

Metaphors Without Borders: Universal Grammar's Role in English-Mandarin Figurative Parallels

Yung-huei Chen, National Chung Cheng University, Taiwan

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Abstract

Speakers of different languages interpret their experiences through their physical environment, expressing events or emotions either faithfully or symbolically through idioms. These expressions are drawn from users' observations of material objects, sentiment, imagery, or cognition, and they vary across cultures due to geography, history, philosophy, or society. However, universal grammar highlights the consistency of languages, as they share traits and influence one another over time. Therefore, this study examines English and Mandarin idioms to explain the influence of universal grammar on figurative language. The analysis reveals that most idioms function at both metaphorical and linguistic levels, reinforcing shared human experiences. While metaphorical and lexical commonalities exist in both languages, they do not align perfectly; however, many of them overlap.

Keywords: figurative language, metaphor, universal grammar, idiom

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Introduction

Metaphors, as one kind of figurative language, are believed as a conscious and deliberate use of words by correlating one thing to another (Kövecses, 2010). They go beyond literal semantics and factual information to conceptual observations and intangible perceptions (Ramón-Cortés et al., 2018). They compare the likeness of two objects (Niculae & Danescu-Niculescu-Mizil, 2014) by adding emotions or images to a word or sentence. The usage of metaphor is observed in everyday language; in other words, they are not restricted to literary works, or for artistic and rhetorical purposes (Dolphin, 2016; Filipczuk, 2015; Kövecses, 2010). Metaphors are better understood by cognitive concepts (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980; Su, 2002) so that they are pervasive in thoughts (Dancygier & Sweetser, 2014). They also reflect the values of a culture (DeCapua & Wintergerst, 2016) which is central to all language and thought patterns in general (Kövecses, 2010).

Culture universal is found in every human society that this “psychic unity of mankind” cannot be overlooked (Burt & Ethel, 2015). The innate “cradle traits” of cultural behavior is inherited in all human beings which resulted in similar disposition, perception, and savoir-faire toward different issues (Burt & Ethel, 2015). Characteristics of culture in interpreting metaphorical items are alike due to the shared thinking patterns among people (Ma & Liu, 2008). Human beings have the ability to depict abstract ideas with concrete examples by observations and experiences (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980; Su, 2002) of cultural-oriented, value-related, and norm-directed languages (DeCapua & Wintergerst, 2016).

When foreign language learners do have sufficient cultural stimulus from the target language, their metaphorical competence could be elevated by using strategies of associative fluency, analogical reasoning, and image formation process (Littlemore, 2008). From Littlemore’s (2008) perspective, it is beneficial for learners to make connections from their schemata to the L2 setting when they receive L2 stimulus on metaphorical usages. On the one hand, learners adapt and associate their background knowledge with the unknown one; on the other, they demonstrate their ability of translating metaphorical usages from unknown to known.

Figurative Language as a Cognitive Process

When applying metaphorical items in communication, it entails a cognitive process in which the abstract target domain connects with the concrete source domain (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980). The target domain transfers something worth triggering, such as an idea, inference, or reference, from the corresponding source domain (Kövecses, 2010); and the source domain, stemming from every-day experiences, carries out a shared idea (Su, 2002). The traits of the source domain are later highlighted and triggered from the target domain in order to complete the communication cycle (Ramón-Cortés et al., 2018). This cognitive process of reflecting ideas from abstract implications to concrete objects is necessary (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980) because it helps to metaphorically interpret and elaborate implicit concepts. Alternatively, the meanings of the target domain and its referent, the source domain, influence each other (Dolphin, 2016). With a view to this, examples or concepts from the application of metaphorical usages in the source domain can be understood and delivered properly (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980; Yalçın Arslan & Cinkara, 2016).

Metaphorical language contains denotations and connotations in referring to an object or phenomenon (Al Soudi, 2015). When a phenomenon is discussed metaphorically, embraced ideas are transformed from language domain to conceptual domain (Ma & Liu, 2008). For

example, a heart can be denoted as an organ in human body, as well as having the connotation as a symbol of love and affection from the source domain (Picken, 2007). Additionally, “human body” and “weather” are the best applied source domains than “animals,” “plants,” or “machines” (Picken, 2007) that the learning of them may lessen the burden of EFL instructors in teaching metaphorical expressions. For most of the time, language users tend to use more connotative than denotative meanings in communication, because these meanings create evocative comparisons in general (Littlemore, 2008).

