Chapter 1

Introduction

The importance of metaphor to human language and cognition cannot be over emphasized. This importance is well summarized by Malotki (1983: 13) when he writes:

> Man, in confronting reality, faces a kaleidoscope of phenomena ranging from the natural to the man-made, to the imaginary, to the totally abstract. Comprehension of such a broad inventory of reality and non-reality requires language, the tool that permits man to take verbal stock of objective and subjective experiences alike. In man's ongoing endeavor to conceptualize and verbalize a world that can never be fully known, language is the vital intermediary. Language provides a repertoire of coping mechanisms, of which metaphor is one of the most powerful and useful.

Important as it is, metaphor has attracted the attention of scholars interested in language, especially rhetoricians and literary critics, for more than 2000 years.

Traditionally, however, metaphor was viewed as a matter of **language**, as a set of extraordinary or figurative linguistic expressions whose meaning is reducible to some set of literal propositions. This view can be traced back to as early as Aristotle, who defined metaphor in terms of deviation from ordinary usage: "Metaphor consists in giving the thing a name that belongs to something else" (from Ricoeur 1975: 13). According to this view, metaphor is primarily decorative and ornamental in nature. It is not necessary; it is just nice. Viewed as such, metaphor was called a figure of **speech**, and its study was confined mostly to literature and rhetoric (Lakoff 1986a).[1]

In the past few decades, however, the situation has undergone a radical change. The interest in metaphor and the study of its structure, mechanism, function, effect, and cognitive nature have grown rapidly in a broad range of disciplines: linguistics, anthropology, philosophy, psychology, education, sci-

ences, as well as literary criticism and rhetoric (see, e.g., Sapir and Crocker 1977, Sacks 1978, Honeck and Hoffman 1980, Johnson 1981a, W. Taylor 1984, Paprotté and Dirven 1985, Danesi 1988a, Fernandez 1991a, Ankersmit and Mooij 1993, Ortony 1993a, Goossens et al. 1995). As Wayne Booth, a famous literary theorist and rhetorician, noticed one and a half decades ago, "No matter how we define it, metaphor seems to be taking over not only the world of humanists but the world of the social and natural sciences as well" (1978: 48). He regarded the transitional period as "an intellectual movement" which is "one of the 'greatest' in the history of thought" (p. 47). From the viewpoint of a philosopher, Mark Johnson (1981a: ix) observed the change like this: "We are in the midst of a metaphormania. Only three decades ago the situation was just the opposite: poets created metaphors, everybody used them, and philosophers (linguists, psychologists, etc.) ignored them. Today we seem possessed by metaphor." By then metaphor had already moved "from the status of a subsidiary concern to the status of a central problem" (Johnson 1981b: 3).

Rising in this change is the view that metaphor is a matter of thought and, as such, should be called a figure of **thought** (Lakoff 1986a). This view is based on "an ever-increasing awareness that figurative language lies at the core of communication and of cognition" (Danesi 1988b: vii). The rise of the new view and the current multidisciplinary exploration mark a striking phenomenon in modern intellectual history: the transformation of metaphor from a specialized concern of rhetoricians and literary critics to a central concept in the study of human understanding. Metaphor is now a concept with multidisciplinary implications. Its use has been found "in virtually every aspect of human thought: physical science, biological science, economics, law, political theory, psychology, art, philosophy, business, morality, and even poetry" (Johnson 1995: 158). As Johnson (1993b, 1995) suggests, metaphor is definitional of human beings: "whatever else we are, we humans are metaphorizing animals" (1995: 159).

Emerging from this period of transformation is a new theory of metaphor whose beginning was marked by the publication of Lakoff and Johnson's seminal book *Metaphors We Live By* in 1980.[2] The central thesis of the theory is that metaphor, in its broad sense, is pervasive and essential in language and thought. Human conceptual systems "are pervasively and ineliminably structured by metaphor, metonymy, and other kinds of imaginative structure" (Johnson 1995: 158). During the past one and a half decades, the theory has been developed and articulated in works such as Brugman (1988), Gibbs (1993, 1994a, 1994b), Goossens et al. (1995), Johnson (1983, 1987, 1989a,

1989b, 1991, 1992, 1993b, 1993c), Kövecses (1990a), Lakoff (1986a, 1986b, 1987a, 1987b, 1987c, 1989b, 1990, 1993a, 1993b, 1994), Lakoff and Johnson (1981), Lakoff and Turner (1989), Sweetser (1990, 1992), Turner (1987, 1991), to mention just a few.

