

WISDOM OF SPEECH:
BOOK OF ANALECTS AND BOOK OF JAMES

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Introduction

Speech plays a vital role in our daily activities. There are two ancient Chinese statements: “One who knows does not talk; one who talks does not know”; and “Speak when it is time to speak.”¹ The timing of speaking stands as the central key in Chinese culture. The Scriptures also indicate the importance of one’s speech. In some of the Wisdom books, especially the Old Testament and Old Testament Pseudepigrapha, there are also many teachings about speech, such as “a man of understanding remains silent” (Prov 11:12, ESV); “before you speak, learn” (Sir 18:19); or “others keep silent because they know when to speak” (Sir 20:6). From these statements, one can see that the manner and timing of speaking are crucially important for all people regardless of their cultures. Speech can either encourage or destroy people. A word spoken incorrectly can impede communication, but a word aptly uttered can lead to understanding.² Different cultures have developed their philosophical concepts of speaking.

Since the book of *Analects* and the Bible are two important books in the Eastern and Western cultures, this paper starts from analyzing these two books to understand the different concepts of speech. The book of *Analects* which preserves lectures of the great Chinese master Confucius will be a helpful starting point to

1. Lao-Tzu, *Teachings*, 56; Confucius, *Analects*, 14:13.
2. English, *Theology Remixed*, 106.

understand Chinese wisdom in terms of the manner of speech.³ Unfortunately, there is no consensus among scholars about the issue of how to read the *Analects*. Some people propose that one should focus on semantics, syntax, and pragmatics to understand this book. On the other hand, other people point out that one should pay more attention to the rationale in order to really catch the deeper ideas. There are many pieces of unknown information in each chapter of the *Analects* (names, or reasons for the sayings).⁴ The book of *Analects* is not a systematic work but an act of collective memory.⁵ Therefore, these pieces of memory will provide good resources for readers to tease out the concept of speech in the Chinese culture through Confucius's works, especially his speeches and dialogues with his students. This paper will attempt to focus on the ideas and rationales through the Chinese culture and Confucius framework to understand the ethical concerns of speech.

In Scripture, speech is usually related to the understanding of wisdom (Jas 1:19; Sir 5:11; Eccl 5:1). Wisdom is usually regarded as a measure of human behavior, including speaking, and this pattern can also be found in Proverbs (1:7; 2:6; 22:4), Sirach (1:1, 14, 26; 19:20), and Wisdom of Solomon (1:6; 7:15).⁶ In this case, while one wants to tease out ideas of speech from the New Testament, it is inevitable to analyze the book of James, especially 3:1—4:10.⁷ Since the passage of Jas 3:1—4:10 is regarded as Scripture, one can employ a proper method to understand the manner of speech through analyzing the language. Comparing Chinese culture and the teachings in the Bible will provide a framework for discerning the teachings about effective speaking. This paper will demonstrate distinct rationales lead to various understandings of speeches in the *Analects* of Confucius and in the Bible. Therefore, one can see the different theological

3. Confucius is called the model teacher of every age in Chinese culture.

4. Qian, *Kong Zi*, 5–13.

5. *The Analects* was not written by a single author but written on bamboo strips by the disciples of Confucius (see Martin, "Understanding the Confucian Analects," 75).

6. Varner, *Book of James*, 29–30.

7. Varner, *Book of James*, 116.

foundations of these two works, focusing on the role of God in one's daily life. In this case, this paper argues that the order of creation and limits between creatures that God set serve as the critical point for understanding ethical issues in speaking. In other words, the creature was made in order, and following this order establishes boundaries between different living beings. But in the model of Confucius, the discussion focuses on the horizontal relationship among people, without the vertical concept of God. This model is the significant difference between Confucian and Christian thoughts, and therefore, a Christian who has been influenced by Confucian ideas needs to be aware of this issue and establish a more robust theology, not just focusing on social relationships.

Methodology and Theory

Ancient Chinese Culture and Confucius

The book of *Analects* is a scattered collection of speeches, and the method of studying this book should start from the Chinese cultural background, especially the understanding of Confucius's thoughts. In ancient China, human beings were the focus of attention. There is an old saying, "[m]an [and woman] excels all the beings in heaven and on earth." The ancient Chinese regarded societal structure to be more important than the benefits to individual beings, and it has served as a distinct foundation of moral order.⁸ Chinese people took the natural distinctions of age, sex, and family relationships very seriously because they thought these were a part of nature.⁹ The law which was revealed in nature was an essential factor that enabled people to determine how to act.¹⁰

The Chinese concept of "heaven," however, simply refers to the laws of nature. People observe nature and synthesize general

8. H. F. Rudd, *Chinese Moral Sentiments before Confucius: A Study in the Origin of Ethical Valuations* (Shanghai: Christian Literature Society Depot, 1915), 88.

9. Rudd, *Chinese Moral Sentiments*, 116.

10. Taylor, *Sources*, 87.

principles, especially the relationships among human beings. Therefore, social order is the focus, and family life becomes the major area in which people establish their personalities.¹¹ Within the family, distinctions are identified by age, experience, wisdom, etc. Senior members provide protection of and affection for the young whereas the younger generation is characterized by immaturity, dependence, and obedience.¹² There are five types of relationships which Chinese people are concerned with: ruler and subject; parent and child; husband and wife; elder and younger brother; and between friends. Three of them are practiced in the family and the other two in society.¹³ The family system established the foundation of society and was the place for human beings to practice morality. Almost all philosophers develop their ideas using this scheme. There was a period in which different schools of thought debated thousands of years ago. It is known as the period of the Spring and Autumn and the Warring States (770–221 BCE). Among all philosophers at this time, one of them was the most well-known Confucius (551–479 BCE), who influenced China's history, politics, and thoughts for more than two thousand years.

