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ONTLOGICAL METAPHOR IN CHINESE SYNTAX

DISSERTATION

Presented in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for
the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy in the Graduate
School of The Ohio State University

By

John Harvey Rouzer, M.A.

*****

The Ohio State University
1997

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Department of East Asian Languages and Literatures
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ABSTRACT

On the premise that Lakoff-type conceptual metaphor reflects actual, unconscious, human conceptualizations, this dissertation has extended Lakoff's idea beyond word choice issues and into syntactic issues. By investigating the productivity of one type of conceptual metaphor, ontological metaphor, in Chinese syntax, it is shown that the elucidation of conceptual metaphor provides a way to make objective and meaningful claims about how human conceptualization shapes syntax. Our presupposition that human conceptualization should have a determining effect on syntax is inspired by Tai's cognition-based functional approach to grammar.

Ontological metaphor, which conceptualizes abstractions as objects, was chosen because it was thought to have the most immediate relevance to syntax insofar as it determines what notions can be nominalized. In view of the covert nature of conceptual metaphor, it was deemed expedient to compare known examples of ontological metaphor in English with analogous examples in Chinese as a way to elucidate ontological metaphor in Chinese, i.e., as a way to make the familiar strange.
By this method, it was found that ontological metaphors are operative in Chinese, but to a lesser extent than in English. Specifically, and with reference to Lyons’ substantive universals, Chinese is less inclined to ascribe first-order features—such as, having constant perceptual properties, occupying 3-dimensional space, and being subject to individualization—to higher order notions. Chinese tends to resist conceptualizing verbal expressions e.g., activities, as nominal expressions. Where activities would show up as containers in English, they appear as adverbial clauses of time in Chinese. Where activities may be construed as process (i.e., be more amenable to nominalization), they may appear with \( \text{zhong} \) ‘center/middle’ but not with \( \text{li} \) ‘in’. Events are objects, but not container objects, suggesting a whole-part metaphor for the constituents of events rather container-contained metaphor.

Metaphorical containers where they do show up in Chinese must have an actual physical basis, for example as substances or entities but not as abstractions, such as one finds in English. However, even for the conceptualization of physical space, container is still less productive in Chinese than it is in English. For example, Chinese will select \( \text{nei} \), expressing interiority, or \( \text{zhong} \), expressing middle/center, and even \( \text{shang} \), showing two-dimensional space, but not \( \text{li} \), which would express three-dimensional space, i.e., true container. Thus, even for notions that are clearly nominalized, further conceptualization as container may not show up. Related to the productivity of container metaphor is the applicability of Reddy’s conduit metaphor for communication, which, insofar as it depends on container metaphor, i.e., ‘putting ideas into words’, is also less productive in Chinese
than it is in English. Personification, which often entails ascribing agentive quality to nominals, is also relatively less productive in Chinese. Finally, in both English and Chinese, the TIME IS A MOVING OBJECT metaphor is highly productive, although in Chinese time is occasionally represented as moving along a vertical axis as opposed to the horizontal axis in English.

In order to explain the principal finding, that ontological metaphor, and specifically container metaphor, is less productive in Chinese relative to English, it is suggested that there is a coherent linguistic conceptualization in Chinese that resists objectification generally. For such a conceptualization, it is observed that whole-part metaphor is more congenial than container-contained metaphor. This is coherent with a version of Hansen's mass-noun hypothesis that also depends on a whole-part conceptualization for nominal expressions in Chinese. Finally, it is recommended that coherence, both conceptual and syntactic, be the test for any future claims that one might make about conceptualizations, metaphoric or otherwise, that may determine syntactic patterns in Chinese language.
DEDICATION

To the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob

To my parents, Harvey Hayes and Lois Helen Rouzer

and

To my wife Joy Zhao, and our daughter Lois Ailene Rouzer
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I wish to express my appreciation to my adviser, James H.-Y. Tai, for his guidance and insight through the various stages of this dissertation. It was my reading of Tai's (1985) "Temporal Sequence and Word Order in Chinese" that relieved me from having to view syntax as abstract and autonomous, and that restored the human factor to the study of grammar for me. Thanks also go to the other members of my committee; to Marjorie K.M. Chan, for her encouragement, and her careful and critical reading of earlier versions; and to Galal L. Walker for his clear-eyed appraisal of the whole enterprise. I want to thank my original mentor in Chinese Linguistics, Hsin-I Hsieh, for equipping me with the critical apparatus necessary to pursue a graduate career. I also thank my boss in ESL Composition, Diane Belcher, for her sympathy on matters to do with language contrast. I thank my colleague, Wu Xiaoqi, for her careful reading and comments at a crucial stage in the development of the ideas represented here. Finally I want to express my gratitude to Zhao Hongqi who tolerated my pestering her at all hours of the day or night for her intuitions on a whole range of issues related to this dissertation.
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FIELDS OF STUDY

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The guiding idea comes from Lakoff and Johnson (1980). In their book, *Metaphors We Live By*, they make the case that a full understanding of human language cannot be gotten without an appreciation of the fact that much of linguistic expression is determined by metaphorical conceptualizations of experience. They point out, for example, that in English the activity of argument is metaphorically conceived of as war. The RATIONAL ARGUMENT IS WAR metaphor explains a whole range of expressions connected with that activity.

Your claims are *indefensible*.

He *attacked every weak point* in my argument.

His criticisms were *right on target*.

I *demolished* his argument.

I've never *won* an argument with him.

You disagree? Okay, *shoot*!
If you use that strategy, he'll wipe you out.

He shot down all my arguments (p.4).

From the above example one can get a sense that Lakoff and Johnson's insight about the metaphorical structuring of experience as revealed in human language has the potential power to explain facts about linguistic usage that have until now been nearly intractable (when not invisible). Furthermore, as we shall see in the course of this discussion, comparing metaphorical conceptualizations across languages can be a useful way to contrast and to generalize facts about usage that a purely syntactic analysis would, obviously, miss. An explicit awareness of such facts about usage can provide insight into human cognition and culture, and have implications for language learning.

1.1 THE THREE CLASSES OF METAPHOR: ORIENTATIONAL, ONTOLOGICAL, AND STRUCTURAL

In Lakoff and Johnson's view, the metaphors used in human language to conceptualize our experience fall into three classes; orientational (spatial), ontological, and structural metaphors.

An example of the first class of metaphors, orientational metaphors, in English is the viewing of happiness and related notions as being up. HAPPY IS UP explains the following expressions:
I'm feeling *up*.

That *boosted* my spirits.

My spirits *rose*.

You're in *high* spirits.

Thinking about her always gives me a *lift*.

An interesting feature of such metaphorical conceptualizations, which contributes to the power of this type of linguistic analysis, is that these metaphors should be coherent with respect to related notions. For example, if happy is up then sad should be down—as is the case in English:

I'm feeling *down*.

I'm *depressed*.

He's really *low* these days.

*I fell* into a depression.

My spirits *sank* (p.15).

The second class of metaphors, ontological metaphors, is that class of metaphors which treat abstract notions as entities. As Lakoff and Johnson observe, "once we can identify our experiences as entities or substances, we can refer to them,
categorize them, and quantify them—and, by this means, reason about them" (p.25). For example, THE MIND IS A BRITTLE OBJECT makes it possible for us to talk about a range of emotional and psychological phenomena.

Her ego is very fragile.
You have to handle him with care since his wife's death.
He broke under cross-examination.
She is easily crushed.
The experience shattered him.
I'm going to pieces.
His mind snapped (p.28).
I broke your concentration

From the above examples it can be seen that reasoning about such an abstract thing as mind is highly dependent upon the use of metaphor.

The third class of metaphors, structural metaphors, are where "...one highly structured and clearly delineated concept [is used] to structure another [concept]" (p.61). The metaphor, RATIONAL ARGUMENT IS WAR, mentioned above, is an example of structural metaphor. Here, in English, war is a more highly structured concept than is rational argument, so it can be used to help us reason about the activity of rational argument. Structural metaphors differ most obviously from
spatial and ontological metaphors in that they do not have a physical basis—both the
source concept and the object concept are abstractions in structural metaphor.

To confirm and extend Lakoff and Johnson's insight one could pursue it in a
number of directions. One could take a specific domain of human concern, and
describe the metaphors that operate in the conceptualization of that domain. Brian
King has done this in his 1988 dissertation, *The Conceptual Structure of Emotional
Experience in Chinese.* Another direction would be to take a particular notion, e.g.,
WAR or CONTAINER or HEAT and LIGHT, and describe all the ways that that
notion is exploited as a source for the metaphoric structuring of experience in
languages. A third direction, the one which will be pursued in this dissertation, is to
take one of the three classes of metaphors described above and see to what extent
that whole class of metaphors is operative in one language. We propose looking
specifically at the extent to which ontological metaphors are operative in Chinese.

1.2 ONE TYPE OF ONTOLOGICAL METAPHOR: CONTAINER
METAPHOR

To illustrate what we have in mind, recall Lakoff and Johnson's observation that
ontological metaphors are used "...to comprehend events, actions, activities, and
states. Events and actions are conceptualized metaphorically as objects, activities as
substances, [and] states as containers" (p.30). In general semantic terms such
metaphorization means ascribing 1st-order features to higher order, in this case 2nd-
order, entities. They offer the example of a race being metaphorically structured as a CONTAINER OBJECT in English. It would be interesting to see to what extent this ontological metaphor is operative in Chinese. The situation in English is illustrated by Lakoff and Johnson's sentences below (p.31):

Are you *in* the race on Sunday? (race as CONTAINER OBJECT)
Are you *going to* the race? (race as OBJECT)
Did you *see the race*? (race as OBJECT)
The *finish* of the race was really exciting. (finish as EVENT OBJECT within CONTAINER OBJECT)
There was *a lot of good running* in the race. (running as a SUBSTANCE in a CONTAINER)
I couldn't do *much sprinting* until the end. (sprinting as SUBSTANCE)
*Halfway into* the race, I ran out of energy. (race as CONTAINER OBJECT)
He's *out of* the race now. (race as CONTAINER OBJECT)

To what extent is ontological metaphor operative in Chinese for the conceptualization of a *race*? A fair and common translation of the above sentences into Chinese might be as follows:

(1) Are you *in* the race on Sunday?
星期天你参加不参加比赛？

*xingqi tian ni canjia bu canjia bisai?*

Sunday you join NEG join competition

(2) Are you going to the race?

