

# Cognitive Analysis of Metaphor and Metonymy in Prose

Lu Siyi, Ma Yueling\*

Department of Foreign Languages, South China University of Technology, Guangzhou, China

## Email address:

Lynn\_1011@hotmail.com (Ma Yueling)

\*Corresponding author

## To cite this article:

Lu Siyi, Ma Yueling. Cognitive Analysis of Metaphor and Metonymy in Prose. *International Journal of Literature and Arts*. Vol. 11, No. 3, 2023, pp. 138-146. doi: 10.11648/j.ijla.20231103.17

Received: May 12, 2023; Accepted: June 2, 2023; Published: June 21, 2023

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**Abstract:** Metaphor and metonymy, which are figures of speech as well as means of cognition and ways of thinking, are commonly used in literary works, allowing authors to better express themselves and helping readers appreciate the charm of language. In order to have a better understanding of how they add to the cultural connotations of literary works and expand readers' cognition, this article selects typical sentences from *Chi ZiJian Prose* featured by vivid and poetic language and analyzes how metaphor and metonymy, as important rhetorical devices and ways of thinking, act as active roles in adding luster to literary works and helping readers grasp the spirit and emotion of the author and in return, further broaden their perceptions by creating extensive connections. Therefore, readers are supposed to utilize their past cognitive experience and fully exert their imagination to find similarities and build connections, project their knowledge and experience from one domain to the other, understand the hidden meaning and thus the cognitive purposes can be achieved. The analysis of this study also places emphasis on the cultural background and the intentionality of the author because words and sentences can not be isolated from the context or it can be interpreted in many different ways.

**Keywords:** *Chi ZiJian Prose*, Metaphor, Metonymy, Cognitive Experience, Conceptual Domain

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## 1. Introduction

Literature is commonly seen as an art of language for it offers readers a window to the diversity and continuity of language throughout history. To achieve that goal, rhetorical devices are necessary for they probe into hidden information rather than stress the meaning on the surface. A fine example would be how metaphor and metonymy act an active role in adding luster to literary works and helping readers grasp the spirit and emotion of the author.

Chi Zijian is one of the writers with extensive influences in contemporary China. She has published over 30 literary works, most of which are novels or prose essays. Her works present the time-honored practices of her northern village Mohe City of Heilongjiang Province in northeast China from a feminist perspective and convey an enthusiasm for her hometown through delicate writing and poetic language. This paper elaborates upon different types of metaphor and metonymy based on sentences selected from *Chi ZiJian Prose* [11], discusses their connotations and analyzes in which way metaphor and metonymy, as means of cognition

and ways of thinking, convey the author's meaning and in return fulfill readers' reading experience and broaden their perceptions.

## 2. Metaphor

### 2.1. Definition of Conceptual Metaphor

For quite a long time, metaphor has been regarded as a rhetorical device that the author might be eager to use to set him or her apart from others. Just as Aristotle [1] defines in the book *Poetics and Rhetoric*, metaphor is a figure of speech which is widely used by poets and politicians, depending on the similarities of two things. It was not until the 1970s when the term "conceptual metaphor" was put forward for the first time in the book *Metaphors We Live by* [3] as Lakoff and Johnson studied metaphor from cognitive linguistic perspective. Lakoff and Turner [5] studied the mechanism of conceptual metaphor and described it as the result of mapping one conceptual domain (source domain) to another conceptual domain (target domain) and they concluded that conceptual metaphor is one means of a word to relate to

another and is more representative than others. According to scholar Shu Dingfang [18], metaphor is an implicit analogy, a kind of simile, which equates one thing with another in an imaginative way, and imposes the characteristics of one thing on another, implying the psychological behavior through the use of analogy between them. Zhu Chengqi and Su Jianrong [23] also believed that, metaphor uses one conceptual domain to understand the others through the use of projection from one thing or experience to another.

The uses of conceptual metaphors are literally everywhere. Take the motto "Life is a journey." as an instance. As is known to all, journey is an act of travelling from one place to another, allowing us to appreciate both good and bad views along the way and then we can learn something from it gradually, which is similar to the meaning of life. Also, when we try to describe an issue which is too tricky to be dealt with, we can say "This is a hot potato." and instantly that brings us back to the experience of holding a hot potato anxiously with bare hands. "A lion in the way" is another fine example to show this dilemma in a particular situation. These examples show that all these metaphors are attached to our daily experience and represent our inner thoughts for they start from familiar, tangible and specific cognitive domains to unfamiliar, intangible and abstract ones. In other words, the use of conceptual metaphor is conducive to understanding one thing in terms of another. In this sense, in addition to an important rhetorical device, metaphor can also be compared to a cross-domain mapping in our conceptual system.

