A COGNITIVE ANALYSIS OF SNAKE AND LION METAPHORS IN MANDARIN CHINESE AND BRITISH ENGLISH

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MANDARIN CHINESE AND BRITISH ENGLISH

By

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A COGNITIVE ANALYSIS OF SNAKE AND LION METAPHORS IN MANDARIN CHINESE AND BRITISH ENGLISH

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May 2012

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Faculty: Modern Languages and Communication

Not only are studies on animal expressions relatively few (Hsieh, 2004; Hsieh, 2006), but studies conducted cross-linguistically are scarce (Talebinejad and Dastjerdi, 2005). In addition, most previous studies on animal metaphors have been based on data collected from dictionaries or surveys and they have focused on the aspect with human beings as the target domain. This study is an effort to add to findings of the previous studies. Based on the Conceptual Metaphor Theory (CMT) and the Conceptual Blending Theory (CBT), this study investigated snake and lion metaphors based on data collected from authoritative corpora in Mandarin Chinese and British English. Another added dimension of the study is the target domain includes both human beings and non-human beings. The main aim of the study was to identify similarities and differences between snake and lion metaphors in the two
Six steps were involved in the collection and analysis of the data. First, the data comprising snake and lion expressions in Mandarin Chinese and British English were collected from the Modern Chinese Corpus compiled by the Centre for Chinese Linguistics of Peking University (CCL Corpus) and the British National Corpus (BNC) respectively. Then, the snake and lion metaphorical expressions were identified. Next, the metaphorical expressions were categorized according to their source domains and target domains. Meanwhile, the evaluation of each metaphorical expression was ascertained. Subsequently, particular metaphors were generalized from the data. Following that, the CMT and the CBT were applied to the interpretation of typical metaphorical expressions and metaphors. Finally, the results obtained from the two languages were compared.

Both similarities and differences between the snake and lion metaphors in Chinese and English were found. In terms of similarities, first, the animal’s characteristic and appearance are the main aspects of the source domain when the target domains are human beings and non-human beings respectively. Second, human beings, daily items, and economy are the three main shared target domains. Third, more conceptual metaphors were generalized for human beings than any non-human domains. Fourth, the conceptual metaphors generalized from the animal’s appearance are image-based, from the animal’s behavior are both image-based and knowledge-based, and from the animal’s characteristic are knowledge-based. In terms of differences, first, the animal expressions can be mapped onto more domains in Chinese than in English and more conceptual metaphors were generalized in Chinese than in English. Second, the snake metaphorical expressions have a much more derogative meaning of man in Chinese but a much more derogative meaning of woman in English. Third, the lion metaphorical expressions convey more negative meaning in Chinese than in English when they were applied to woman. Moreover, this study also found support for Kövecses’s (2002; 2005; 2010) claim that both
cultural contexts and the natural and physical environment play a role in explaining the causes for metaphor universality and variation in Chinese and English. Thus, the study on snake and lion metaphors provides evidence to show that universality and variation between animal metaphors exist in Chinese and English.

Apart from its contribution to the literature on studies of animal metaphors, the findings from this study seem to have modified Kövecses’s (2002, 2010) dichotomy categorization of metaphors by adding another type, that is metaphors that are both image and knowledge-based at the same time. The findings from this study also have some contribution in terms of refining the CBT. In this case, a revised version of the CBT is obtained by allocating more attention to context in the process of interpreting metaphorical expressions and metaphors and by adding a new space, that is, the output space.

**Keywords:** metaphor, snake metaphors, lion metaphors, Mandarin Chinese, British English, Conceptual Metaphor Theory, Conceptual Blending Theory
mencakupi kedua-dua makhluk, iaitu manusia dan bukan manusia. Tujuan utama kajian ini adalah untuk mengenal pasti persamaan dan perbezaan antara metafora ular dengan metafora singa dalam kedua-dua bahasa berkenaan.


Kedua-dua, iaitu persamaan dan perbezaan antara metafora ular dan metafora singa dalam bahasa Cina dan bahasa Inggeris telah ditemui. Dari segi persamaan, pertama, ciri dan rupa haiwan menjadi aspek utama dalam mandala sumber jika mandala sasarannya makhluk manusia dan bukan manusia. Kedua, manusia, barangan harian, dan ekonomi merupakan tiga aspek yang sama-sama digunakan dalam mandala sasaran. Ketiga, lebih banyak metafora konsep digeneralisasikan untuk mandala manusia berbanding dengan mana-mana mandala bukan manusia. Keempat, metafora konsep yang digeneralisasikan daripada rupa haiwan adalah dengan berasaskan imej, sementara yang digeneralisasikan daripada tingkah laku haiwan adalah dengan berasaskan imej dan pengetahuan, dan yang digeneralisasikan daripada ciri haiwan adalah dengan berdasarkan pengetahuan. Dari segi perbezaan, pertama, ungkapan metafora haiwan dalam bahasa Cina boleh ditunjukkan dalam mandala yang lebih banyak berbanding dengan ungkapan dalam bahasa Inggeris, dan lebih banyak metafora konsep dapat digeneralisasikan dalam bahasa Cina berbanding dengan bahasa Inggeris. Kedua, ungkapan metafora ular lebih banyak maksud yang negatif


Keywords: metafora, metafora ular, metafora singa, bahasa Cina Mandarin, bahasa Inggeris British, Teori Konsep Metafora, Teori Paduan Konsep
DEDICATION

To
My beloved parents, Wei Xiaozhen, Su Meiyi;
To
My most beloved lecturer, Professor Zhou Zhen,
Who is as noble as a lion!
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In close, I am very thankful for all kinds of help I’ve obtained from those I have mentioned above but I myself am responsible for all the blemishes and inappropriate opinions in the present thesis.
I certify that a Thesis Examination Committee has met on (11 May, 2012) to conduct the final examination of Wei Lixia on her thesis entitled “A Cognitive Analysis of Snake and Lion Metaphors in Mandarin Chinese and British English” in accordance with the Universities and University Colleges Act 1971 and the Constitution of the Universiti Putra Malaysia [P.U.(A) 106] 15 March 1998. The committee recommends that the student be awarded the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

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This thesis was submitted to the Senate of Universiti Putra Malaysia and has been accepted as fulfillment of the requirement for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy. The members of the Supervisory Committee were as follows:

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Date:
DECLARATION

I declare that the thesis is my original work except for quotations and citations which have been duly acknowledged. I also declare that it has not been previously, and is not concurrently, submitted for any other degree at Universiti Putra Malaysia or at any other institutions.

WEI LIXIA

Date: 11 May 2012
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