你去不去看比赛？

*ni qu bu qu kan bisai?*

you go NEG go see race

(3) Did you see the race?

你看马拉松赛了没有？

*ni kan malasong sai le mei-you?*

you see foot-race PERF NEG-have

(4) The finish of the race was really exciting.

(那场比赛,)结尾特别精彩。

*(nei chang bisai,) jiewei tebie jingcai.*

(that CL race,) ending really exciting

(5) There was a lot of good running in the race.

那场比赛很多人跑得很好。

*nei chang bisai, ren bu ren you kan bisai de hai de.*

(那场比赛, some people run well.*
A cursory look at the above examples indicates that the ontological metaphor RACE IS A CONTAINER OBJECT is not operative in Chinese. Examples (2) and (3) show that in Chinese one can 'see' the abstract thing called 'race', 看比赛 and 看
which indicates that in Chinese, as in English, race is objectified to the extent that it is visible. In other words 'race' as event, a 2nd-order entity in English, is similarly construed in Chinese. However, the other examples show that, unlike English, the RACE IS AN OBJECT ontological metaphor in Chinese cannot be further elaborated into RACE IS A CONTAINER OBJECT. In example (1) one cannot be in a race; one can only join a race. Examples (5), (6), and (8) do not translate into Chinese. Neither of the activities, running in (5) nor sprinting in (6), can be conceived of as SUBSTANCE, so to say that there is good running or much sprinting is incoherent in Chinese. Moreover, as we have said, race may be an OBJECT in Chinese, but not a CONTAINER. Thus, for example (5) there is nothing for the hypothetical substance to be in; instead race turns up as topic, and a lot of good running turns up as 'a lot of people running well.' Similarly, there is nothing for one to be out of in example (8). Example (7), halfway into the race, can be fairly rendered in Chinese but not in terms of CONTAINER OBJECT metaphor. The corresponding Chinese expression, 比赛一半儿 hisai yiban(r) ‘race one-half’, depends instead on a WHOLE-PART ontological metaphor. Similarly, example (4), the finish of the race, which Lakoff and Johnson also regard as depending on CONTAINER OBJECT metaphor (i.e., finish as EVENT OBJECT within race as CONTAINER OBJECT), cannot be so construed in Chinese. In fact, viewed in isolation, it is hard to say just what the situation is with 结尾 jiewei ‘finish’ in the sentence, 结尾特别精彩 jiewei tebie
jingcai ‘finish very exciting.’ However, if the sentence were viewed as part of a topic chain headed by 那场 比赛 nei-chang bisai ‘that-CL race,’ it would be natural to regard 结尾 jiewei ‘finish’ metaphorically as part of the whole event, 比赛 bisai ‘race.’

1.3 HYPOTHESES ABOUT ONTOLOGICAL METAPHOR IN CHINESE

Generalizing on the basis of the above few examples, a number of specific, claims can be put forth as hypotheses for research:

1. Ontological metaphors are operative in Chinese, but to a lesser extent than in English.

2. The most common ontological metaphors in Chinese, as in English, are those which view events and actions as objects (e.g., 看 比赛 kan bisai ‘watch race’). However, activities as substances and states as containers may not be operative in Chinese.

3. Whole-part may be a more productive elaboration of object metaphors than container-contained (e.g., 比赛 一半儿 bisai yiban(r) ‘race one-half’).

4. The existence or absence of certain ontological metaphors will be consistent with certain features of Chinese syntax and semantics and culture.

With respect to claim (4), above, Brian King has observed that "...for English...the source of entification [for ontological metaphors] is an ontology that views physical phenomena as discrete or bounded and then imposes this view on events, activities
and states" (p.205). This immediately suggests its complement; i.e., that in languages where the entification/objectification metaphor is less productive, or otherwise restricted, then the source of entification should be an ontology that views physical phenomena differently—perhaps as being less discrete and less bounded. For King the situation with English is consistent with a perceived "cultural bias towards entification" (p.206). Is the situation with Chinese then consistent with some other cultural bias? How would one describe the complement of entification? The facts about the use of ontological metaphors in Chinese language must first be delineated before one can speculate on this question.

How can the facts about the use of ontological metaphors in Chinese be most effectively delineated? The problem is compounded by the fact that, as Lakoff and Johnson observe, most ontological expressions are not noticed as being metaphorical. "...One reason is that ontological metaphors serve a very limited [but crucial] range of purposes—referring, quantifying, etc. Merely viewing a nonphysical thing as an entity or substance does not allow us to comprehend very much about it" (p.27). Of course it is this invisibility of metaphor which proves the practical identity of metaphor and conceptualization, and which makes the elucidation of metaphor so interesting—it promises to make explicit our unconscious conceptualizations. "When we are living by the metaphors...as we do in our culture, we tend not to see them as metaphors at all" (Lakoff & Johnson p.68). Indeed to say that 'A is B', as one does in ontological metaphors, e.g., THE MIND IS A THING,
would simply be a case of subcategorization if A and B were viewed as the same kind of thing, e.g., 'an automobile is a vehicle'. The metaphorical dimension of the claim, 'A is B', would only be apparent if A and B were viewed as different kinds of things—which is just what speakers do *not* do when they are 'living by metaphor'.

In view of this subtle relationship between metaphor and conceptualization an expedient way for us to elucidate otherwise invisible metaphor—i.e., to make the familiar strange—is to compare translations from English to Chinese, as above, and/or Chinese to English.
NOTES:

1. Outside of Chinese, most of the work taking this approach, i.e., looking at a specific domain of human concern to see the ways that that domain is elaborated metaphorically, has been done by Kovecses 1986, 1988, 1990, 1991, and also Lakoff and Kovecses 1987. Yu Ning in “Metaphorical Expressions of Anger and Happiness in English and Chinese” (1995) takes this approach, but seems unaware of Brian King’s earlier, closely related work.

2. Here we are appealing to Lyons’ (1977) notional description of nouns in terms of a hierarchical order of first-order, second-order, and third-order entities. The ontological status of first-order entities (persons, animals, and things: e.g., ‘boy’, ‘cat’, ‘table’, in English) is relatively clear. Lyons, citing Strawson (1959), observes that first-order entities, “under normal conditions...are relatively constant as to their perceptual properties: that they are located, at any point in time, in what is, psychologically at least, a three-dimensional space; and that they are publicly observable” (p.443). Lyons also observes that among first-order entities, “persons are more strongly individualized than animals, and animals more strongly individualized than things.” Thus there is also hierarchy within each of the three orders of the primary hierarchy. Second-order entities are “events, processes, states-of-affairs,...which are located in time and which, in English, are said to occur or take place, rather than to exist.” They are “...more obviously perceptual and conceptual constructs than first-order entities are,” and in some languages they may be referred to as individuals. Third-order entities are “such abstract [unobservable] entities as propositions, [also reasons --but not causes--, theorems, and ideas] which are outside space and time.” Truth rather than reality is “...more naturally predicated of them.” Third-order entities are the objects of propositional attitudes such as belief, expectation, and judgment; they can be affirmed or denied, remembered or forgotten.

3. Indeed, according to Lakoff and Johnson subcategorization and metaphor should be understood as endpoints on a continuum. In terms of this continuum it is reasonable then to speak of ‘degree of metaphoricity.’ Interestingly, the idea of degree of metaphoricity would be consistent with van Dijk’s (1980) notion of “degree of sortal incorrectness”, except that van Dijk is working within the framework of formalist, truth-conditional semantics, while Lakoff and Johnson are not.
CHAPTER 2

BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

In his paper presented at the 1993 meeting of the Chicago Linguistic Society, George Lakoff observed with reference to the exploration of the human conceptual system, that "...our huge system of conceptual metaphor...dwarfs our grammatical systems, both in size and profundity (p.238). He points out, for example, that, "linking rules that specify how semantic roles are paired with grammatical relations can often be dispensed with when we take into account metaphorical semantic roles characterized by independently existing metaphors" (p.238). An older analysis of the sentence,

From my office, I can see the bay.

that would link 'office' as source and 'bay' as goal had to posit 'see' as a verb of motion. This counter-intuitive analysis of the verb is motivated by the presence of the adverbial phrase. A more satisfactory analysis is gotten by appreciating the existence of the conceptual metaphor SEEING IS TOUCHING. Thus, we understand that vision, like limbs, can be directed along a path.
From my tall chair, I can reach all the way to the ceiling.

From my office, I can see all the way to the bay.

This enriched view of syntax as being informed by human conceptualization has only recently begun to receive a measure of acceptance in the field generally. The view that syntax be regarded as autonomous, represented by linguists sympathetic to the Chomskyan "generative enterprise," though traceable to the tradition represented by Bloomfield, has been the dominant paradigm since at least the 1960's. A brief discussion of these mainstream views will help us to appreciate the importance of Lakoff's insight.

2.1 AUTONOMY, INNATENESS, AND UNIVERSALISM

Linguists, except for anthropological linguists, have been reluctant to even consider the possibility of a relation between syntax and human conceptualization—i.e., to consider even a mild form of linguistic relativism—for fear of being tarred with the brush of lunatic whorfianism. Pinker (1994), Chomsky's latest apologist, disparages the straw man of linguistic determinism, the radical version of relativism, and assumes that he has disposed of the whole issue—sneeringly observing "the perennial appeal of the hypothesis to undergraduate sensibilities" (p57). Generative syntax as first conceived even tried to exclude semantics from the analysis of language structure. Indeed, prior to 1959, the rules in Chomsky's generative grammar were regarded as non-psychological formalisms and not speaker
knowledge. In Steinberg's (1975) review and critique, Chomsky at this stage championed Bloomfield's anti-mentalism "...in order to keep semantics out of linguistics" (p.223). Slowly, however, Chomsky's thought began to take on some mentalistic accretions. In his critique of Skinner, Chomsky observes that a grammar is something "...that each individual has somehow and in some form internalized" (1959:576). As Steinberg observes, by 1964, "the psychologization of the rules of grammar is completed" (p.232). However, Chomsky's original formalistic bias prevents him from imagining language acquisition to be the product of general cognitive processes and principles. Instead he must posit an autonomous Language Acquisition Device (LAD) and the associated Innateness Hypothesis—the view that the human capacity for language learning is unique and that the human brain is 'hard-wired' for the specific purpose of language acquisition.¹

