

From Textual Prompts to Cognitive Models: A Context-oriented Perspective on Metaphor Interpretation in Taiwanese Presidential Speeches*

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The present research adopts a context-based approach to metaphor interpretation in Taiwanese presidential speeches by detailing the notion of context to include linguistic context and stored knowledge. Two specific sets of metaphors will be investigated as examples in this qualitative study: The metaphorical use of *menkan* 'threshold' can be understood either as a part of a wall of a CONTAINER or as an obstacle in a JOURNEY. The second set of instances involves a country profiled as a SHIP, a TREE, or a PERSON, depending on context. It will be argued that metaphor comprehension in discourse encompasses the following segments: Linguistic context prompts pieces of information that embeds the target lexical item. These pieces of information are organized according to the cognitive models, based on which a global understanding of metaphors is possible.

The contribution of the present study is at least two-fold: It delineates the nuts-and-bolts of how context, given appropriate details, is capable of constraining construals. The study further proposes a context-oriented model of metaphor interpretation trying to call for due attention to pragmatics.

Key words: contextualization, co-text, context, cognitive model, frame, metaphor, domain, ways-of-seeing (WOS)

1. Introduction

The problem of multiple interpretations of metaphor in discourse has been a knotty issue in metaphor studies. Previous literature has identified specifically a problem of dual interpretation where one concrete lexical item is potentially subject to dual explanations (Goatly 1997, 2002, Caballero 2003, Charteris-Black 2004). These discourse-based studies of metaphor concurrently report the phenomenon of multiple domain pairings

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based on data from various genres and from assorted theoretical stances, touching upon the importance of context in metaphor understanding, yet simply in passing.

In view of this, this study aims to investigate contextual influence on metaphor interpretation in discourse from a radical context-based perspective by giving context a clear two-fold definition. The sample excerpts to cover here will be taken from authentic political speeches by Taiwanese presidents.

2. Contextual influence on metaphor interpretation in discourse

Discourse-oriented studies have pointed out a puzzle of multiple interpretations of metaphor, and have mentioned the importance of context: Goatly (2002:266-267), for instance, in a discussion of how the metaphor use in Hong Kong educational reform proposals can cause confused thinking and argument, relates “multivalency” where “the same metaphorical vehicle (source) is used for two different topics (targets)” and exemplify his point with *snake* being used to refer to a lock of hair or to a whip and the construction metaphor “used sometimes to refer to the curriculum designed by educationalists and sometimes to knowledge created by the students.”

Caballero’s (2003:151) discourse study on the role of metaphor in the building review similarly reports a case of the term *articulate*, which is open to two interpretations: ‘consisting of segments united by joints’ and ‘the ability of expressing oneself readily, clearly, or effectively’. The use of *articulate* can be analyzed as either “drawing upon a PART-WHOLE image schema” or as “activating a language metaphor, highlighting different parts of a building”.

In his critical metaphor analysis on metaphors in American presidential speeches, Charteris-Black also points out that identifying source domains does not facilitate understanding of the deep level meaning of metaphors since different metaphors may be chosen according to what type of message the political figure wishes to get across. A good example in this study will be the multiple interpretations of the lexical items *bridges* and *barrier* in that “‘bridges’ and ‘barriers’ could potentially be analysed as drawing both on a building *and* on a journey source domain” (Charteris-Black 2004:95, italics original).

A common characteristic shared by the three studies above is their concentration on the behavior of metaphor in contextualized language use instead of in constructed sentences, which I argue to have much to do with the puzzle of multiple interpretations of metaphor. These authors also concurrently discuss a simple method of disambiguating: observing the context. Caballero (2003:151) touches upon the way to clarify the meaning of metaphor only by “taking into account the textual rather than the cognitive-only aspects of metaphor. Thus if we pay attention to the co-text of ‘articulate’ we may conclude that

it is the expressive (i.e. language) property of the façade that is highlighted here.” Charteris-Black (2004:96) likewise mentions the importance of context in metaphor interpretation by stressing: “Only analysis of the context in which the word occurs can reveal if one conceptual basis is more active.”