Metaphor in Culture and EFL Learning

Merriam Webster (2018) clearly defines metaphor as: “a figure of speech in which a word or phrase literally denoting one kind of object or idea is used in place of another to suggest a likeness or analogy between them.” These usages could be better applied to raise learners’ awareness (DeCapua & Wintergerst, 2016) on culturally-appropriate items (Littlemore, 2008; Yalçın Arslan & Cinkara, 2016) with a view to trigger learners’ metaphorical processing skills (Picken, 2007) and the ability to associate, resemble, and contrast.

In the same vein, metaphorical languages are teeming with culture so that language learning cannot be completed without the learning of culture (Yağiz & Izadpanah, 2013). Various social standards and communication strategies should be applied to language learners during the instructions (DeCapua & Wintergerst, 2016). When metaphorical languages are learned, it is beneficial to address their cultural backgrounds as to assist learning (Liu, 2008; Yağiz & Izadpanah, 2013).

DeCapua and Wintergerst (2016) pointed out “..., communication is rarely culture free” (p. 282), reinforcing that culture is intertwined, preserved, and manifested in a language. Therefore, language learners incline to use their own assumptions to render cultural contacts when learning a new language. Learners may face the dilemma of tackling cultural assimilations embedded in written or oral communication. It might be the time when misassumptions of a certain culture prevail and interferes with the learning. With a view to this learners’ disposition, culture shock and cultural misunderstandings may take place in the learning phase (Yağiz & Izadpanah, 2013). To fix the embarrassment and take control of the situation, having culture awareness (DeCapua & Wintergerst, 2016) and figurative competence in language learning is as important as learning lexical or semantic items (Liu, 2008; Xiao, 2016).

Wegner and Nückles (2015) claimed that the teaching and learning of figurative language is beneficial for academic purposes. Bearing this in mind, EFL instructors and learners are suggested to have some level of metaphorical and cultural competence as to interact with the target language group (Yalçın Arslan & Cinkara, 2016). When instructions on figurative language are implemented, deep and detailed processing works and explanations are required (Picken, 2007). For example, Littlemore (2008) conducted a study on 43 post-graduate students with upper-intermediate English proficiency. This experiment intended to know if the participants would be able to understand the meaning of new vocabulary by applying metaphorical extension strategies. The results showed that associative fluency, analogical reasoning, and image formation strategies did help learners to find the meanings of a vocabulary; however, these strategies worked better when a metaphorical vehicle is concrete enough as to provoke an image. Littlemore (2008) stated that this competence may help learners to interpret novel metaphors in the first time, especially when no equivalence can be found in learners’ mother tongue. She believed that applying metaphoric extension strategies

are beneficial for the learning of vocabulary, as well as elevating learners' associative fluency, analogical reasoning, and image formation skills. However, she pointed out that the strategies work well on learners with higher cognitive ability.

Universal Grammar and Metaphorical Expressions

According to Chomsky (1965), the laws of language are innate. Universal grammar is common to all languages regardless of speakers' first language. Even though the surface structures of languages are thought to be different, the deep structure of them are fundamentally universal and invariable (Chomsky, 1965). It is believed that the surface structure corresponds to the final output of the syntactic structure of a sentence (Chomsky, 1965). As each phonological component is processed and disassembled from the hearer and reader, it represents how a sentence is being read, heard or spoken. On the other hand, when deep structures are processed, they underwent several transformations from surface structures. Parts of speech and grammatical structures are decoded in order to "make sense" of surface structures with the aids of auxiliary, conjunction, conjugating verb, and other parts of speech. They indicate abstract representation of a sentence, that is, the meaning.

Languages are formed in universal patterns that they have shared concepts toward abstract ideas (Burt & Ethel, 2015; Evans & Levinson, 2009). Any given language shares similar structural properties, syntactic rules, and principles (Field, 2004). With regard to universal grammar, "some lexical categories (noun and verb), structure-dependency, phrases containing a head of the same type as the phrase, and a phrase structure consisting of Specifier, Head, and Complement" (Field, 2004, pp. 316-317) of different languages are the same. By the same token, metaphors found in different languages also follow a universal rule (Kövecses, 2010; Ma & Liu, 2008). Although metaphors are renditions of words used for artistic and rhetorical purposes; in point of fact, they are resemblances between two entities (Kövecses, 2010). Lakoff and Johnson (1980) stated that metaphors manifest shared experiences. It is the "universal bodily experience" that bridges metaphors from different language families; therefore, when an incident is described, different language users tend to use the same or similar metaphorical items because of the shared cognitive makeup (Kövecses, 2010; Su, 2002). In Kövecses' (2010) study, he pointed out that one language may share conceptual metaphors with another by using the same metaphorical items or grammar structures. Since metaphors are drawn from common sensory experiences, intuitions, or conceptual ideas possessed by human beings, they are correspondingly formed among languages with no doubts. The reason why metaphors are universal is because all human beings share a commonality in their sensory perceptions and experiences (DeCapua & Wintergerst, 2016; Kövecses, 2010).