The Foundation of Confucius's Ethics

Confucius's central idea is that human beings should cherish the aspiration to become superior to who they were in their past and who they are in the present.¹⁴ In Confucius's mind, *li* (禮; “forms of social intercourse”) and *jen* (仁; “benevolence”) are basic principles of social discipline.¹⁵ For him, *li* is the principle which the ancient kings established. It combined the laws of heaven and regulated the expressions of human nature.

11. Rudd, *Chinese Moral Sentiments*, 72–73.

12. Rudd, *Chinese Moral Sentiments*, 117.

13. Rudd, *Chinese Moral Sentiments*, 134.

14. Dawson, *Ethics*, 1.

15. There is the third category *yi* (義; “righteousness”). This concept, however, refers to social justice, which provides the most appropriate way to make a profit. Therefore, the analysis can merge *yi* into the discussion of *li* since they both talk about the maintenance of social order among people (see Confucius, *Wisdom*, 157).

Therefore, the one who has attained *li* lives; the one who has lost it dies:

This *li* is based on the form set up in the heaven and patterned on the earth. *li* deals with the worship of the spirits and is extended to the rites and ceremonies of funerals, sacrifices to ancestors, archery, carriage driving, “capping,” marriage, and court audience or exchange of diplomatic visits.¹⁶

The good things are confidence and peace; the bad things are struggle, robbery, and murder. *Jen* is the root of humanity and serves as the highest moral standard. To subdue oneself and return to propriety is *jen*.¹⁷ The social orders between prince and minister or father and son were Confucius’s central concerns, and he believed that the social relationship is definitely the place to manifest *jen*.¹⁸ As for the relationship of these three, Confucius proclaimed the concept of *tao* (道; “path”). *Tao* was understood as the focus of ethics in ancient China, which could be characterized as *li* and *jen*. Confucius’s *tao* talks about the principles of maintaining proper social order which can be attained through education.¹⁹ It is more concerned with natural law and how planets operate. This does not mean that Confucius did not care about natural laws, but he used a different way, tracing these laws by observing the relationships among people. Confucius was deeply attracted by pursuing *tao*. He said, “[i]f a person in the morning hears the right path (*tao*), he may die in the evening without regret.”²⁰ In terms of Confucius’s *tao*, he took *jen* as the way to connect all his concepts and there are two components of *jen*: *chung* and *shu*. *Chung* refers to the will to help others and do one’s best, and *shu* is not to give others what we do not like and being consistent to oneself.²¹ Based on the understanding, people who have *jen* will speak faithfully to be

16. Confucius, *Wisdom*, 158.

17. Confucius, *Analects*, 12:1.

18. Song, *Zhong Yong Jin Zhu Jin Yi*, 1.

19. Qian, *Kong Zi*, 97–105.

20. Confucius, *Analects*, 4:8.

21. Confucius, *Analects*, 15:24.

the best of themselves and consist in themselves.²² He says, “[m]y doctrine is that of an all-pervading unity,” and his student Zeng says, “[t]he doctrine of our master is to be true to the principles of our nature (*chung*) and the benevolent exercise of them to others (*shu*). This [the doctrine of our master] is nothing more [than these two].”²³ In addition, Confucius asserted the concept of *kuan* (“pass-through”), which means “a thread for stringing holed, copper coins through a hole.”²⁴ The ideas of *chung* and *shu* are highly associated with social relationships from both the positive and negative sides. They serve as manners of representing the central idea of *kuan*. Confucius started from the relationships among people to discuss the concept of *tao-kuan* (passing through the path), but had nothing to do with gods, although he did not deny their existence. In practice, Confucius clearly distinguished two kinds of people: *junzi* (君子; “best moral self”) and *xiaojen* (小人; “immature moral self”), with the criteria of practicing *li*, *jen*, or not. He paid attention to the *tao* of *junzi* (君子之道), which is based on filial piety. And the three aspects of practicing this *tao* are: relationship; reign; and destiny.²⁵ The concept of reign is also a type of relationship among people whereas destiny is related to the relationship between human beings and heaven.²⁶ Relationship exposes the concepts of these two and becomes the most significant element to understand Confucius’s philosophy which is centered on human beings and their relationship.²⁷

A Linguistic Model

Since people take the book of James as Scripture, a more text-based methodology will be a better way to analyze the text. In this case, Halliday’s Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) will

22. Frisina, “Ritual.”

23. Confucius, *Analects*, 4:15.

24. Cua, “Possibility.”

25. Chen, *Kong Xue Lun Ji*, 223–35.

26. The concept of heaven in Chinese culture is an abstract idea. It is not a “person” but refers to a principle which has been practiced in the cosmos for a long time.

27. Qian, *Kong Zi*, 210.

be a helpful tool since it focuses on trusting the text.²⁸ There are many topics or themes in this book, and the passage Jas 3:1—4:10 is the prominent section to describe this issue. To control one's tongue is a clear teaching in this passage, but this passage would be easily regarded as a moral exhortation. In addition, this passage can help us to understand the relationship between God and this moral teaching. Employing a proper method of interpretation will help us gain a better understanding. According to Brown and Yule, "topic is clearly an intuitively satisfactory way of describing the unifying principle which makes one stretch of discourse 'about' something and the next stretch of discourse 'about' something else."²⁹ Hence, this paper will employ a discourse analysis approach in order to help arrive at a meaning within this passage which will give us more understandings about speeches. Discourse-analysis approaches involve various categories, and one of them is *cohesion*. Martin Dibelius points out that in the book of James, "there is not only a lack of continuity in thought between individual sayings and other smaller units, but also between larger treaties."³⁰ Nevertheless, one can still find cohesion while employing a proper linguistic approach to this book.³¹ In this case, the book of James consists of "a text with high cohesion, high cohesive interaction, and hence high cohesive harmony."³² Since "texts cohere or hold together in a unified way,"³³ *cohesion* serves as an important factor to discern what the topic is.³⁴ The biblical texts usually provide elements that creates cohesion with patterns of continuity.³⁵ In order to trace the cohesion in a passage, we may employ the ideas of semantic and participant chains and with the analysis of the interaction of these elements, we can recognize the central concept