Despite the importance of context being mentioned, these studies nevertheless do not go into details of how the context of a metaphorical expression contributes to the decoding process because the notion of context has not been clearly defined in these studies, and this vague terminology as a result fails to capture how context comes into play to give rise to the different interpretations of metaphor. The three studies in sum all remark on the phenomenon of one metaphorical vehicle used in different contexts and receiving multiple interpretations, but a lacuna does exist in the literature with respect to the specific role that context or co-text plays in understanding metaphorical use of a lexical item. As Croft & Cruse (2004:221) have adequately pointed out, “the role of contextual and other constraints and the mechanism by which they produce their effects” is indeed a mystery of metaphor. In light of this, the present study aims to explore how context, given appropriate details, can help in communicating the meaning of a metaphor.

3. Defining context

Working within the research camp of cognitive pragmatics, the present study assumes that linguistic stimuli interact with the interpreter’s background assumptions, i.e. the so-called contextual factors, to create pragmatic meanings in use (Sperber & Wilson 1986, 2002, Carston 2002). The present discussion thus aims to pick up on how “context” contributes to the meaning of metaphor in discourse by first giving context a clear definition: I shall refer to Croft & Cruse’s (2004) four-fold definition of context, which includes linguistic context, physical context, social context, and stored knowledge. However, I shall not go into the idea of physical context due to the written nature of the data employed in the present study. I have also discussed the influence of social context (ideology) on metaphor use somewhere else (Lu & Ahrens 2008). Hence the immediate linguistic context of a metaphorically used lexical item and the world knowledge associated with the vehicle that assists in utterance interpretation will be the main focus of discussion here.

Specifically, the two types of context are defined as follows: First, for metaphor comprehension in written discourse, linguistic context refers to the phrase or sentence in which the target lexical item occurs. Namely, I hold that textual company may constrain the construal of a metaphorical expression. The second critical element of context will be stored knowledge, which is organized by way of structures called idealized cognitive

models (Lakoff 1987) or cognitive models (Evans 2006), frames (Fillmore 1982), or scripts (Schank & Abelson 1977). Stored knowledge is in other words experience-based patterns against which utterances are processed and is capable of operating on construals.

4. Methodology

A point to note is that the studies reviewed all recruit authentic discourse data to unravel the phenomenon of multiple interpretations of metaphorical vehicle. This is not mere coincidence because constructed examples can hardly reveal the nuts-and-bolts of the on-line construction of meaning. In other words, I believe that real texts do better to reveal the contextual effect on processing of a metaphorically understood lexical item. The present discussion started as a comparison to previous studies on the metaphors used in political discourse (Charteris-Black 2004, Goatly 1997). Hence, I adopt excerpts from authentic political speeches given by Taiwanese presidents on New Year's Days and Double Tenth Days.¹ The speeches are targeted toward the general public in Taiwan, are televised throughout the entire country, and report the progress of the country up to a certain point, so the speeches bear relatively high political significance. The speeches are looked over manually, with two sets of instances finally collected for illustration.

Expressions are marked as metaphorical when they involve any domain incongruity in attribution. Incongruity is considered to involve the understanding of one entity in terms of another belonging to a different experiential domain, regardless of the degree of innovation. The metaphorical expressions that concern us in the present document, and probably do most researchers in cognitive linguistics, are actually rather conventional ones. For instance, a *menkan* 'threshold' will therefore be regarded as a metaphorical use if it does not refer to an entity that is physically walked over but to some abstract impediment. Also, a country is considered to be understood metaphorically when it is interpreted against concepts such as a SHIP, a TREE, or a PERSON that does not belong to a domain of a COUNTRY, even when the above concepts are conventionally used in reference to a country.

In addition, a notation tradition in cognitive linguistics is followed in the present paper: Concepts are capitalized. So when reference is made to 'a woody plant having a single main stem usually with few branches on its lower part' at the conceptual level instead of a real plant, it is notated as a TREE, and 'a seagoing traffic vehicle' will be notated as a SHIP, etc.