To find cross-cultural universals in using metaphors, Ma and Liu (2008) found that English, Chinese, and Korean use the same source domain (tiger) to denote military-related heroes. For instance, English uses the "Flying Tiger" to represent a squadron, Chinese adopts the "Tiger General" to refer to a tough fighter, and Korean takes the "White Tiger Regiment" to describe a military unit. In addition to the examples on "tigers," the authors also discussed metaphorical usages drawn from other kinds of animals (e.g. birds and eagles). It is justified that the abstract level of structural organization in semantics between English and Chinese is similar because of the universality of metaphors. DeCapua and Wintergerst (2016) also provided evidences on universal values of time, wisdom, and diligence from English, Turkish, Spanish, Chinese, and Japanese idioms. They concluded that idioms speak not only for the core of a culture, but carry a sense of likeness among one another. They are convinced that cross-cultural awareness prepares language learners to "better predict probable pragmatically appropriate language use

and interactional moves used in another culture” (p. 284). As a result, metaphorical expressions are cross-linguistic and cross-cultural (Dancygier & Sweetser, 2014).

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study is to investigate cross-cultural evidences in figurative language on why shared knowledge structures and expressions are the standard choices of two typologically different languages. The researcher wishes to adopt Littlemore’s (2008) finding on using concrete items to learn metaphors, and apply Ma and Liu’s (2008) elaborations on universal metaphorical usages to analyze the interactions between English and Mandarin idioms. Furthermore, Chomsky’s (1965) Universal Grammar is also embraced in this research to examine whether English and Mandarin idioms have shared deep or surface structures.

An empirical generalization from Littlemore (2008) proposed that figurative usages facilitate L2 learners’ metaphorical learning. When figurative language is learned, learners’ “associate fluency” could be cultivated from the help of concrete objects; and when metaphorical tenors and vehicles are concrete enough, learners demonstrate a better learning progress. The “associate fluency” skill, namely, triggers learners’ schemata on L1 versus L2 cultural awareness. The learners notice cultural similarities during their learning phase when this skill is activated. Moreover, this skill scaffolds the learners to interpret and associate metaphorical idioms from L1 to L2. Based on Littlemore’s (2008) concept, this present study will set out to examine concrete metaphorical expressions in English and Mandarin. An analysis on English and Mandarin idioms is carried out, hoping to discover the links between semantic entities and metaphorical items from these two languages.

Ma and Liu’s (2008) research focused on ten metaphorical expressions from English, Chinese, Polish, and other languages to examine the existence of metaphorical universals. Examples from their studies showed that similar metaphorical expressions are found in different language settings. Therefore, this study adopted their concept and analyzed a total of ten metaphorical expressions between English and Mandarin in order to observe if the idioms are universally-similar or culturally-specific. In the meanwhile, Chomsky’s (1965) Universal Grammar will also be adopted in this study to find if the conceptions of metaphorical expressions across languages are rooted from a shared language universal. The researcher wishes to find any similarities or differences from the metaphorical examples given in the following section, and thus explain whether human behaviors and cultural influences could reflect corresponding patterns across different language families. At the end of the study, the researcher hopes to justify that of the Lakoff’s (1993) and Ma and Liu’s (2008), whose findings proposed that general human character traits yield similar metaphorical expressions, are indubitable.

