

语言理论与实践

工作论文

Metaphor as a textual strategy in English

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I. Introduction

I-1.a review of studies in metaphor in texts

A.Grahama Low:six functions of metaphor

1.to make it possible to talk about X(X, in Graham Low's terminology, stands for the tenor or the topic and Y stands for the vehicle or comment)at all

2.to demonstrate that things in life are related and systematic in ways we can, at least partially, comprehend

3.to extend thought

4.to compel attention by (positively or negatively)dramatisizing X

5.to prevaricate and deny responsibility for X

6.to allow the speaker to discuss emotionally charged subjects(Low,1988:125-147)

B.Claire Lindegren Lerman:Media Analysis of a Presidential Speech:Impersonal Identity Forms in Discourse

C.E. K. Lybbert

D.Walter Nash:Design in Prose

I-2.Data

Villete by Charlotte Bronte

II.A review of theories on metaphor

1.the substitution theory

2.the comparison theory: similarities and resemblances

3. the interaction theory: filtering of the tenor by the vehicle

4.the view point of the present paper: a combination of the comparison and interaction theories

III. Interactive mapping

III-1 balanced follow-up mapping

Some old people are oppressed by the fear of death. In the young there is a justification for this feeling. Young men have reason to fear that they will be killed in battle may justifiably feel bitter in the thought that they have been cheated of the best things that life has to offer. But in an old man who has known human joys and sorrows, and has achieved whatever work it was in him to do, the fear of death is somewhat abject and ignoble. The best way to overcome it--so at least it seems to me--is to make your interests gradually wider and more impersonal, until bit by bit the walls of the ego recede, and your life becomes increasingly merged in the universal life. An individual human existence should be like a river--small at first narrowly contained within its banks and rushing passionately past rocks and over waterfalls. Gradually, the river grows wider, the banks recede, the waters flow more quietly, and in the end, without any visible break, they become merged in the sea, and painlessly lose their individual being. The man who, in old age, can see his life in this way, will not suffer from the fear of death, since the things he cares will continue (Russell, "How to Grow Old" from Portraits from Memory).

III-2 parallel progressive mapping

My calm little room seemed somehow like a cave in the sea. There was no colour about it except that white and pale green, suggestive of foam and deep water; the blanched cornice was adorned with shell-shaped ornaments; and there were white mouldings like dolphins in the ceiling-angles. Even that one touch of colour visible in the red satin pincushion bore affinity to coral; even that dark, shining glass might have mirrored a mermaid.(Villette:163)

III-3 lopsided mapping

III-3-a The vehicle full-fledged with the tenor a mere introducer

Text is a dialectic, a semantic rally. But the ball that comes back may be slightly different from the ball you've just played. And the ball has two parts--a bit you thought might come back different and a bit you assumed would stay the same. When the ball comes back at all--in which case you may choose another ball or stop playing altogether (or decide to find a new partner for the next round)...Text is a rally you aren't trying to win; it's a game you're trying to share(Martin,1992:490-491)

III-3-b The tenor full-fledged with the vehicle "a mere decoration"

You praise a thing for being "fresh". I understand what you mean, but the word besides conveying the truth conveys a secondary something which is certainly false. When you say a person or drawing is fresh, and so good, the impression is somewhat conveyed that the essential element of goodness is freshness, that it is good because it is fresh. Now this is certainly wrong, there is nothing particularly desirable about freshness per se. Works of art aren't eggs.(T.E. Hulme,1936:135)

IV. Substitution

A: Can I have a cup of black coffee with sugar, please?

B: Give me the same, please(Quirk and etc., 1985:860)

And the child delivered a note; the little dove dropped on my knee its olive-leaf plucked off.(Villette:405)

IV-1 Substitution of the tenor term by the vehicle term

And he took forth and held out to me a clean silk handkerchief. Now a person who did not know M.Paul, who was unused to him and his impulse, would naturally have bungled at this offer and declined accepting the same etcetera. But I too plainly felt this would never do: the slightest hesitation would have been fatal to the incipient treaty of peace. I rose and met the handkerchief halfway, received it with decorum, wiped therewith my eyes, and, resuming my seat, and retaining the flag of truce in my hand and on my lap, took especial care during the remainder of the lesson to touch neither needle nor thimble, scissors nor muslin.(Villette:219)

IV-2 Substitution of the tenor as a phrase by the vehicle term

One morning I was sitting in the carre, at work upon a piece of embroidery which one of the pupils had commenced but delayed to finish, and while my fingers wrought at the frame ,my ears regaled themselves with listening to the crescendos and cadences of a voice harranging in the neighbouring class, in tones that momentarily more unquiet, more ominously varied. There was a good strong partition-wall between me and the gathering storm, as well as a facile means of flight through the glass door to the court, in case it swept this way;...(Villette:294)

IV-3 Substitution of the tenor as a clause by the vehicle term

Midnight was long past: the concert was over, the crows were thinning. I followed the ebb.(Villette:429)

IV-4 Substitution of the tenor as a sentence by the vehicle term

My stay at La Terrasse was prolonged a fortnight beyond the close of the vacation.Mrs. Bretton's kind management procured me this respite.(Villette:175)

IV-5 Substitution of the tenor as a combination of sentences or instances

(Examples omitted)

Variations

1. Vehicle term headed by a possessive pronoun

She (the Queen) often bent her head to listen to the boy's remarks, and would then smiling repeat them to his sire. The King started,listened, smiled, but invariably relapsed as soon as his good angel ceased speaking. (Villette:395)

2. Vehicle term headed by a repetitive modifier plus the definite article

In the very extremity of want, I had recourse again, and yet again, to the little packet in the case--the five letters. How splendid that month seemed whose skies had beheld the rising of these five stars!(Villette:243)

3. Vehicle term headed by "such a"

With one of these beauties I once had the honour and the rapture to be perfectly acquainted: the inert force of the deep, settled love she bore herself, was wonderful; it could be surpassed by her proud impotency to care for any other living thing. Of blood, her cool veins conducted no flow; placid lymph filled and almost obstructed her arteries.