## 2.2. Classification of Conceptual Metaphor

In the book *Metaphors We Live by* [2], Lakoff and Johnson pointed out that metaphor is a mapping process and can be divided into three types based on different cognitive functions, including structural metaphor, ontological metaphor and orientation metaphor. Definitions of each kind will be provided in the following with typical examples selected from *Chi Zijian Prose* [11].

### 2.2.1. Structural Metaphor

Structural metaphor refers to those that use one highly structured and clearly delineated concept to structure another abstract and unfamiliar concept [2]. That's to say, structural metaphor can be used to explain those intangible, abstract and vague concepts by using tangible, concrete and explicit ones. To quote an idiom "Knowledge is power." as an example, the concept of the source domain is different from the target domain but they share some similarities in structure. To be more specific, illustrating the huge and potential impact of knowledge can be tricky if we try to explain the abstract concept with facts and statistics. However, in this sentence, people describe "knowledge" as "power", and then some salient features of "power" are projected onto the connotation of "knowledge". Undoubtedly, "power" provides us strength to succeed or attack and defends us in times of danger. Similarly, "knowledge" has such function to protect us when we are in treacherous situations and thus, we can

resort to the shelter of knowledge just like the way we wield power. Gradually, it has been a common metaphor we use in our daily life.

The followings are examples of structural metaphor from *Chi Zijian Prose*.

#### Example 1

ST (Source Text): 炊烟是房屋升起的云朵，是劈柴化成的幽魂。（暮色中的炊烟，91页）

TT (Target Text): The smoke is a cloud rising from the house and a ghost transformed from a split wood. (*Smoke in the Twilight*, p. 91)

Analysis: In this sentence, the author makes use of the similarities between smoke from kitchen chimneys and cloud and ghost to show the way it floats in the air, leaving ample spaces for further imagination and encouraging readers to exert their imagination and discover the beauty depicted in this scene.

#### Example 2

ST: 这时候年画成了太阳，而我们是葵花。我们的脑袋都探向它，沐浴着它散发出来的暖人的光泽。（年画与蟋蟀，95页）

TT: At this time, the New Year's paintings became the sun and we were the sunflowers. All of us faced towards them basking in the warm light they gave off. (*New Year's Paintings and Cricket*, p. 95)

Analysis: As is known to us, the sunflower turns towards the direction of the rising sun and heads to follow the sun as it moves. It seems the sun has always been a huge, burning magnet for sunflowers. This cognition on plants provides the premise for this structural metaphor, and thus we may describe the target domain "people" by the source domain "plants". By doing so, the features and appearances of sunflowers are mapped on people, that is, the way we are attracted by New Year's paintings are exactly the way sunflowers are drawn to the sun, making the image more vivid and adorable.

#### Example 3

ST: 只要气温骤然升高，又伴有大风的话，这匹极难驯服的野马就长驱直入了。（我们到哪里去散步，137页）

TT: Whenever temperature rises all of a sudden and a strong wind comes along, this wild horse, which is extremely difficult to be tamed, drives straight in. (*Where Do We Go For a Walk*, p. 137)

Analysis: This is a typical example of animal metaphors. In our mind, horses are too wild to be tamed. Then the abstract concept (the dust storm) is connected with the concrete concept (the wild horse) based on their similarities, allowing readers to form an extraordinary picture in mind of how the dust storm rolls in wildly like an untamable horse.

#### Example 4

ST: 如果说短篇是溪流，长篇是海洋，那么中篇就应该是江河了。（江河水，190页）

TT: If short stories are streams and long stories are oceans, then middle stories should be rivers. (*Rivers*, p. 190)

Analysis: Water is one of the most important elements of nature because it not only nurtures life but also is the cradle of human civilization. As source of life, water makes a

significant difference in people's life and therefore becomes the most useful way of promoting early understanding of the outside world. With the progress and development of human society, people gradually project their knowledge of water onto nearly everything around them, and then get to understand some intangible and abstract concepts with perceivable features of water.

In this sentence, the author holds that literary works of different lengths and genres are unique with their own characteristics, which might be a general knowledge among creators but a vague idea for most readers. So the author metaphorizes short, long and medium works as streams, rivers and oceans respectively. Thus, the feelings we might have when we observe the flowing waves are mapped onto the thoughts we might have when we appreciate those literary works.