The project for those subscribing to the innateness idea became then to construct the richest possible universal grammar (UG) so that the particular grammars of all the world's languages could be derived by stipulating the smallest possible number of parameters. Greenberg's research on language typology and his discoveries that a whole range of syntactic patterns across languages could be described and 'explained' by a small number of simple parameters, e.g., head-final versus head-initial, seemed to give strong empirical support to the universalist's project. The best known proponent of the universalist idea in Chinese linguistics is James C.-T. Huang (cf. Huang 1982).
The success of the Chomskyian revolution with its formalistic bias and its notions of innateness and universalism made it difficult for linguists who wanted to operate in the mainstream of the field to even speculate on possible interface between general cognitive principles, i.e., those principles which inform human conceptualizations of the world (some of which will be culture-specific), and language structure. Such speculations were viewed as antithetical to the innateness idea. Indeed the success of Chomsky and his followers can be measured by the degree to which linguistics has been separated from the fields of anthropology and psychology. However, there have always been some linguists, not to mention anthropologists and psychologists, who have viewed Chomsky's claims for universalism and innateness as little more than elements of a pseudo-psychological facade masking what is at heart a formalistic structure. This is the thrust of Steinberg's 1975 critique. Gumperz and Levinson (1991) have pointed out that issues of linguistic relativism—broadly, the view that different languages by virtue of their different structures may be indicative of different human conceptualizations—"were alive before being banished by an ideologically rather than empirically based tide of rationalism and universalism" (p.620). Lakoff and Johnson deplore this bias for treating language structure apart from semantics and pragmatics and conceptualization, calling it "objectivist" linguistics.²

Of course the generativists did not control the whole field. Many linguists operating under a variety of theoretical labels remained immune to the enticements
of the generativist enterprise. From our point of view the most interesting are those linguists operating under the broad rubric of functionalism whose semantic or communicative explanations of syntactic structures often, inadvertently perhaps, have implications for human conceptualizations. A perfect example of this is Bolinger’s (1968) principle for explaining gerund versus infinitive usage in English where the V+ing form signals a ‘realized’ activity and the to+V form signals ‘unrealized’ activity. A range of syntactic patterns can be explained in terms of this basic distinction. Many other so-called functionalist explanations depend on human conceptualizations—if only by implication. A good example is Chafe’s famous given-new explanation of word order. A related version of this idea shows up in Li and Thompson’s (1981) functional grammar of Chinese where, in explaining variations in constituent word order in Chinese, they observe, “...preverbal position is a signal for definiteness for topics, subjects, and objects, that is, for whether these [constituents] are already known to both the speaker and hearer” (p20). The implicit conceptualization is that, on a string, what is known precedes temporally what is yet to be known. An early explicit treatment of the human conceptualization-syntax interface shows up in discussions of iconicity in syntax. Haiman’s Iconicity in Syntax (1985) contains Tai’s presentation of his Principle of Temporal Sequence—a meaning-placement distinction for a whole range of constituents in Chinese sentences such that, “the relative word order between two syntactic units is determined by the temporal order of the states which they represent in the conceptual
world" (p. 50). This and much of Tai's subsequent research (e.g., 1985, 1989, 1992a, 1992b, 1993a, 1993b) establishes clear connections between human conceptualization and syntax. Indeed under the rubric, cognition-based functional approach, Tai (1989) delineates a program of linguistic analysis which assumes that human conceptualization of the 'real world' constrains linguistic structure, i.e., that syntactic structures are motivated by conceptual structures. As such, true explanations of syntactic phenomena must be cognition-based and functional; formal approaches can only be descriptive at best. In this dissertation, we fully endorse all these tenets of Tai's cognition-based functional approach.

2.2 CONCEPTUAL METAPHOR

However, it is Lakoff and Johnson's (1980) Metaphors We Live By that really opened the door on the possibility of viewing human conceptualization as determinative of linguistic patterns. Of course, it was Lakoff and others associated with the generative semantics enterprise in the early 1970's that persuaded linguists in the Chomskyian school that an adequate description of natural language had to have a semantic component. However, since the 1980's Lakoff has also been persuading linguists that an adequate description of natural language has to have a human conceptual component as well. He has done this by approaching natural language from a wholly unexpected perspective; that is, from the perspective of what he calls 'conceptual metaphor.' Early versions of their idea primarily concerned
lexical semantics rather than syntax--basically explaining the relation between conceptualization and word choice; e.g. conceptualizing argument as war versus argument as dance determines word choice and related elaborations and entailments. However, it has recently become possible to view their idea as having implications for syntax as well. Obviously, this is not merely metaphor as literary trope or figure of speech; rather, it is, as Lakoff has called it, metaphor as "figure of thought" (1986).

Veale (1996) recapitulates Lakoff’s idea as a change in the status of metaphor “...from that of a superficial rhetorical device that decorates our speech, to the status of a deep, cognitively-realized agency that organizes our thoughts, shapes our judgments, and structures our language (italics added)” (p.1). ‘Cognitively-realized’ means that the productivity or non-productivity of any conceptual metaphor will depend on those same human mental processes that determine both our perception and conception of experience. Thus as artifacts of cognition, metaphors are reliable indicators of human conceptualizations of experience. Indeed, a strong reading of Lakoff’s idea of conceptual metaphor allows that metaphors are actual mental representations. This is Veale’s reading, which he explains thusly:

Lakoff (1988) conjectures that metaphors project the cognitive map of the source domain (i.e., the vehicle) onto a target domain (the tenor), thereby causing the target to become grounded in spatiophysical experience via the source. The result is that the schemas which mediate between conceptual and sensory levels in the source become active also in the target (italics added). In this view, a metaphoric schema is a mental representation that grounds the conceptual (intellectual) structure of an abstract domain in the sensory (sensible) basis of another, more physical, domain (p.2).
This strong reading of Lakoff's idea, that metaphoric conceptualization of a situation is analogous to the mental representation of that situation and that it is expressed directly in human language, is also the view that we will take in this dissertation as we compare the relative productivity of one type of conceptual metaphor in two languages, Chinese and English. Thus the relative productivity of a particular conceptual metaphor in a language directly indicates the relative productivity of a particular conceptualization which is presumably a fairly straightforward function of the mental representation of speakers. This notion of metaphor as indicative of conceptualization and of mental representation is, as we have said, much more powerful than previous notions of metaphor. The elucidation of conceptual metaphor, then, gives us an empirical basis for claims about actual human conceptualizations of situations. This appreciation of conceptual metaphor provides a principled way to talk about the relation between language and conceptualization. As such, at least two lines of inquiry are suggested and will be pursued in this dissertation: 1) What is the role of conceptual metaphor in syntax; and 2) How do particular conceptual metaphors compare and contrast across languages? Lakoff's answer to the first question is, as we have already said, that conceptual metaphor "dwarfs our grammatical system." Conceptual metaphors assign the semantic roles that explain grammatical relations. Thus, conceptual metaphor is central to syntax. Not incidentally, as we attempt to describe the relation between conceptualization and syntax we will find ourselves reviving the traditional descriptors for syntactic
categories, e.g., that nouns designate ‘persons, places, and things’: and thus, as Lyons points out, we will be presupposing the acceptance of some “neutral ontological framework.” Given this as the answer to the first question, then the comparison and contrast of conceptual metaphors across languages has the potential to explain differences in syntactic patterns and should have implications for language typology.

2.3 TRUTH CONDITIONAL VS. CONCEPTUAL METAPHOR

Above, we contrasted Lakoff’s conceptual metaphor with the literary notions of metaphor; however, we also need to contrast it with linguistic notions of metaphor. Earlier linguistic descriptions of metaphor, best represented by Searle, only sought to explain how metaphor could be interpreted. Linguists such as Searle viewed metaphor as another instance of a break between sentence meaning and utterance meaning. As such, metaphor is a problem on par with the problems of irony and indirect speech acts. For Searle the project is then to find out first how hearers are able to know that the literal meaning is not intended and then to offer principles that allow the hearer to understand the true utterance meaning based on literal sentence meaning. For example, the sentence,

It’s getting hot in here.

as a literal utterance would mean that it is getting hot in the place of utterance; as an indirect speech act it could be a request for someone to open a window; as an ironical utterance it could mean that it is getting quite cold in the place of utterance;
and as a metaphorical utterance it could be a comment about "the increasing vituperation of an argument that is in progress" (Searle 1979:87). In every case, for truth conditional semanticists, the starting point for interpretation of an utterance is the literal meaning of the sentence. The literal meaning establishes a set of truth conditions which are evaluated against a background of factual assumptions about the sort of things that the speaker can be referring to in the utterance context. Thus, for example, where the literal meaning turns out to be not true it is the hearer's job to reinterpret the utterance until it becomes true. The hearer is inspired to do so under the Gricean assumption (Grice 1975) that conversation is a cooperative enterprise. However, this is obviously not Lakoff's project.

Lakoff does not care how the metaphor deviates from the literal. Instead, he cares about how a situation is represented; he is interested in the fact that HEAT is selected to represent vituperation, and that that selection is coherent with a conceptualization that represents DISAGREEMENT as FRICTION and that friction entails heat. In other words, Lakoff is interested in the metaphorical conceptualization of situations. To put it crudely, Lakoff is interested in cases where metaphor is taken literally. In this sense, metaphors are literal to the extent that humans have no other way to conceptualize and verbally represent a situation. The literalness of Lakoff-type conceptual metaphor can be seen clearly in the language used to describe abstractions. e.g., human emotions. Searle's example,

"Sally is a block of ice."
can be understood straightforwardly as an elaboration of the larger conceptual metaphor, INSENSITIVE IS COLD which could have a bodily basis in the fact that loss of sense precedes death, whereupon the body does become cold.

This is not to say that Searle's account of how hearers interpret metaphor is not otherwise on track. His first two principles (also called comprehension strategies), i.e., that hearers will select the most salient, defining or well-known characteristics of the source term to apply to the target term, show an appreciation of the role of human conceptualization. Thus, his example, 'Sam is a giant'—where the hearer realizes that Sam is not literally a member of that class of mythical beings—is taken to mean 'Sam is big' because bigness is the salient, defining characteristic of giants. In this case there are literal characteristics that the source, giant, and target, Sam, share. Hearers can comprehend the meaning by selecting the most salient literal features of the source and matching them with literal features of the target. For linguists steeped in the tradition of truth-conditional semantics, this is a pretty satisfactory explanation. The limitations of this approach, however, show up in those cases where the source and target have no common literal features, e.g., 'Sally is a block of ice.' Searle can only observe that, "it is a fact about our sensibility, whether culturally or naturally determined, that we just do perceive a connection" (p105). Searle is unable to explain just how the connection is perceived. The explanation, of course, is just by way of Lakoff-type conceptual metaphor. The salient literal feature of the source term, block of ice, is matched to the target, Sally,
by means of the mediating, conceptual metaphor, INSENSITIVE IS COLD. In this example, as we have seen, the sensibility is naturally determined insofar as this conceptual metaphor has a bodily basis. To what extent the sensibilities expressed in conceptual metaphor may be culturally determined is yet to be seen.