28. Westfall, "Mapping the Text," 13.
29. Brown and Yule, *Discourse Analysis*, 75.
30. Dibelius, *James*, 2.
31. Porter, "Cohesion."
32. Porter, "Cohesion," 67.
33. Porter, *Idioms*, 304.
34. Givón, *On Understanding Grammar*, 298–99.
35. Westfall, "Mapping the Text," 14.

of the topic by tracing the information flow.³⁶ The words which are in the same semantic domain may establish various chains. Participant chains, on the other hand, refer to the repetition of the characters which are indicated by nouns, verbs, or pronouns.³⁷

The last criterion for determining the topic of discourse is the relationship to the co-text (literary context). Brown and Yule state, “[t]ext creates its own context.”³⁸ Misinterpretations may result from neglecting the co-text.³⁹ Lexical, semantic, and grammatical elements serve as important factors for us to understand the relationship to the co-text.⁴⁰ Therefore, the steps of analysis will include the following: (1) identifying the semantic and participant chains; (2) probing the relationship of the chains; (3) and recognizing the relationship to the co-text.⁴¹

Analects’ Model on Speech—Confucius’s Ethics on Speech

Since *li* and *jen* are central ideas in the system of Confucius, one should tease out his ethics on the speech from these perspectives. Propriety is the most important rule to explain the right relationships with others, and the chief one is revealed under the manner of *li*.⁴²

Li (禮) from the Model of Junzi (君子)

One’s speech should follow the natural sequence, which is called *li*.⁴³ The heaven does not speak, but the four seasons run their course, and therefore, human beings would much rather not talk.⁴⁴ In this case, although natural laws should serve as the

36. The interaction between semantics and participant chains will serve as a means to find the topic of a passage (i.e., what the text is talking about). More details can be found in Liu, “What a Story Is about.”

37. Westfall, “Blessed Be the Ties.”

38. Brown and Yule, *Discourse Analysis*, 50.

39. Gorman, *Elements*, 69–71.

40. Westfall, “Mapping the Text,” 17.

41. Westfall, *Discourse Analysis*, 28–87.

42. Dawson, *Ethics*, 98.

43. Defoort, “Confucius.”

44. Confucius, *Analects* (Waley), 235.

standard for people to trace the order. People will recognize the rationale by observing the changes of the seasons and the life or death of grain, but it does not provide enough information for people to learn how to speak.⁴⁵ One needs to turn to pay attention to the relationship between human beings in order to understand the idea of *li* and to probe into the ethics of using speech.

In addition, in Confucius's framework, *jen* (仁; "benevolence") is a serious issue which is explained according to the understanding of human beings and their actions.⁴⁶ *Junzi*, which Confucius asserted as a perfect model for *li*, is a virtuous person who perfectly controls the idea of wisdom, and focuses on practical issues, especially those of the family and public administration, and seeks to solve ethical and political problems.⁴⁷

Confucius depicted an image of the virtuous person concerning the idea of speech. He proposed that a *junzi* should act without violence and speak without vulgarity.⁴⁸ The superior person is quick in action but cautious in speech, is free from worries and fears, and is ashamed of his word outstripping his deed.⁴⁹ Confucius says, "[l]ook not at what is contrary to propriety; listen not to what is contrary to propriety; speak not about what is contrary to propriety; make no movement which is contrary to propriety."⁵⁰ One will know what to do and when to do it when this person knows the proper boundary between people, which is the real function of *li*, and it will show the real *jen*.⁵¹ This person may not know everything; however, he or she does not widely comment on things he or she does not understand, but when this person names something, the name is sure to be usable in speech, and when this person says something, that is sure to be

45. Wong, *Ju Chia Ti Chung Ho Kuan*, 96–98.

46. Qian, *Kong Zi*, 47–48.

47. Yao, *Wisdom*, 214.

48. Yao, *Wisdom*, 143.

49. Confucius, *Analects*, 14:27.

50. Confucius, *Analects*, 12:1.

51. Nan, *Lun Yu*, 53.

practicable.⁵² This person seldom speaks; when he or she does, it is sure that he or she will be right on the mark.⁵³

Wisdom of Society and the Manner of Modesty

The wisdom of society and the manner of modesty are the foundations of speaking. Wise people should also be humble and have a keen sense of observing the social order. According to Confucius, “he [or she] who speaks without modesty will find it hard to make his [or her] words good.”⁵⁴ Furthermore, words also serve as a touchstone to knowing people. In particular, a person can be regarded as wise or foolish by speech. It is said, “[w]ithout knowing the force of words, it is impossible to know people.”⁵⁵ “For one word a person is often deemed to be wise and for one word he [or she] is often deemed to be foolish.”⁵⁶ In Confucius’s idea, there is a significant difference between “wise” and “clever.” The wise are virtuous, although they are slow to speak.⁵⁷ The clever are immoral, although they seem always to manage “clever talking.”⁵⁸ Confucius held a high suspicion about those who talk nicely. He said, “clever talk and pretentious manner are seldom found in the good.”⁵⁹ One will become wise through education and learning from the social relationship.⁶⁰

Therefore, the pursuit of wisdom is centered on a way of stabilization, being disciplined, and being shaped in the changeable stream of human experiences, and in the Confucian tradition is to establish a framework of formal roles, relationships, and institutions.⁶¹ Confucian concepts of wisdom are connected with moral practices, not only abstract ideas. Since society and human