¹ These speeches are available online at the website of the presidential office: http://www.president.gov.tw/index_c.html, and that of Chungcheng Foundation, <http://chungcheng.org.tw>

5. Context-dependency of metaphors in use

Two sets of examples will be analyzed in this section, revealing the context-dependent nature of metaphor interpretation in authentic discourse: two cases of *menkan* ‘threshold’ and cases of country conceptualized either as a SHIP, a TREE, or a PERSON. Presented first will be two passages involving the lexical item *menkan* in (1) and (2). This pair resembles the case of *barrier* discussed by Charteris-Black (2004), Caballero’s (2003) instance of *articulate*, or what Goatly (2002) terms multivalency, representing how one single linguistic form can metaphorically be understood either against a CONTAINER or a JOURNEY respectively. The second set of examples will illustrate how one single notional referent, a political entity in presidential speeches, be its formal realization *zhonghuaminguo* ‘the Republic of China’ or *taiwan* ‘Taiwan’, can be conceptualized as a SHIP, a TREE, or a PERSON. With the two sets of instances, I aim to illustrate how the interpretation of target lexical items depends crucially on the two types of contexts: linguistic context and stored knowledge.

5.1 Dual interpretations of *menkan* ‘threshold’: CONTAINER or JOURNEY?

Discussed below are two cases of *menkan* ‘threshold’ used as a metaphorical vehicle, and the two cases of *menkan* can be construed as a part of the Iron Curtain, a wall of a container in (1), or as an impediment in a journey, as in (2).

- (1) 鐵幕 以內，被 奴役 人民 的 恐怖 呼號， 和
 tiemu yinei bei nuyi renmin de kongbu huhao he
 iron curtain within PASS slave people DE horrible howl and
 冒 死 逃亡， 以及 其 不斷 突發 的
 mao si taowang yiji qi buduan tufa de
 risk death runaway and its constantly explode DE
 抗暴 怒 火， 正在 震撼 鐵幕 以外 自由
 kangbao nu huo zhengzai zhenhan tiemu yiwai ziyou
 anti-violence anger fire PROG shock iron curtain outside free
 世界 的 人心！ 也在 撞擊 並 鎔解 鐵幕 的
 shijie de renxin yezai zhuangji bing rongjie tiemu de
 world DE heart also shove and melt iron curtain DE

門檻！ (Chiang K. 52)

menkan

threshold

“Inside the Iron Curtain, the slaved people are bellowing and are trying to escape. The fire of anger is moving free people’s heart outside the Iron Curtain and is shoving at and is melting the threshold of the Iron Curtain.”

Example (1) is excerpted from Mr. Chiang Kai-shek’s speech in 1963, where *menkan* ‘threshold’ is understood as a part of the Iron Curtain, a type of a wall of a container so is interpreted as a type of limit. The fact that a CONTAINER is involved at the conceptual level is reflected by its immediate linguistic contexts: a distinction made between *tiemu yinei* ‘within the Iron Curtain’ and *tiemu yiwai* ‘outside the Iron Curtain’. The textual prompts also subtly profile the wall of the container by pointing out what the contents in the container do to its wall: *zhuangji* ‘shove at’ and *rongjie* ‘melt’. The contextual clues in other words collaborate to establish a mental scenario of confinement, where some metaphorical agent inside the CONTAINER, with an attempt to escape, is shoving at and is trying to melt the threshold of the Iron Curtain as a wall that makes a distinction of “inside” and “outside”. In addition to such linguistic contexts, the other type of context, stored knowledge, also plays a subtle yet indispensable role in processing the above passage. From our previous experiences of interacting with the environment, a knowledge pattern can be generalized that a CONTAINER has its inside and outside, so even when no form actually conveys the message of a CONTAINER, the use of *yinei* and *yiwai* suffices to implicate the existence of a CONTAINER. According to human experience of interacting with the world, the function of a CONTAINER is to hold its content and to keep it from getting away. Such containers may include prison, cage, pen, etc. It is therefore inferable that entities contained but trying to escape usually do something to the wall of the CONTAINER, which serves as the knowledge base to organize the information triggered by the textual cues. These complicated computations would be impossible without the underlying patterns of stored knowledge. *Menkan* is hence identified with the concept of CONTAINER because its linguistic contexts trigger relevant information that conforms to our knowledge regarding a CONTAINER and the stored knowledge of a confinement scenario closely associated with CONTAINER.