Cross-Cultural Evidence in Metaphors

This section intends to analyze idioms from English and Mandarin. Figurative language usages from the deep and surface structures of both languages would be examined. Whether metaphorical tenors and vehicles of the idioms are related to the source domains in natural phenomena and man-made products would be discussed. All chosen tenors and vehicles have concrete images as to echo with Littlemore’s (2008) claims. A total of ten examples on figurative language usages are provided in the following orders: (1) A Mandarin idiom written in Chinese characters; (2) Mandarin phonetic transcriptions (Pin-Yin); (3) An explanation of each Mandarin character in English; (4) A similar English idiom; (5) A cross-cultural analysis on deep and surface structures. The ten examples are:

1. 空中樓閣 (kōng zhōng lóu gé), which means: sky – middle – building – attic. This Mandarin idiom is similar to “A pie in the sky” in English, suggesting that something is unlikely to happen in any sense. Instead of using “a pie” as a light and commonly-seen food as the noun connotation in English, “樓閣 (attic)” as a heavy and sheltering construction is adopted in Mandarin. These noun references symbolize unrealizable dreams, yet no similarity is found in the surface and deep structures between them. As for another noun connotation - “the sky” and “空 (sky),” both languages took the expression of “sky” to illustrate the vast area above the earth and to stress the unlikeness to have something staying in it. Thus, the same surface and deep structure can be found on “the sky.” With regard to the preposition “in” in English, it is applied to describe something is closed off by another thing in an enclosed space; on the other hand, Mandarin use “中 (middle)” to specify the position of something within a space. The above-mentioned prepositions share similar concepts from the prepositions of place; therefore, they have similar deep structures.
2. 良藥苦口 (liáng yào kǔ kǒu), which means: good – medicine – bitter – mouth. This Mandarin idiom is similar to “A good medicine tastes bitter” in English, indicating that one should tolerate harsh criticism as to have constructive and positive feedback. The adjectives (“good & 良” and “bitter & 苦”) and nouns (medicine & 藥) have the same corresponding meaning in both languages that their deep and surface structures are the same. English uses the verb “taste” to specify the action of taking medicine, while Mandarin uses the noun “口 (mouth)” to illustrate a physical image which receives the medication. “口 (mouth)” is required to “taste” the flavour of something; therefore, the metaphorical ties between English and Mandarin demonstrate a cause-and-effect relationship. Although “taste” and “口 (mouth)” has no direct connections in the surface structure, they do have an association and correlation in the deep structure to some degree.
3. 雨後春筍 (yǔ hòu chūn sǔn), which means: rain – after – spring – bamboo shoot. This Mandarin idiom is similar to “Spring up like mushrooms” in English, implying that something grows rapidly and substantially. The word “spring” demonstrates different parts of speech and reveals diverse meanings between English and Mandarin. English uses it as a verb whereas a noun in Mandarin. “Spring” indicates “to grow” in English, whereas “春 (spring)” represents the spring season in Mandarin. In addition, the word “spring” in both languages connotes a phenomenon of being prosperous so that they bear a certain resemblance to the deep structure. If focusing on the word choice instead of the meaning, a coincidence is found that “春 (spring)” has an indistinguishable surface structure in both languages. As for the metaphorical vehicle, both languages use the edible and widely-cultivated vegetables above ground that can be found effortlessly in the West and East. “Mushroom” and “筍 (bamboo shoot)” are assigned as the staple and everyday food category as vehicles. Minor deep structure connections could be found between them. Moreover, Mandarin especially, uses an adverb clause “雨後 (after the rain)” to point out the moisture of the rain germinating the bamboo shoots. The Mandarin idiom also adopts the preposition “後 (after)” to signify a following consequence when the rain comes down to nourish the vegetation. On the contrary, no adverb clause is found in the English idiom. With reference to the propositions from the idioms, “like” is found in English so that a simile is created to make explicit comparisons; however, no preposition is found in Mandarin. Therefore, no surface and deep structures are found between English and Mandarin on the choices of prepositions.

