English Abstract

The present book provides a detailed investigation of metaphors in Mandarin Chinese based on the premise that different knowledge domains are mapped in the formulation of metaphors. In conceptual metaphors (Lakoff & Johnson 1980, Lakoff 1993), the two mapped domains include the target domain, which is usually more abstract, and the source domain, which is usually more concrete, providing key information to understand the concepts of the target domain. Due to the importance of source domains, studies attempting to define operationally how source domains are involved with conceptual metaphors have been undertaken in the past. However, these studies have encountered difficulties due to two main reasons: (a) the variation in the specificity of the source domains; and (b) the subjectivity of individuals when determining source domains.

This book overcomes these difficulties by employing both top-down and bottom-up approaches to determine the source domain of a conceptual metaphor. A top-down approach to source domain determination usually sorts metaphorical instances according to pre-determined source domains that come from a conceptual knowledge system (such as an ontology). Alternatively, a bottom-up approach accumulates knowledge about the source domain through language use (or collocation). Both approaches, top-down and bottom-up, have been used to identify source domains in metaphor studies; however, the precision of these two approaches has not previously been compared. The present book intends to fill the gap between these two approaches by comparing the approaches using computational tools, such as WordNet, SUMO (Suggested Upper Merged Ontology), and Sketch Engine.

The outcome of this study provides a comprehensive comparison of the top-down and bottom-up approaches regarding the determination of source domains. Based on the combined results of the two approaches, this study proposes a hierarchical model for source domain definition. This model facilitates automatic identification of metaphors and explains why certain domains overlap in conceptualization. By using computational tools with a linguistic framework of domain identification that contribute to computational linguistics, this study finds further support through psycholinguistic experiments, thus enhancing the ability to define source domains. This, in turn, makes a substantial contribution to understanding the human categorization of concepts through linguistic evidence.

Key words: source domains, conceptual metaphors, top-down approach, bottom-up approach, ontology, collocation