The other instance involving *menkan* is from Mr. Chen Shui-bian’s talk in 2003, where *menkan* is construed as a hurdle or an obstacle in a JOURNEY and the country *taiwan* is conceptualized as a moving agent, as in (2):

- (2) 台灣 正在 跨越 一道 又 一道
 taiwan zhengzai kuayue yidao you yidao
 Taiwan PROG stride across one-CL and one-CL
- 看不見 的 門檻， 通過 一層層 艱難 的
 kanbujian de menkan tongguo yicengceng jiannan de
 invisible DE threshold pass layer difficult DE
- 考驗， 最後 將 通往 民主 自由、 進步
 kaoyan zuihou jiang tongwang minzhu ziyou jinbu
 test finally will go to democratic free progressive
- 繁榮 的 希望 之 門。(Chen 92)
 fanrong de xiwang zhi men
 thrive DE hope ZHI gate

“Taiwan is striding across invisible thresholds and passing through arduous examinations, and (the path) will finally lead to the gate of hope to democracy and prosperity.”

Here, at the textual level, contextual cues indicate that the country is doing what is usually done by a PERSON in a JOURNEY (or a PERSON on the move): *kuayue* ‘stride across’, *tongguo* ‘pass’, and *tongwang* ‘go to’, which builds a mental scenario of JOURNEY against which *menkan* is interpreted. The construction of JOURNEY however further relies on our stored knowledge concerning what usually happens and what is usually involved in a JOURNEY: The above linguistic context is reminiscent of a JOURNEY because a JOURNEY usually involves a fixed path that leads to a certain goal, i.e. *xiwang zhi men* ‘the gate of hope’ in this passage, and in a JOURNEY there are often obstacles to get over. Experientially, when one moves into or out of a room or a house, *menkan* ‘threshold’ can be thought of as a concrete obstacle which one must walk over. Such experience-based knowledge thus works as a template on which these pieces of textually triggered information are arranged and fall into place. *Menkan* is therefore understood against the concept of JOURNEY because its immediate linguistic contexts coherently prompt a cognitive model of JOURNEY and the stored knowledge regarding a JOURNEY can fit a THRESHOLD into our experience of traveling or moving.

5.2 What is a country? a SHIP, a TREE, or a PERSON?

The above pair of examples illustrates how one single lexical item of *menkan* can receive two seemingly different interpretations against a CONTAINER or a JOURNEY

at the conceptual level, but the seeming difference essentially results from its nearby textual prompts and stored knowledge base that organizes the triggered information. The second set of instances to consider in my analyses comprises metaphors with a country as its notional referent, albeit in different linguistic forms. In these passages, the country, whether referred to by the name *zhonghuaminguo* ‘the Republic of China’ or by *taiwan* ‘Taiwan’, refers to the same political entity but receives sometimes an interpretation of a SHIP and sometimes one of a TREE, and still sometimes as a PERSON. I argue that the decision as to how a metaphor is understood in discourse should not be arbitrary, and that one should also go beyond the pure conceptual level into the contextual woods for an explanation of multiple interpretations of metaphor.

5.2.1 Country as a SHIP

Presented first is a case found in Mr. Chen Shui-bian’s speech in the year 2001, where the country *zhonghuaminguo* is profiled as a SHIP that remains firm on a hazardous sea journey, as in (3):

- (3) 中華民國 在 波濤洶湧 中 幾 經 挫折，
zhonghuaminguo zai botaoxiongyong zhong ji jing cuozhe
the ROC LOC rough tides and waves in several meet frustration
但 始終 能夠 屹立不搖... 讓 我們 在 無數次
dan shizhong nenggou yilibuyao rang women zai wushuci
but all the way can stand firm let we LOC numerous
的 橫流 之中... 克服 最 嚴苛 的 挑戰。(Chen 90)
de hengliu zhizhong kefu zui yanke de tiaozhan
DE violent current in overcome most harsh DE challenge

“The ROC underwent frustration in the rough sea but still has remained steady... Let us overcome the toughest challenges... in numerous violent currents.”

Note that the understanding of the above passage involves extremely complex mental computation from various levels: The lexical form for the country, *zhonghuaminguo*, is embedded in linguistic contexts, *botaoxiongyong* ‘rough waves and tides’ and *hengliu* ‘violent current’, which are suggestive of the cognitive model of an angry sea based on another type of context, the stored knowledge patterns, since according to people’s encyclopedic knowledge a rough sea often involves these two dramatic elements. The two linguistic forms collaborate at the textual level on the one hand, and the lexical

meanings of the two on the other conceptually co-construct a mental scenario that implies possible harm that may happen at sea.