Lakoff does not dispute that there is "an extensive range of non-metaphorical concepts." He offers 'The balloon went up' and 'The cat is on the mat' as examples of non-metaphorical sentences. However, "as soon as one gets away from concrete physical experience and starts talking about abstractions or emotions, metaphorical understanding is the norm" (1993:205).

2.4 THE PROBLEM OF ONTOLOGICAL COMMITMENTS

Earlier in this discussion we observed that one of the reasons that mainstream linguists have tended to not explore the relation between human cognition, conceptualization, and syntax is because the radical structuralist orientation of the dominant generative linguistics paradigm made such relations appear uninteresting—to say the least. The language faculty is thought to be innate to humans; syntax is thought to be autonomous. However, another very different reason for not exploring such relations was the uncomfortable feeling that taking a deterministic view on cognition, conceptualization, and syntax would also entail the view that different speakers of different languages inhabit different worlds. Indeed, as we shall see in chapter five, Michael Reddy's discussion of his Conduit Metaphor implies that
Lakoff-type conceptual metaphor in language does have a determining effect on human perception and behavior. We need to explain why this should not be the case.

We just said that conceptualization is a function of mental representation which is a product of cognition. On the basis of universally available cognitive apparatus all humans in principle must be capable of the same sorts of mental representations. Nevertheless we must also accept that a given situation may be subject to various conceptualizations. For example the human activity, argument, can be metaphorically conceptualized as war or as dance. However, this in no sense indicates that speakers of a language that prefers the war metaphor cannot also appreciate the dance metaphor. The conceptualizations that are indicated by linguistic patterns could be culturally determined or could be consistent with certain habits of thought, but they should not be construed as indicative of ontological commitments.

There are three reasons why we will resist making claims about ontological commitments. The first has to do with the fact that all humans are equipped with the same cognitive apparatus; the second is that links between language and ontology have never been proven; and the third reason, based on the philosophy of language literature represented by Quine, Davidson, and Rorty, is that any such links if they were proven would turn out to be trivial.
First, on the (reasonable) assumption that all humans are endowed with the same
cognitive apparatus for the forming of mental representations, it follows that all
humans are capable of roughly the same sort of conceptualizations. In this view, the
different patterns of conceptualizations that inform the different linguistic patterns
across languages are habits of thought but no more than habits. Even habits that are
culturally determined are not immutable.

The second reason for saying that the conceptualizations indicated by linguistic
patterns in natural language need not entail ontological commitments on the part of
speakers is simply that such relations cannot be proven. The most famous examples
we know of that purport to demonstrate a relation between language and reality, i.e.,
between language and ontological commitments on the part of speakers, are the
Berlin Kay color experiments and Bloom’s research about counterfactuals in
Chinese. In the Berlin Kay experiments it is debatable whether the fact that
different languages parse the continuous color spectrum differently is any more
significant than the claim that Eskimos and skiers may have a dozen terms for snow.
Two people may argue about whether a thing is green or blue but the facts-of-the-
matter will not be disputed. The fact that debate is about two near neighbors on the
continuous spectrum, blue and green, and not about, say, red and blue merely shows
that roughly the same sensory irradiation’s are being perceived. This is not grounds
for ontological relativism. As for the snow example, rather than suggesting
differences in world-views, it merely suggests differences in expert knowledge.
Bloom, to his credit, shifts the discussion from perceptual relativism to conceptual relativism. However, his principal claim that the absence of a real versus unreal conditional distinction in Chinese syntax makes it harder for Chinese L-1 speakers to grasp English counterfactuals does not prove that Chinese speakers do not appreciate the distinction. Many would say simply that the distinction in Chinese is understood through context. By accepting this claim we acknowledge that cognition and conceptualization will be richer than syntax. However, our view of the relation between language, thought, and reality, while robbing linguistic relativism of its romance and danger, still holds that the relation between conceptualization and syntax is significant in that conceptual coherences will explain linguistic patterns.

Above, we said that the relation between language and ontology has not been proven and so we will be agnostic about what ontological commitments, if any, may or may not be indicated by particular patterns. Here we want to explain the third reason for our agnosticism by appealing to the philosophy of language literature beginning roughly with Quine’s famous discussion of ontological relativism represented in the well-known *gavagai* example. Quine’s point is that there is no way to prove or disprove that human beings subscribe to incommensurable systems just by looking at language.

In his example, an English-speaking linguist and a monolingual speaker of an exotic language both see a rabbit dash across the clearing in front of them. Where
the English speaker might say 'Look! There's a Rabbit,' the exotic language speaker exclaims, 'Gavagai.' Quine observes that there is no way to determine the meaning of gavagai. "Given that a native sentence says that a so-and-so is present, and given that the sentence is true when and only when a rabbit is present, it by no means follows that the so-and-so are rabbits. They might be all the various temporal segments of rabbits. They might be all the integral or undetached parts of rabbits...[or merely] that rabbithood is locally manifested. Better just 'Rabbiteth,' like 'Raineth'" (1969:2-3). Quine thus makes clear the problem of referential theories of meaning generally. Quine's concern as a philosopher of language is to dispose of the analytic-synthetic distinction; he is not interested in natural language per se. However, our reading of his idea helps us to make a methodological decision, i.e., to limit our discussion to the relation between conceptualization and syntax and to be agnostic about what such relations may indicate about ontological commitments of speakers. If, as Quine points out, we cannot say what a sentence means then we cannot make claims about ontological commitments feeding into putative incommensurable systems.

In other words, if referential meaning is already so indeterminate, i.e., if we cannot tell what in the world a sentence really means, then we have no grounds for supposing that different syntactic patterns across languages should indicate ontological commitments that support incommensurable systems. Thus our knowledge is not really knowledge of the world. Instead, "the totality of our so-
called knowledge or beliefs...is a man-made fabric which impinges on experience only along the edges...like a field of force whose boundary conditions are experience” (Quine 1953:42). What is crucial to meaning then is not reference but what we will call conceptual coherence. In this way we exploit Quine’s notion of knowledge as fabric. Furthermore, insofar as the conceptualizations that underlie syntactic patterns in a given language are coherent one with another then the syntactic patterns themselves will be coherent one with another.

It is true that Quine speaks of knowledge as a fabric of belief—where the term belief would appear to suggest something about ontological commitments, i.e. beliefs about the way the world is. However, on this point we appeal to Donald Davidson to help us maintain our agnostic position on the relation between language and thought on one hand and reality on the other. Our reading of Davidson’s Principle of Charity shows Davidson taking an even stronger view of knowledge as a coherent fabric than Quine does in that Davidson cuts the thread altogether on objective reality—or more accurately, the sensory irradiation’s of experience. It can be seen that Quine’s theory of knowledge and meaning does retain a referential aspect. When he says that the fabric impinges on experience only along the edges, it is true that he has much reduced the importance of real world reference in the human construction of knowledge and meaning, but he does not do away with it altogether. For Quine the fabric of beliefs is still grounded in fact—however peripherally or tenuously—so that there is still grounds for talking about conceptual relativism.
Along the edges of the force field, at least, there is still reference to some common stuff, some neutral content, about which it might be said that conceptual schemes could differ. It remained for Davidson to completely abandon any dependence on referentiality and thereby effectively silence discussion of that version of linguistic relativism that purports to sustain incommensurability.

In his Principle of Charity Davidson says that “most beliefs are correct,...[being] identified by their location in a pattern of beliefs,...[a] pattern that determines the subject of belief...[and that] depends on a background of largely unmentioned and unquestioned true beliefs” (Davidson 1984:168). The Principle of Charity, “makes interpretation possible...[because] we can dismiss a priori the chance of massive error” (p168). Thus, Davidson, while retaining Quine’s notion of a coherent belief system, effectively abandons the notion of referentiality and shifts the discussion to what it means for a sentence to be true; not how we know it is true. What it means for a sentence to be true is merely that someone holds it to be true. Any appeal to referentiality or stimulus meaning to prove that it is true is unnecessary for the task of interpretation because of the above-mentioned Principle of Charity—i.e., most beliefs will be true. Again, although Davidson, like Quine, is not particularly concerned about natural language per se, we share his worry about the problem of incommensurability and borrow his idea to say that any differences in conceptualizations that turn up must in principle be trivial.
From the Quine-Davidson view of knowledge and meaning as primarily a coherent fabric of belief it is a short step to the view of knowledge and meaning as a social construct. Rorty (1979, 1991), one of the best-known expositors of Quine-Davidson thought, takes just such a constructionist view. Indeed Hall and Ames (1987) take a social constructionist view to elucidate classical Chinese thought and discover that Confucius assumed constructionist views of knowledge as well—2,700 years before Quine and Davidson made it possible for westerners to entertain the idea! The point for our purposes is just that these current ideas end up with a view of meaning as a social construct but that trivializes ontological commitments (if any) that such a view may entail. What we are left with, turning Quine’s fabric metaphor to our own purposes, is a view of meaning as dependent on conceptual coherence—coherences which show up in language most plainly in Lakoff-type conceptual metaphor. Thus, when we speak of the relative productivity of conceptual metaphor across languages we are (obviously) endorsing a version of linguistic relativism. However, as we hope we have made clear, this a far cry from the caricaturized version that Chomsky’s followers love to disparage.