52. Confucius, *Analects*, 13:3.

53. Confucius, *Analects*, 11:14.

54. Confucius, *Analects*, 14:20.

55. Confucius, *Analects*, 20:3.

56. Confucius, *Analects*, 19:25.

57. Confucius, *Analects*, 13:27.

58. Confucius, *Analects*, 1:3.

59. Confucius, *Analects*, 1:3.

60. Yang, *Kong Xue Si Lun*, 51.

61. Ames, “Thinking,” 103–4.

ethics are the main concerns of Confucianism, Chinese intellectuals usually seek unification between learning and action by practicing social responsibility with morality and knowledge.⁶² In Confucius's expression, wisdom has its outward appearance, which is woven into *jen*.⁶³ The wisdom of how to respond and when to advance or retreat, is the condition for being a *junzi*. Besides, Chinese culture developed a philosophy of instinct. Farmers who work on the ground will become *jen-zhe* (仁者; "people of benevolence") who appreciate mountains while merchants who travel along the seashore will become *zhi-zhe* (知者; "sages") who love bodies of water. In his system, Confucius adopts naturalism to depict heaven as the law of nature which does not speak and employs humanism to put human beings in the center of culture.⁶⁴ The harmony between the cosmological order and human order opens a path to distinguish good from evil, right from wrong, proper from improper.⁶⁵

Biblical Model of Speech—Analysis of James 3

Now we will focus on the teachings from the Scripture about speech. There are many teachings about speech in the Hebrew Bible, especially in Proverbs (e.g., 10:8, 11, 21; 11:9; 12:18, 25; 13:3; 16:27; 17:14; 18:7, 21; 26:22, etc.). Sages have noted that speaking well was very important in ancient Israel. The manner of talking continues to develop in the New Testament. In the epistle of James, the author holds in high value using one's tongue. James says, "[i]f anyone is never at fault in what he says, he is a perfect man (Jas 3:2, NIV)." Therefore, it is worth analyzing this passage to obtain a clearer image of the way to talk and understand the principles of speech in the Bible. In the following section, we will focus on this passage in James to discuss the idea of controlling tongues in the Bible.

62. Junren, "Reasons," 94.

63. Yao, *Wisdom*, 210.

64. Jiang, "Kongzi," 50.

65. Bo, "Debate," 558; Yao, *Wisdom*, 16–17.

Identify the Discourse

Before we analyze the text further, we have to identify the discourse.⁶⁶ The phrase ἀδελφοί μου (“my brothers [and sisters]”) is followed by the imperative γίνεσθε (“become”) in 3:1, following the perfect participle εἰδότες (“know”) and serving as a solid marker to divide units from others. Prominence occurs along with a shift from the second-person plural to the first-person plural form. And this shift is followed by the causal clause (πολλὰ γὰρ πταίομεν ἅπαντες, “for all of us make many mistakes”) which remains the use of the first-person plural form.⁶⁷ This combination (the use of ἀδελφοί with an imperative) also appears in 4:11, creating another boundary marker. One can notice that the phrase ἀδελφοί μου is also used in 3:10 and 3:12. Since in both these two cases, however, this phrase is not connected with an imperative, they stand for other signs to group sub-units, rather than the macro-units.⁶⁸ Furthermore, the particle ἰδοῦ (“behold”) is used twice in 3:4 and 3:5. The use of this particle and the change of person and number from the form of the first plural to the form of the third singular in 3:4 mark sub-units of 3:4–5a and 3:5b–10a. The verb γεγονότας (“become”) with the perfect tense in 3:9 draws the attention of readers to emphasize the importance of taming the tongue as subduing the creature not to curse those who have been made in the likeness of God.⁶⁹ In addition, the repetitions of σοφός (“wise”) and εἰρήνη (“peace”) in vv. 13–18 form cohesive ties that link these verses together.⁷⁰ In 3:13, the use of interrogative τίς (“who”) indicates the idea of wisdom, which leads the discussion in the

66. Cheung and Bauckham, *Genre*, 75.

67. Westfall, “Analysis”; Reed, *Discourse Analysis*, 105–6.

68. Cheung and Bauckham, *Genre*, 65.

69. Hartin and Harrington, *James*, 179.

70. According to Stoddard (*Text and Texture: Patterns of Cohesion*, 15), “[c]ohesion occurs ‘where the interpretation of some element in the discourse is dependent on another,’ because one presupposes the other so that each pair of dependent/independent elements creates a ‘cohesive tie.’”. Furthermore, Martin asserts that the use of the word σοφίας at 3:13 and 3:17 establish an *inclusio*. But the repetition of the word εἰρήνην at 1:17 and 1:18 seems to glue these two verses together (Martin, *James*, 125).

following verses to distinguish the wisdom above from earthly wisdom.⁷¹ This repeated usage of σοφία (“wisdom”) in 3:13, 3:15, and 3:17 not only groups a sub-unit but also provides a clue of the relationship between wisdom and life conduct. In Jas 4, the adverb πόθεν (“whence”) provides a new starting point for the discussion. However, it is still associated with the previous topic.⁷² Along with the question of “do you not know” in 4:4, the vocative noun μοιχαλίδες (“adulteresses”) produces a new point to start a new sub-set. Similarly, the vocative usage in 4:8 also provides another beginning.⁷³ The contrast between the terms of εἰρήνην (3:18) and πόλεμοι (“war,” 4:1) glues the passages 3:13–18 and 4:1–10 together. Further, the author uses the second person plural pronoun “you” from 3:13 to 4:10. In this case, the passage 3:13–18 can serve as a transition for 3:1–12 and 4:1–10.⁷⁴ Therefore, the passage Jas 3:1–4:10 should be regarded as a completed section for the analysis.

Semantic and Participant Chains

Apart from the repetition of the same lexical items, the theory of Louw and Nida provides a helpful tool to trace the words within the same semantic domain which form semantic chains.⁷⁵ In 3:1–10a, there are several semantic chains worth noticing. The first is the chain of Moral and Ethical Qualities and Related Behavior (Louw and Nida’s Semantic Domain 88), which occurs five

71. The term σοφός (“wise”) is pointed out at the beginning of the question, which indicates that the topic of this passage is wisdom (see Varner, *Book of James*, 373).