However, despite the contribution of surrounding textual cues, it remains an utter mystery why the country can be readily understood as a type of transportation vehicle, viz. a SHIP at, especially when the vehicle is not mentioned at all in any linguistic sign. I will argue that the interpretation process involves a stored knowledge pattern based on which interpretation is inferred at the conceptual level.

First of all, the knowledge of dangerous tides and waves, violent currents, and the fact that they frequently happen in a description of a dangerous sea voyage work hand-in-hand to contribute to the construction of the mental scenario of a hazardous sea voyage at the conceptual level. In other words, after the textual cues prompt related concepts such as ‘rough waves and tides’ and ‘violent current’, these concepts are organized by a related knowledge pattern that is experience-based, and as a whole construct a scenario of a dangerous sea voyage. Stored knowledge pattern, as a sort of context, plays the vital role of organizing relevant information, based on which further inference will be computed.

A more subtle step of metaphor interpretation in this passage will involve the tight cooperation of stored knowledge patterns and the inferential ability of human beings. The surrounding lexical items have, at the conceptual level, triggered a scenario of sea voyage with the concept of ‘rough waves and tides’ and ‘violent current’, but a further mystery remains as to why the country can be readily understood as the SHIP instead of as the other elements in the scenario in the absence of a linguistic form that codes the very concept. The interpretation does not come for free: it takes the stored knowledge patterns to construct a sea voyage scenario, and after this we need to assign a role in the scenario to the country. The act of role specification requires the human inferential ability in that those linguistic forms only build up a JOURNEY, yet nothing essentially indicates what role in the scenario the country should fill in. The ability to run pragmatic inference answers this pending question for us: A ship is what is portrayed to ‘meet frustration’ and ‘try to overcome challenges on the rough sea on a voyage’. With the above inference, we are thus able to figure out which possible role may correspond to the country in the sea voyage scenario in the absence of a form that stands for the concrete concept of a SHIP, which helps us arrive at the construal of a country as a SHIP in the process of comprehension although the concept of SHIP is not explicitly coded.

Excerpt (4) is found in Mr. Lee Teng-hui’s 1997 speech, where the country, *zhonghuaminguo*, can likewise be construed as a SHIP in the rough sea:

- (4) 八十六年來，中華民國在波濤洶湧的
bashiliu nian lai zhonghuaminguo zai botaoxiongyong de
eighty-six year come the ROC ZAI rough tides and waves DE
歷史洪流中，幾經挫折，終能屹立不搖，
lishi hongliu zhong ji jing cuozhe zhong neng yilibuyao
history flood in several meet frustration finally can stand firm
憑藉的，就是對民主的堅定信心，和
pingjie de jiushi dui minzhu de jianding xinxin he
rely DE is to democracy DE steadfast faith and
對歷史的負責態度。(Lee 86)
dui lishi de fuze taidu
to history DE responsible attitude

“For the past eighty-six years, the ROC has undergone numerous frustrations on the angry sea and in floods, and has been able to stand firm because of our steadfast faith toward democracy and our responsible attitude toward history.”

Almost the same conceptualization can be witnessed in this excerpt, where the country is also described as a SHIP that encounters frustration in the floods of history against rough tides and waves. The understanding of such metaphor of country as a SHIP in discourse also involves the textual cues that co-construct a cognitive model of an angry sea based on stored knowledge patterns, and an inferential result of the arrangement of information organized by the knowledge patterns. In the above examples, the country, linguistically realized as *zhonghuaminguo*, can as a result be interpreted as a SHIP because its linguistic environments trigger information that fits into our stored knowledge pattern of a sea journey, with the similarity established between the country and a certain participant in a sea journey, viz. a SHIP.