2.5 PREVIOUS STUDIES OF CONCEPTUAL METAPHOR IN CHINESE

The relative productivity of certain metaphors indicates relative tendencies to think of things in certain ways. Whether one chooses one way to think of something instead of some other equally plausible way presumably depends on which way of
thinking coheres most closely with already-held related conceptualizations. Thus, to think of argument as war instead of thinking of argument as dance means, first, that war may be a more highly developed concept than dance, and/or, second, that significant aspects of the conceptualization of the source concept, war, correspond with salient aspects of the object concept, argument. The question then becomes why war should be a more highly developed concept than dance (if that is the case), and why the ‘conflict’ aspect of argument should be picked out as being more salient than the ‘cooperative’ aspect of argument. The obvious place to look for explanation is in the culture. This is the direction that was pursued in two earlier treatments of conceptual metaphor in Chinese, by Brian King (1989) and Yu Ning (1995). In both works particular domains of emotional experience were chosen, metaphorical conceptualizations that are used to express these emotions were elucidated, and underlying cultural models were elaborated so that the “surface differences across languages [are] explainable from cultural perspectives” (Yu 1995:59). For these researchers the elucidation of conceptual metaphor across languages is important for what it reveals about the culture. For example Yu offers the conceptual metaphor, ANGER IS THE HOT GAS IN A CONTAINER, to explain usage in the sentences:

(1)-a 你又发脾气了.

\[ ni\ you\ fa\ piqi\ le. \]
Yu explains the choice of this metaphor by appeal to a specifically Chinese cosmology, the theory of *yin-yang*, “in which gas is categorized with heat” (p.83). This Chinese belief permits entailment with the related conceptual metaphor, *ANGER IS HEAT*. Thus, conceptual metaphor, linguistic expression, and well-recognized cultural beliefs make a coherent loop embracing language, thought, and reality. The focus of their studies has been primarily with word choice and lexical entailments.6

However, our aim in this dissertation is to see how conceptual metaphor across languages can inform the syntax, as well as the lexicon, and to see how such information may be coherent with the whole syntax of the language, rather than with the culture of its speakers. Much of the earlier research has been concerned with what Lakoff and Johnson call structural metaphor—conceptualizing less structured abstractions in terms of more highly structured abstractions, e.g., *ARGUMENT IS WAR*—while we will be concerned with what they call ontological metaphor—
conceptualizing abstractions as objects or substances, e.g., PROCESS IS A CONTAINER. Thus for our purposes the relative productivity/non-productivity of a particular conceptual metaphor is more a typological issue than an issue of world-views. We are interested in ontological metaphors specifically because they represent the conceptualizations that determine what notions can and cannot be nominalized in a given language. We think it is this type of metaphor that has the most relevance to syntax. Furthermore, should it be the case that not just one type of ontological metaphor is less productive, but that ontological metaphor generally is less productive, then we will have made an important claim about the productivity of nominalization strategy in that language.

2.6 RELATED ISSUES TO BE EXPLORED

2.6.1 TYPOLOGY, WORD-CLASS DISTINCTIONS, AND THE STATUS OF NOMINALS

Many claims have been made about Chinese syntax that are broadly typological–and/or ontological—in nature. These claims have implications that point to a conceptual coherence that is language-specific. Describing ontological metaphor in Chinese should elucidate conceptualizations that can sustain or refute some of these claims. For example, Tai (1984) has expressed the view in connection with certain facts about Chinese sentence structure that, compared with English, Chinese is more interested in action-result relation; whereas English is more interested in agent-
action relation. This ontological view depends partly on the fact that what little inflectional morphology one does find in this relatively isolating language shows up mostly in the so-called resultative verb constructions. Tai (1984) explains that in resultative verb constructions, the action is presupposed and the result is asserted. The shift of interest from the action to the result suggests a typological distinction such that, in Tai's words, English is an agent-oriented language, while Chinese is a patient-oriented language. This relative lack of interest in the agent's part in the action is consistent with other facts about Chinese syntax; e.g., the prevalence of topic-comment structures, zero-pro for agents, and the absence of overt marking for passive. Thus, Li and Thompson's typological claim that Chinese is a topic-prominent language, while English is subject-prominent, can be viewed as an epiphenomenon of the underlying result orientation of Chinese verbs, observed by Tai. Tsao Feng-fu's idea that Chinese is a discourse-oriented language while English is sentence-oriented is an analogous typological claim. These typological claims disguise highly impressionistic ontological and conceptual claims. Insofar as Lakoff-type conceptual metaphor provides a principled way to link conceptualization and syntax then such views can either be confirmed or disconfirmed. For example, if ontological metaphor, that makes it possible to conceptualize notions as objects, turns out to be relatively less productive in Chinese then we would have evidence that what Chan Ning-ping (1985) calls the "nouny alternative" itself is less attractive. In other words the elucidation of ontological metaphor can tell us something about
the status of nominals generally in a language. Thus, if it should turn out to be the case that nominalization, which is made operative by ontological metaphor, is less productive in Chinese syntax, then we could sustain some version of the hypothesis that Chinese is more interested in activities than in entities.

Another ostensibly typological claim has it that quantities and qualities that would be expressed adjectivally in English are expressed adverbially in Chinese. This too seems to say something about the general status of nominals in Chinese. Examples are from Hsieh 1978:170 (also discussed in Tai (1982):

(2-a) 他走错了房间

\[ ta\ zou\-cuo\ le\ fangjian \]

he enter-wrong PERF room

‘He mis-entered a room’

‘He entered the wrong room.’

(2-b) 他嫁错了人

\[ ta\ jia\-cuo\ le\ ren \]

she marry-wrong PERF person

‘She mis-married a person’

‘She married the wrong person.’
The differences between the Chinese and the English in the above examples can be explained by a difference in the status of the nominal expressions in the two languages. The preferred English translations indicate a conceptualization where the world is filled with a vast array of independently existing entities—what philosophers might call an objectivist ontology. In this conceptualization, where there is a vast array of independently existing rooms in 2-a and a vast array of independently existing persons in 2-b, it is natural to conceive of picking out the wrong entity. However, the Chinese sentences suggest a conceptualization where it is more natural to conceive of wrongly marrying an indefinite person, or wrongly entering an indefinite room. With respect to Lyons notional description of parts of speech, there is presumed to be a substantive universal about nominals such that first order nominals should designate entities that can be individualized. However, in the above examples it appears that this ‘universal’ may not be crucial for the description of 1st order nominals in Chinese. Actually, if we accept Lyons’ substantive universals, we may be able to be more perspicuous and say simply that the range of 1st order nominals is narrower in Chinese than in English.

Other examples of Chinese treating adverbially what English would treat adjectivally are given in Tai (1982), in these cases dealing with quantities rather than qualities:

(3)-a 他多吃了一碗饭,
The choice over whether quantities and qualities should be expressed adverbially or adjectivally across languages becomes a problem that shows up in the advanced-level English writing of Chinese L-1 speakers in the following examples:

? It has side-effects more than in rheumatoid arthritis.
? Mr. Barde completely obtained the amino acid sequences of these neurotrophins.

? Chinese has well-preserved documents more than many other languages.

? However, usually language teaching methods seem to have reversed this order.

These Chinese learners of English show a consistent pattern of describing adverbially what should be described adjectivally. These types of contrastive errors together with the examples offered by Hsieh and Tai, above, indicate differences in the status of nominal expressions between Chinese and English.

Obviously the difference in the status of nominals between Chinese and English must be described in relative terms, e.g., NP referents are more 'thing-like' or less 'thing-like' across languages. Lyons' description of 1st-order, 2nd-order, and 3rd-order entities is more elegant but no less relativistic. For example in *Semantics* (1977), Lyons describes a hierarchy of 1st order entities such that "persons are more strongly individualized than animals, and animals more strongly individualized than things." These 1st order entities "...are relatively constant as to their perceptual properties [through time]" (443). However, in the above examples we see that what
should, by Lyons' description, be pristine 1st-order entities do not necessarily behave that way in Chinese, e.g., there is no evidence that they are individualized, and modification is done adverbially rather than adjectivally.

Of course we are in full sympathy with Lyons’ project of identifying what Fillmore (1968:1) has referred to as “substantive syntactic universals”—as opposed to formal syntactic universals. Lyons’ (1966) idea that every grammar requires such categories as Noun, Predicator, and Sentence, but that other grammatical categories and features may be differently arranged in different languages is very important to us. His notional definitions of parts of speech are what make it possible for us to talk meaningfully about the relation between conceptualization and syntax, and indeed they are what make contrastive analysis interesting. In other words, his assumption that all grammars must in some way deal with some substantive universals, e.g., persons, places, things, qualities, states, events, processes, and activities, give us the metalanguage that we need in order to talk about different syntactic patterns across languages. By reference to these substantive universals we are able to say in just what way “grammatical categories and features may be differently arranged in different languages.”

The point is that certain notions can be realized differently across languages. While it may be the case that ‘persons’ will always show up as 1st order nominals across languages, the same cannot be said for all ‘things.’ ‘Places’, in Lyons’ terminology are “ontologically ambivalent” between 1st order nominals and
adverbials. As for the syntactic status of ‘qualities’ and ‘states’, they are notoriously ambivalent, showing up as nouns, adjectives, or verbs. For example, Kratochvil (1968) in the same breath refers to words such as 好 hao ‘good’ as both stative verbs and as adjectives. Thus being able to assess the productivity of nominalization in Chinese could have implications for how a range of related phenomena are categorized lexically and syntactically.

2.6.2 THE ROLE OF DERIVATIONAL MORPHOLOGY

Tai (1997) has already observed a conceptual constraint on the productivity of the nominalization of verbs in Chinese such that ‘visible action verbs,’ being more prototypically verbal, will not be nominalized in Chinese; whereas, ‘abstract stative verbs,’ being peripheral, can be nominalized easily. He illustrates a central-to-peripheral continuum by means of the following examples (p.451):

(4)-a *我 忘不了 他的 跑/跳.

wo wang-bu-liao ta-de pao tiao.

I forget-NEG-ASP he-POSS run/jump.

‘I cannot forget his running/jumping.’

(4)-b ?我 忘不了 他的 哭/笑.

wo wang-bu-liao ta-de ku xiao.

I forget-NEG-ASP he-POSS cry/laugh
‘I cannot forget his crying/laughing.’

(4)-c 我忘不了他的爱/恨.

wo wang-bu-liao ta-de ai hen.

I forget-NEG-ASP he-POSS love/hate.

‘I cannot forget his love/hate.’

Running and jumping in (4)-a, being prototypically visible action verbs, cannot be treated as nominals. Crying and laughing in (4)-b, being presumably less visible actions, are marginally acceptable as nominals. However, love and hate in (4)-c, being abstract stative verbs, can be nominalized. Obviously all three examples can be translated easily into English.