#### Example 5

ST: 投在水面的阳光, 便也跟着起了波纹, 好像阳光在水面打起蝴蝶结来了。(春天是一点一点花开的, 2 页)

TT: The sunlight that gleamed on the water, followed with the flowing ripples, as if it was tying a bow on the water. (*Spring is Blooming Over the Trees Little by Little*, p. 9)

Analysis: In this sentence, the ripple on the lake's surface is metaphorized as a bow knot based on their similarities, unfolding a dynamic landscape that's shining and gleaming just before our eyes.

#### Example 6

ST: 每一本看过的书, 都是谢了的花瓣。有的花瓣可以当标本, 作为永久的珍藏; 有的则因为庸常, 随着风雨化成泥了。(枕边的夜莺, 194 页)

TT: Every book you read is a petal of a withered flower. Some petals can be made into specimens and treasured forever, while others turn into mud with the wind and rain because of their mediocrity. (*The Nightingale on the Pillow*, p. 194)

Analysis: In this example, different pages of a book are metaphorized as petals made into specimen and petals gone with the wind. In our cognition, the former implies cautious collection and protection, which is similar to the way we treasure the words and sentences we read in a certain book when we gain some insights within. On the contrary, petals that are gone with the wind represent pages that are read, forgotten or left behind for falling into the same old pattern. In this way, the vehicle of metaphor offers readers a refreshing experience.

#### Example 7

ST: 而当你意志消沉、黯然神伤时, 读一读张若虚的《春江花月夜》, 你就会觉得所有的不快都是过眼云烟。(枕边的夜莺, 195 页)

TT: When you are depressed and gloomy, just read "Springtime Night at River with Moonlight and Flowers" written by Zhang Ruoxu and you will feel that all those sad feelings are just passing clouds and winds. (*The Nightingale on the Pillow*, p. 195)

Analysis: Chen Jiayu [10] believes that, emotions constitute an important part in human experience while abstract emotions are largely expressed through metaphors

based on human perceptions. How can we describe the relief of pain and suffering that comes from nowhere? In this sentence, the author adopts passing winds and clouds to show how those intangible depression and frustration disappear after reading. By doing so, words and scenes come alive in readers' mind.

#### Example 8

ST: 不过这些绿色蔬菜只是晚餐桌上的配角, 主角呢, 是农人们自己宰杀的猪, 是刚从河里打捞上来的野生的鱼类。(寒冷也是一种温暖, 125 页)

TT: But these green vegetables are just supporting roles on the dinner table while the main characters are the pigs that farmers slaughter and the wild fish that are just salvaged from the river. (*Coldness is Also a Kind of Warmth*, p. 125)

Analysis: The term "main role" and "supporting role" are commonly used in the film industry, while in this sentence, "green vegetables" are metaphorized as the "supporting role", and "fish" and "pigs" are described as the "main role" to show their frequency of presence in dinner, making the whole sentence clear and compact.

#### Example 9

ST: 这时的北方大地寸草不生, 所有的植物都成了寒冬的战利品, 被彻底地俘虏了, 无声无息。(北方的盐, 103 页)

TT: At this time, not an inch of grass grew in the northern land, and all plants became the spoils of winter and were completely captured and silent forever. (*Salt of the North*, p. 103)

Analysis: In our daily life, war is more likely to be mapped onto some target domains like life and death. In this sentence, the field in north China is seen as the battlefield and plants are soldiers beat by the cruel winter. Thus, plants died and left in the field are metaphorized as defeated, aimless soldiers deprived of free will, unfolding a dramatic picture before us.

#### Example 10

ST: 个人的生死, 在他们的眼里, 不过草芥, 所以他们的诗词才有这大悲悯、大哀愁, 这也是我深深喜爱他们的原因。(枕边的夜莺, 195 页)

TT: In their eyes, personal life and death are merely "caojie" (dry and tiny grass in the corner), which is why their poems are so full of compassion and sorrow and that's why I love them so much. (*The Nightingale On the Pillow*, p. 195)

Analysis: How can we show human's insignificance compared with the vastness of the whole universe? An appropriate answer would be the use of metaphors. Thus the author metaphorizes people as "caojie" (dry and tiny grass in the corner), which is a common metaphor used in the Chinese context to show things that are too worthless and trivial to be noticed by all. As visible as it can be, our being compared with the mysterious and unknown universe seems to unfold before us through the use of metaphors.

