

Mapping Principles and Novelty in the Processing of Conceptual Metaphors in
Mandarin Chinese: An Interdisciplinary Approach

龔書萍

Department of Foreign Languages, National Chiayi University

Conceptual metaphor is one of figurative language that uses concrete concepts in describing abstract concepts. The mapping process allows people to easily conceptualize abstract events and to create many novel metaphors in daily language. Since conceptual metaphors are so productive, we are interested in whether there is any mapping principle that may govern conceptual metaphors. In addition, if the mapping principles exist in conceptual metaphors, do they influence on the production and comprehension of conceptual metaphors? Our research questions are as follows,

1. Are conceptual metaphors in Chinese principle-governed?
2. Do people use the mapping principles in interpreting novel conceptual metaphors?
3. Do the mapping principles facilitate the comprehension of novel conceptual metaphors in discourse?
4. Are there any neurological differences between novel conceptual metaphors and anomalous conceptual metaphors?

In this talk, we will present an interdisciplinary approach to determine the influence of mapping principles and the level of novelty on the processing of conceptual metaphors in Mandarin. In particular, five studies via four approaches will be discussed: one corpus study, one production experiment, two reading time experiments and one event-related potential experiment. In the end, we will also show the applications of using the linguistic knowledge of metaphors and mapping principles in teaching Chinese as a second language.