

The Cohesive and Coherent Functions of
Conceptual Metaphor in English Discourse



英语语篇中

概念隐喻的衔接

邵 晖◎著 及连贯作用

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Abstract

Metaphor has been studied from different perspectives. In the traditional rhetorical view, metaphor is one of the rhetorical devices and it is used for the effect of “comparison”. During recent years, with the development of cognitive linguistics, many studies in philosophy and linguistics on metaphor have shifted the focus of scientific inquiry from a strictly linguistic plane to a cognitive-based stance. Lakoff and Johnson (1980) put forward the cognitive approach to the study of metaphor in their book *Metaphors We Live By* and they argue that metaphor can constitute basic schemas by which people conceptualize their experience and the external world. Therefore, metaphor can play an important role in our understanding of language and the world we describe through language. Metaphor in the cognitive linguistic view means primarily conceptual metaphor, as opposed to linguistic metaphor^⑥ (Kövecses, 2002:29). Conceptual metaphor has been explored from various perspectives including the types, the nature, the experiential basis and its three basic functions. But few studies have focused the attention on its

⑥ “Linguistic metaphor” means that metaphor is a linguistic phenomenon and is regarded only as a matter of language.

cohesive and coherent functions in discourse^⑦. In fact, the use of conceptual metaphor in discourse can contribute to the coherence of discourse and make discourse more vivid and much easier to understand. Some linguists such as Ricoeur(1975/1986), Gibbs(1994) and Cameron(2002) have pointed out that metaphor has a textual function but they have not made detailed analysis.

This thesis makes an analysis of the cohesive and coherent functions of conceptual metaphor in English discourse with three sample discourses. These discourses are explored in this thesis to show how conceptual metaphor performs the cohesive and coherent functions in discourse. This study is carried out on the basis of the theory of Lakoff's cognitive linguistics and the theory of Gullian Brown and George Yule's discourse analysis. Metaphors frequently appear in reading materials. And the conceptual metaphors that are used in the reading materials can enhance text cohesiveness and coherence. With the illustration of the three sample discourses, this thesis explores the significance of the cohesive and coherent functions of conceptual metaphor in English teaching especially in the teaching of reading. In some reading discourses, conceptual metaphor can help to present the writer's intentions. In addition, conceptual metaphor can make the discourse more vivid and help to develop the topic. Because of this, it becomes essential for the teacher to foster students' metaphorical ability in the teaching of reading.

This thesis consists of seven chapters. Chapter One is the introduction, presenting the objective and the organization of this thesis. Chapter

⑦ In this thesis, "discourse" refers to any passage, spoken or written.

Two introduces the two important terms “cohesion” and “coherence”. Chapter Three gives the traditional view of metaphor and goes to the study of metaphor in cognitive linguistics. And then the types, the functions and the characteristics of conceptual metaphor are elaborated. Chapter Four specifies the three basic functions of conceptual metaphor and points out that conceptual metaphor has cohesive and coherent functions in discourse. The next chapter, Chapter Five, analyzes three sample discourses to show how conceptual metaphor performs the cohesive and coherent functions in discourse. Chapter Six explores the significance of these functions of conceptual metaphor in English teaching. And two reading passages are selected to explore how to teach metaphorical reading passages. Chapter Seven draws a conclusion.

Key Words: conceptual metaphor, cohesion, coherence, discourse, English teaching

内 容 摘 要

人们已经从各种不同的角度对隐喻进行过研究。传统的修辞观认为隐喻是一种修辞手段,它的使用是为了达到“比较”的效果。近年来,随着认知语言学的发展,许多在哲学和语言学方面对隐喻进行的研究,已经转移了它的科学调查的焦点,从单一的语言学的平台转移到了以认知为基础的平台。在“我们赖以生存的隐喻”一书中,Lakoff 和 Johnson(1980)提出了隐喻研究的认知法。他们表明,隐喻能构成人们感知经验和外部世界的基本的图式。因此,隐喻在我们理解语言和用语言来描述世界过程中起到一个很重要的作用。Kövecses(2002:29)提到,与语言隐喻相反,在认知语言学观点中的隐喻主要指概念隐喻。人们已经对概念隐喻做过很多研究,包括概念隐喻的类型、特点、经验基础及三个基本功能。但是,很少有人研究过概念隐喻在语篇中的衔接及连贯作用。实际上,在语篇中,概念隐喻的使用能够保证语篇的连贯,同时能够使语篇描写更加形象,从而更容易理解。一些语言学家如 Ricoeur(1975/1986), Gibbs(1994)及 Cameron(2002)已经指出了隐喻具有语篇功能,但是,针对隐喻的语篇功能他们没有进行详细的分析。