#### Example 11

ST: 这种透明的无瑕的兰, 对久居都市, 为尘烟所困扰的我来说, 就是《福音书》。(白雪红灯的年, 106 页)

TT: Such transparent and flawless orchid is the Gospels for me, who has lived in the city for a long time and has long been troubled by dust and smoke. (*The Year of White Snow*

and Red Lanterns, p. 106)

Analysis: Guo Zhenwei [13] holds that authors are bound to express their emotions they believe in as they describe an objective proposition and we, as readers, are supposed to explore these linguistic sources and connect them with their cultural background to understand and interpret the hidden meaning and implicit attitudes absorbed in. And in this process of verbal communication, metaphor has become an important bridge to transfer information and achieve mutual communication between the writer and the reader. In this sentence, to express her love to orchids, the author simply chooses the Gospels as the metaphor to show how she misses and cherishes such flowers as a city dweller away from the companion of nature.

Example 12

ST: 那些古诗词就是我枕畔的《圣经》。(枕边的夜莺, 195 页)

TT: Those Chinese ancient poems are the Bible next to my pillow. (*The Nightingale on the Pillow*, p. 195)

Analysis: In this sentence, the author also takes the Bible as a metaphor to show her noble belief in Chinese ancient poems, building a cognitive bridge and meanwhile adding to the cultural connotation of the essay.

### 2.2.2. Ontological Metaphor

According to Tang Jiali [19], ontological metaphor is the easiest way for us to perceive the world by mapping those abstract concepts, such as thoughts and emotions, to concrete conceptual source domains based on individual ontological experiences. Bearing the basic features of metaphor, ontological metaphor is believed to inject features of physical objects and substances on those incomprehensible experiences through metaphorization. According to Lakoff and Johnson [3], ontological metaphor can be divided into three types: entity and substance metaphor, container metaphor and personification.

The most common ontological metaphor is related to “heart” both in English and Chinese, and “heart” itself is an essential concept too. It’s normally adopted to represent a pivotal human organ in charge of blood circulation in a living organism and plays an important role in maintaining life. While in the cognitive analysis of linguistic metaphors, the semantic meaning of “heart” goes far beyond and can be applied in multiple aspects of life for it has been expanded and extended and various words associated with “heart” can be developed accordingly. This can be found in many Chinese poetry since “heart” is regraded as a shelter of mind and soul with metal and cognitive capacity to express feelings, thoughts, characters and other conceptual emotions. For instance, in expressions like “一片丹心照汗青” (I let my staunch heart (dan xin) shine bright in historical annals) or “一片冰心在玉壶” (my heart is crystal clear and kept jadeite pure), “dan xin” and “bing xin” are representative of loyalty and sincerity.

Like examples abound in English. When we describe someone who’s indifferent and selfish, we may use the phrase “cold heart”. In this sense, the property of an object -

“coldness” is mapped onto the person who owns it. Still another example “break someone’s heart”. In this example, abstract feelings of “sadness” and “anguish” are metaphorized as a physical object that’s been broken into pieces, which is calculable and tangible. Just as Hu [14] proposes that “heart”, when used as a container, represents an intense emotion if it is fully filled. “Full heart”, “on one’s heart”, and “in one’s heart” are all common expressions that compare the “heart” to a container, so that the inner world of the character can be better revealed and the character can be portrayed more vividly. Lakoff [4] also argues that “people map their knowledge of themselves to abstract things, events, or states of other concrete spatial domains and everyday experiences, so that other things or events, etc., can also be seen as a human body, imagined as a container, and conceptualized as such, thus giving rise to the container metaphor”.

Example 13

ST: 我至今不明白, 他为什么喜欢吃蜂蜜, 也许蜜蜂身上有蜂蜜, 吃了能甜它的心? (动物们, 82 页)

TT: I still don’t understand why he likes having honey. Maybe the bee has honey on it and eating it will sweeten his heart? (*Animals*, p. 82)

Analysis: As mentioned above, the emotional metaphor represents a significant part of ontological metaphor. Wu Feifei [21] believes that in this kind of metaphor, people regard those vague thoughts, feelings, states of mind, time, conditions and other imperceptible definitions as concrete physical characteristics. In this example, “his fondness for honey” is metaphorized as “sweetness”. In this way, both the source domain and the target domain shares the common ground of “sweetness” which inspires people’s spirits, transferring invisible experience of entities or substances into features of objects.

Example 14

ST: 黑子虽然面丑, 但是心却是不丑的。(动物们, 83 页)

TT: Although Hei Zi looks ugly, his heart is not. (*Animals*, p. 83)

Analysis: In this example, “Hei Zi” is a person’s name while “Hei” means “black” or “dark” in English. In the context, what “Hei Zi” looks like is only known within a small group and in order to depict his appearance and character, the author directly adopts his “heart” as a metaphor to compare with his inner world in merely one sentence.