4. 揮金如土 (huī jīn rú tǔ), which means: wave – money – like – clay. This Mandarin idiom is similar to “Spend money like water” in English. To suggest someone who disburses carelessly, both languages adopt the exact same verbs “揮金” and “spend money,” and prepositions “如” and “like” to describe the behavior. Also, both languages took the advantage of using simile so that two unlike things could be explicitly compared and visualized. Even though the sole Mandarin character “揮” means to “wave,” when it is combined with the noun “金 (gold),” this verb phrase becomes “spending money.” Therefore, the surface and deep structures are the same from the first three characters in Mandarin and the first three words in English (e.g. the tenors). As for the vehicles, both languages use non-countable nouns (“土” and “water”) to strengthen the spending concept. To make it more specific, Mandarin takes on the meaning of “土 (clay)” to pin down a nonchalant attitude and reckless spending behavior; on the other hand, English borrows the word “water” to stress that the paying action is flowing and non-stop. In consequence, no similarity in surface structure can be found, but similar deep structures can be observed.
5. 大海撈針 (dà hǎi lāo zhēn), which means: big – sea – to dredge up – needle. A similar English idiom is “To look for a needle in a haystack.” This metaphor explains that it is almost impossible and extremely difficult to find something when something is lost. For the connotations of the verbs, English establishes a searching-with-effort process by using “to look for,” while Mandarin draws this picture by adding a powerful action verb “撈 (to dredge up)” to indicate a hard work made. Both of them show an action of locating something within a space. Although these two verbs do not meet the same surface structures, they hold similar deep structures. With regard to the noun references, “needle” and “針 (needle)” are tagged. Since a needle is considered as a tiny and light object which may be easily neglected or lost in both languages, the surface and deep structures of them are identical. On the other hand, when referring to a huge quantity, both languages demonstrate similar deep structures as “海 (sea)” and “haystack” to show that it is difficult to find something within an uncertain huge area or within an amorphous quantity and substance. Mandarin also includes an adjective “大 (big)” to modify the noun, indicating the vastness of the sea. However, the surface structure is not the same when referring to a huge quantity in both languages.
6. 赴湯蹈火 (fù tāng dǎo huǒ), which means: go – hot water – step – fire. An English idiom which has a similar meaning is “To go through fire and water.” This metaphor indicates that one has to undergo dangers and difficulties before achieving something. This Mandarin idiom contains two verbs (which is allowed in Mandarin pragmatics) to stress that someone tries his or her best to do something for other people. For example, “赴 (go)” in the Mandarin idiom has the same meaning as “to go” in the English idiom; and “蹈 (step)” finds no corresponding meaning and verb in English. Therefore, only one verb connotation (“赴” and “to go”) has the same deep and surface structure. As for the noun references, both languages adopt the idea of fire (火) and water (湯) to point out the intangible and uncountable natural substances which are intrinsically connected to the lives of human beings. To be specific, Mandarin uses “湯 (hot water)” to strengthen the boiling action when the temperature is high enough as to turn liquid into gas. In order to have parallel structures in semantics and to point out that water and fire are mutually destructive, “water” and “fire” are highlighted and contrasted in both languages. From the Universal Grammar perspective, the surface and deep structures of the noun references are the same.

7. 滄海一粟 (cāng hǎi yī sù), which means: cold/green – ocean – one – grain. This Mandarin idiom is similar to “A drop in the ocean” in English, which intends to depict a relatively small amount when comparing to the total amount needed. No verbs can be found in both languages which shows a similar Universal Grammar usage. When referring to a unit or amount, Mandarin uses “一 (one)” to show “one object,” while English uses “a” to specify an article; in consequence, both languages apply the same deep and surface structure in referring to a countable unit. As for the noun references, English uses a “drop” to define a small quantity of liquid; while Mandarin allocates “粟 (a grain)” as an undersized amount of a small and hard article. When a tiny amount in comparison with a larger one is defined, both languages tag similar deep structures. In signifying a huge area from a vast and uncountable amount of water, Mandarin uses “海 (ocean)” and English uses “the ocean” in the sayings. This shows that a shared surface and deep structure is found. Moreover, Mandarin adds a slight touch of sensory detail, “滄,” to specify the feeling and color of the ocean as “cold and green”. On the contrary, no modification is found in English.
8. 殺雞取卵 (shā jī qǔ luǎn), which means: kill – hen – take – egg. This Mandarin idiom is similar to “Kill the goose that lays golden eggs” in English. To imply any unprofitable action which results in a useless return, both languages apply identical expressions in the verbs “殺 & kill” and nouns “卵 & egg” in deep and surface structures. English especially, adds the glittering “golden” egg to reinforce the preciousness of the harvest; it also emphasizes the action to deposit and produce the egg by using the verb “lay.” The adjective and verb references have no corresponding parts of speech in Mandarin. On the other hand, Mandarin uses “取 (take)” to state the process of obtaining an object; however, it does not use any explicit adjectives or action verbs to describe the progression. It has no equivalent terms in English. Since poultry are raised for their meat, eggs and feather, they are placed as the metaphorical vehicles to specify the noun reference in both languages. English uses “the goose,” a flying bird, to indicate the subject; nevertheless, Mandarin uses “雞 (a hen),” a domesticated fowl instead. These two metaphorical vehicles are similar in deep structures, but different in the surface structures.
9. 樹大招風 (shù dà zhāo fēng), which means: tree – tall – catch – wind. This Mandarin idiom is similar to “Tall trees catch much wind” in English, proposing that jealousy is easily caught when someone is too outstanding, boasting, or wealthy. When referring to an eye-catching object, the “tree” and “樹 (tree)” are served as the marked target because they are “tall” and “大(tall)” enough to “catch (招) wind (風)” in both languages. English adds an adjective touch “much” to describe the velocity and strength of the wind, while no adjective is observed to describe the wind in Mandarin. To sum up, this idiom has identical deep and surface structures on the nouns (tree & wind), verb (catch), and adjective (tall) in English and Mandarin.
10. 隔牆有耳 (gé qiáng yǒu ěr), which means: next – wall – have – ear. This Mandarin proverb is similar to “Walls have ears” in English, suggesting that one should be careful as not to reveal the secret unexpectedly. The arrangement of the words in both languages has the same order: wall (牆 & wall) – have (有 & have) – ear (耳 & ear). These three words/characters represent the exact meanings from English and Mandarin that identical deep and surface structures are justified. An adjective “隔 (next)” is furnished to specify an adjacent position in Mandarin; however, no adjective is observed in English.