5.2.2 Country as a TREE

In addition to a SHIP, a country can also be portrayed as a TREE. In example (5), the country, coded in a different linguistic form of *taiwan*, is understood as an ORGANISM, specifically a TREE. The interpretation similarly comes from the coordination of textual cues and stored knowledge patterns:

- (5) 阿扁 同時 也 希望 我們 海 內 外
 a-bian tongshi ye xiwang women hai nei wai
 A-bian meanwhile also hope we sea in out
- 同胞... 讓 台灣 繼續 成長、 繼續 繁榮， 讓
 tongbao rang taiwan jixu chengzhang jixu fanrong rang
 comrade let Taiwan go on grow go on thrive let
- 台灣 在 國際 社會 上 能夠 永續
 taiwan zai guoji shehui shang nenggou yongxu
 Taiwan ZAI international community on can continuous
- 發展 屹立不搖。(Chen 93)
 fazhan yilibuyao
 develop stand firm

“Meanwhile, A-bian hopes that our comrades all over the world... can let Taiwan grow and flourish, and let Taiwan develop and take root in the international community.”

At the textual level, the linguistic contexts of the form for the country, *taiwan* ‘Taiwan’, code the attribute of an organism: *chengzhang* ‘grow’ and *fanrong* ‘flourish’. It is at first glance difficult to identify whether the organism belongs to an ANIMAL or a PLANT until the etymology of *fanrong* can be identified, which historically referred to the manner in which a plant flourished.² The country can be further ascertained to be compared to a TREE given another modifier in context *yilibuyao* ‘stand firm’, which suggests an attribute of an old plant, especially an old, divine tree that has taken deep root, in our cultural knowledge. Hence in this excerpt, the country, with the linguistic form of *taiwan*, can be readily understood as a TREE given the fact that its textual company conveys relevant information that builds up an idealized cognitive model of a TREE based on our experience-based knowledge patterns.

5.2.3 Country as a PERSON in a JOURNEY

A country can also be construed as a PERSON. Example (6) further profiles the country as a PERSON in a JOURNEY that walks, accepts help from others, survives on his own, wins applause from all over the world, and strides toward a goal, also with

² The more concrete meaning of *fanrong* refers to the manner in which a plant flourishes, according to the online standard Mandarin dictionary compiled by the Ministry of Education. <http://140.111.34.46/newDict/dict/index.html>

stored knowledge organizing information triggered by textual prompts into a coherent mental scenario:

- (6) 八十九 年 來， 中華民國 走 過 華路藍縷 的
bashijiu nian lai zhonghuaminguo zou guo bilulanlu de
eighty-nine year come the ROC walk past extremely hard DE
- 草創 初期， 接受 國外 援助 繼而
caochuang chuqi jieshou guowai yuanzhu jier
start first stage accept foreign aid and
- 自力更生， 歷經 殖民 統治 與 威權
ziligengsheng lijing zhimin tongzhi yu weiquan
independent go past colonial rule and authoritarian
- 政權， 以 「經濟 奇蹟」 贏得 舉世 讚譽，
zhengquan yi jingji qiji yingde jushi zanyu
regime with economic miracle win all over the world praise
- 終於 在 世紀 末 以 政黨 輪替 的
zhongyu zai shiji mo yi zhengdang lunti de
finally ASP century end with party alternation DE
- 民主 「政治 奇蹟」 建構 邁向 新 世紀
minzhu zhengzhi qiji jiangou maixiang xin shiji
democracy political miracle build stride toward new century
- 的 動力。(Chen 89)
de dongli
DE power

“In these eighty-nine years, the ROC went through extreme difficulties at the very beginning of the country, accepted foreign aids and was able to stand on his own feet. The ROC went through colonial and authoritarian rule, and won applause from all over the world with an economic miracle. The ROC finally built the power to stride toward the new century with a democratic political miracle of party alternation at the turn of the century.”

In this excerpt, the actual referent of the country, coded by *zhonghuaminguo*, is obviously conceptualized as a PERSON. A series of textual clues contribute to such interpretation: *zouguo* ‘walk past’, *jieshou* ‘accept’, *yuanzhu* ‘help’, *ziligengsheng* ‘survive on one’s own’, *yingde* ‘win’, *maixiang* ‘stride toward’. These lexical cues trigger

what a person does, specifically mostly what a person does in a journey. The meanings of the lexical items thus co-construct a cognitive model of JOURNEY at the conceptual level with the following cues: *zouguo* ‘walk past’, *jing* ‘past’, *maixiang* ‘stride toward’. These linguistic contexts naturally portray a coherent profile of the subject, viz. the country, as a PERSON on the move. Stored knowledge, i.e. the other specific type of context, serves to arrange the pieces of textual clues together into a coherent mental scenario of JOURNEY with encyclopedic patterns regarding a journey based on our past experience. Therefore, though not explicitly coded in any form, the metaphorical meaning of the country in discourse can still be identified to be a PERSON in a JOURNEY.