Example 15

ST: 李冰正是握着这饱蘸墨汁的笔, 书写了人间奇迹。(寻道都江堰: 14 页)

TT: Li Bing is holding this pen which is fully dipped with ink, writing a miracle of the world. (*Pay Homage to Holy Water at Dujiang Weir*, p. 14)

Analysis: In this sentence, the Min River is metaphorized into an object - “a pen fully dipped with ink”, indicating that the mighty hydraulic power of the Min River and how Li Bing exerted his wisdom to control flooding and exploited it to improve people’s livelihood generation after generation. In this sense, people’s respect for Lin Bing is materialized to be more

concrete and poetic based on our experience of entity and substance.

### 2.2.3. Orientation Metaphor

Orientation metaphors have something to do with spatial directions like up and down, front and back, left and right and deep and shallow [2]. They give concept an orientation so that abstract concepts like emotion, social status, time and quantity can be specifically described. Spacial sense is more conducive to people's cognition than non-spatial sense, and non-spatial things can be conceptually projected on the basis of orientation [9]. Therefore, based on physical experience, cultural and social cognition, using concepts that are relevant in spatial orientation, a conceptual system can be constructed.

The Chinese idioms like “七上八下” (an unsettled state of mind), “声东击西” (clamor in the east while attack in the west), “居高临下” (looking down from a height) are used to show invisible things like people's emotions, feelings or social status. In addition, the concept of “up” is normally connected with positive feelings for our body tends to open up when we feel confident, powerful and inspired. Accordingly, “down” is associated with negative feelings because we may close up when we are miserable, weak and demoralized. All these connections are deep rooted in our cognition of space and how we react to the surroundings, and in return, all of them have enriched our expression and perception in return.

#### Example 16

ST: 车到孟克山时, 雨声激昂, 溅在风挡玻璃上的雨滴, 豆粒般大, 它们把我的心击打得阵阵下沉。(风雨总是那么的灿烂, 57页)

TT: When we arrived at the Mengke Mountain, the rain was stirring, splashing on the windshield in drops as big as beans, and they knocked my heart down in gusts. (*The Storm is Always so Splendid*, p. 57)

Analysis: Based on our experience, it is perceived that “up” is associated with positive things like happier mood, higher status or better conditions while “down” represents low spirits, degrading positions or sudden setbacks. The above sentence follows the same rule. By “decreasing heart”, the abstract meaning of disappointment is no longer static or vague, allowing readers to form connections with their own experience and play the initiative to empathize with the writer.

## 3. Metonymy

According to Dong Chengru [12], metonymy is not only a rhetorical device but also a ubiquitous feature of language. Moreover, it is a basic mode of thinking, a cognitive process in which people employ the salient, well-understood and easy-to-perceive part to stand for the whole or another part of the whole, or to select the whole as a gestalt to represent one of its part. Huang Birong and Yu Rui [15] hold that, through a large number of researches, metonymy is found to be more fundamental than metaphor to some extent believed by many cognitive linguists. Wu Shuqiong [22] believes that, the

extension of a word's meaning is mainly accomplished through metonymy and metaphor thinking, and metaphor is based on metonymy.

Both in our daily life and literary works, metonymies are ubiquitous. For instance, some typical partial features can substitute the whole, and in the Chinese context, the phrase “黄发垂髫” (the aged and the young) refers to the elderly people and the youth. Also, just as Wan [20] suggests, our body is a basis for “knowing and experiencing the world”, and the words for the body parts is correspondingly endowed with the meanings of metaphor and metonymy.

The idiom “掏心掏肺” literally means ripping one's heart and lung, but it is always used metaphorically to show a person's sincere feelings. Similarly, “give me a hand” can be traced to daily experiences too. When we take the initiative to help other people, we tend to reach out our hands at first, thus creating a bond with them. The same pattern works in the phrase “brain drain”, which is normally used to describe the loss of talented or professional people because “brain” controls every action, thought, and process of the body and determines how thoughtful we are, and therefore can be used as a metonymy to substitute people with wisdom or expertise. In reverse, the whole can also be an metonymy for its parts. What we really mean by saying “He hits me by the arm.” is to state the fact that it is his fist that hits me by the arm, not the human body as a whole.

In addition, the tools we use can be utilized to represent an event [8]. For example, in the sentence “The pen is mightier than the sword.”, “the pen” refers to writing because it's the tool that we must use as we write something and “the sword” represents war and fight for it constitutes a crucial part in such event. And when we say “He speaks English.”, what we mean is that he has a good command of English, not just a basic skill in speaking English. Production metonymy is another particular kind. In the famous verse “何以解忧, 唯有杜康” (How to drown such grief and sorrow? Best resort to Du Kang Wine.), “杜康” is utilized to represent “wine” because in Chinese folk tales, “Du Kang” is said to be a semi-legendary inventor of liquor and was famous for “Dukang brewery”. Gradually, he becomes a synonym for wine that can also be adopted as an metonymy.

