Metaphor and Metonymy

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Required readings:

- Yu, N. (2003). Chinese metaphors of thinking. Cognitive Linguistics, 14(2/3), 141–165
- Huang, S. F. (1994). Chinese as a Metonymic Language. In Mathew Y. Chen and Ovid J.-L.. Tzeng. (eds.), In Honor of William S-Y. Wang. Interdisciplinary Studies on Language and Language Change. 223-252. Taipei: Pyramid.

Recommended readings:

- Lakoff, G., & Johnson, M. (1980). Metaphors we live by. Chapter 1: Concepts we live by. pp. 3-6; chapter 8: Metonymy. pp. 35-40; Chapter 12: How is our conceptual system grounded? pp. 56-60.
- Grady, J. E., Oakley, T., & Coulson, S. (1999). Blending and Metaphor. In G. Steen & R. Gibbs (eds.), Metaphor in cognitive linguistics, pp.101–124. Philadelphia: John Benjamins.

According to Lakoff & Johnson (1980)

- Our concepts structure what we see, how we get around the world, and how we relate to other people.

- Our conceptual system thus plays a central role in defining our everyday realities.

According to
Lakoff & Johnson (1980)

Our conceptual system is not something we are normally aware of.

According to Lakoff & Johnson (1980)

- Since communication is based on the same conceptual system that we use in thinking and acting, language is an important source of evidence for what that system is like.

According to Lakoff & Johnson (1980)

- **Conceptual System - Metaphorical in Nature**
  - Primarily on the basis of linguistic evidence, we have found that most of our ordinary conceptual system is metaphorical in nature.

Metaphor

- A metaphor is the expression of an understanding of one concept in terms of another concept, where there is some similarity or correlation between the two.

- A metaphor is the understanding itself of one concept in terms of another.

The Concept of ARGUMENT

and

the Conceptual Metaphor ARGUMENT IS WAR

Examples of A Verbal Battle:

- Your claims are *indefensible*.
- He *attacked every weak* point in my argument.
- His criticisms were *right on target*.
- I *demolished* his argument.
- I've never *won* an argument with him.
- You disagree? Okay, *shoot*!
- If you use that *strategy*, he'll *wipe you out*.
- He *shot down* all of my arguments.

(Lakoff & Johnson, 1980)

According to Lakoff & Johnson (1980)

- We talk about arguments that way because we conceive of them that way – and we act according to the way we conceive of things.

- **The essence of metaphor is understanding and experiencing one kind of thing in terms of another.**

According to Lakoff & Johnson (1980)

- The concept is metaphorically structured

- The activity is metaphorically structured

  - Consequently, the language is metaphorically structured

According to Lakoff & Johnson (1980)

- Metaphor is not just a matter of language, that is, of mere words.

- Human thought processes are largely metaphorical.

- The human conceptual system is metaphorically structured and defined.

The Systematicity of Metaphorical Concepts

- The metaphorical concept is systematic

- The language we use to talk about that aspect of concept is systematic

  - Thus, we can use metaphorical linguistic expressions to study the nature of metaphorical concepts and to gain an understanding of the metaphorical nature of our activities.

Chinese Metaphors of Thinking

Yu, N. (2003: 141-165)

Thinking is Object Manipulation

- 思想交流
- 思想火花
- 抛在脑后
- 挖空心思
- 思想包袱
- 思想疙瘩
- 旧思想的束缚

谷子

Acquiring Ideas is Eating

- 精神食粮
- 陈腐观念
- 陈糠烂谷子
- 馊主意
- 如饥似渴
- 囫囵吐枣
- 搜肠刮肚

Thinking is Moving

- 思路
- 想到
- 想通
- 想出
- 想开

Examples

- 门外一阵喧哗打断了她的思路。
- 她忽然 想到一件重要的事情。
- 只要相通了，他就会积极地 去干 。
- 她想出一条妙计。
- 想开点, 别生气了。
- 她遭人遗弃, 一时想不开就自杀了。

Successful thinking takes a correct direction

- 晕头转向
- 这道算题真难，把我搞得晕头转向。

- 拐弯
- 他思想一时还拐不过弯来。

Make a turn in thinking in order to 'get back to the right track"

- 反思
- 反省

"Go back"

- 追思
- 追想
- 追溯
- 追还
- 追念
- 追忆
- 追悔

One's thinking can "travel" or "wander" very far and deep

- 深谋远虑
- 思深虑远
- 遐想
- 遐思
- 满天的繁星会引起人们无边无际的遐想。

- "Hard thinking" entails "movement"

- 想来想去
- 我想来想去还是认为自己没有错。
- 左思右想
- 她躺在床上左思右想，一夜没合眼。
- 前思后想

"back and forth movement"

- 进退两难
- 左右为难
- 我想去看她，可是不是时候，不去吧，又不放心。真是左右为难。

Thinking as Seeing

- 看
- 看法
- 我 看他是个可靠的人。
- 你对这件事怎么看？
- 我们应该全面地看问题。
- 你们应该看清形式。
- 你们必须从实质上看。
- 他把人民的利益看得高于一切。