Looking at the above examples, however, begs a related question; that is to what extent does the presence or absence of a rich derivational morphology facilitate or impede nominalization process? Lyons’ observes in this connection that hypostatization of higher-order entities, e.g., activities and events, “depends crucially on the structure of particular languages” (1977:445). Taking his use of the word ‘structure’ to include morphology, then presumably hypostatization depends to some extent on the availability of morphological mechanisms to facilitate the process of nominalization. In English, nominalization is commonly done by means of derivational morphology, e.g., -ing suffixation in the English examples above. There is relatively much less such morphology in Chinese. What does the relative paucity
of derivational morphology—a feature that distinguishes relatively isolating languages from non-isolating languages—signify?

For first-order entities, of course, since they are in principle not derived even across languages, the relative absence of derivational morphology would signify nothing—assuming for example that the same kinds of referents, i.e., persons, places, and things, behave like nouns across given languages. For higher-order entities, the absence of derivational morphology might be significant if 1) no other equally productive nominalization mechanisms exist, and if 2) it can be shown that second and third order entities in a language having derivational morphology do indeed exhibit more nouny behavior than they do in languages not having derivational morphology.

However, point 1) is probably irrelevant to the situation in Chinese for two reasons: First, zero-derivation can still be productive; and second, there is some derivational morphology in Chinese—some suffixation, and disyllabicity. With respect to the first reason, the above sample sentences, e.g., (4)-c with 愛恨 ai hen ‘love/hate’, show that some activities represented by abstract stative verbs can be treated as nominals without any morphological marking whatsoever. Thus, the absence of derivational morphology in these cases has no impact at all. With respect to the second reason, in cases where there is a relation of action and instrument, Chinese does have derivational morphology for the nominalization of verbs:
suffixation with -zi, -tou, and -er, as represented by the following examples (also from Tai 1992:8):

(5)-a 钉

\[ d\text{ing} \]  \( \rightarrow \)  \( d\text{ingzi} \)

to nail (verb)  
nail (noun)

(5)-b 锄

\[ c\text{hu} \]  \( \rightarrow \)  \( c\text{hutou} \)

to hoe (verb)  
hoe (noun)

(5)-c 锁

\[ s\text{uo} \]  \( \rightarrow \)  \( s\text{uoer} \)

to lock (verb)  
lock (noun)

Another kind of nominalizing morphology in Chinese, disyllabicity, is discussed by Chan Ningping in her (1984) dissertation and subsequent journal article (1987). She observes that diachronically Chinese is manifesting, “an acute tendency towards longer sentences [which] promotes a shift from a general verbal style to a general nominal style.” She views deverbalization, i.e., nominalization, as “part of a ready repertoire of strategies for backgrounding” in written texts (1984:190-91). The principle means of achieving it is by means of disyllabicity.
(6)-a 研究 方法 非 常 重 要。

*yánjiù fāngfǎ hěn zhòngyào.*

research method very important

‘To do research on methodology is very important.’ (activity) -or-

‘Research method is very important.’ (nominal adjunct)

(6)-b 研究 方法 学 是 非 常 重 要 的。

*yánjiù fāngfāxué shì hěn zhòngyào de.*

research method-study is very important NOM

‘To do research on methodology is very important.’

(6)-c 研究 方法 是 非 常 重 要 的。

*yánjiù fāngfā shì hěn zhòngyào de.*

research method is very important NOM

Research method is very important.

In (6)-a 研究 *yánjiù* ‘research’ can either be interpreted as an activity or as a nominal adjunct. In (6)-b it is disambiguated into an activity; while in (6)-c it is disambiguated as a nominal adjunct. She explains that since “disyllabism among nouns is more frequent and occurs prior to disyllabicity in verbs, verbs following this practice are already wearing a nouny disguise...An added phonetic bulk to a monosyllabic verb allows easy access to the Verb/Noun borderline” (p.187).
Thus, given the possibility of zero derivation and given the existence of some morphological processes in Chinese, the paucity of derivational morphology relative to English may be moot in terms of its effect on the productivity of nominalization generally. However to really close the book on this question point number 2) should be addressed. That is, do second and third order entities in a language having derivational morphology exhibit more nouny behavior than they do in languages not having derivational morphology? A ready way to address this question is to see to what extent notions may be subject to conceptualization in terms of ontological metaphor.\textsuperscript{8}

In the following chapters we will try to assess the nature and the productivity of this major nominalization strategy, ontological metaphor, in Chinese.
NOTES:

1. The most commonly cited evidence in support of the innateness hypothesis is 1-that young children are able to produce novel utterances at an early stage, and 2-that children acquire the full regalia of language at an early age. The first point purports to prove that language is uniquely rule-governed behavior; the second point 'proves' that humans are uniquely endowed with language learning capacity. Thus the vehemence of Chomsky's attack on Skinner is understandable given that rules could just be habits by another name. With respect to the innateness hypothesis it can also be seen that Jackendoff's (1983) position is somewhat ambiguous. Despite his avowed allegiance to the generativist enterprise, the fact that Jackendoff even recognizes a cognition-semantics interface necessarily undermines the idea of modularity of mind—which is so crucial to the idea of innateness.

2. We recommend that the term, 'constructivist linguistics,' be used as the positive alternative to the 'objectivist linguistics' that Lakoff and Johnson so much deplore. Constructivists would embrace the 'non-objectivist' position.

3. A comprehensive summary of 'functionalist' approaches taken in the study of Chinese language, "...which broadly includes research taking a cognitive, semantic, functional syntactic, or discourse perspective," over the past twenty years is presented in Biq, Tai and Thompson (1996). The central tenet of this functional tradition is defined as "...an emphasis on linguistic structure as reflecting the role of language as a tool of human communication rather than as an instantiation of an abstract set of mental representations" (p.97). This dissertation, aiming to elucidate the role of human conceptual metaphor in shaping Chinese syntax, obviously conforms to the spirit of this central tenet.

4. One is reminded of Polanyi's earlier (1975) idea, expressed in connection with his philosophy of science, that human knowledge is only extended by means of metaphor. Whatever is wholly novel can only be expressed in terms of what is already familiar.

5. This is part of the claim made by Cynthia Hsin-feng Wu in her dissertation (1993). She points out that, "...both English and Chinese have explicit linguistic devices to express the counterfactual, but they exist at different levels...In English, the linguistic markings are at the syntactic level, while in Chinese, they are distributed at the lexical, syntactic, and discourse levels." Au (1983, 1984) and Liu (1985)—cited by Pinker (1995:241)—criticize Bloom's methodology in ways that basically undermine his claims.
6. A third study by Liu (1992) explains Chinese compounds involving the uses of 心 xin 'heart' and 氣 qi 'gas/air' in terms of the conceptualization of the physical structures of 心 xin and 氣 qi and the metaphoric elaborations that are licensed by those conceptualizations. For example, the compound, 空心 kongxin, is licensed by the fact that the heart is conceptualized as a three-dimensional concrete object having substance that can be "removed" (p.6).

7. It should be apparent that we are not just trying to have it both ways; i.e., on the one hand being agnostic about ontological commitments, while on the other hand presupposing Lyons' "acceptance of some neutral ontological framework." (Lyons 1977). The neutral ontological framework is just the source for the substantive universals that inform Lyons' notional descriptions of parts of speech. Thus, insofar as it is neutral, it is congenial with our aim of staying agnostic about the ontological commitments of speakers.

8. Marjorie K.M. Chan has correctly pointed out to me in connection with the sentences on pp42-43 that it is -ing suffixation in English that allows the actions to be treated as nominals. Certainly, this is prima facie evidence that the existence of such derivational morphology does facilitate nominalization. Our point is merely that one should look at nominalization in terms of broad conceptual coherences that operate in the whole language before deciding about the importance of such derivational morphology.
CHAPTER 3

CONTAINER METAPHOR

In the introduction we suggested that given the subtle relationship between metaphor and conceptualization an expedient way to elucidate otherwise invisible metaphor—to make the familiar strange—is to compare translations from English to Chinese and/or Chinese to English. In this section we compare English and Chinese versions of the first three chapters of the Book of Genesis, 创世记, in the Old Testament Bible, 旧约. The English is taken from the New International Version; and the Chinese is from the 当代圣经. We choose to look at the Bible because, since it is a sacred text, we imagine that translation must have been done with great care. Scholars will have thought hard about the nuance of particular expressions since their choices could have serious theological implications. One can assume that the use of one word or phrase or metaphor over another matters deeply.

Looking at the text for every example of ontological metaphor—i.e., where abstractions are treated as objects—on the English side, there emerge some interesting points of comparison and contrast on the Chinese side. Examples (1) to 50
(3) show English treating abstractions as objects; while examples (4) to (6) show abstractions as objects being further elaborated as containers.

(1) I will put enmity between you and the woman. (3:15)

我要使你和女人成为仇敌。

wo yao shi ni he nuren chengwei choudi.

I will make you and woman become enemy

(2) Your desire will be for your husband. (3:16)

你仍要恋慕丈夫。

ni reng yao lianmu zhangfu.

you still will admire husband

(3) to know good and evil (3:5)

分别善恶

fenbie shan e

distinguish good evil

(4) I will greatly increase your pain in childbearing. (3:16)

我必加重你的苦楚，你怀胎分娩时，一定痛苦。

wo bi jiazhong ni de kuchu, ni huatai fenmian shi, yiding tongku.
I must increase you POSS suffering, you pregnant labor time, certainly painful.

(5) *In the beginning* God created the heavens and the earth. (1:1)

太初，神创造天地。

*taichu, shen chuangzao tandi.*

**ultimate-beginning, God create heaven-earth**

(6) ...to fall *into* a deep sleep. (2:21)

...沉睡.

...*chen shui*

sink-sleep

In the first three sample sentences above, we see that the English nominal expressions, *enmity* in (1), *desire* in (2), and *good* and *evil* in (3), are all treated differently in Chinese. *Enmity*, which is an OBJECT in English that can be physically placed *between* persons, does not surface in Chinese; instead it is presumably the abstract quality possessed by persons who are ‘enemies’, 仇敌 *choudi*. The nominal expression *desire* in (2) is translated as a verbal expression 恋慕 *liannmu* ‘to desire’ in Chinese. A subtler difference in the ontology of the notions *good* and *evil* between English and Chinese shows up in (3). Whereas in English *good* and *evil* are OBJECTS of *knowledge*, i.e., ‘things’ that can be *known*, in
Chinese their nominal status is mitigated. Thus, 善 shan ‘good’ and 恶 e ‘evil’ are relational notions that can be ‘distinguished’ 分别 fenbie, but they may not necessarily be construed as OBJECTS.