Following Lakoff (1993a), I will call this theory of metaphor "the contemporary theory of metaphor." The primary objective of my study is to contribute to the contemporary theory of metaphor from the viewpoint of Chinese, so as to help place the theory into a wider cross-cultural perspective.

Aiming at this primary objective, the study explores two major questions faced by the contemporary theory: (1) if abstract reasoning is at least partially metaphorical in nature; and (2) what conceptual metaphors are universal, widespread, or culture-specific. It focuses on (a) metaphors of two emotions, namely anger and happiness; (b) the TIME AS SPACE metaphor; and (c) the Event Structure Metaphor.

The contemporary theory of metaphor claims that abstract concepts are at least in part understood and expressed metaphorically in spatial terms and that abstract reason is achieved by using certain mechanisms for the perception of spatial relations. This is seen as the consequence of the Invariance Principle (Lakoff 1990, 1993a, 1994, Turner 1990, 1992, 1993), which states that metaphor projects the image-schematic structure of the source domain onto the target domain in a way that is consistent with inherent target domain structure. In this theory, therefore, metaphor is the locus for abstract reason. It casts the abstract and the nonphysical into the concrete and the physical, usually with spatial dimensions. Indeed, most image schemas, such as SOURCE-PATH-GOAL, OBJECT, CONTAINMENT, BALANCE, LINKS, CYCLE, are spatial in nature. Even various invisible force schemas, such as COMPULSION, ATTRACTION, COUNTERFORCE, DIVERSION (Johnson 1987), bring about spatial consequences.

In this book, I will work toward an answer to the following general questions:

1. Is abstract reason in Chinese achieved via metaphor mapping the concrete and physical onto the abstract and nonphysical? If the answer is positive, then how is it achieved?
2. How is Chinese similar to or different from English in certain aspects of the conceptual system? I will particularly investigate metaphors of anger and happiness, the TIME AS SPACE metaphor, the Event Structure Metaphor, and the image schemas involved.

3. If there exist commonalities and differences, as is expected, what reasons (cognitive or cultural) are there that can account for them?

As mentioned above, I will first present a comparative study of metaphors of emotions, which is a revised version of my earlier work (Yu 1995). In the last one and half decades, extensive studies have been made by cognitive linguists on the function of metaphor in the conceptualization of emotions in English (e.g. Fesmire 1994, Kövecses 1986, 1988, 1990, 1991, Lakoff 1987, Lakoff and Johnson 1980, Lakoff and Kövecses 1987). A central claim of these studies is that human emotions, which are abstract in nature, are largely conceptualized and expressed in metaphorical terms. For instance, it is argued that in English, to some extent, the emotion of anger is conceptualized in terms of heat and internal pressure (e.g. Lakoff and Kövecses 1987). It is also argued that in English the metaphors of orientation and light participate in the conceptualization of happiness (e.g. Kövecses 1991). The question arises as to what extent it is also true in Chinese. In particular, my questions are:

1. Are emotions of anger and happiness conceptualized metaphorically in Chinese?
2. If yes, what similarities and differences are there in terms of mapping across domains between English and Chinese?
3. What reasons are there that can account for the similarities and differences?

Next, I will present a study of the TIME AS SPACE metaphor in Chinese. I have chosen the TIME AS SPACE metaphor for detailed study because it has already been noted in various languages that notions of time are understood and expressed in terms of space (e.g. Clark 1973, Traugott 1978, Malotki 1983, Lakoff 1990, 1993a, 1994, Alverson 1994). It is proposed that the metaphorical understanding of time in terms of space is a universal cognitive process (Alverson 1994). So far, however, sufficient research on this phenomenon has not yet been done in Chinese (Alverson 1994 contains one study). Therefore, a thorough analysis of expression and conceptualization of time in Chinese will contribute to the establishment of the universal status of this cognitive phenomenon.

Lakoff (1990, 1993a, 1994) has noticed that in English the general conceptual metaphor of time is TIME PASSING IS MOTION. Specifically, time is understood in terms of things (i.e. entities and locations) and motion. The present time is at the same location as a canonical observer, with future times being in

front of the observer and past times behind the observer. Either time or the observer is moving while the other is stationary. Therefore, as Lakoff specified, there are two special cases in English:

1. TIME PASSING IS MOTION OF AN OBJECT.
2. TIME PASSING IS MOTION OVER A LANDSCAPE.

In the first case, the observer is fixed, and times are entities moving with their fronts toward the observer. In the second case, times are fixed locations, and the observer is moving through them. Lakoff (1993a, 1994) also observed the phenomenon he called 'duality' where simultaneous mappings may mix the two special cases in a single expression.