Langacker [7] proposes that, in intercultural communication, people's expressions are governed by the principle of information maximization and economy maximization. Concluded from the above examples, the working mechanism of metaphor and metonymy includes the principle of economicalization, which means we need to choose things that are clearly understood and highly relevant to describe those ambiguous and obscure things. The second is the cognitive principle: human beings tend to choose things that are related to themselves, typical and easy to perceive to substitute things that are not. The third principle lies in its inclination to be influenced by multiple factors such as cultural and social factors. Thus, we are able to express both literal meaning and hidden cultural and social connotations under the guidance of metaphor and metonymy.

## Example 17

ST: 阳光是人的铺路石, 而雨是人的绊脚石。雨一来, 街市中的气氛就寥落了。(雾气中的烟火: 29 页)

TT: The sun is a paving stone, and the rain a stumbling block. When rain drops, the popularity in the market becomes few and far between. (*Fireworks in the Fog: p. 29*)

Analysis: Metonymy arising from the interaction between the whole and its parts are ubiquitous. Here, when the author tries to express how the weather influences people's intention to go out, instead of putting it directly, she selects the typical weather conditions, that is, rain and shine, representing rainy and sunny days. Such implication avoids falling into the trap of bluntness and also invites readers to mobilize their cognitive experience.

## Example 18

ST: 伐木声取代了鸟鸣, 炊烟取代了云朵。(从山峦到海洋, 215 页)

TT: The sound of logging replaces birdsong, and the smoke sent out from factories replaces clouds. (*From the Mountains to the Sea, p. 215*)

Analysis: As the author aims to disclose the fact that industrialization has strongly influenced our natural environment, instead of listing "factories" and "woodcutters", she only adopts "the sound of logging" and "the smoke sent out from factories", leaving ample spaces for imagination and also injecting artistic aesthetics into the prose.

## Example 19

ST: 他的心中, 一直亮着一盏颤动着的绿灯。(红绿灯下, 72 页)

TT: In his heart, a trembling green light was always on. (*Under the Traffic Lights, p. 72*)

## Example 20

ST: 我们要给自己多亮几盏红灯, 让生命有所停顿。这样的火焰, 就是我们生命中不熄的火焰。(红绿灯下, 73 页)

TT: We need to give ourselves a few more red lights to pause for a while in life. (*Under the Traffic Lights, p. 73*)

Analysis: In the above two examples, in light of our cognition, "red lights" and "green lights" refer to stop and go respectively according to traffic regulations. Thus the author utilizes such connection to analyze the invisible concept of longing, desire and peaceful moments that direct us to continue or pause for a while.

## Example 21

ST: 做母亲的, 怕的就是这样的泪痕会淋湿她的儿女啊! (61 页)

TT: What a mother fears is that such tear stains will drench her children! (*Longan and Umbrella, p. 61*)

Analysis: According to Lakoff [6], the expression of emotions involving external body is mostly about metonymy, and the main principle of it is to replace an emotion with its physiological response. In this sentence, the author's mother is deeply distressed about her for the dramatic loss she experienced in life. While instead of describing a complicated and abstract feeling in detail, the author simply uses "tears" to replace sore feelings we might have when facing those hardships because it is through the use of

metonymy that transfers a situation into a physiological response commonly shared by most of us. Otherwise, this will need a long sentence to make clear the cause and effect.

## Example 22

ST: 我这本书的名字是《北极村童话》, 这个书名像我的乳名一样, 虽然后来就不常有人叫了, 但只要想起来, 心底还是热乎乎的。(我的第一本书, 198 页)

TT: The title of this book is *Fairy Tales of Arctic Village*, like my maiden name, though not often called afterwards, whenever I think of it, my heart still gets warm. (*My First Book, p. 198*)

Analysis: Qiu Yanfang and Ma Yunfei [17] also hold that people's emotions can be reflected by their body language, including facial expressions, eye gaze, gestures, posture, and conscious or subconscious body movements and these emotions can be felt through the sensory organs, especially the visual organs. In light of our cognitive patterns, we get warm and comfortable when we are in a happy mood or we are reminded of sweet memories, and such experience and physiological response can be associated with a certain type of mood and emotion. So the author uses "a warm heart" as a metonymy to express her gratitude and affection.