Conclusion

The purpose of this paper is to explore cross-cultural evidences in English and Mandarin through a comparison of figurative expressions from the inspection of Universal Grammar. Previous questions were posed that idioms are affected by specific source domains and experiential domains which can be either culture-specific or language-specific. However, observations in this research found that lexical combinations of idiom usages in English and Mandarin are similar. The analysis of metaphorical expressions from the two languages echoed with that of Lakoff's (1993) that general human character traits attribute to similar metaphorical usages.

This paper has examined the components of source domains from natural phenomena (such as tree, sky, sea, wind, and rain) to man-made products (such as needle, building, attic, medicine, and wall) from the perspective of Universal Grammar theory between English and Mandarin. Although with geographic and lexical inconsistency, both languages in expressing certain idioms demonstrated a relatively close equivalence in semantic usages. The lexical evidences from those metaphorical expressions have shown remarkable similarities between English and Mandarin. Word choices and parts of speech are of little differences in metaphorical expressions. The Universal Grammar evidences obtained in both languages share similar surface or deep structures. The cultural evidences found in the idioms are relevant to one another because they take account of the general experiences from human beings.

This study replicated some of the conclusions of previous research and came up with the following findings: (1) Semantic usages are stable with English and Mandarin, that a shared-cultural phenomenon is reflected in metaphorical items from both languages. Although one language from the West may seem diverged from another language from the East, human experiences are indispensable, compatible, and identical; (2) Universal Grammar theory can be applied in metaphorical usages in English and Mandarin. Even though Indo-European and Sino-Tibetan languages are apparently unrelated, the idioms provided in this research have demonstrated a strong link between the two. It is found that most idioms are richly manifested at metaphorical and linguistic levels in describing a phenomenon, since metaphorical usages are grounded from universally-related human experiences. The findings have demonstrated that metaphorical and lexical commonalities reside in both languages. Metaphorical usages are considered universal.

Empirical generalizations are found in both languages on metaphorical items because people usually react to the stimulus of the environment in parallel ways. The findings of this paper echo with Ma and Liu's (2008) investigations that metaphorical items are transparent and intertwined universally in which they shared similar thinking patterns. As Littlemore (2008) stressed the importance of having "associate fluency" in facilitating learning metaphors through concrete objects, the examples from this examination have justified that concrete objects trigger similar metaphorical vehicles and tenors. The findings can be also agreed upon by Lakoff (1993) that universal metaphorical usages are derived from universal human experiences to engage or deal with social and environmental interactions.

This research was just an exploratory study that still needs further investigations. Even though this paper has found significant similarities of metaphorical usages in English and Mandarin, more evidence should be provided so that a more generalized claim can be made between the two languages. Furthermore, this paper has only presented ten examples of metaphorical usages of English and Mandarin, it would be worth investigating whether samples from other source

domains would be similar. To date, cross-cultural metaphorical usages have not yet been fully studied with EFL university-level students, because figurative language arises marginal interests in EFL teaching from previous studies (Salwa, 2016). It remains to be examined how EFL adult learners respond to the learning and production of metaphorical usages.

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