本书用三个语篇分析了概念隐喻在英语语篇中起到的衔接及连贯作用的。通过对这三个语篇的分析研究来说明语篇中概念隐

喻是怎样起到衔接及连贯的作用。这个研究是以 George Lakoff 的认知语言学理论及 Gullian Brown 和 George Yule 的语篇分析方法作理论依据展开的。在阅读材料中,隐喻频频出现,在阅读材料中出现的概念隐喻能够增加语篇的衔接力。在对三个语篇进行分析的基础上,本文进一步探讨了概念隐喻的衔接及连贯作用在英语阅读教学中的重要性。在一些阅读文章中,作者使用概念隐喻从而能够更形象地表达出作者的写作意图。此外,概念隐喻还能够使语篇更生动,同时促进了语篇内容的发展。因此,在阅读教学中,教师应尽量培养学生的隐喻能力。

本书包括七章。第一章是引言,提出了本文研究的目的及文章的结构。第二章介绍了两个重要的概念“衔接”和“连贯”。第三章首先回顾了传统观点中的隐喻,然后介绍了认知语言学中的隐喻研究,最后详细阐述了概念隐喻的类型、功能及特点。第四章着重讨论了概念隐喻的三大功能,同时指出概念隐喻还具有语篇功能。第五章对三个语篇进行了分析,根据对这三个语篇的分析研究来说明语篇中概念隐喻是怎样起到衔接及连贯作用。第六章探讨了概念隐喻的这些作用对英语教学的启示。第七章对整篇论文进行了归纳与总结。

关键词: 概念隐喻,衔接,连贯,语篇,英语教学

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Chapter One Introduction

1.1 Approaches to Metaphor

1.1.1 Traditional Approaches to Metaphor

The systematic study of metaphor can be traced back to Aristotle who is the first one to give a systematic elaboration of metaphor. Aristotle (1954: 87) regards metaphors as implicit comparisons between a metaphorical expression and a literal paraphrase based on underlying analogy or similarity, hence the name of the comparison theory, which dominates the traditional study of metaphor. In Poetics, Aristotle gives the following definition: "Metaphor consists in giving the thing a name that belongs to something else; The transference being either from genus to species, or from species to genus, or from species to species, or on the ground of analogy". He believes that metaphor is a nominal transference from one thing to another through the process of finding out the similarities among dissimilarities. Aristotle defines genus as a semantic superordinate and

species as a semantic hyponym. A species is included in its genus. He distinguishes four kinds of metaphor: genus – to – species, species – to – genus, species – to – species and a matter of analogy. Aristotle's definition of metaphor proves an effective way of interpreting metaphor and thus can be assumed to account for the mechanism of metaphor as well. As to the use of metaphor, Aristotle believes that it is totally ornamental in adding charm and clarity of diction and that metaphor can only be used in poems or writings for ornamental device. Aristotle interprets metaphor as a form of transference of meaning, which still has great influence today.

1.1.2 Cognitive Approaches to Metaphor

With the development of various disciplines of natural sciences and social sciences, there are still many other scholars who have done research on metaphor in translation, metaphor and second language acquisition, or metaphor embedded in culture. Another recent development in metaphor study has appeared within the framework of the theory of "conceptual blending". Conceptual blending is rapidly emerging as a major force in cognitive science. This theory has shed some new light on metaphor. Fauconnier points out the mental space as a partial and temporary representation structure. He defines conceptual blending as networks of four mental spaces. A conceptual blending network is an array of mental spaces in which conceptual blending unfolds. There are two input spaces, between them there is a partial mapping of counterparts. Each is a partial structure corresponding to one of the two identities. There is a generic space, which maps onto each of the inputs. It reflects some common or abstract structure and organization shared by the inputs. As well,

it defines the core cross – space mapping between them. It is often constructed and elaborated along with the other spaces and connections and therefore merely exists in people's short – term memory. The two inputs are partially projected to a fourth space, the blend space. The blend as an emergent structure is not provided by the inputs. Instead, it is generative. In this way, it is possible for the generation of more new conceptual metaphors on the basis of the current metaphors existed in our brains.