## Example 23

ST: 这种热情的“奔命”, 使我们一个在此岸, 一个在彼岸, 永隔着万水千山。(红绿灯下, 72 页)

TT: Such passion of "running for life" keeps us one on this shore, and the other on the other side, forever separating us by thousands of rivers and mountains. (*At the Traffic Light, p. 72*)

Analysis: In the context, the author is forever apart from her lover while it's not that appropriate to put it bluntly so she conveys the equivalent meaning with the utilization of metonymy - thousands of rivers and mountains, which is a frequently-used idiom in Chinese for it means immeasurable long distance depicted with concrete beings. Or this might need a long sentence with more private information to make clear the whole situation.

## Example 24

ST: 家里有了春联和灯笼, 如同有了门神和天使的眼睛, 关上这样的门时, 虽然知道家中无人, 可却觉得屋子里是有呼吸和脚步声的。(白雪红灯的年, 106 页)

TT: With Spring Festival couplets and lanterns at home, it is like having the eyes of a door god and an angel. When you close the door, although you are aware of the fact that there is no one at home, you feel that there is breathing and footsteps in the room. (*The Year of White Snow and Red Lanterns, p. 106*)

Analysis: In this sentence, metonymy replaces the whole thing with easily perceived and understood parts in the same cognitive domain. It is an ubiquitous rhetorical device before scholars come to realize that's based on our cognitive mind primarily. According to our cognition, since every human being is able to breathe and walk in a daily basis, it is feasible that the author selects such behaviour to show the presence of her family members, adding brevity to the whole sentence.

## Example 25

ST: 这样的残雪, 还妄想做冬的巢穴。(春天是一点一点花开的, 2 页)

TT: Even the remaining snow dreams to be the nest of winter. (*Spring is Blooming Over the Trees Little by Little*, p. 2)

Analysis: In this example, the remaining snow is described as “the nest of winter”. According to our cognition, the nest is a tiny place or structure that birds stay or lay their eggs or care for the young birds, which means providing a shelter and comfort for them to stay for a while. In this sentence, the existence of snow can be seen as the shelter of winter.

#### Example 26

ST: 宫殿是由骨头铸就的。(紫气中的烟火气, 29 页)

TT: The palace is forged from bones. (*Smoke and Mirrors in the Purple Air*, p. 29)

Analysis: It's not that difficult to reach a conclusion that metonymy doesn't express the similarity of one thing to another like metaphor does, but does express the association between them. That means, the thing mentioned can remind people of another thing without being mentioned. Such being the case, the author takes “bones” as a vivid metonymy to suggest that palaces are built with bricks and tiles in view of our cognition of how the human body is made up.

#### Example 27

ST: 看来夜有多黑, 就有多少光明的心。(白雪红灯的年, 107 页)

TT: It seems that there are as many bright hearts as there are darkness in the night. (*The Year of White Snow and Red Lanterns*, p. 107)

Analysis: Based on our own experience, the heart is an important organ and thus is used to represent a person and his or her soul and desire specifically, making the language compact and poetic.

#### Example 28

ST: 母亲就像伞, 把隐晦留给自己, 而把晴朗留给儿女。(龙眼与伞, 63 页)

TT: Mother is like an umbrella, sparing the vagueness to herself and leaving the clearness for her children. (*Longan and Umbrella*, p. 63)

Analysis: Substituting one thing with its characteristics is also frequently used in literary works. In this sentence, “vagueness” is a typical feature of being trapped in a vicious circle of emotional breakdown that includes confusion and hopelessness, and the other side - “clearness” is marked by a lighthearted mood and positive state of mind. In this way, metonymy is adopted to spare redundant expressions but leaves more spaces for readers to form opinions based on their own experience.

#### Example 29

ST: 沾染了这样气韵的北方人的日子, 定然是有阴霾也有阳光, 有辛酸也有快乐。(寒冷也是一种温暖, 124 页)

TT: The days of northerners who are tainted with such temperament must have gloom and sunshine, sorrow and joy. (*Cold is Also a Kind of Warmth*, p. 124)

Analysis: Similarly, cloudy days are filled with low pressure and dark clouds, while sunny days are endowed with sunshine and breeze, allowing people to associate them with extreme conditions in life - frustrated moments and cheerful pieces, combining every aspect of the whole life and illuminating grand and abstract ideas in an easy manner.