72. Moo, *James*, 167.

73. The pattern in 4:8 (imperative + accusative + vocative) sets up a parallel.

74. Cheung and Bauckham, *Genre*, 76–77.

75. The categories of semantic domains can be seen in Louw and Nida, *Greek–English Lexicon* (note that I refer to their work as LN in this paper). Westfall writes, “[s]emantic chains are formed by lexis that share the same semantic domains. Participant ties and chains are formed by noun phrases, pronouns and verbs that refer to the same person . . . When two words that share a semantic domain occur in the same context, their meaning is constrained” (“Blessed Be the Ties,” 11).

times.⁷⁶ The next chain is in the domain of Body, Body Parts, and Body Products (Domain 8), which occurs eleven times.⁷⁷ These words which are related to the physical body establish a clear cohesive tie.⁷⁸ The third one is the domain of Communication (Domain 33), which occurs seven times.⁷⁹ In 3:10b–11, the contrast between “sweet” and “bitter” serves to set up a cohesive tie of the domain of Features of Objects (Domain 79).⁸⁰ There is an essential chain of Domain 88 in 3:12–18, which occurs fourteen times.⁸¹ From the repetitions of εἰρήνη in 3:17 and v.18 and ποιέω (“do”) in 3:12 and 3:18 establish other two cohesive ties. Besides, we can observe another significant chain that runs throughout the whole chapter and refers to the domain of Be, Become, Exist, and Happen (Domain 13).⁸² The discussion of morality persists in 4:1–10 and the words in this domain are used ten times to carry on the chain of morality.⁸³ The semantic chain

76. The words are παίωμεν (LN 88.291), παίει (LN 88.291) and χαλιναγωγῆσαι (LN 88.85) in 3:2, ἀδικίας (LN 88.21) in 3:6, and κακόν (LN 88.106) in 3:8.

77. These are στόματα (LN 8.19) and σῶμα (LN 8.1) in 3:3, γλώσσα (LN 8.21) and μέλος (LN 8.9) in 3:5, γλώσσα (LN 8.21), γλώσσα (LN 8.21), μέλεσιν (LN 8.9), and σῶμα (LN 8.1) in 3:6, γλώσσαν (LN 8.21), ἰού (LN 8.74) in 3:8, and στόματος (LN 8.19) in 3:10a.

78. Cheung and Bauckham, *Genre*, 75.

79. The words which are in the same domain are διδάσκαλοι (LN 33.243) in 3:1, λόγῳ (LN 33.99) in 3:2, πείθεσθαι (LN 33.301) in 3:3, ἀρχεῖ (LN 33.368) in 3:5, εὐλογοῦμεν (LN 33.356) and καταρώμεθα (LN 33.471) in 3:9, and εὐλογία (LN 33.356) in 3:10.

80. γλυκύ (LN 79.39) and πικρόν (LN 79.41).

81. These are καλῆς (LN 88.4) and πραῦτητι (88.59) in 3:13, ζῆλον (LN 88.162), ἐριθείαν (LN 88.167), and κατακαυχᾶσθε (LN 88.194) in 3:14, ζῆλος (LN 88.162), ἐριθεία (LN 88.167), and φαῦλον (LN 88.116) in 3:16, ἀγνή (LN 88.28), ἐπιεικῆς (LN 88.63), ἐλέους (LN 88.76), ἀγαθῶν (LN 88.1), and ἀδιάκριτος (LN 88.242) in 3:17, and δικαιοσύνης (LN 88.13) in 3:18.

82. The words are γίνεσθε (LN 13.48) in 3:1, ὄντα (LN 13.1) in 3:4, ἐστίν (LN 13.1) in 3:5, καθίσταται (LN 13.9) and γενέσεως (LN 13.71) in 3:6, γεγονότας (LN 13.48) in 3:9, γίνεσθαι (LN 13.48) in 3:10, ποιῆσαι (LN 13.9) twice in 3:12, ἔστιν (LN 13.1) in 3:15, ἔστιν (LN 13.1) in 3:17, ποιούσιν (LN 13.9) in 3:18, καθίσταται (LN 13.9) in 4:4.

83. The words are κακῶς (LN 88.106) in 3:3, μοιχαλίδες (LN 88.278) in 3:4, φθόνον (LN 88.160) in 3:5, χάριν (LN 88.66; twice in this verse),

of Domain 33 also continues in this passage, with the cognitive words (αἰτεῖσθαι [“ask”], γραφή [Scripture], and λέγει [“say”]). This concept is a little different in 4:1–10 from that in the previous chapter for the communication has shifted from humans to God.⁸⁴ Before analyzing how these chains are used in this passage, one needs to pay attention to participant chains as well.

After determining the semantic chains, we now come to identify participants. In this passage, the first participant chain refers to the believers. In 3:1, the author encourages the recipients that many should not become teachers. Therefore, the cohesive tie is linked by the chain from πολλοί (“many”) through διδάσκαλοι (“teachers”) and the verb γίνεσθε (“be”) to the phrase ἀδελφοί μου. After that, the readers also serve as the subject of εἰδότες (“know”) and λημψόμεθα (“receive”) in 3:1, the subject of πταίμεν (“stumble”) in 3:2, and the actor of βάλλομεν (“put”) in 3:3. Then in 3:6, the author indicates the pronoun ἡμῶν (“us”) and continues to center the discussion around “us” being the subject of the verbs εὐλογοῦμεν (“bless”) and καταρώμεθα (“curse”) in 3:9. The phrase ἀδελφοί μου occurs again in 3:10 and 3:12. In 3:13–14, the author changes to the second person plural pronoun as a signal to the recipients that the second person plural pronoun becomes the subject of the verbs ἔχετε (“have”), κατακαυχᾶσθε (“boast”), and ψεύδεσθε (“lie”) in 3:14. In 4:1–10, the discussion remains focusing on this participant, which is about the believers. The pronoun “you” occurs several times, and the second person plural form is used for the verbs throughout the whole passage. Furthermore, the first-person plural form is frequently used in this passage (3:1–3, 9). This usage establishes a participant chain to represent the editorial “we” and to reflect the idea of self-designation. In other words, the author switches between the first person plural and the second person plural to draw at-

ὑπερηφάνοις (LN 88.214), and ταπεινοῖς (LN 88.52) in 3:6, ἁμαρτωλοί (LN 88.295) and ἀγρίσατε (LN 88.30) in 3:8, and ταπεινώθητε (LN 88.56) in 3:10.

84. The word αἰτεῖσθαι (LN 33.163) which is used in 4:2 and 4:3 refers to words to God, whereas the other two words γραφή (LN 33.53) in 4:5 and λέγει (LN 33.69) in 4:5 and 4:6 are talking about the words from God.

tention from the recipients that they should learn lessons from the author.⁸⁵

Besides, there is a separation among the community of believers. It seems that this group is divided into two categories which can be recognized within this contrast. The discrepancy indicates two different kinds of life, characteristics, and virtues. The first part refers to those who make no mistakes in speaking, are perfect (3:2), show that their works are done with gentleness born of wisdom by their good lives (3:13), have wisdom from above which is peaceable, gentle, willing to yield, full of mercy and good fruit, without a trace of partiality or hypocrisy (3:17), and a harvest of righteousness which is sown in peace (3:18). The second group refers to those who are opposite, who cannot control the tongue, boasting of great exploits (3:5), praising God and cursing people with the same mouth (3:9–10); they have bitter envy and selfish ambition in their hearts (3:14) and are earthly, unspiritual, and devilish (3:15). The author indicates that “we” all stumble, and the conditional statement with εἰ (“if”) represents a hypothetical situation.⁸⁶ These two kinds of people become a contrast which continues in 4:1–10, talking about those who do whatever they want which causes fight and killing on the one hand. On the other hand, the ones who submit themselves to God and receive God’s grace with humility are mentioned in this passage.

Another important participant in this passage is God, who is indicated as the Lord and Father in 3:9 and serves as the object of εὐλογία (“blessing”) in 3:10. After that, the adverb ἀνωθεν (“from above”) is used twice in 3:15 and 3:17, which also refers to God as the origin. In addition, the author points out this participant in 4:4 to contrast the world and God, with a quotation in 4:5 and 4:6. Then God becomes the key figure for the author to encourage the readers to cleanse themselves and resist the devil.

There is another chain that needs to be noticed. In v.3, ἵππων (“horse,” LN 4.29) is mentioned and in v. 7, θηρίων (“wild beast,” LN 4.3), πετεινῶν (“bird,” LN 4.38), ἐρπετῶν (“reptile,”

85. Varner, *James*, 326.

86. Varner, *James*, 329.

LN 4.51), and ἐναλίων (“things in the sea,” LN 4.58) are used. These words refer to different kinds of animals. On the other hand, συκὴ (“fig tree,” LN 3.5), ἐλαίας (“olive tree,” LN 3.9), ἄμπελος (“vine,” LN 3.27), and σῦκα (“fig,” LN 3.5) are indicated in v. 12 which are in the domain of plants. In addition, natural substances are also pointed out in this passage, such as πῦρ (“fire,” LN 2.3) in 3:5 and 3:6, ὕδωρ (“water,” LN 2.7) in 3:12. All these refer to the creature of God.

Interaction between Semantic and Participant Chains

In this passage, there are four semantic chains and three participant chains threading through the whole passage. The author uses the concept of part and whole to emphasize the effects of the tongue. Frequently the image of a body is described to indicate that although the tongue is a small member, it can cause a huge disaster. This expression indicates that the chain of Domain 8 is associated with Domain 33, and therefore, the body part that the author focuses on is the tongue. From the interaction between these two, the importance of learning how to speak is emphasized.⁸⁷ Furthermore, the concepts of morality and speech are related in this passage. The author points out that those who make no mistakes in speaking are perfect. Accordingly, the tongue can be an evil creature, which is full of deadly poison. The results of misusing tongue occur in 3:13–18, where the author continues discussing how the tongues would influence the “entire body (3:6).”⁸⁸ The contrast between the wisdom from above and the earthly wisdom develops in 4:1–10, and serves as the outcomes of the wisdom not from above.⁸⁹ People who have the wisdom from above will not boast about one’s ambition nor deny the truth, whereas earthly wisdom will cause disorder and wickedness. One of these moral acts of behavior is the way people talk. Similarly, words within the semantic domain of being become an explicit instruction of telling the differences between order and

87. Tongue is usually used as a symbol of speech (see Louw and Nida, *Greek-English Lexicon*, 97).

88. Martin, *James*, 127.

89. Martin, *James*, 142.

disorder. Wisdom from above or below also serves as a criterion to describe the contrast in this passage. Therefore, the topic in this passage is that morality is highly related to wisdom, and speech is the means of distinguishing the heavenly wisdom from earthly wisdom. God plays the central role, giving true wisdom for people to control their tongues well; communication with God becomes the foundation of communicating well with people. God's creation also plays an important role in this passage. It seems that the creature of God represents the natural order, which manifests the wisdom of the work of creation. God is the one who creates all creatures and is the one who gives wisdom from above. This connects the relationship of God, wisdom, creation, speech, and moral conduct.