6. Contextual contributions: linguistic and conceptual

With analyses of the above two sets of metaphors, I have demonstrated how metaphor interpretation is predicated on the two types of context: linguistic context and stored knowledge. Following this, two parts will substantiate my discussions and implications: the omnipresence of context and the necessity of a context-oriented perspective on metaphor understanding.

6.1 Co-construction of construals by textual prompts and cognitive models

From bare data, *menkan* can be conceptualized as a part of a CONTAINER in (1), and as a hurdle to cross in a JOURNEY in (2). However, the two cases of *menkan* are fundamentally not as different as they may seem from a pragmatic point of view: It is readily imaginable that a threshold can be viewed as an impediment in a JOURNEY, yet once the obstruction is sizable, it becomes too strenuous for one to overcome, and as a result the unrealized JOURNEY turns into CONFINEMENT given an easy obstacle becoming a gigantic wall of a CONTAINER that prevents the traveling agent from escaping.

The above shift in construal is reminiscent of Cruse (2000) and Croft & Cruse’s (2004) ways-of-seeing (henceforth WOS), which derives from and loosely corresponds to what Pustejovsky (1995) terms qualia roles. In comparison, Pustejovsky’s qualia roles outline how predicates can attach to nouns, while WOS “represent different ways of looking at the same thing” (Croft & Cruse 2004:137). Among the four WOS proposed by Croft & Cruse, the *menkan* in (1) belongs to the “part-whole WOS” in that the threshold is viewed as a part of a wall of a container, and the *menkan* in (2) falls into their “functional WOS” because the usual way of interaction between people and a

threshold, i.e. striding over it, is highlighted.³ In other words, somehow in (1) a threshold is, by the part-whole WOS, interpreted as a part of a wall of a CONTAINER, or part of a BUILDING in a CONFINEMENT scenario, whereas in (2) a threshold is, by the functional WOS, understood as an impediment which people stride over as they move in a JOURNEY.⁴

It must, however, be noted that such a shift in construal must be actuated by linguistic prompts, i.e. the tight cooperation between *menkan* and its nearby lexical cues, plus encyclopedic knowledge associated with the lexical prompts. The way we interpret the two metaphorical usages of *menkan* is thus clearly shaped by these two types of context: linguistic and stored knowledge.

In excerpts (3)-(6), where the country is described metaphorically either as a SHIP, a TREE, or a PERSON, the play of these two types of context is also evident. Coded in different linguistic forms of *zhonghuaminguo* or *taiwan*, the notional equivalents of the country are also understood differently based on their varying context. With a country as their referent, one common characteristic of these metaphorical usages is that they also depend on immediate linguistic context for information that builds up a scenario or an idealized cognitive model at the conceptual level. The pieces of textually triggered information fall into place with the help of experience-based knowledge patterns, against which the referent is understood. In some cases, interpreters or listeners are even able to clarify which particular role in the scenario to identify with the referent by way of similarity established when that particular source concept, e.g. SHIP, is not explicitly coded. The identification of the source concepts of these country metaphors is therefore in a similar vein based on the two types of context: linguistic and stored knowledge.

6.2 Towards a context-oriented perspective on metaphor study

This qualitative discourse study of metaphor illustrates the fundamental difference between studies from a discourse approach and those based on constructed examples. For studies that recruit exclusively constructed examples, mostly there exists only one interpretation because examples have been trimmed or manipulated in order to control

³ The usual proper way of the Chinese people interacting with a threshold is striding over it. There are certainly other culture-specific ways, indicating do's and don'ts when one strides over a threshold. For more on the intertwining nature of metaphor and culture, see Su (2002).