With respect to the study of time in Chinese, my specific questions are:

1. Is time conceptualized metaphorically in terms of space in Chinese?
2. Are the two special cases in the conceptualization of time, as observed by Lakoff (1993a, 1994), applicable in Chinese?
3. What similarities and differences are there between English and Chinese?
4. What reasons are there that can account for the similarities and differences?

Finally, I will present a study of the Event Structure Metaphor in Chinese. I have chosen the Event Structure Metaphor for study because it constitutes a very complex metaphorical system in itself. In Lakoff's words (1993a: 220), "This is a rich and complex metaphor whose parts interact in complex ways." It includes abstract notions like states, changes, actions, causes, purposes, means, and difficulties. Lakoff and his students have found (Lakoff 1990, 1993a, 1993b, 1994) that these notions are characterized in English via metaphor in terms of space, motion, and force. He has suggested that the Event Structure Metaphor is his "candidate for a metaphorical universal" (1993a: 249). Therefore, it will be of great theoretical interest to see if a parallel situation exists in Chinese.

The Event Structure Metaphor may include the following mappings (from Lakoff 1993a):

States are locations (bounded regions in space).
Changes are movements (into or out of bounded regions).
Causes are forces.

Actions are self-propelled movements.
Purposes are destinations.
Means are paths (to destinations).
Difficulties are impediments to motion.
Expected progress is a travel schedule; a schedule is a virtual traveler, who reaches prearranged destinations at prearranged times.
External events are large, moving objects.
Long term, purposeful activities are journeys.

There are also various submappings under each of the above.

With regard to the Event Structure Metaphor, my specific questions are:

1. Are various aspects (states, changes, actions, causes, purposes, means, and difficulties, etc.) of event structure conceptualized metaphorically in terms of space, motion, and force in Chinese?
2. Is the above list of mappings found as it is in Chinese?
3. What similarities and differences are there between English and Chinese in this aspect?
4. What reasons are there that can account for the similarities and differences?

The source domain for both time and event structure dealt with here is space, which "has become a fertile domain of investigation by cognitive scientists from disciplines spanning neurophysiology (Jeannerod 1994) to cognitive anthropology and comparative linguistics (Levinson 1991, Svorou 1994)" (Sinha 1995: 7). However, the spatial domain is especially important to cognitive linguistics. In his 'Introduction' to the *Cognitive Linguistics* special issue (6-1) 'Spatial language and cognition 1,' Sinha (1995: 7) points out that the semantic and cognitive domain of space occupies a special place in the brief history of cognitive linguistics because cognitive semantics and cognitive grammar "rest upon an essentially visuo-spatial conception of meaning and conceptualization, in which symbolic structures are derived from embodied constraints upon human perception and agency in a spatial field." Although cognitive linguists were not the first to adopt a spatial conception of grammaticalized meaning, "their analyses surpass previous approaches both in comprehensiveness and in richness of detail" (Sinha 1995: 7). Sinha (1995: 7) further points out why the domain of space should attract our special attention.

> As we learn more both about the biological foundations of human spatial perception and cognition, and about the truly astonishing variation between languages in the way they express and schematize spatial meaning, we cannot fail to be struck by the thought that the spatial domain is a particularly rich one for empirical investigation both of possible linguistic and cognitive universals, and of possible cross-linguistic and cross-cultural cognitive differences.

The spatial domain is important not only in its own, but because it is commonly mapped into other more abstract domains, giving rise to spatial conceptualization of those more abstract domains in a metaphorical fashion. As Levinson (1991: 3) has commented:

> There are many reasons to think spatial conceptualization central to human cognition: spatial understanding is perhaps the first great intellectual task facing the child, a task which human mobility makes mandatory, but above all spatial thinking invades our conceptualizations of many other domains as diverse as time, social structure and mathematics.

How the spatial domain is mapped into each of those many other domains and in what way the mappings reflect human universality and cultural relativity are the questions that remain to be answered. The present study represents one effort in this direction.