1.2 The Objective of This Thesis

Since the publication of the book *Cohesion in English* (Halliday and Hasan, 1976/2001), cohesion and coherence have been two important topics in discourse analysis. And articles about cohesion and coherence have come out one after another. But all the studies on cohesion just focus on the lexical and grammatical cohesive devices. And most of the studies are on conjunctive words, pronouns and articles, which can create cohesion. Few studies concern that conceptual metaphor also can perform the cohesive and coherent functions. In the cognitive linguistic view, metaphors are sets of mappings between a more concrete or physical source domain and a more abstract target domain. Metaphor in the cognitive linguistic view means conceptual metaphor, which will be discussed in Chapter Three. Conceptual metaphor has been explored from different perspectives including its functions. Paul Ricoeur begins to study metaphor from the perspective of discourse analysis in his book *The Rule of Metaphor* (1975/1986). Later on, other famous linguists such as Gibbs and Goatly claim that metaphor has a textual function. However, they have not made detailed analysis of the textual function.

The objective of this study is to explore how conceptual metaphor plays the cohesive and coherent roles through some cohesive devices in discourse. The use of conceptual metaphors in discourse decides the choice of words in the passage. That is to say, conceptual metaphor can contribute in a decisive manner to the cohesive force upon which the discourse representation depends. The use of conceptual metaphor can con-

tribute to the cohesiveness and coherence of a discourse. Conceptual metaphor can perform these functions in two ways:

● In the first way, one conceptual metaphor establishes the heuristic frame for the rest of the discourse sequence. The heuristic conceptual metaphor in the discourse creates many other metaphors and metaphorical expressions. And all the metaphors in the discourse work in a systematic way. This study is carried out on the basis of the analysis of Sample Discourse Two in Section 5.2.

● In the second way, one conceptual metaphor links the passage as a thread through some cohesive devices such as *repetition*, *reference*^① and *synonymy*. This study is carried out on the basis of the analysis of Sample Discourses One and Three in Section 5.1 and Section 5.3.

Through this analysis, we are to learn how conceptual metaphor performs the cohesive and coherent functions in discourse. And on the basis of this analysis, this thesis is to further explore that these functions of conceptual metaphor can facilitate students' learning of reading materials. If students can keep conceptual metaphors in mind, they can understand reading materials more easily. So the study of the cohesive and coherent roles of conceptual metaphor is very important for English teaching.

① In this thesis, the cohesive device "reference" includes endophoric reference and exophoric reference.

1.3 The Organization of This Thesis

This thesis falls into seven chapters.

Chapter One serves as an introduction, introducing different approaches to metaphor, the objective and the organization of this thesis.

Chapter Two concerns two important concepts “cohesion” and “coherence”, discussing the definitions of these two concepts and also the relationship between them.

Chapter Three first presents the traditional view on metaphor and then mainly discusses metaphor in the cognitive linguistic view, which is called conceptual metaphor. Metaphors are not merely linguistic in nature, but are conceptual structures. Metaphor is accurately a figure of thought, a conceptual or cognitive organization. Conceptual metaphor can structure many abstract concepts through mapping concrete concepts onto abstract ones. Finally, this chapter introduces the definitions, the types and the nature of conceptual metaphor.

Chapter Four focuses on the functions of conceptual metaphor. Conceptual metaphor can guide perceptions, structuralize experience and create new insight. In fact, conceptual metaphor also has a textual function.

Chapter Five, which is the key part of the thesis, carries on the discourse analysis with three sample discourses. These three discourses are divided into two kinds. In one kind of discourse, one conceptual metaphor establishes the heuristic frame for the rest of the discourse sequence. And in the other kind of discourse, only one conceptual metaphor links the whole discourse as a thread through the cohesive devices: