 긍정 운율로 나타났으며 fa1zuo4하고 bao4fa1하고 fa1sheng1는 부정 운율의 비율이 높은 것을 나타냈다. 또한 영어의 EXPERIENCE류 어휘 중 go through는 중립 운율로 나타났으며 experience는 부정운율의 비율이 높은 것으로 나타났다. 중국어의

EXPERIENCE류 어휘 중 ti3yan4하고 jing1guo4는 중립 운율로 나타났으며 jing1li4는 부정 운율의 비율이 높은 것을 나타냈다. 게다가 영어의 EXPERIENCE류 어휘 중 undergo와 중국어의 EXPERIENCE류 어휘 jing1shou4는 둘 다 인내의 의미를 가지고 있으며, 둘 다 부정적인 의미를 나타내지 않았다. 이를 바탕으로 tmxmall.com 웹사이트에서 영어문장에 대한 중국어 번역의 오류를 의미 운율을 중심으로 살펴보았는데 의미운율을 고려하지 않은 번역이 다수 발견되었다. 따라서 본 논문 말미에서는 의미 운율을 고려한 번역 교육이 필요하다는 점에 대해 논의하였다.

1. Introduction

Near synonyms are difficult for foreign language learners because of their similar denotative meanings but un-interchangeable semantic prosody (Xiao & McEnergy, 2006). Collocations and semantic prosody of near synonyms have recently attracted many researchers, especially in English. Halliday (1976:73) observed that although *strong* and *powerful* have similar denotative meanings, *strong* often collocates with *tea*, while *powerful* typically collocates with *car*. Similarly, according to Tsui (2004), the word *high* is often used in a metaphorical sense with more abstract nouns, but *tall* often collocates with concrete nouns, such as *people*, *tree* and *building*. In addition to different collocational behavior, near synonyms also show difference in semantic prosodies. For example, Sinclair (1987) observed that *happen* and *set in* both have negative semantic prosodies. Based on the research of Sinclair (1987), Partington (2004:133) argued that not only do *happen* and *set in* have unfavourable prosodies, but that the majority of words belonging to the *happen* semantic group have a negative semantic prosody with different degrees, such as *occur*, *come about* and *take place*. Tognini-Bonelli (2001) found that the word *largely* occurred more frequently with negative words, while *broadly* often appears with positive ones. In addition, Hu (2015) analyzed the semantic prosody of three adjective synonymous pairs in COCA, namely *initial & preliminary*, *following & subsequent* and *sufficient & adequate*. She found that these three synonymous adjective pairs all obtain neutral semantic prosody in academic texts, but there are tiny differences between each pair. For example, for the pair *following & subsequent*, the word *following* prefers to collocate with concrete nouns consisting of specific sub-components or steps, such as *questions*, *examples*, *criteria*, *categories*, *comment*, *statement(s)* and *steps*, but the major collocations of *subsequent* are abstract nouns, such as *analyses*, *developments*, *amendments*, *comparisons*, *investigations*, *revisions* and *editions*. Based on the above analysis, it is obvious that although near synonyms have similar meanings, their collocations and semantic prosody may differ, so we cannot interchange near synonyms randomly, especially when we do translation in

two languages.

Although many researchers have studied English near synonyms, there is little research on the comparison of semantic prosody and collocations of near synonyms in two languages. Sardinha (2000) and Elena (2001) contrast semantic prosodies in European languages, such as English vs. Portuguese and English vs. Italian. Xiao and McEnery (2006) compare semantic prosodies of English and Chinese through three case studies, including the *consequence* group, the *cause* group, and the *price/cost* group. Hashemnia, Hosseini-Maasoum, and Yousefi (2013) have researched the semantic prosodies of two word groups, namely the *CAUSE*-words and the *RESULT*-words, between English and Persian. For foreign learners, it is quite difficult to translate a word or a phrase into their language accurately, because there are near synonyms that have similar denotative meanings as the word or the phrase in other languages but have different semantic prosodies. Therefore, more research on the collocational behaviour and semantic prosody of near synonyms from a cross-linguistic perspective should be done to help second language learners.

This paper will discuss similarities and differences of semantic prosody and collocations of near synonyms between English and Chinese (Mandarin) based on corpus data. Two word groups (verbs) are involved in this paper, including the *HAPPEN* group and the *EXPERIENCE* group, and their close translation equivalents *fa1sheng1(发生)* and *jing1li4(经历)* groups in Chinese. The reason why I choose *HAPPEN* group and *EXPERIENCE* group to do research is that in English *HAPPEN*-words and *EXPERIENCE*-words show diversity in semantic prosodies, so I want to see whether their close translation equivalents in Chinese, including their synonyms, also have diverse semantic prosodies. After the discussion of the collocations and semantic prosodies of near synonyms, this paper also discusses the importance of applying semantic prosody to translation. The reason why this paper emphasizes this is that when we translate one language into another language, we may choose inappropriate near synonyms because both languages have features of semantic prosody, and near synonyms are normally not collocationally interchangeable in either language, as they show different semantic

prosodies (Xiao and McEnery 2006). This paper identifies many translation mistakes on the website *tmxmall.com* which includes many English-Chinese translations done by registered members of the website. For example, in sentence (1) they translate *hou4guo3*, which has a strong negative prosody in Chinese, into *result* which has a positive prosody. This translation is not accurate and may confuse readers, especially second language learners. It is better to translate *hou4guo3* into *consequence*, which has the similar negative semantic prosody as *hou4guo3*.

- (1) Original text: Ting2ji1 shi4gu4 de1 *hou4guo3* shi4 xiang1dang1
yan2zhong4 de1.

Translated text: The *results* of a shutdown is considerable.

Therefore, it is obvious that semantic prosody and collocations of near synonyms play a crucial role in translation.

II. Literature Review

2.1. Collocation and Semantic Prosody

Collocation has been studied for least five decades. Firth (1957) was the first to use the word collocation as a technical term. He stated "I propose to bring forward as a technical term, meaning by collocation, and apply the test of collocability" (Firth 1957:194). According to him, "collocations of a given word are statements of the habitual or customary places of that word" (Firth 1968:181). Also, he used this term to refer to the phonological idea that different sounds create different meanings.

Sinclair (1987) first extended the concept of collocation into semantic prosody. He did research on *happen* and *set in*, and found that they both prefer to collocate with unpleasant things, such as *accident* and *disease*. Later, Louw (1993) defined the concept of collocation as "semantic prosody". He illustrates semantic prosody with some examples. For instance, he found that the phrase *bent on*

typically collocates with undesirable things, such as *destroying*, *ruining*, *clinical depression*, etc. Louw (2000) observed that semantic prosody is “a form of meaning which is established through the proximity of a consistent series of collocates” (p57), which means that the node word and its collocates often occur within a fixed pattern and the meaning of the pattern reflects the speaker’s attitude. Stubbs (2001) argued that the term "semantic prosody" should instead be "discourse prosody", based on the idea of Sinclair (1996) that semantic prosody has the discourse function of a sequence rather than a word. Stubbs (2002:225) further found that “there are always semantic relations between node and collocates, and among the collocates themselves”. In other words, semantic prosody arises from the interaction between a given node and its typical collocates (Xiao and Mcenery 2006: 105). Also, Stubbs (2002) classified semantic prosody into three categorizations, including negative, positive, and neutral. For example, the verb *cause* often collocates with negative nouns such as *accident*, *crisis*, *delay*, etc., while the verb *provide* is often associated with positive nouns like *food*, *care*, and *help*.

In addition to the above theory, Thompson (2000:5) defined the meaning of semantic prosody as “the speaker or writer’s attitude or stance towards, viewpoint or feelings about the entities and propositions that he or she is talking about”. In other words, it is an “indication that something is good or bad” (Hunston 2004:157). For example, according to Stubbs’ analysis (1995), the word *cause* always collocates with negative words, so it has a strong negative semantic prosody. However, the phrase *bring about*, which has a similar meaning as *cause*, typically does not express a negative meaning (Xiao and McEnry 2006:115), because it usually collocates with *improvement*, *cure*, *success*, *solution*, etc. which denote favourable things. In a word, semantic prosody is an aspect of evaluative meaning (Partington 2004:131).

2.2. Previous Research

Sinclair (1987) first noticed that the items *happen* and *set in* are usually

associated with unpleasant events. Therefore, *happen* and *set in* have negative semantic prosodies. Partington (2004:133) pointed out that not only do *happen* and *set in* have unfavourable prosodies, but words belonging to the *HAPPEN* semantic group have bad prosodies with different degrees. He researched both *set in* and *happen* and some of their ‘synonyms’, namely *occur*, *come about*, and *take place* in two corpora. *Set in* has an extremely unfavourable prosody because it usually collocates with words and phrases like *foot-rot*, *deterioration*, *loss of confidence*, etc. *Happen* also has an unfavourable prosody. In addition to its unfavourable prosody, *happen* is also often used to describe things that occur by chance without any plan, which means *happen* has a strong tendency to indicate ‘non-factuality’. *Occur* is very similar to *happen*, with over twice as many bad environments as good ones, but *occur* is more frequently used in a neutral environment than *happen*. *Occur* also appears in numerous non-factual environments. As for *come about*, there is little evidence that it usually appears in unfavourable environments. *Take place* is often used to describe things that happen by arrangement rather than by chance. The collocations of *take place* include both negative words like *death*, *killing*, *attack*, *stabblings*, *riots*, *disturbances*, and *fight*s, and neutral words like *trial*, *celebration*, *event*, *meeting*, and so on. In summary, *set in* has the worst prosody, followed by *happen*, *occur*, and *take place*, while there is not enough evidence to show the semantic prosody of the phrase *come about*. According to the above analysis, it can be said that both individual words and phrases can have semantic prosodies (Schmitt and Carter 2004:7).

In addition to the research on the semantic prosody of near synonyms in one language, there are also other researchers who explore the collocational behaviour and semantic prosody of near synonyms from a cross-linguistic perspective. Xiao and McEnery (2006) conduct research on English and Chinese (Mandarin). First, they researched the *CONSEQUENCE* group. According to their findings, *consequence* and *aftermath* have strong negative semantic prosodies, while *result* and *outcome* are usually associated with favourable meanings. Similarly, in Chinese *jie2guo3*(结果) typically expresses a positive meaning, while *hou4guo3*(后

果) is typically negative, and *shuo4guo3*(硕果) and *cheng2guo3*(成果) are inherently positive, whereas *ku3guo3*(苦果) and *e4guo3*(恶果) are inherently negative. Second, they researched on the CAUSE group. Based on their research, *cause* has a strong negative prosody, but *bring about* typically does not express a negative affective meaning. *Result in* and *result from* are used less frequently than *cause* to show a negative affective meaning and less frequently than *bring about* to show a positive evaluation. *Lead to* usually collocates with neutral words, and *arouse* and *give rise to* are used relatively infrequently. The close translation equivalents of the CAUSE group in Chinese include *chan3sheng1*(产生), *xing2cheng2*(形成), *zao4cheng2*(造成), *yin3qi3*(引起), *dai4lai2*(带来), *dao3zhi4*(导致), *cu4shi3*(促使), *zhi4shi3*(致使), *yin3fa1*(引发), *cu4cheng2*(促成), and *niang4cheng2*(酿成). *Zhi4shi3*(致使), *niang4cheng2*(酿成), *zao4cheng2*(造成), *yin3fa1*(引发), and *dao3zhi4*(导致) have strong negative prosodies, while *cu4shi3*(促使) and *cu4cheng2*(促成) often collocate with positive words. *Dai4lai2*(带来) and *yin3qi3*(引起) are less negative than the words with strong negative prosodies mentioned above. *Xing2cheng2*(形成) and *chan3sheng1*(产生) are relatively neutral.

Also, Hashemnia, Hosseini-Maasoum, and Yousefi (2013) examined the semantic prosody behavior of some Persian words that are close translation equivalents of *cause* and *bring about*, and *consequence*, *result*, *outcome*, and *aftermath*. They found that semantic prosodies of the close translation equivalents are also obvious in Persian, but there are some differences from the words in English. For example, although the semantic prosodies of the near synonyms *cause* and *bring about* are different, the semantic prosodies of their close translation equivalents in Persian are not, and they can be used interchangeably. As for the RESULT-words, the semantic prosody of these words are quite similar in both languages. In English, *result* and *outcome* have a positive semantic prosody, while *consequence* and *aftermath* share a negative semantic prosody. The Persian equivalent *hasel* has a strongly positive semantic prosody, and its near synonym *natijeh* has neutral semantic prosody. Two other near synonyms *payamad* and *aghebat* have overwhelmingly negative semantic prosodies.

Although some research on the collocations and semantic prosody of near

synonyms has been done, more research is needed to help language learners. Therefore, this paper is going to deal with the semantic prosody and collocations of near synonyms in English and Chinese (Mandarin).

III. Method

In order to identify the collocations of both English and Chinese, this paper has collected data from two reliable corpora. The corpus used to find the collocates of the *HAPPEN* group and the *EXPERIENCE* group in English is the Corpus of Contemporary American English (COCA), which is the “largest freely-available corpus of English, and the only large and balanced corpus of American English”¹⁾ This corpus contains more than 450 million words from texts from a wide range of genres, including spoken, fiction, magazines, newspapers, and academic papers. The data analysis of the *HAPPEN* group and the *EXPERIENCE* group in English is based on the 20 most frequent collocates within a span of four words to the left for the *HAPPEN* group and four words to the right for the *EXPERIENCE* group in COCA, and only those collocates with a mutual information over three are selected for comparison. In addition, in order to find out the semantic prosodies of two word groups accurately, one hundred randomly selected concordance lines with each of the 20 collocates are examined, and all the concordance lines are looked at for those words with less than 100 concordance lines. Also, these concordance lines are rechecked by another researcher.

For the close translation equivalents of *happen* and *experience* in Chinese, this paper uses a dictionary called *Dict.cn*²⁾ to find out the corresponding words. According to this dictionary, *happen* can be translated into *fa1sheng1*(发生), *chu1xian4*(出现), *peng4qiao3*(碰巧), and *ou3yu4*(偶遇), but the close translation equivalent of *happen* is *fa1sheng1*(发生) which takes up 83% in the pie chart. Also, *experience* can be translated into *jing1yan4*(经验), *jing1li4*(经历), *ti3yan4*(体

1) cited from the website <https://corpus.byu.edu/COHA/help/intro.asp>

2) This online translation dictionary includes more than 20 million words. It uses pie chart to explain the translated words.