Relationship to the Co-Text

Many scholars take Jas 3 as a new passage that links to the topic of speech in 1:19–21.⁹⁰ This passage, however, is also related to 1:26 where the teaching of wisdom is discussed. The topic of a pure speech is related to speech with no anger (1:19–21) and continues under discussion in 4:13–5:6 where the author mentions the concept of “boast in arrogance.” Again the use of tongue and the moral idea of evil are connected in these chapters.⁹¹ This connects 5:7–11 which is about the encouragement of endurance to 3:1–4:10. Therefore, the proper manner of talking becomes a decisive issue.⁹² On the other hand, the exhor-

90. Dibelius, Perkins, Bauckham, Martin, Cheung, Adamson, and Ropes hold this assertion. Taylor, on the other hand, proposes that there is a hooked word *σῶμα* (2:26/3:2) to connect this passage to chapter two, along with the themes of perfection (2:22/3:2), and there is a distant hook word *χαλιναγωγέω* (1.26/3:2). James 2:2–4 illustrates the concept of right speaking, and 3:1–12 is the explanation of the further discussion about law and judgment in 2:8–13. Furthermore, both passages 3:13–18 and 4:1–10 serve as transitional passages which link 3:1–12. But this is not in the scope of this essay. We will focus on the topic of speech here (see Dibelius, *James*, 181; Perkins, *First and Second Peter, James, and Jude*, 115; Bauckham, *James*, 204; Adamson, *James*, 138; Ropes, *Critical and Exegetical Commentary*, 226; Taylor, *Text-Linguistic Investigation*, 115; Martin, *James*, 103–4; Cheung and Bauckham, *Genre*, 74).

91. Taylor, *Text-Linguistic Investigation*, 117.

92. Davids, *James*, 181.

tation to seek for wisdom from above recalls the assertion that wisdom comes through prayer in 1:5–8. The idea of wisdom from above (ἄνωθεν σοφία) in 3:17 is also related to every ideal gift from above (πᾶν δῶρημα τέλειον ἄνωθέν) in 1:17. In addition, since the perfect gift is equivalent to the word of truth (λόγῳ ἀληθείας) in 1:18 and the implanted word (ἐμφυτον λόγον) in 1:21, we can summarize that wisdom is highly associated with words.⁹³

Summary of the Analysis

According to the analysis above, we can see that the content in 3:1–4:10 echoes several passages in the other chapters of James. The major theme of this passage is that wisdom from above is the pivot of controlling the tongue, which will highly influence moral conduct. The real danger of misusing the tongue is that it could describe the values of the world which is evil. In addition, stewarding the creature is one of God's plans for human beings, but the tongue is the place where this power cannot be exercised. James basically provides the reason for controlling the tongue based on the concept of creation, which is related to the essence of human beings, who are created in God's image.⁹⁴ The epistle of James does not focus on the idea of the superiority of human beings as was common in the Greek world.⁹⁵ The author, however, is talking about the order of creation, which exhibits God's wisdom. True wisdom is a gift from God, who is generous and ungrudging. When people have the correct relationship with God, this wisdom can be found; if the relationship with God is wrong, this person will be full of chaos and disorder in his or her life. To know the order of creation, which manifests the wisdom of God, is one of the means of knowing how to make a correct relationship with God.

93. Edgar, *Has God Not Chosen the Poor?* 23.

94. Carson, "James," 1006.

95. Davids, *James*, 144.

*Wisdom of Speech—Confucian and Christian**Similarity: The Manner of Speech is Rooted in External Path (tao)*

Both Confucius and the author of James believe that speech has a great influence on morality, and both of them seek *tao* (“path”) and wisdom as the recipes for learning how to speak. These two traditions observe the orders as the foundation of knowing this *tao* with their own definitions. In Chinese culture, speech is a matter of respecting the social order. The incorrect manners of speaking are regarded as orderless errors. There are three errors that make a person liable in the presence of a man of virtue and station: “they may speak when it does not come to them to speak—this is called rashness. They may not speak when it comes to them to speak—this is called concealment. They may speak without looking at the countenance of their superior—this is called blindness.”⁹⁶ There is another speech in one of the four books of Confucian schools: according to *The Great Learning*, “[t]hings have their root and their branches. Affairs have their end and their beginning. Knowing which comes first and which comes last, one is already close to *Tao*.”⁹⁷ Based on the analysis, one can see that in Chinese culture, how one is talking is more important than what is talking about. People need the order from *tao* to learn how to speak, which is to maintain a good social relationship between people.

In Jas 3:1—4:10, a similar concept is mentioned. The tongue is full of deadly poison, which becomes the image of the serpent which brought death. The pollution of the “whole body” results from a lack of control over the tongue. The one who can control the tongue shows the ability to be pure. Interestingly, the wisdom “from above” is also described as pure. In other words, the wisdom from above becomes the key factor to making a person pure.⁹⁸ This concept is similar to that in the Chinese culture, meaning that both perspectives believe that one needs to learn a

96. Confucius, *Analects*, 16:6.

97. Confucius, *Ta-Hio*, 1.

98. Lockett, *Purity*, 141.

good manner of speaking from external help, either *tao* from Chinese culture or wisdom from about in the Scriptures.

Differences: Creation Order or Social Order

In the Bible, speech is related to the wisdom from above. People who cannot control their tongue are failed sages. The wisdom from above results from friendship with God whereas the wisdom from below shows the friendship with the world.⁹⁹ The author emphasizes that the creation story is a teaching instrument and the situation of not being able to control the tongue represents the situation of the fallen creature, which needs to be restored.¹⁰⁰ The further explanation of the relationship between controlling the tongue and creation is that the tongue can be used to bless God and curse those who are made in the likeness of God at the same time. This contradiction manifests the orderless disarray. The illustrations of fruit (3:12) in this passage are examples to show this muddle. They represent an image of mixed kinds, which violates the natural order of things.¹⁰¹ To steward nature is one of the purposes of God's creative work, and to tame animals is a way to show this ability of human beings.¹⁰² The order of creation is that human beings are created by God to tame the nonhuman creature.¹⁰³ Therefore, the wisdom from above, represents order and limits in the creation. The passage in 3:13–18 further indicates solutions to the problem in the previous discussion, and the creation story provides a framework as the foundation for human beings to have a correct relationship with other creatures, which becomes the foundation of ethical doctrine.¹⁰⁴ Not to cross the boundaries between different creatures will become the central focus of one's speeches and conducts. Teachers are those who expose themselves to the danger of "committing a verbal offense" because they are people who