⁴ It is certainly possible to relate *menkan* in (1) to Pustejovsky's "constitutive role" and that in (2) to the "telic role" as well. But the qualia roles deal better with the combination of a noun and its verb, so a looser definition of WOS is adopted here. It should in addition be noted that some "cases of WOS-like differential construals are difficult to assign unambiguously to one of the proposed possibilities" (Croft & Cruse 2004:138), so the distinction is not always clear-cut.

contextual influence so that the interplay of context and metaphor use goes easily unnoticed. On the other hand, given a clear definition of context, a discourse-based study of metaphor like the present one has proven to explicate the interpretative power of context by demonstrating how one single lexical item or notional equivalents may develop multiple interpretations in varying linguistic environments, with operations at the conceptual level also delineated. Furthermore, the present research differs from previous discourse-based ones in that it adopts a cognitive pragmatic approach by giving context a clear definition, which facilitates a context-based explanation for metaphor interpretation.

Specifically, in this pragmatics-oriented study, two types of context have been argued to play pivotal parts in metaphor interpretation: the linguistic context of the target lexical item, and the stored knowledge associated with the information that is prompted by these lexical cues. Such a context-based approach of metaphor interpretation assumes the interrelation of metaphor use in discourse and conceptualization in the following way: First of all, a lexical item does not stand alone and needs to depend on its textual company for a holistic interpretation, which prompts pieces of information or concepts to be organized. These fragments of information are arranged onto encyclopedic knowledge patterns as a template, and construct a scenario or cognitive model against which the target lexical item is processed. The human inferential ability also serves to establish similarity, mappings, or to identify role to fill in a scenario.

We also witness the so-called ways-of-seeing at play, a source of discontinuity in lexical meaning identified in Cruse (2000) and Croft & Cruse (2004), not simply in understanding literal use of lexical items, as is reported by them, but also in the metaphorical cases of *menkan*. The pair delineates how a change in construal arises from a shift in the cognitive viewpoint, and I have also proven that the change in construal is essentially caused by the influence of linguistic context and stored knowledge patterns. Thus, the interpretation of metaphor, rather similar to lexical meaning, is infinitely complex and highly context-dependent as far as the WOS evidenced in the comparison of the pair involving *menkan* is concerned.

7. Metaphors in the wild

By investigating two sets of instances of metaphor in Taiwanese presidential speeches, I have entitled pragmatics its pivotal role in metaphor study given appropriate details of context: linguistic context and stored knowledge patterns, which enable us to capture what pure semantics-oriented studies fail to deal with. By way of WOS, I have proven that the understanding of metaphor, just like studies on literal meanings of lexical items, is highly context-sensitive in essence. Many previous metaphor studies

that fail to heed the issue of contextualization neglect this fact: Metaphors arise from real language use and are not to be isolated outside of context. The present pragmatics-based study on metaphors in presidential discourse is simply a cognitive-pragmatic model at its preliminary stage, which certainly needs further studies on metaphors in other genres or even metaphors in general. By carving out details of context and exploring how metaphors interact with their relevant context, I wish to draw the attention of researchers in related fields back on track to a context-based approach giving pragmatics due attention.

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從形式上的前後文到認知模型：以偏重語境的角度看台灣總統演說稿的隱喻詮釋

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本研究以台灣總統演講的實際語料為例，強調語境在隱喻詮釋中的重要性。在本文中的語境定義為形式上的前後文及知識層面。本質性研究深入的探討兩組隱喻：第一組隱喻涉及「門檻」一詞，「門檻」可以被理解為是一個容器的一部分，或者是在一段移動路徑中行動者所遭遇到的障礙。第二組隱喻涉及國家的概念，國家可在不同語境裡被理解為一艘船、一棵樹、或是一個人。本文建議，在實際語料或溝通中的隱喻理解涉及下列的元素：目標詞彙和其形式上的前後文會一起引發出各種資訊。這些資訊會依照認知模型組織起來，而受話者對隱喻的較完整的理解應是建構在此依認知模型所組織起來的知識之上的。

本文的貢獻至少有兩方面：提供了「語境」詳細的定義之後，深入解釋了語境如何影響意義與概念化。本文另一方面也從語用的角度嘗試提出一個偏重語境的隱喻理解模型。

關鍵詞：脈絡化，前後文，語境，認知模型，框架，隱喻，範疇，視角