Summarizing on the basis of the above three examples, two hypotheses can be suggested:

1. Abstract qualities connected with human volitionality will not be objectified; instead they will be implicitly attached to types of humans presumed to possess those qualities (e.g., ‘enmity’ as ‘enemy’ 仇敌 choudi) or they will appear as verbal expressions (e.g., ‘desire’ as ‘to desire’ 恋慕 liannu)

2. Abstract notions that are duals— i.e., that can be understood relationally— will tend to not be objectified (e.g., 善 shan 恶 e ‘good evil’)

Looking now at the examples where English treats abstractions as containers, childbearing in (4), beginning in (5), and sleep in (6), we again find a different situation with Chinese. The English childbearing in (4), an activity which may be construed as a process, is a CONTAINER OBJECT that contains the SUBSTANCE, pain. Once again, however, the ontological metaphor, CONTAINER OBJECT, appears to be untranslatable into Chinese. Instead one finds an adverbial clause of time 你 怀胎 分娩 时 ni huaitai fenmian shi ‘when you give birth.’ The activity remains a verbal, not a nominal, and instead of container there is an expression of time frame encompassing the activity. On the other hand, PAIN IS A SUBSTANCE, the quantity of which can be increased, shows up clearly in both languages— increase
your pain and 加重 你的 苦楚. In (5), the use of the preposition in indicates that beginning, as a span of time, is construed as a container of events or activities.

Thus, for English, the metaphor, TIME IS A CONTAINER OF EVENTS/ACTIVITIES, is suggested. In Chinese, 太初 taichu ‘ultimate-beginning’ without any locative expression, indicates an absence of metaphoric conceptualization. (That is unless one regards topic-comment structure itself as an elaboration of an ontological metaphor based on WHOLE-PART; where TOPIC IS WHOLE, e.g., 太初 taichu, and COMMENT IS PART, e.g., 神创造天地 shen chuangzao tiandi ‘God create heaven-earth.’) In (6) the English deep sleep is objectified as a container into which one can fall. In Chinese, however, the situation is described by a verb phrase, 沉睡 chen shui ‘sink-sleep’, undermining the possibility of any ontological metaphor—though it is interesting to note that the adverbial 沉 ‘sink’ is roughly analogous to the adjective deep.

Generalizing on the basis of the above three container examples, one can hypothesize that:

3. The ontological metaphors, TIME IS A CONTAINER and ACTIVITY IS A CONTAINER, which are fairly productive in English, do not show up in Chinese.

In considering the claim suggested by hypothesis 3, we notice that it is congruent with hypothesis 1, in Chapter One, that ontological metaphors are less operative in Chinese than in English, and also that 3 is congruent with part of hypothesis 2, in Chapter One, i.e., that A STATE IS A CONTAINER may not be operative in
Chinese. Does this mean that there is no correlation between English and Chinese with respect to container metaphors? So far we have looked at abstractions as containers; the last thing to look at then is the extent to which actual physical substances or entities may be viewed metaphorically as containers. From our sample text we find two examples in English:

(7) God...[also] said, “Be fruitful..., *fill the earth...*” (1:28)

神...又说: “你们要...,布满 地面,...”

*Shen...you shuo: “Nimen yao..., buman dimian,...”*

God...also said: “You should..., disseminate-fill earth-surface,...”

(8) God formed *out of* the ground all the beasts of the field and birds of the air.

(2:19)

神...用 泥土 造成...各样 飞禽走兽...

*Shen...yong nitu zaocheng...geyang feiqin-zoushou...*

God...*use* mud create...each-kind flying-birds-four-footed-animal...

Both sentences above contain expressions that depend on container metaphor in English but which appear as something else in Chinese. In (7) the apparent conceptual correspondence between the English, *fill the earth*—EARTH IS A CONTAINER—and the Chinese, 布满 地面 *buman dimian* ‘disseminate-fill earth-
surface', is weakened by the presence of the clitic みみ mian 'surface'—suggesting the perhaps more intuitive, i.e., physically based, metaphor, EARTH IS A SURFACE for Chinese. In (8) the English indicates something like CONSTITUENT SUBSTANCES ARE CONTAINERS OUT OF WHICH CREATED THINGS EMERGE to explain the expression in which animals are formed out of the ground.

The apparent complexity of this metaphor stems from the fact that the substance not only constitutes the container but also fills the container with itself—the constituent substance is both container and contained. In Chinese the use of the verb 用 'use' indicates that container metaphor is not operative; instead an ontological metaphor, CONSTITUENT SUBSTANCES ARE INSTRUMENTS IN CREATION is indicated.

So far we have taken the approach of comparing English and Chinese translations of a given text because, in view of the intrinsically covert nature of metaphoric conceptualization, we regard this as an expedient way to 'make the familiar strange.' Having in this way formed some hypotheses about ontological metaphor in Chinese, the next step in our discussion of container metaphor in Chinese is to turn the thing around by looking at the Chinese version of our sample text for any expressions whatsoever that may suggest the notion of container. We will then try to generalize to what extent these expressions may be construed as metaphorical.
Altogether, we find 17 expressions which may be thought to suggest the idea of container in Chinese. These fall into roughly 5 groups: 1) 4 expressions denoting appear, produce, or develop with V + Hi; 2) 1 expression combining NP + Hi; 3) 2 expressions with M, one with NP + Hi, and one with NP + VP + Hi; 4) 6 expressions with NP + Hi; 5) 3 expressions with NP + M / 4, that denote groups. In every case the metaphorical containers in Chinese are actual physical substances or entities and not abstractions, e.g., activities, or processes, such as one finds in English. Examples of each group are:

(9)-a: (1:9)
lo chu gan di.
The dry ground appeared

(9)-b: (1:22)
Shen cao chu bu long zhong de yeshou.
God create out NEG same kind type POSS beast

(9)-c: (1:11)
di yao zhang chu qing cao.
earth will grow out plants

Let the land produce vegetation

Examples of each group are:
(10) Shen...shi li zhang chu ge lei shumu,...
God...cause earth in grow out each type tree,...
'God...made all kinds of trees grow out of the ground'

(11)-a you yi tiao he cong Yidian liu chu...
have one CL river Eden from flow out...
'a river flowed from Eden'

(11)-b zhi you wu cong di li mao qi,...
only have fog from earth in produce rise,...
'But fog came up from the earth'

(12)-a shui li yao you wu you dong, kong zhong yao you que niao feixiang.
water in will have thing swim move, air in will have sparrow bird fly
'the water teems with living creatures, birds fly across the expanse of
the sky'

(12)-b yuan li de guo zi ni qu bu du can yi chi.
yuan li de guozi ni quanbu dou keyi chi.
garden in POSS fruit you complete all can eat
'You are free to eat from any tree in the garden'

(12)-c 她是我骨中的骨, 肉中的肉! (2:23)
ta shi wo gu zhong de gu, rou zhong de rou!
she is I bone midst POSS bone, flesh midst POSS flesh
'[She is] bone of my bone, flesh of my flesh'

(13)-a 然而, 在所造的一切活物中, 蛇是最狡猾的. (3:1)
ran er, zai shen suo zao de yiqie huo wu zhong, she shi zui jiaohua de.
afterwards, at God which create POSS all live thing in, snake is most
sly NOM.
'Now the snake was more crafty than any of the wild animals God had
made.'

(13)-b 你要受牲畜野兽中最严厉的咒诅. (3:14)
ni yao shou shengchu yeshou zhong zui yanli de zouju.
you will receive livestock beast in most severe POSS curse
'Cursed are you above all the livestock and all the wild animals.'

(13)-c [他们]立刻躲进树丛里,... (3:8)
[tamen] like du jin shucong li,...
[they] immediately hide enter tree-clump in,...
‘[they] hid...among the trees...’

For the sentences in (9) with V + 出 denoting 'appear', 'produce', or 'develop', it is hard to establish the notion of container. In (9)-a the VP 露出 lou-chu ‘appear’ is unaccusative and there is no reference to source. In (9)-b the VP 造出 zao-chu 'make' is accusative, the agent is 神 shen 'God', but there is no reference to source. In (9)-c the VP 長出 zhang-chu 'grow' is accusative, and here the agent 地 di 'earth' is also the source—but it is not conceived as container. Actually, in English, where the agent-action relation is more commonly the focus of attention, this kind of expression, in which abstractions (as inanimate objects) take the role of agent, is a variety of ontological metaphor that Lakoff and Johnson call personification. In their words, "...the physical object is further specified as being a person;" e.g., Cancer finally caught up with him (p.33). This applies especially in cases where the "physical" object is metaphorically constructed from an abstract entity. In this kind of ontological metaphor, personification is presumably imputed from the fact that a common quality of agency is volitionality; a quality most typically applied to persons. In (9)-c above, 地 di 'earth', though agent, is already a substance rather than an abstraction. This brings to mind another question for research: If, as has been observed by Tai (1982, 1985), Chinese syntax focuses more attention on the action-result relation than the agent-action relation, should one expect
personification metaphor to be less operative in Chinese as compared to English?

We will deal with this hypothesis in Chapter 6.

In (10) 地 di 'earth' is again source and with the addition of 里 li 'in', the metaphor of container is suggested; i.e., the earth contains trees in incipient form that come out. The sentences in (11) containing 从 cong 'from' indicate source in (11)-a, without 里 li 'in', but in (11)-b the expression, 从地里 cong di li 'from earth in', with 里, does suggest container.

The sentences in (12) and especially in (13) clearly depend on container metaphor. In (12)-a, the substances, 水 shui 'water' with 里 in, and 空 kong 'air' with 中 'in/inside', contain fish and birds respectively. In (12)-b, 园 yuan 'garden' with 里 'in' contains 果子 guozi 'fruit'. The expression in (12)-c, 在...骨中的骨, 肉中的肉 gu zhong de gu, rou zhong de rou 'bone of my bone, flesh of my flesh', describing the situation in the story where the woman is made from the rib of the man, is analogous to the source as container metaphor in sentences (10) and (11)-b above.