#### Example 30

ST: 虽说几个世纪以来, 上帝不断听到刀戈相击的声音, 听到枪炮声中贫民的哀嚎。(光明于低头的一瞬, 54 页)

TT: While for centuries, God has constantly heard the sound of swords and spears clashing, and the wailing of the poor among the sound of guns and cannons. (*Light in a Moment of Bowed Head*, p. 54)

Analysis: The metonymy of war is commonly used for every aspect of it is so typical and impressive that can never be obscure and elusive for readers. Therefore, in this sentence, as constituent parts of a warfare - guns, bombs, cannons, swords, dagger-axes, miserable refugees and so on. The color of war is too cruel to be true that humanity has a collective memory towards it generation after generation. Under this kind of cognition, the author utilizes used weapons and afflicted people in the warfare as metonymies to show the harsh cruelties of war and how it does harm to human civilization in the long run.

#### Example 31

ST: 身为队长的郑智在对比利时队的比赛中, 竟然如此下“黑手”, 被红牌罚下, 真是输球又输人。(中国足球的曙光在哪里, 135 页)

TT: As the captain of the team, Zheng Zhi was sent off with a red card in the match against Belgium, which was really a loss of the game and a loss of people. (*Where is the Dawn of Chinese Football*, p. 135)

Analysis: How can we find any similarity between “red card” and “sending off football players”? The answer would be in our cognition that ties the former with the latter regulated by rules. So even though we may not find apparent similarities between two different things, we can also play the initiative to expand our cognitive zones and explore if there's any hidden association regulated in advance. If so, it gives us the freedom to utilize it and build bridges between them. That's why the author adopts “a red card” as a sign of football players sent off by rules.

#### Example 32

ST: 这双靴子, 踏过多少朝露和霜雪。(看见的和看不见的镣铐, 128 页)

TT: How much dew and frost and snow have these boots trod on. (*Seen and Unseen Shackles*, p. 128)

Analysis: The above example is also a typical example of how an abstract concept is replaced by its combining parts. As we live in the world and get to experience the passing of time and the alteration of seasons, it's fascinating to experience the changeable traits of four seasons in every single day. In this sentence, frost mostly implies autumn and snows suggests the arrival of winter. In this sense, the passage of time goes far beyond the changing numbers on the calendar but can also be reflected in our surroundings, especially nature. What's more, the utilization of metaphor also makes contributions to the poetic function of language.

## 4. Insights from Metaphor and Metonymy in Literary Works

The wide use of metaphor and metonymy in literature

allows us to appreciate the charm of language. Both of them are important techniques used to make language vivid and poetic. While as readers, in order to understand the author's intentions, they should mobilize their past cognitive experiences and give full play to their imagination to find similarities and build connections, project their knowledge and experiences from one domain to another, understand the hidden meaning and thus the cognitive purposes can be achieved.

Liu Bin and He Qingqing [16] argue that understanding of metaphors are deeply related to the cultural backgrounds of different countries; it can be reasoned that Chinese culture is profound and enjoys a long history, and metaphors in the Chinese cultural context are unique and dependant. Against the backdrop of "going global", summarizing the research on metaphor in China by using the mainstream research method across the world is of great significance to deepen the connotation of Chinese traditional culture and promote the exchange and mutual appreciation between Chinese and foreign cultures.

At the same time, being sensitive to recognize the intentionality of the author is another crucial part. For example, in sentences without a specific context and you are not allowed to recognize the author's intention, it is difficult to understand what the author truly means and therefore it can be interpreted in various ways. For example, in the sentence "Boys are boys.", how can we know which characteristic the author pays attention to and what is the exact meaning of the author with no particular context and theme since boys can be naughty, funny and irresponsible, relying on preceding and following contexts specifically. Therefore, it is equally important to interpret in the context of both individual and collective cognitive experience and to have a grand picture of the whole context.

## 5. Conclusion

Analyzing metaphor and metonymy in prose, it is easy to find that the metaphor is used when comparing one thing to the other, reflecting the similarities between them. Metonymy, on the other hand, replaces one thing with another, reflecting a certain degree of correlation between two things. Most of the time, when we meet something new and need to interpret it, we do not create new words endlessly, but usually relate things already existed in our cognitive system to the newly recognized concept, find similarities or correlations between them. Thus, it can be seen that the use of creative metaphor and metonymy is a common phenomenon, which enriches our vocabulary and expands the cognitive scope at the same time by establishing connections and substitutions between old and new words.

The concepts of metaphor and metonymy are built on our own experiences. Since semantics and our cognition are inextricably linked together, and when we create new words with the help of metaphors and metonymies, we also further expand the scope of human cognition. In addition, the mapping and interaction mechanisms of

metaphor and metonymy are universal across languages and cultures. As readers, we should keep thinking and exploring on this basis, so as to enrich our experience and broaden our cognition.

## Acknowledgements

This research has been supported by National Social Science Fund of China (20CWW007) and the Basic Research Project of Central Universities in 2022 (QNMS202222).

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