99. Johnson, *Brother of Jesus*, 165.

100. Wall, *Community*, 172–73.

101. Lockett, *Purity*, 124–25.

102. Perkins, *First and Second Peter, James, and Jude*, 118.

103. Laws, *Commentary*, 152–53.

104. Martin, *James*, 119; Hartin and Harrington, *James*, 186–87.

give speeches.¹⁰⁵ They have to lead lives that demonstrate their faith in action. Nevertheless, wisdom from above is not an abstract idea or an object to pursue. Welcoming the word of truth is the way (*tao* in the Chinese language) of obtaining the wisdom from above as a gift from God.¹⁰⁶ When the people of God observe these phenomena, they are seeking God, rather than the wisdom in and of itself. In James, the author depicts God as a friend and benefactor. Friendship with God is the condition of receiving wisdom from above. In addition, holding heavenly wisdom will produce insight into manners and knowing how to interact with other people. To sum up, God's wisdom is revealed in the creature, which those who are God's friend will observe carefully. God's people will praise God when they observe the creature on all the earth (Ps 8:1). The friendship with God establishes the possibility of friendship with others,¹⁰⁷ and the first step is to learn how to control one's tongue.

On the other hand, the quest for nature and human beings getting united in Chinese culture deals only with the physical world, not with the metaphysical one, or especially with the relationships between people. For Confucius, intellect and virtue serve as the foundation of understanding destiny.¹⁰⁸ Confucius thinks that no individual can understand the destiny of heaven fully, but what this person can grasp is enough to guide his or her choices.¹⁰⁹ He thought that learning below would be able to penetrate what is above.¹¹⁰ In addition, *li* is for the worship of heaven, so that different gods may fulfill their duties. Yet when *li* is practiced in the worship of earth, this will result in growth and multiply.¹¹¹ The concept of heaven in Confucius's system is different from that in the Bible. Although both the Analects and the book of James talk about heaven, heaven does not reveal itself in the former, whereas heaven creates human beings in the

105. Dibelius, *James*, 182.

106. Hartin, "Who Is Wise and Understanding among You?"

107. Batten, *Friendship*, 176–77.

108. Confucius, *Analects*, 2:4.

109. Yao, *Wisdom in Early Confucian and Israelite Traditions*, 206–207.

110. Confucius, *Analects*, 14:35.

111. Confucius, *Wisdom*, 161–63.

latter (Jas 3:9). Therefore, Confucius asserted that what happens on earth and how to deal with social relationships are more important than talking about heaven. These metaphysical issues cannot become the mainstream of Chinese culture because he said, “[t]he Master would not discuss unusual occurrences, physical strength, disorder, or spirits.”¹¹² This prevents Confucius from seeking universal principles of knowing the order of nature, the order of social relationship, and the order of creation. In other words, the book of James tells readers to know the boundaries between creatures to learn how to speak, whereas the *Analects* focuses on maintaining a good balance between various social relationships to provide rules for speech.

Conclusion

In this paper, I have introduced the ethical idea of Chinese culture about speech, Confucius’s idea in particular, and I also use James 3:1—4:10 as an example to present the concept of talking in the Bible. Both thoughts take speech very seriously. Speaking carefully is one of the traditional virtues in Chinese culture. Chinese people emphasize individual cultivation to drill *li* and *jen* in their relationships with others. To be considerate and to love others are the two pillars of self-training. These two results from social orders between prince and minister, father and son, couples, brothers (sisters), and friends. One of Confucius’s students Mengzi said, “between father and son, there should be affection; between sovereign and minister, righteousness; between husband and wife, attention to their separate functions; between old and young, a proper order; and between friends, fidelity.”¹¹³ The satisfactory aspect of social order, which is the key to grasp this wisdom, is to make people fit in Nature.¹¹⁴ To control the tongue is also an important issue in the Scriptures. From Jas 3:1—4:10, we can observe the idea of speaking carefully as well.

112. Confucius, *Analects*, 7:21.

113. Shi, *Meng Zi Jin Zhu Jin Yi*, 31.

114. This idea is from Xunzi, who was one of Confucius’s followers (see Ivanhoe, “Values”).

The major difference, however, is that these two traditions set up different points of departure. Confucius's approach starts from the bottom and remains among human beings. Natural laws only serve as a mirror for people to learn how to exercise social order. Many Chinese people may have established their theology based on this understanding and pay too much attention to the social relationship but neglect the wisdom from above. God plays a less important role in these people's minds, but to maintain harmony between people becomes their central concern. In the Bible, we discern different access. It begins with God and then moves to people. Chinese culture is horizontal, whereas Christianity is more vertical. Chinese philosophy focuses on social standards and pushes them from the outside toward the inside. Yet Christianity emphasizes the relationship with God which sets up a new life internally which will appear in the interaction between people externally. It is a pity that modern people often neglect the power of speech which held a great influence, for both good and bad.¹¹⁵ As students of the Bible, we should learn the way to talk which God expects us to use. God is the one who orders creation. Christians inherit this task to set up orders of doing good in our lives, which should be involved in God's "creating and redeeming purposes."¹¹⁶ The more we understand the wisdom of creation, the more we can control our tongues and use them to bless instead of a curse. From the conclusion of this paper, we may start learning how to speak properly, politely, and wisely. Confucius's model provides many good patterns of *li and jen*, and God's word gives us the real motivation to make them come true in our daily lives. Therefore, people who have been influenced by Confucius's model need to turn their eyes from the social relationships to the relationship between God and human beings (or all creature). In this case, an appropriate manner of speech can be found, and the true harmony among creatures can be maintained because every creature lives after its kind.

115. Bauckham, *James*, 204.

116. Long, *Goodness of God*, 280.

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