Such a Juno as I have described sat full in our view-- a sort of mark for all eyes, and quite conscious that so she was, but proof to the magnetic influence of gaze or glance: cold, rounded, blonde, and beauteous as the white column, captaled with gilding, which rose at her side.(Villette:190)

4. Vehicle term headed by a numerical without the definite article

Does the reader, remembering what was said some pages back, care to say how I answered these letters: whether under the dry, stinting check of Reason, or according to the full, liberal impulse of Feeling?

To speak truth, I compromise matters: I served two masters: I bowed down in the house of Rimmons, and lifted the heart at another shrine....

V. Extension

V-1 Repetitive extension of the vehicle term

"Papa,papa, you look like an enormous polar bear."

The bear shook himself, and the little sprite fled from the frozen shower.

V-2 Varied extension of the vehicle term

Prison: dungeon (Examples omitted)

V-3 Schematic extension of the vehicle

V-3-a Extension of typical components of the schema

A piece of writing is like a castle in the building, and you need to be more than a crafty mechanic, you must also be the wise old architect. If you are doing your job properly you can always see those invisible towers, and that should affect the way you go to work on those visible battlements. (Robert G. Nender, 1977)

V-3-b Extension of stereotypical order of events

The dawnsings, the first developments of peculiar talent appearing within its range, and under his rule, curiously excited, even disturbed him. He watched its struggle into life with a scowl; he held back his hand--perhaps said, "Come on if you have strength, "but would not aid the birth.

...When the pang and peril of the first conflict were over, when the breath of life was drawn, when he saw the lungs expand and contract, when he felt the heart beat and discovered life in the eye, he did not yet offer to foster.(Villette:319)

Struggle into life---breath of life drawn---lungs expand and contract---heart beats---life in the eyes discovered

VI. Metaphor and Conversation

"But life itself is like that :No man is an..."

"That's right," interrupted her while he filled her wine glass. "We're all isthmuses, and since I can still say "isthmuses", you obviously need

a drink."(William Ash,1976)

II. The Status of Metaphor as a Textual Strategy

There was a stone like a suitcase balanced on the wall of a trench and he pondered what he should do. He put his back against the suitcase and his feet against the other side of the trench. The suitcase grated, moved. He got a shoulder under one end and heaved. The suitcase tumbled in the next trench and broke. He grinned without humour and lugged the larger part up into his lap. He raised the broken suitcase to the wall, turned it end over end, engineered it up slopes of fallen but unmanageable rock, pulled and hauled.(William Golding, Pincher Martin:61)

VIII. Conclusion

In this paper, I have made a tentative study of metaphor in terms of its function in creation of cohesion in English texts. First I tried to demonstrate the mapping between the tenor and the vehicle descriptions, that is, how the two systems are manifested in the surface representation. Extensive reading of and intensive investigation into texts representing both expository and creative writing (mainly the latter) reveals that the mapping can be classified into three categories, although there are variations (For instance, the tenor and the vehicle descriptions sometimes may get intertwined a little bit.): (1) full-fledged follow-up mapping, in which both the tenor and the vehicle system are explicated; (2) parallel progressive mapping, in which the tenor system and the vehicle system are juxtaposed and run in parallel progressively in terms of similarities between the two systems; (3) lop-sided mapping in which only one of the systems is full-fledged. Cognitive linguists have shown that the mapping helps us to learn what is new, unknown or unfamiliar in terms of what is old, known and familiar. Stylists have revealed that the mapping lends much colour and power to the language. This paper adds another dimension to the picture by proving that the mapping is also an important strategy in texture building, to be specific, in creation of cohesion. Secondly I showed how metaphor can function cohesively through substitution of the vehicle for the tenor and revealed that metaphoric substitution in my discussion is different from the substitution in Halliday and Hasan's book in that the former is figurative and the latter is literal. Thirdly I illustrated how the vehicle or the vehicle system is extended to maintain cohesion and coherence: (1) repetition of the vehicle term, (2) variation of the vehicle term, and (3) schematic extension. In conversation metaphor also plays a significant role in creation of cohesion and coherence, but the picture is a little different from expository prose or narration in that it is the participants in the conversation that co-operate in maintenance of the flow of the discourse in a metaphoric way. Finally, having inquired into the cause of the paucity of literature on metaphor devoted to the study of its textual dimension, the paper concludes that as metaphor is so persuasive in our language and has become so entrenched in our conceptual system and that as metaphor proves to be instrumental in texture creation due attention should be paid to the study of metaphor as a cohesive strategy in its own right. It seems to me that further inquiry is to be directed to (1) how imagery is related to coherence and cohesion as metaphor typically involves imagery, and (2) how metaphor functions cohesively in different genres of English, so as to have a comprehensive picture of the textual function of metaphor.

◆作者:Liao Mei-zhen

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