

Mega-metaphor: A Textual Semantic Account of Conceptual Metaphor and Grammatical Metaphor

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The work of Lakoff and Johnson (1980) has analyzed aspects of the cognitive nature of metaphor, while Halliday (1985/1994) and Halliday & Matthiessen (1999) have explored the functions and representations of grammatical metaphor. Werth (1994) points out that linguistic approaches to metaphor provide sentence-level account of the phenomenon. He proposes a text-world account of metaphor to deal with the “undercurrent” of discourse meaning and the extended use of metaphor (mega-metaphor) within a text, based on his data from literary texts. Nevertheless, his analysis has not touched upon grammatical metaphor.

What functions do conceptual metaphor and lexical metaphor play in texts? In this paper the nature of coherence of text is first explored. It is argued that the essence of coherence is the logical semantic relations between parts, presumably, resemblance, cause-and-effect, temporal, and spatial, and that both types of metaphor contribute to the establishment of such kinds of relation in text. This point is illustrated by the data from a classic Chinese text *Persuasion to the Emperor on Ten Considerations* by Wei Zheng, a minister of the Tang Dynasty, a masterpiece of argumentative writing in Chinese history, in which both conceptual metaphor and grammatical metaphor are effectively used.

What is the main discourse semantic feature of each type of metaphor? Both types of metaphor are necessary in the construction of textual meaning. Nevertheless, each type possesses its discourse semantic feature. In light of conceptual blending theory, the analysis of the lexical metaphors used in the text suggests that they help to present a forceful argument that the stability of political power lies first and foremost in integrity of the ruler, which is the core of the discourse meaning of the text. The main feature of conceptual metaphors in the text is integration. As for the grammatical metaphor in the text, the process of obtaining power and that of sustaining power are nominalized (as *qu zhi* and *shou zhi*) so as to objectify them and discuss them. The data show that nominalization possesses the feature of semantic junction.

Keywords: mega-metaphor; conceptual metaphor; grammatical metaphor; textual function; Semantic feature

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