In the past, the cognitive linguistic study of metaphor was criticized for its methodological weaknesses or limitations, such as introspective inspection, decontextualization, in addition to lack of cross-cultural and cross-linguistic perspectives (see, e.g., Fernandez 1991b, Quinn 1991, and the discussion in Gibbs 1996a). To try to get beyond these limitations I did the following with respect to my research methods. Instead of resorting to introspective inspection only, I collected my data for Chapters 4 and 5 from a naturalistic setting, mainly from *People's Daily*, the number one official newspaper in mainland China, and occasionally from some other publications, as well as from Chinese dictionaries.[3] With a few exceptions, they were collected during a period of about three months of the summer of 1994. The examples actually cited in this study constitute only a very small portion of the data collected. I did not record the actual sources of the data, such as the page and the date of the newspaper from which a particular example is taken. This is mainly because I had to simplify some of the examples by chopping off some irrelevant details so as to keep them short and concise. In so doing, I made the examples simpler and

more to the point. Furthermore, by cutting the original examples shorter, I saved the space for word-by-word gloss and for more free version of translation. Thus, not all examples are 'original' as they are actually in the newspapers. However, my abridgments have, I believe, not changed their metaphorical structure. I feel it is fine as long as native speakers find them all in good and natural Chinese. I have kept at least some of the examples unsimplified, so as to show how metaphor actually permeates in discourse, rather than just resides in the boundaries of words, phrases, or sentences. The data for Chapter 3, which were collected in an earlier period, mainly from dictionaries, consist only of highly conventionalized and idiomatic expressions.

The Chinese examples cited in this book are transcribed into *pinyin* romanization. Their counterparts in Chinese characters, which are numbered exactly as they are in the main text, are provided in the appendix for those who want to refer to the original character version.

In dealing with the English translation I follow Malotki's (1983) practice of translating the Hopi examples. That is, "stylistic excellence is not always envisaged as a desirable goal. Frequently, preference is given to a rather literal rendition which may be awkward from a stylistic point of view, but may be more revealing of the Hopi thought patterns involved" (p. 11). I follow the same principle in translating the Chinese examples into English.

The empirical studies reported here have produced some remarkable findings in support of the contemporary theory of metaphor. In the first place, my study of metaphors of emotions demonstrates that English and Chinese share the same central conceptual metaphor ANGER IS HEAT, which then breaks into two subversions in both languages. Whereas English has selected FIRE and FLUID metaphors, Chinese uses FIRE and GAS metaphors for the same purpose. Similarly, both English and Chinese share the UP, LIGHT, and CONTAINER metaphors in their conceptions of happiness, although they differ in some other cases. Besides, these two languages also follow the same metonymic principle in talking about anger and happiness by describing the physiological effects of these emotions. This study shows that metaphors of anger and happiness are primarily based on common bodily experience, with surface differences across languages explainable from cultural perspectives. Secondly, the study of the system of temporal expressions shows how time in Chinese is conceptualized in terms of space and motion, and fits into the two-case model proposed by Lakoff (1990, 1993a, 1994) for English. It is found that Chinese and English bear great similarity in following the same principle of spatialization of time. Last, my study of the Event Structure Metaphor demonstrates that in Chinese

various aspects of event structure such as states, changes, causes, actions, purposes, means, and difficulties are conceptualized metaphorically in terms of space, motion, and force, just as in English (Lakoff 1990, 1993a, 1993b, 1994). The conceptual mappings at a high hierarchical level of the metaphor system are found the same in both English and Chinese, whereas the specific linguistic instantiations of those conceptual mappings may be similar or different between the two languages.

In general, the empirical studies presented herein reinforce the view that metaphor is the main mechanism through which we comprehend abstract concepts and perform abstract reasoning. They also support, from the perspective of Chinese, the candidacy of some conceptual metaphors for metaphorical universals. These include, for instance, the ANGER AS HEAT metaphor, the HAPPY IS UP metaphor, the TIME AS SPACE metaphor, and the Event Structure Metaphor. These conceptual metaphors are grounded in some basic human experiences that may be universal to all human beings and therefore constitute the "culture of species" (Svorou 1994: 2).

Finally, a word about how this book is arranged. After a detailed review of the contemporary theory of metaphor in Chapter 2, I present a comparative study of metaphorical expressions of anger and happiness in English and Chinese in Chapter 3. I then make a thorough investigation of two metaphorical systems, namely the TIME AS SPACE metaphor and the Event Structure Metaphor in Chinese respectively in Chapters 4 and 5. Chapter 6 is the conclusion.