验), and *gan3shou4*(感受). Among these translated words, *jing1yan4*(经验) which occupies 51% in the pie chart should be excluded, because it is used as a noun. Therefore, among the rest three translated words, the close translation equivalent of *experience* is *jing1li4*(经历) which takes up 26% in the rest 49% pie chart.

After finding the close translation equivalents of *happen* and *experience*, this paper uses two online dictionaries to find out synonyms of *fa1sheng1*(发生) and *jing1li4*(经历). In one online dictionary *jinyici.xpcha.com*, synonyms of *fa1sheng1*(发生) include *chan3sheng1*(产生), *fa1zuo4*(发作), and *bao4fa1*(爆发), and synonyms of *jing1li4*(经历) contain *ti3yan4*(体验), *tong2guo4*(通过), *jing1guo4*(经过), *jing1shou4*(经受), and *yue4li4*(阅历). In another online dictionary *jinyifanyi.wncx.cn*, synonyms of *fa1sheng1*(发生) include *chan3sheng1*(产生), *fa1zuo4*(发作), *chu1xian*(出现), and *bao4fa1*(爆发), and synonyms of *jing1li4*(经历) contain *ti3yan4*(体验), *jing1guo4*(经过), *jing1shou4*(经受), and *shi3mo4*(始末). Therefore, this paper chose *chan3sheng1*(产生), *fa1zuo4*(发作), and *bao4fa1*(爆发) as the synonyms of *fa1sheng1*(发生), and *ti3yan4*(体验), *jing1guo4*(经过), and *jing1shou4*(经受) as the synonyms of *jing1li4*(经历).

In order to find out the collocates of Chinese *fa1sheng1*(发生)-words and *jing1li4*(经历)-words, this paper uses the Lancaster Corpus of Mandarin Chinese (LCMC), which is designed as a Chinese match of the Freiburg-LOB Corpus of British English (FLOB), providing a valuable resource for contrastive studies between English and Chinese. This corpus is made by Tony McEnery and Richard Xiao and includes more than 100 million words. In LCMC, the data analysis is based on the first one hundred concordance lines, and all the concordance lines are looked at for the words with less than 100 concordance lines. Also, the semantic prosodies of these concordance lines are rechecked by another researcher. During research, some irrelevant data are excluded. For example, the English-Chinese dictionary shows that the Chinese equivalent of *experience* is *jing1li4*(经历), which can also be used as a noun referring to things or events that have been seen, done, or encountered by oneself or others. These uses are excluded from the analysis.

In this paper, negative collocates are italic and bold, and positive ones are

underlined in the following tables.

IV. Two Case Studies

4.1. The HAPPEN Group

4.1.1 The HAPPEN Group in English

HAPPEN

The negative semantic prosody of *happen* has been widely observed (most notably by Sinclair 1987). In this research, the first twenty collocates of the *happen*-words in COCA are examined, as shown in Table 1.

Table 1. Top 20 collocates co-occurring with *happen* in COCA

collocates	frequency
things	9,549
thing	5,878
<i>accident</i>	498
<i>incident</i>	428
<i>accidents</i>	356
<i>tragedy</i>	211
<u>miracle</u>	170
<u>miracles</u>	148
<i>incidents</i>	129
<i>heck</i>	68
<i>shootings</i>	56
<i>tragedies</i>	42
inbox	24
<i>enormity</i>	17
coincidences	16
microcosm	15
<i>mishaps</i>	12
<i>catastrophes</i>	11

<i>burglaries</i>	10
<i>radicalization</i>	9

It is obvious that the majority of these collocates have strict negative meanings, such as *accident(s)*, *incident(s)*, *tragedy(s)*, *heck*, *shootings*, *enormity*, *mishaps*, *catastrophes*, *burglaries*, and *radicalization*. There are some examples selected from 100 concordance lines, as shown in the following:

- (2) a. I'll bet that was just another accident of yours that happened to screw up my life!
- b. When a tragedy like this happens, the community comes together and really strengthens.
- c. Three of the shootings happened in Atlanta and one was in Fairburn in south Fulton County.
- d. It's hard to know exactly what the heck is happening over the course of this entire sequence.

According to Table 1, there are only two positive collocates, *miracle* and *miracles*, as shown in (3).

- (3) a. We almost gave up our life, but it is kind of a miracle, a miracle happened to my family to survive.
- b. You know, miracles have happened to me since I fell ill.

Other collocates are neutral, such as *thing(s)*, *coincidences*, and *microcosm*. Although these words are neutral, when they collocate with *happen*, they carry negative meanings, as shown in (4).

- (4) a. And this is so unfortunate that things like these have to happen.
- b. People die, coincidences happen, accidents happen.
- c. But the fight is also a microcosm of what's happening in the conventional TV business as a whole.

In sentence a, because of the word *unfortunate*, the meaning of *things* is negative. Similarly, in sentence b, because of the word *die*, *coincidence* becomes negative, and in sentence c, because of *the fight*, the word *microcosm* becomes negative. Therefore, it is obvious that the word *happen* has a strong negative semantic prosody.

OCCUR

A synonym of the word *happen* is *occur*. *Occur* also has strongly negative semantic prosody, because according to the twenty collocates, more than half of them have negative meanings, as shown in Table 2.

Table 2. Top 20 collocates co-occurring with *occur* in COCA

collocates	frequency
changes	1362
events	956
change	881
event	546
<i>incident</i>	525
<i>deaths</i>	404
cases	384
behavior	380
<i>error</i>	299
<i>accident</i>	292
<u>growth</u>	290
<i>violence</i>	288
<i>incidents</i>	261
<i>attack</i>	255
<i>damage</i>	253
activity	233
<i>injuries</i>	226
<i>crime</i>	225
shift	209
<i>injury</i>	207

Therefore, it is obvious that *occur* also carries negative semantic prosody. Here are some examples randomly chosen from 100 concordance lines, as shown in (5).

- (5) a. Which is a reminder of a New York transformed by 9/11 -- an incident that occurred just before the debut of Friends' eighth season.
- b. The sheriff's office in Sonoma County, where most of the deaths have occurred.
- c. Several studies indicate that medication errors are the most likely type of error that can occur.
- d. New York are investigating the attack, which occurred Friday morning, as a hate crime, according to The Cornell Daily Sun.

In addition, one collocate, *growth*, shows positive prosody, as in *An opportunity for growth and development has occurred for the general care nurse through the ENIT program*. Other collocates of the word *occur* bear neutral prosody, such as *change(s)*, *event(s)*, *cases*, *behaviour*, *activity*, and *shift*. Although these words are neutral, when they collocate with *occur*, they express negative meanings, which is similar to the word *happen*, as shown in (6):

- (6) a. Irreversible changes in ecosystems could occur, causing massive emigration and greater conflicts.
- b. My nerves had yet to calm down from the unfortunate events that had occurred over the past summer.
- c. Cases of Lyme disease occur annually among Washtenaw residents.
- d. It is also possible, however, that problem behavior continued to occur during the escape interval in order to avoid the re-presentation of demands.

In summary, *occur* also has a strong negative semantic prosody like *happen*, but the difference between the two words is that the most significant nominal collocate of *occur* is *changes* (the MI scores for *changes* is 5.1, occurring 1,362

times as a collocate of *occur*), which mainly bears bad meanings when it collocates with *occur*, while that of *happen* is *thing(s)* (the MI scores for *things* and *thing* is 3.99 and 3.55 respectively, occurring 9,549 and 5,878 times as collocates of *happen*).

TAKE PLACE

The phrase *take place* is also a synonym of *happen*, but *take place* does not express a strongly negative affective meaning according to the 20 collocates shown in Table 3.

Table 3. Top 20 collocates co-occurring with *take place* in COCA

collocates	frequency
changes	665
events	493
event	328
change	304
meeting	277
action	227
learning	222
conversation	192
activity	169
<i>incident</i>	160
<i>attack</i>	160
activities	158
debate	147
elections	128
meetings	120
ceremony	119
<i>shooting</i>	118
discussions	115
transformation	114
<i>attacks</i>	110

It is obvious that most of the collocates are neutral, as shown in the following

examples:

- (7) a. Next we discuss some of the changes that have taken place with the infusion of guided reading.
- b. The induction ceremonies and concert events will take place on three days: April 23, 29 and 30.
- c. The meeting will take place at a fortress in Orion in two months.
- d. The primary habitus is typically formed through educational activity that takes place within a family group.

However, there are other four collocates that have negative meanings, so *take place* can also collocate with negative words, as shown in (8)

- (8) a. Four men were charged in the attack, which took place around 2:30 a.m. outside the club in Houston.
- b. According to her account, the incident took place on the last day of shooting for the film.
- c. The shooting took place a few minutes after Sharif and a second Palestinian had attacked soldiers with knives.

Therefore, *take place* has negative semantic prosody in addition to neutral semantic prosody, but the major semantic prosody is neutral since there are much more neutral collocates than negative ones.

According to the above analysis, the most significant nominal collocates of *occur* and *take place* are both *changes* and *events*, which can either be good or bad, but when they collocate with *take place*, they mainly show neutral prosody, while when they collocate with *occur*, they have negative prosody. Therefore, *take place* is relatively neutral, whereas *occur* is negative.

In sum, *happen* has the worst prosody, followed by *occur*, while *take place* mainly has neutral semantic prosody.

4.1.2. The HAPPEN Group in Chinese

The Chinese close equivalent of *happen* is *falsheng1*(发生). There are 341 instances in LCMC. Among them, 100 concordance lines are examined, and the collocates with frequency more than two are recorded in Table 4.

Table 4. Collocates with frequency more than two co-occurring with *falsheng1*(发生) in LCMC

collocates	frequency
bian4hua4(change)	29
shi4(thing)	14
<i>zai1hai4(disaster)</i>	5
<i>che1huo4(accident)</i>	5
<i>dong4luan4(turmoil)</i>	4
<i>chong1tul(conflict)</i>	4
<i>di4zheng4(earthquake)</i>	3
<i>zheng1zhi4(dispute)</i>	3
<i>bing4(disease)</i>	2
<i>bei1ju4(tragedy)</i>	2
lian2xi(contact)	2
xian4xiang4(phenomenon)	2
<i>duan4xian4(break line)</i>	2
<i>jilzhan4(fierce fighting)</i>	2
chong2bai4(worship)	2

According to the table, it is obvious that most of the collocates have negative meanings, so *falsheng1* mainly has negative semantic prosody. Here are some example sentences:

- (9) a. Zai4 lou2 wai4 de1 ren2men1 kan4jian4 yi4chang3
 at building outside Gen. people see a
 si1xin1lie4fei4 de1 bei1ju4 jiu4yao4 falsheng1 le4.
 heart-breaking tragedy will happen
 "People outside the building see a heart-breaking tragedy
 happening"

- b. Li2hun1 shuang1fang1 yin1 fu3yang3 wei4cheng2nian2 zi3nv3
 divorce both side for raise minor children
fa1sheng1 zheng1zhi4.
 happen dispute
 "Disputes concerning raising children happened between both sides of the divorce"
- c. Xi3yi1ji1 zai4 shi3yong4 guo4cheng2 zhong1 fa1sheng1
 washing machine usage process during happen
gu4zhang4.
 breakdown
 "A sudden breakdown happened to the washing machine during usage"

In addition, there are two collocates, namely *bian4hua4(change)* and *shi4(thing)*, which have high frequencies in the table, carrying neutral meanings. In order to find out semantic prosodies of sentences including *bian4hua4(change)* and *shi4(thing)*, another researcher also took part in doing the judgement together, and the results are shown in the following tables.

Table 5. Cross-sectional table of two researchers' judgments about the meaning of *bian4hua4(change)*

		valuator1			
		positive	negative	neutral	total
valuator 2	positive	8	0	3	11
	negative	1	2	1	4
	neutral	2	2	10	14
	total	11	4	14	29

After doing the judgement, this paper uses Kappa to quantify interrater agreement. According to Kappa, the results are shown as following:

Number of observed agreements: 20 (68.97% of the observations)

Number of agreements expected by chance: 11.5 (39.60% of the observations)

Kappa= 0.486

SE of kappa = 0.140

95% confidence interval: From 0.211 to 0.761

The strength of agreement is considered to be 'moderate'.

Therefore, the data in the table is reliable. According to the above table, when *bian4hua4(change)* collocates with *falsheng1(发生)*, it at least doesn't express negative meanings.

The same research has been done about the meaning of *shi4(thing)*, as shown in Table 6.

Table 6. Cross-sectional table of two researchers' judgments about the meaning of *shi4(thing)*

		valuator1			
		positive	negative	neutral	total
valuator 2	positive	2	1	0	3
	negative	0	8	1	9
	neutral	1	1	0	2
	total	3	10	1	14

According to Kappa, the results are shown as following:

Number of observed agreements: 10 (71.43% of the observations)

Number of agreements expected by chance: 7.2 (51.53% of the observations)

Kappa= 0.411

SE of kappa = 0.208

95% confidence interval: From 0.003 to 0.818

The strength of agreement is considered to be 'moderate'.

Therefore, the data in the table is reliable. According to the table, when *shi4(thing)* collocates with *fa1sheng1(发生)*, it mainly has negative semantic prosody. This situation is similar to its close translation equivalent *happen*, because when *happen* collocates with its most significant nominal collocate *things*, it mainly has negative semantic prosody.

In a word, *fa1sheng1(发生)* mainly has negative semantic prosody, but when it collocates with the word *bian4hua4(change)*, it normally doesn't express negative meanings.

Common near synonyms of the word *fa1sheng1(发生)* in Chinese is *chan3sheng1(产生)*, *fa1zuo4(发作)* and *bao4fa1(爆发)*. Different from the word *fa1sheng1(发生)*, *chan3sheng1(产生)* is a relatively positive or neutral word. There are 361 concordance lines of *chan3sheng1* in LCMC. Among them, 100 concordance lines are examined, and the collocates with frequency more than two are recorded in Table 7.

Table 7. Collocates with frequency more than two co-occurring with *chan3sheng1(产生)* in LCMC

collocates	frequency
ying3xiang3(influence)	14
zong1jiao4(religion)	9
gan3jue2(feeling)	6
bian4hua4(change)	5
shen2chuang4lun4(creationsim)	5
chong2bai4(worship)	3
xiang3xiang4(imagination)	3
xiao4guo3(effect)	3
xin1li3(mentality)	3
guan1nian4(concept)	3
mao2dun4(contradiction)	2
wen4ti2(problem)	2
li4liang4(power)	2
guang1(light)	2
xian4xiang4(phenomenon)	2

Based on the table, most of the collocates have neutral meanings. In addition, in the rest 36 collocates, there are six collocates have positive meanings; 10 collocates have negative meanings; 20 collocates carry neutral meanings. Therefore, *chan3sheng1*(产生) mainly has neutral semantic prosody. Here are some examples:

- (10) a. Zhe4 ji2da4de1 gai3bian4 le4 ren2lei4 de1 sheng1huo2, ye3 dui4
 this dramatically change Past. human Gen. life also for
 shi4jie4 zong1jiao4 chan3sheng1 le4 qian2suo3wei4you3de1
 world religion take place Past. unprecedented
ying3xiang3.
 influence
 "It dramatically changed the lives of humans. Also, an
 unprecedented influence took place in the religion"
- b. Wo3guo2 yuan2shi3 zong1jiao4 dui4 hou4shi4 de1
 our country primitive religion for later generations Gen.
 si1xiang3wen2hua4 chan3sheng1 le1 shen1yuan3de1 ying3xiang3
 ideology and culture take place Past. profound influence
 "A profound influence of our country's primitive religion has taken
 place in the ideology and culture of later generations"
- c. Ren2men dui4 ke4guan1de ren4shi2 bi4ran2 jin4ru4 xin1de gao1du4,
 people for objective understanding must enter new height
 cong2er2 shi4 yi4shi2xing2tai4 chan3sheng1 bian4hua4.
 thus make idenology take place change
 "People's understanding of the objective will inevitably enter a new
 height, thus changes will take place in the ideology"

In addition, according to 100 concordance lines in LCMC, the most significant nominal collocate of *chan3sheng1* is the word *ying3xiang3*(influence). There are 14 examples in LCMC. In order to find out semantic prosodies of *ying3xiang3*(influence) when it collocates with *chan3sheng1*, the same two researchers' evaluation research has been done, as shown in Table 8.

Table 8. Cross-sectional table of two researchers' judgments about the meaning of *ying3xiang3(influence)*

		valuator1			
		positive	negative	neutral	total
valuator 2	positive	2	0	3	5
	negative	0	3	0	3
	neutral	2	1	3	6
	total	4	4	6	14

According to Kappa, the results are shown as following:

Number of observed agreements: 8 (57.14% of the observations)

Number of agreements expected by chance: 4.9 (34.69% of the observations)

Kappa= 0.344

SE of kappa = 0.213

95% confidence interval: From -0.073 to 0.760

The strength of agreement is considered to be 'fair'

Therefore, the data in the table is also reliable. According to the table, when *chan3sheng1(产 生)* collocates with *ying3xiang3(influence)*, it mainly has neutral or positive semantic prosody. In summary, *chan3sheng1(产 生)* has relatively neutral semantic prosody, though sometimes it can collocate with negative words.

Another near synonym of *falsheng1(发生)* is the word *falzuo4(发作)*. There are only 18 examples in LCMC, and all of them have negative meanings, as shown in Table 9.

Table 9. Collocates co-occurring with *falzuo4(发作)* in LCMC

collocates	frequency
<i>guan4xin1bing4(heart disease)</i>	8
<i>nu4huo3(rage)</i>	3
<i>du2(poison)</i>	2

<i>silxiang3can2yu2</i> (remnant ideas)	1
<i>zi4beilgan3</i> (inferiority)	1
<i>pi1shuang1</i> (white arsenic)	1
<i>shang1</i> (injury)	1
<i>yan1yin3</i> (tobacco addiction)	1

Therefore, *falzuo4* has strongly negative semantic prosody. In addition, according to the table, we can see most of the words have different meanings of disease, so *falzuo4* prefers to collocate with words related to disease.

Bao4fal(爆发) is also a near synonym of *falsheng1*(发生). There are only 20 examples in LCMC. The collocates of *bao4fal*(爆发) are recorded in Table 10.

Table 10. Collocates co-occurring with *bao4fal*(爆发) in LCMC

collocates	frequency
<i>zhan4zheng1</i> (war)	11
<i>qi3yi4</i> (revolt)	2
<i>yuan4fen4</i> (rage)	1
<i>jing1ji4wei1ji1</i> (economic crisis)	1
<i>tong4kul</i> (wail)	1
<i>huo3shan1</i> (volcano)	1
<i>ge2ming4</i> (revolution)	1
<i>yun4dong4</i> (movement)	1

It is obvious that almost all of the collocates are negative except the neutral one *yun4dong4*(movement), which has a positive meaning in the example in LCMC. For example, the May 4th Movement in China is a positive movement, so when *wu3si4 yun4dong4* (the May 4th Movement) collocates with *bao4fal*, the word *bao4fal* has positive semantic prosody. In addition, according to the collocates listed above, *bao4fal* prefers to collocate with words related to war, such as *zhan4zheng1*(war), *qi3yi4*(revolt), *ge2ming4*(revolution), and *jing1ji4wei1ji1*(economic crisis) which sounds like abstract war.

In sum, *falzuo4* (发作) has the worst prosody, followed by *bao4fal* (爆发),

followed by *fa1sheng1* (发生), while *chan3sheng1* (产生) has relatively neutral semantic prosody.

4.2. The EXPERIENCE Group

4.2.1. The EXPERIENCE Group in English

EXPERIENCE

The first twenty collocates of *experience* are examined, and most of them have negative meanings, as shown in Table 11.

Table 11. Top 20 collocates co-occurring with *experience* in COCA

collocates	frequency
<i>problems</i>	576
<u>growth</u>	441
<i>pain</i>	430
<i>symptoms</i>	351
<i>difficulties</i>	331
<i>stress</i>	329
<i>loss</i>	322
levels	298
<i>difficulty</i>	276
<u>success</u>	243
<i>anxiety</i>	194
feelings	186
effects	185
<i>depression</i>	180
<i>decline</i>	178
<i>violence</i>	169
<i>trauma</i>	150
<i>abuse</i>	144
<u>joy</u>	139
<i>crisis</i>	130

Here are some examples taken from COCA, as shown in (11).

- (11) a. There are some students saying that they experience problems because the program in practice schools changed frequently.
- b. We experience pain as intrinsically unpleasant.
- c. Students who struggle with reading in elementary school may experience difficulties and exhibit lack of motivation to learn in their future academic endeavors.

Also, there are three positive collocates, including *growth*, *success*, and *joy*, so *experience* can also collocate with positive words. Although the rest of the collocates are neutral, when they collocate with *experience*, they often obtain negative meanings, as shown in the following sentences:

- (12) a. Researchers have noted that twice-exceptional students experience high levels of anxiety, poor self-concept, and anger.
- b. Apparently, international students who experience feelings of estrangement and social isolation are more likely to exhibit adjustment problems.
- c. It is often proposed as an alternative therapy in those who experience side effects from statins.

Therefore, *experience* has a strongly negative semantic prosody.

UNDERGO

One near synonym of *experience* is *undergo*. The top 20 collocates of *undergo* are shown in Table 12.

Table 12. Top 20 collocates co-occurring with *undergo* in COCA

collocates	frequency
<i>surgery</i>	1,428
change	553
changes	476
<i>treatment</i>	438
transformation	350
training	234
<i>therapy</i>	213
<i>procedure</i>	211
<i>testing</i>	201
process	181
<i>tests</i>	173
<i>chemotherapy</i>	137
<i>cancer</i>	130
<i>evaluation</i>	125
<i>radiation</i>	123
renovation	112
<i>procedures</i>	102
transition	101
<i>treatments</i>	96
<i>heart</i>	96

According to the italic and bold words in the table, *undergo* is often used in the condition of medical science. During an operation and treatment, patients often endure much pain, so these words are negative for patients. However, after enduring pain, the outcome is often positive, as shown in the following examples:

- (13) a. Senator John McCain underwent surgery Friday to remove a blood clot above his left eye.
- b. We don't always look sickly when we're undergoing treatment, and we just want to live longer.
- c. Laura had slowly awakened from a coma and now she was

undergoing intensive therapy to rebuild her mental and physical powers.

In sentence a, because he endured *the surgery*, his eyes will be healthy again. In sentence b, because we endured *the treatment*, we can live longer, and in sentence c, because Laura endured *the intensive therapy*, she can rebuild her mental and physical powers. Therefore, we can say *undergo* also has the meaning of "endurance" which is different from *experience*, which often just focuses on the description of a fact, not showing the underlying feeling.

In addition, the other italic words, including *procedure(s)*, *testing*, *tests*, *evaluation*, and *heart*, are also often used in the condition of medical science when they collocate with *undergo*, as shown in (14):

- (14) a. This morning I underwent a successful procedure to remove the os trigonum from my right ankle.
- b. The decision comes after Keach underwent medical testing following his opening night performance.
- c. Deeds's son had undergone a psychiatric evaluation the day before his death.
- d. About 100,000 people have undergone heart transplantation worldwide.

Therefore, *undergo* is often used in the condition of medical science, and has the meaning of "endurance". Because of the "endurance" meaning, although the other collocates are neutral, such as *change(s)*, *transformation*, *training*, *process*, *renovation*, and *transition*, when they collocate with *undergo*, they often show positive results, as shown in the following sentences:

- (15) a. The health care industry has undergone tremendous change in recent

years, and that's led to innovative technologies.

- b. This work is predicated on an acknowledgment that teaching, learning, and working is undergoing fundamental transformation as a result of intense technical innovation.
- c. The officers undergo special training on how to handle the homeless and mentally ill, he said.

In summary, the semantic prosody of *undergo* is different from that of *experience*. *Undergo* does not express negative meanings. It carries the meaning of "endurance", and is often used in the condition of medical science.

GO THROUGH

Another near synonym of *experience* is the phrase *go through*. This phrase is relatively neutral according to the 20 collocates, as shown in Table 13.

Table 13. Top 20 collocates co-occurring with *go through* in COCA

collocates	frequency
process	1,276
mind	959
motions	530
<i>period</i>	491
<i>divorce</i>	322
<i>roof</i>	304
training	230
changes	221
<i>phase</i>	217
<i>hell</i>	209
stuff	178
list	175
<i>stages</i>	173
<i>pain</i>	147

<i>periods</i>	131
<i>routine</i>	123
<i>transition</i>	112
<i>phases</i>	105
<i>crisis</i>	102
<i>menopause</i>	88

There are only four negative collocates, and the other words are all neutral. According to the only italic collocates, we find that the phrase *go through* often collocates with time and place words, such as *period(s)*, *roof*, *phase(s)*, *stages*, and *menopause*.

In sum, *experience* has a strongly negative semantic prosody. *Undergo* is often used in the condition of medical science, and it mainly doesn't express negative meanings, because it has the meaning of "endurance" and the results of endurance are often positive. Finally, the phrase *go through* carries neutral semantic prosody and often collocates with time and place words.

4.2.2. The EXPERIENCE Group in Chinese

The Chinese close equivalent of *experience* is *jingli4*(经历) which also has negative semantic prosody. According to LCMC, there are 94 concordance lines related to the word *jingli4*, but among them there are only 47 examples in which *jingli4* is used as a verb. The collocates of *jingli4*(经历) among 47 examples are shown in Table 14.

Table 14. Collocates co-occurring with *jingli4*(经历) in LCMC

collocates	frequency
guo4cheng2 (procedure)	10
jielduan4 (phrase)	8

<i>zhan4zheng1</i> (war)	3
<i>kuang2xi3</i> (wild with joy)	3
<i>weilxian3</i> (risk)	3
<i>feng1bo1</i> (disturbance)	2
<i>cuo4che2</i> (setback)	2
<i>ge2he2</i> (estrangement),	
<i>wu4qu1</i> (misunderstanding),	
<i>tou1du4</i> (steal to another country),	every
<i>da3ji1</i> (strike),	collocate
<i>tong4ku3</i> (pain),	appear
<i>shulsi3pin1bo2</i> (try to fight),	once
<i>ying3ji1fan3ying4</i> (stress respond),	
<i>jian1xin1</i> (hardship),	
<i>wen2ge2</i> (the Culture Revolution)	
<i>xing2dong4</i> (action),	
<i>gai3bian4</i> (change),	every
<i>xuan3ze4</i> (choice),	collocate
<i>nian2</i> (year),	appear
<i>tiao2zheng3</i> (adjustment),	once
<i>yun4zhuan3</i> (revolve),	
<i>duolci4</i> (many times)	
<i>xianglai4</i> (fall in love)	1

Based on the table, more than half of the collocates are negative, but the most significant collocates is *guo4cheng2* (procedure) which has neutral meanings. In order to find out the semantic prosody of *guo4cheng2* (procedure) when it collocates with *jing1li4* (经历), the same two evaluators' judgement research has been done, and the result is shown in Table 15.

Table 15. Cross-sectional table of two researchers' judgments about the meaning of *guo4cheng2* (procedure)

		valuator1			
		positive	negative	neutral	total
valuator 2	positive	1	1	0	2
	negative	1	5	0	6
	neutral	0	1	1	2
	total	2	7	1	10

According to Kappa, the results are shown as following:

Number of observed agreements: 7 (70.00% of the observations)

Number of agreements expected by chance: 4.8 (48.00% of the observations)

Kappa= 0.423

SE of kappa = 0.273

95% confidence interval: From -0.113 to 0.959

The strength of agreement is considered to be 'moderate'.

Therefore, the data in the table is reliable. According to the table, when *guo4cheng2(procedure)* collocates with *experience*, it mainly has negative semantic prosody. In a word, *jing1li4(经历)* mainly does not express positive meanings. Here are some example sentences taken from LCMC:

- (16) a. Yu2 Hong2 gang1 jing1li4 le1 li2hun1 de4 feng1bo1,
 Yu Hong just now experience Past. divorce Gen. disturbance
 yan3xia4 shi4 du2shen1yi4ren2. **(negative)**
 now is alone
 "Yu Hong has just experienced the a bad divorce and is alone
 now"
- b. Jing1li4 le4 liang3ci4 shi4jie4da4zhan4 de1 ou1zhou1 ge4guo2
 experience Past. two times Word War Gen. European countries
 zi4ran2 you3xie1 xin1jing1. **(negative)**
 naturally a little afraid
 "The European countries that experienced two World Wars are

naturally afraid"

- c. Jian4guo2 yi3lai2, zhong1guo2
 foundation of the People's Republic of Chin since China
 zhi2gong1 gong1zhi1 shui3ping2 *jing1li4* guo3 san1ge4 *jie1duan4*,
 employees wage level experience Past. three stage
 cheng2 N xing2 zeng1zhang3 qu3xian4. **(neutral)**
 show N shape increasing trend
 "Since the founding of the People's Republic of China, the level of
 wages of Chinese employees has gone through three stages,
 showing an N-shaped growth curve"

Near synonyms of the word *jing1li4*(经历) in Chinese are *jing1shou4*(经受), *ti3yan4*(体验) and *jing1guo4*(经过). The Chinese close equivalent of *undergo* is *jing1shou4*, because *jing1shou4* also has the same meaning of "endurance" as *undergo*. Only 12 examples of *jing1shou4* are found in LCMC. Nominal collocates of *jing1shou4* are shown in Table 16.

Table 16. Collocates co-occurring with *jing1shou4*(经受) in LCMC

collocates	frequency
<i>kao3yan4</i> (ordeal)	3
<i>duan4lian4</i> (drill)	3
<i>kun4fa2</i> (weary)	1
<i>da3ji1</i> (hit)	1
<i>di4ceng2</i> (stratum)	1
<i>chong1ji1</i> (strike)	1
<i>zai1nan4</i> (disaster)	1
<i>cuo4zhe1</i> (setback)	1

Almost all of the words are negative. However, although these words are negative, after enduring these negative events, the outcomes are often positive, which is similar to the word *undergo*, as shown in (17).

- (17) a. Wo₃men₁ wei₃da₄de₁ she₄hui₄zhu₃yi₄ zu₃guo₂ he₂ ying₁xiong₂de₁
 our great socialist motherland and heroic
 ge₄zu₂ren₂min₂ jing₁shou₄ le₁ yan₂jun₄de₁ kao₃yan₄.
 peoples undergo Past. severe ordeal
 Ren₂min₂ ying₂de₂ le₁ sheng₄li₄, zu₃guo₂ zhuan₃wei₁wei₂an₁.
 people win Past. victory motherland become safe
 "After undergoing the ordeal, our great socialist motherland and
 heroic peoples won the victory, and the motherland became
 safe"
- b. Zi₄ji₃ ying₁ jin₄liang₄ she₄fa₃ shi₃ liang₂xiong₁ neng₂ jing₁shou₄
 self should best try make Mr Liang can undergo
 zhu₄ zhe₄ ju₄da₄de₁ da₃ji₁, ba₄ tong₄ku₃ jian₃qing₁ dao₄
 this big blow make pain reduce to
 zui₄di₁ xian₄du₄.
 minimum
 "He should try his best to help Mr Liang undergo this huge blow
 and reduce the pain to the minimum"
- c. Zhang₁ Man₄yu₄ bu₄zhi₃ yi₁ci₄ de₁ jing₁shou₄ guo₄ gan₃qing₂de₁
 Zhang Manyu not only one time undergo Past. emotional
cuo₄zhe₂, ran₂ze₂ ta₁ ren₄wei₂ ai₄qing₂ shi₃zhong₁ shi₄
 setback but she think love always make
 ren₂sheng₁ suo₃xu₁ de₁ tiao₂ji₄pin₃.
 lie needed product
 "Zhang Manyu has not only undergone emotional setbacks once,
 but she still believes that love is always the product of life's
 needs"

In sentence a, after enduring the ordeal, people won the victory. In sentence b, only after enduring a huge blow can the pain be reduced to the minimum. Also, in sentence c, although she has endured many emotional setbacks, the woman still believes she can get love. Therefore, *jing₁shou₄* is like *undergo* in that they both mainly doesn't express negative meanings.

As for the word *ti3yan4*(体验), its prosody depends on the context. There are 30 concordance lines in LCMC, but only 18 of them used the word *ti3yan4*(体验) as a verb. Nominal collocates of *ti3yan4*(体验) can be seen in Table 17.

Table 17. Collocates co-occurring with *ti3yan4*(体验) in LCMC

collocates	frequency
<i>ying4ji1fan3ying4</i> (<i>stress response</i>)	10
sheng1huo2(life)	2
dong1xi(thing)	1
<u>xing4fu2</u> (happiness)	1
xing4ai3(sex)	1
<i>tong4ku3jing4yu4</i> (<i>painful situation</i>)	1
<i>jie4dai4</i> (<i>debit and credit</i>)	1
zong1jiao4(religion)	1

According to the table, we can see that *ti3yan4* can collocate with all positive, neutral and negative words, as shown in (18). In addition, *ti3yan4*(体验) prefers to collocate with the word *ying4ji1fan3ying4*(*stress response*).

- (18) a. Er2 xing4yun4 jiu4shi4 yao4 zui4 chong1fen4de1 ti3yan4
 However luck is have the most adequately experience
xing4fu2. (**positive**)
 happiness
 "However, good fortune is that we can experience happiness adequately"
- b. Hen3duo1 ying4ji1fan3ying4 zhi3you3 zai4 fan3ying4
 many stress response only at reaction
 zhong1 cai3 ti3yan4 dao4. (**negative**)
 in can experienced
 "Many stress responses can only be experienced during the reaction"

- c. Wo3 geng4 xu1yao4 de1 shi4 neng2 jiao4 wo3
 I more need Gen. is can teach me
 gan3shou4dao4, ti3yandao4, kan4de2dao4, mo1de2dao4
 feel experience see touch
 de1 dong1xi1. **(neutral)**
 Gen. things
 "What I need more is something that I can feel,
 experience, see, and touch"

In the above examples, *ti3yan4* is always translated as *experience*. According to the previous explanation, *experience* often collocates with negative words, but sometimes it can collocate with positive or neutral words. The reason why we often translate *ti3yan4* as *experience* is that when *experience* acts as a noun, it has a meaning of obtaining something useful after an experience, which is similar to the meaning of the word *ti3yan4*.

Another near synonym of the word *jing1li4*(经历) is *jing1guo4*(经过) which has neutral semantic prosody. There are 265 concordance lines in LCMC. The first 100 sentences are examined in this study, and the collocates with the frequency more than two are recorded in the following table.

Table 18. Collocates with frequency more than two co-occurring with *jing1guo4*(经过) in LCMC

collocates	frequency
shen3yi4(deliberation)	9
nu3li4(effort)	7
guan1cha2(observation)	4
shi3yan4(experiment)	4
shi2jian4(practice)	3
duan4lian4(drill)	2
jian4she4(construction)	2

xuan3ze2(choice)	2
zheng3dun4(reorganization)	2
xiao3shi2(hour), yilye4(night), tian1(day), yue4(month), nian2(year)	18
chuan2da2shi4(reception room), shou3(hand), zuo3xin1shi4(ventriculus sinister),	7
pan2shan1lu4(sky way), zhe4li3(here), da4men2kou3(gate)	

All of these collocates are neutral. In addition, there are four words which are related to the meaning of time appearing 18 times in the table, and six words relating to the meaning of place appearing seven times in the table. Thus, we can say *jing1guo4(经过)* prefers to collocate with the words related to time and place, which is like the English phrase *go through*.

In sum, in Chinese, *jing1li4(经历)* mainly has negative semantic prosody like the English word *experience*. *Jing1shou4(经受)* like the English word *undergo* in that they both have the meaning of "endurance" and don't express negative meanings, because the meanings of the sentences including these two words are often positive. *Ti3yan4(体验)* in Chinese is also similar to the English word *experience* because they both have the meaning of obtaining something useful after an experience when they act as nouns. Finally, the Chinese equivalent of *go through* is *jing1guo4(经过)*. These two words both have neutral semantic prosody and can both collocate with time and place words.

V. Implications for Translation

After analyzing the semantic prosody of near synonyms from a cross-linguistic

perspective, we can see that both Chinese and English have semantic prosody, and the collocations and semantic prosody of near synonyms may differ from each other even though they have similar denotative meanings, so we cannot interchange near synonyms randomly, especially when we do translation in two languages. Since semantic prosody plays an important role in translation, several linguists have already conducted research to emphasize that importance. For example, Partington concludes that “the pitfalls for translators unaware of such prosodic differences are evident” (Partington 1998:78). He has researched the comparison between English and Italian to explain such a pitfall. The English word *impressive* has a positive semantic prosody, while the Italian word *impressionante*, which is the close equivalent of *impressive*, is used “as often as not to collocate with neutral and unfavourable items” (Partington 1998:77). In addition, Tognini-Bonelli (2002) has done the similar research to emphasize the importance of semantic prosody in translation. She compares the phrases *in case* in English and *se per caso* in Italian, and concludes that “at the level of semantic prosody it (*se per caso*) could generate a trap for the unaware translator because the correspondence is similar but not as systematic” (Tognini-Bonelli 2002:90). Also, Ebeling (2013) compares English and Norwegian by using the English-Norwegian Parallel Corpus (ENPC). She explores the semantic prosody of *cause* in the two languages and finds that “the favoured Norwegian translation of the verb *cause*: *få* (x til å) shows a tendency towards a neutral prosody, rather than a negative prosody corresponding to that of *cause*” (Ebeling 2014). Therefore, it is clearly meaningful to do research on semantic prosody from a cross-linguistic perspective and apply semantic prosody to translation.

The importance of semantic prosody in translation can be shown by analyzing the translation mistakes on the website *tmxmall.com*, which includes many English-Chinese translations done by users of the website, as I mentioned in the introduction. These translation mistakes are all related to the words I analyzed in this paper. For example, in sentence (19) they translated *fa1sheng1*, which has a strong negative prosody in Chinese, into *take place*, which has a relatively neutral semantic prosody in English. In addition, *war* is a negative event, but the phrase

take place has relatively neutral semantic prosody, so it cannot collocate with *war*. Therefore, this translation is not accurate and may confuse second language learners. It is better to translate *falsheng1* into *happen* or *occur*, which have the similar negative semantic prosody as *falsheng1*.

(19) Original text: Bo1wan1 zhan4zheng1 shi4 he2shi2 falsheng1
de1?

Translated text: When did the Gulf War take place?

Also, a similar translation mistake can be seen in example (20).

(20) Original text: What's the date of the gain took place.

Translated text: zeng1zhang3 falsheng1 de1 ri4qi1 shi4
she2me1shi2hou4.

In this example, the person translated *take place*, which mainly has neutral semantic prosody, into *falsheng1*(发生), which has negative semantic prosody. In addition, *zeng1zhang3*(the gain) is positive, so it cannot collocate with negative word. Here it is better to translate *take place* into *chan3sheng1*(产生) which has relatively neutral semantic prosody as the phrase *take place*.

Other examples related to *experience*-words and its close translation equivalent *jing1li4*(经历), including its synonyms can be seen from (21) to (23).

(21) Original text: Tong1chang2 pai2qi4fa2 yao4 jing1shou4 gao2su4 he2
chong1ji1, yao4 an4 jie2liu2fa2 dui4dai4..

Translated text: Vent valves normally experience high velocity and
impingement and are usually treated as throttling
valves.

(22) Original text: Wo3 ceng2 you3guo4 jian1nan2 de1 sheng1huo2,
wo3 de1 jian1xin1 yu3 wo3 fu4qin1 nv3li4

rang4 wo3 chong2tou2 zai4lai2 suo3 *jing1li4* del
 jian1xin1 bi3qi3lai3 suan4bu4liao3.

Translated text: I've had a hard life, but my hardships are nothing against the hardships that my father went through in order to get me to where I started.

(23) Original text: *Jing1li4* guo4 chong2chong2 da3ji1 hou4, wo3 che4di3
 duan4le dui4 nv3ren2 del nian4xiang3

Translated text: After going through heavy blow, I have completely cut off the thought of woman

In (21), *Jing1shou4* has the meaning of "endurance" in Chinese, but *experience* does not have that meaning, as it only describes a fact. Here *vent valves* should endure and bear the *high velocity and impingement*, and then it will be useful. Therefore, it is better to translate *jing1shou4* as *undergo* because both words have the meaning of "endurance" leading to positive results.

In (22), *Jing1li4* has a strong negative semantic prosody in Chinese, but *go through* is neutral. In addition, *hardship* is a negative thing, but the phrase *went through* has a neutral prosody, so it cannot collocate with *hardship*. Here we can translate *jing1li4* into *experienced* because both words have a strong negative semantic prosody.

In (23), *ing1li4* is an unfavourable word, while *go through* is neutral. Also, *heavy blow* is negative, but *go through* often collocates with neutral words. Here it is better to translate *jing1li4* into *experienced* which has the same negative semantic prosody as *jing1li4*.

There are many other similar translation mistakes on that website. Based on the above examples, we can see that semantic prosody is not only important in one language, but also in two languages, especially when we do translation. Therefore, we should pay close attention to choose accurate close equivalents that have similar semantic prosodies as the target words in the original texts.

VI. Conclusion

This study includes research on the semantic prosody and collocations of near synonyms by comparing English and Chinese. It mainly discusses two group words, namely the *HAPPEN* group and the *EXPERIENCE* group. Based on the analysis of the *happen*-words, the Chinese equivalents of *happen* and *occur* can be *fa1zuo*(发作), *bao4fa1*(爆发), and *fa1sheng1*(发生) because they all have a strong negative semantic prosody, and that of *take place* can be *chan3sheng1*(产生) since they both carry a relatively neutral or positive semantic prosody. As for the *EXPERIENCE* group, Chinese word *jing1li4* (经历) has a strong negative semantic prosody like the English word *experience*. *Jing1shou4*(经受) is like the English word *undergo* in that they both have the meaning of ‘endurance’ and show positive results. And *ti3yan4* (体验) in Chinese is also similar to the English word *experience* because they both have the meaning of obtaining something useful after an experience when they act as nouns. Also, the semantic prosody of *ti3yan4* depends on its context. In addition, the Chinese equivalent of *go through* is *jing1guo4*(经过) because they both have neutral semantic prosody and can collocate with time and place words. After discussing the semantic prosody of near synonyms in both languages, this paper also mentions the use of semantic prosody in translation by analyzing some translation mistakes on a website. It emphasizes the importance of applying semantic prosody to translation. Therefore, when we do translation, we should carefully choose words that have similar semantic prosody to the original texts.

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