- 看穿
- 看透
- 看破
- 看开

- 看扁
- 看底
- 小看

In the mental domain

Mental activities

- **见**
- 见解
- 短见
- 高见
- 管见
- 偏见
- 浅见
- 远见
- 灼见
- 卓见

- **观**
- 观点
- 观念
- 悲观
- 乐观
- 客观
- 主观
- 人生观
- 世界观

- **视**
- 傲视
- 鄙视
- 歧视
- 忽视
- 正视
- 轻视
- 重视
- 珍视

- 望
- 瞻
- 孤

"Turn around and look back: when recalling the past

- 回首
- 回眸
- 回溯
- 回忆
- 回想
- 回念
- 回思

Seeing is conceptualized as the 'eye light" traveling from the eyes to the target

- 目光短浅
- 目光远大
- 目光如炬

Farsighted or farseeing

- 高瞻远瞩
- 站得高, 看得远

Light helps
明白
明亮
模糊
朦胧

Thinking in the Heart or Mind

- 心事
- 心思
- 心想
- 心算
- 心口如一
- 心想事成
- 眼不见, 心不烦
- 老心者治人, 劳力者治于人

Metaphorical concepts reflected in contemporary English

example:

TIME IS MONEY

- You're *wasting* my time.
- This gadget will *save* your hours.
- I don't *have* the time to *give* you.
- How do you *spend* your time these days?
- That flat tire *cost* me an hour.
- I've *invested* a lot of time in her.
- I don't have *enough* time to *spare* for that.
- You're *running out* of time.
- You need to *budget* your time.
- *Put aside* some time for ping pong.
- Is that *worth* your *while*?
- Do you *have* much time *left*?
- He's living on *borrowed* time.
- You don't *use* your time *profitably*.
- I *lost* a lot of time when I got sick.
- *Thank you for* your time.

(Lakoff & Johnson, 1980)

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In modern Western culture,

- time is money,
- time is a limited resource,
- and time is a valuable commodity.

- This isn't a necessary way for human beings to conceptualize time; it is tied to western culture.
- There are cultures where time is non of these things.

An entailment relationship

- There is subcategorization within this single system.
- These subcategorization relationships characterize entailment relationships between the metaphors .

TIME IS MONEY ➡ TIME IS A LIMITED RESOURCE ➡ TIME IS A VALUABLE COMMODITY.

Metaphorical entailments can characterize a coherent system of metaphorical concepts and a corresponding coherent system of metaphorical expressions for those concepts.

e.g. TIME IS

- Money -> *spend, invest, budget, profitably, cost*
- Resources -> *use, use up, have enough of, run out of*
- Commodities -> *have, give, lose, thank you for*

Metonymy

–

Using one entity to refer to another that is related to it.

Functions of Metaphor and Metonymy

- The primary function of Metaphor is understanding
- According to Bernhard Debatin (1995: 381) the fundamental function of metaphor is that of rational anticipation that comes from three basic functions
  - the creative-cognitive
  - the normative and world-disclosing
  - the communicative-evocative functions

- Metonymy has primarily a referential function
  - It allows one to use one entity to stand for another
  - It serves the function of providing understanding.

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Metonymy

-> THE PART FOR THE WHOLE

- There are many parts that can stand for the whole

- Which part we pick out determines which aspect of the whole we are focusing on

- e.g.
- We need some *good heads* on the projects
  - (good heads = intelligent people)
    - *head* ->intelligent part of the body

- *The Times* hasn't arrived at the press conference yet.
  - (*The Times* = the reporter from the Times)
- *The Times* -> the importance of the institution the reporter represents

Metonymy

   -> THE PART FOR THE WHOLE

   -> THE FACE FOR THE PERSON

- She's just a pretty *face*.

- There are an awful lot of *faces* out there in the audience.

- We need some new *faces* around here.

- Metonymies are not random or arbitrary occurrences

- Metonymic concepts are also systematic

  - They are instances of certain general metonymic concepts in terms of which we organize our thoughts and actions.

  - Metonymic concepts allow us to conceptualize one thing by means of its relation to something else

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- e.g.
- THE PART FOR THE WHOLE
  We don' hire *longhairs*.

- PRODUCER FOR PRODUCT
  He bought a *Ford*.

- OBJECT USED FOR USER
  The *buses* are on strike

- CONTROLLER FOR CONTROLLED
  Nixon bombed Hanoi

- INSTITUTION FOR PEOPLE RESPONSIBLE
  You will never get the *university* to agree to that.

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- Thus, like metaphors, metonymic concepts structure not just our language but our thoughts, attitudes, and actions

- Like metaphoric concepts, metonymic concepts are grounded in our experience.

- The grounding of metonymic concepts is in general more obvious than is the case with metaphorical concepts.
  - It usually involves direct physical or causal association.

How Is Our Conceptual System Grounded?

e.g.

❑ Concepts that are understood directly

Spatial concepts

- The structure of our spatial concepts emerges from our constant spatial experience – our interaction with the physical environment

- Concepts that emerge in this way are concepts that we live by in the most fundamental way

- Every experience takes place within a vast background of cultural presuppositions.

  - We experience our "world" in such a way that our culture is already present in the very experience itself.

Concepts in terms of our body functions

- UP-DOWN, IN-OUT, FRONT-BACK, LIGHT-DARK, WARM-COLD, MALE-FEMALE, etc.

- Such a sharply delineated conceptual structure for space emerges from our perceptual-motor functioning

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Grounding for our conceptual system

- We typically conceptualize the nonphysical in terms of the physical – that is, we conceptualize the less clearly delineated in terms of the more clearly delineated.

Homework:

- Find five examples of metaphors in your native language and illustrate them so that others can understand.

- Find five examples of metonymy either in your native language or in English that use human body parts as THE PART FOR THE WHOLE and explain their relations.