The sentences in (13) are the most metaphorical of all the examples from our sample. They come closest to matching the specification of container metaphor as delineated by Lakoff and Johnson (and as found in English); i.e., where abstractions, in this case groups of individuals, are viewed as containers. An expression will be more metaphorical than another to the extent that it has less of an actual physical basis and depends more on human abstraction. A group of living things in (13)-a 在...活物中 zai...huo wu zhong 'at live thing in/among', a group of animals in
(13)-b 牲畜 野兽 中 shengchu yeshu zhong 'livestock beast in/among', and a clump of trees in (13)-c 树 丛 里 shucong li 'tree clump in', are abstractions in the sense that humans have to conceive these collections of particulars as wholes that contain their constituent elements, as in (13)-a and -b, or that contain other elements, as in (13)-c.

3.1 THE RELATIVE NON-PRODUCTIVITY OF CONTAINER METAPHOR IN CHINESE

Generalizing on the basis of the above examples, what claims can be made about the use of container metaphor in Chinese? What would be the significance of such claims? We have seen that expressions which suggest the notion of container in Chinese are less metaphorical than the expressions in English in the sense that the Chinese expressions all have some physical basis. Whereas in English abstractions such as TIME, ACTIVITIES, and STATES are metaphorically constructed as containers, in the Chinese examples we find EARTH, WATER, AIR, GARDENS, and GROUPS constructed as containers and no examples of abstractions such as appear in English. Thus we have prima facie evidence to support the hypothesis that TIME, ACTIVITIES, and STATES ARE CONTAINERS, which is a very productive metaphor in English does not show up in Chinese. Furthermore, since these are all a variety of ontological metaphor, this claim gives support and meaning to our original
intuitive hypothesis, i.e., that ontological metaphors are less operative in Chinese than in English.

Of course the data on which these claims are based, a few random sample sentences, and one small fragment of text are not sufficient proofs. In fact possible counter-evidence comes directly from *The Pinyin Chinese-English Dictionary* (Commercial Press 1981). Under the entry for 中 *zhong* 'middle...in the process of', the following examples of usage are given:

(14)-a 月 中

*yue zhong*

month middle

'in the middle of the month'

(14)-b 在 修建 中

*zai xiujian zhong*

at build middle

'in the process of being built'

(14)-c 历史 在 斗争 中 发展, 世界 在 动荡 中 前进

*lishi zai douzheng zhong fazhan, shijie zai dongdang zhong qianjin*

history at struggle in develop, world at stir-up in advance

'history develops in struggle and the world advances in the midst of turbulence'
Though the time expression 月 yue 'month' is not a container in (14)-a it is certainly a physical space with a 'middle'. However, the activity 修建 xiujuan 'build' in (14)-b does appear to be container. Similarly, the activity斗争 doucheng 'struggle' in (14)-c appears to be the container for the development of history, and 动荡 dongdang 'turbulence/stir-up' appears to be the container for the advancement of the world. Thus, ACTIVITY IS A CONTAINER appears to be operative in Chinese. To what extent these counter-examples undermine our claim about the prevalence of container metaphor in Chinese is difficult to say. The first thing one notices about斗争 doucheng 'struggle' and 动荡 dongdang 'stir-up' as containers in (14)-c is that they have the extra quality of INSTRUMENT; i.e., it is by means of struggle and stirring up that the ends are achieved. If this holds true in other cases we would have to restrict the metaphor by saying ACTIVITY AS INSTRUMENT IS CONTAINER. However, a more important question is to what extent does 中 itself, as opposed to里, express container? Looking at the following phrases involving the use of abstractions with 中 we notice that in each case the expression of time, 的时候 de shihou, can be substituted for 中 but that 里 cannot.

(15)-a 在 文化大革命 中/的 时候/*里...

zai wenhua da geming zhong de shihou *li...

at culture big revolution in/time/*in...
'in/during the Cultural Revolution...'

(15)-b 在过程中的时候/*里...

*zai guocheng zhong de shihou *li...*

at process in/time/*in...

'in/during the process...'

Given that 的时候 de shihou can be substituted for 中 zhong but that 里 li cannot, we could stipulate the more restricted metaphor, ACTIVITY AS TIME-FRAME IS CONTAINER for the Chinese case. However, upon reflection, one can recognize that the use of 中 zhong as 'center' or 'middle' actually need not elicit container—中 zhong could equally apply to any one-dimensional or two-dimensional substance or space; i.e., to a line or to a plane, such that one can refer to the middle of a line or the center of a plane. Indeed the contrastive use of 上 shang versus 里 li in Chinese versus 'in' in English could indicate a general bias in Chinese for conceptualizing substance and space in terms of two dimensions rather than three dimensions—as, for example, in the sentence: 鸟 在 树 shang: niao zai shu shang; versus *鸟 在 树里 *niao zai shu li; versus 'the bird is in the tree.' Two examples translating from English to Chinese can reinforce this point:

(16)-a There are three stages in adolescent development.

青春的发展(*中)有三个阶段.
adolescent POSS development (*in/during) have three CL stage

(16)-b 青春期, 分三个阶段.

' The adolescent period is divided into three stages.'

(17) In washing the window, I splashed water all over the floor (L. & J. p.31).

擦窗户的时候, 我洒了一地水.

wash window POSS time, I splash ASP one/whole floor water

(16)-a, describing a process—here viewed as a type of activity—as containing steps or stages, represents the perhaps the prototype case of ACTIVITY IS A CONTAINER in English; i.e., PROCESS IS A CONTAINER. However, in the Chinese version, even the use of 中 zhong, not to mention 里 li, is ungrammatical. Chinese native-speaker informants have said this is because the three stages encompass the whole process; so to speak of 中 is incoherent. (Presumably, the whole is not greater than the sum of its parts; the whole is merely cut up into parts.) If this is indeed the case then we have prima facie evidence in support of an earlier claim reported by King (1989) that whole-part is more productive than container-contained in Chinese. This
is also in line with the view that the topic-comment sentence structure itself is a metaphorical construction based on whole-part relation (cf. Tai 1989, 1993a,b). Sentences like (16)-a are consistent with that interpretation; i.e., where what wants container metaphor in English shows up unmarked in a topic-comment structure in Chinese. To thus show that metaphorical conceptualization operates not just at the lexical level but at the syntactic level too, is an important extension of Lakoff and Johnson's insight about the importance of metaphor in shaping linguistic expression.

(16)-b, which native speakers offer as a more idiomatic translation of the English in (16)-a, ignores the English nominalization of the activity, 'develop' (thus precluding the notion of process-as-container), and instead focuses on the time-frame aspect of the situation. The English metaphor, ACTIVITY IS CONTAINER OF CONSTITUENT PARTS, is replaced by TIME-FRAME IS A WHOLE DIVIDED INTO CONSTITUENT PARTS. The Chinese bias for casting activities as time-frames is shown in (17). This sentence from Lakoff & Johnson (p.31) which represents container metaphor in English, depends on ACTIVITY AS TIME-FRAME IS CONTAINER in Chinese.

We can summarize our discussion of container metaphor in Chinese with the following points:

1) 里 suggests true container, but it does not apply to abstractions (e.g., activities/processes). Instead, its containers must have a physical basis. The most abstract, i.e., least physically based, container found in the sample with
M is groups of particulars.

2) For abstractions, the use of 中 suggests the metaphor, ACTIVITY/PROCESS AS TIME-FRAME IS CONTAINER. Evidence for this metaphor is found in the fact that:

a) 中 and 时候 can substitute, but not 里.

b) Furthermore, time-frame is more salient than container since activity/process does not contain all its parts—it only contains activities that occur within the time-frame that the activity/process encompasses.

Based on the above results with container metaphor, the following general conclusions about the productivity of ontological metaphor in Chinese can be drawn:

- Our hypothesis that TIME IS A CONTAINER and ACTIVITY IS A CONTAINER do not show up in Chinese is so far confirmed.

- Our hypothesis, that whole-part may be a more productive elaboration of object metaphors is also so far confirmed.

- To the extent that the above claim is true then our first hypothesis, that ontological metaphors (which view abstractions as objects) are less productive in Chinese than English, is also confirmed and given meaning; i.e., container metaphors are less productive in Chinese.

A careful reading of Lakoff and Johnson's discussion of ontological metaphor in English seems to indicate that the typical ontological metaphor is one that views an
abstraction as an object. In terms of English syntax, and based on the examples that Lakoff and Johnson offer, this often involves the nominalization of some activity otherwise described by a verb. If it is true that ontological metaphors of this typical kind are less productive in Chinese, then it could also be the case that nominalization, a syntactic process, is also less productive in Chinese than in English. In other words, the construction of ACTIVITY IS A CONTAINER metaphor requires two moves: 1) that activity be nominalized; and 2) that nominals be conceived of as containers. As such, the apparent nonproductivity of activity as container metaphor in Chinese could be explained by the absence of either the first move, the second move, or both moves.

In the above discussion of container metaphor we began by translating English sample sentences exemplifying ontological metaphor into Chinese in order to develop some notion of what kind of ontological metaphor may be operative in Chinese. We then refined those notions by looking at a fragment of Chinese-English bilingual text. Finally we confirmed or disconfirmed our refined hypotheses by looking at a Chinese monolingual text. We think this kind of contrastive approach to the problem of metaphoric conceptualization in natural language is well motivated by the fact that most ontological metaphor is not noticed as being metaphorical.

What can be the value of making claims about ontological metaphor in Chinese? 1) Such claims can explain facts about expression.
2) Such claims can be connected to other yet to be elucidated facts about Chinese expression with a view towards elaborating a language-specific, coherent conceptual scheme (at least with respect to ontological metaphor).

3) Such claims can contribute to the ongoing debate between objectivists and non-objectivists—to provide an enriched view of linguistic phenomena.
CHAPTER 4

OTHER APPLICATIONS OF CONTAINER METAPHOR

4.1 PHYSICAL SPACE IS A CONTAINER

Container metaphor also shows up in English in connection with the conceptualization of physical space. One case identified by Lakoff and Johnson has to do with land areas. Just as a room is a container, such that we go out of one room and into another room, so a clearing in the woods can be seen as a bounded area such that we can be in the clearing or out of the clearing; in the woods or out of the woods. Lakoff and Johnson observe that putting a boundary on territory is "an act of quantification" (p.29). This is because "bounded areas have sizes...[which] allows them to be quantified in terms of the amount of substance they contain" (p.30). In their example, Kansas is a bounded area, which allows us to say, "There's a lot of land in Kansas." Indeed there appears to be a natural tendency for humans, themselves container objects, to construct bounded areas in the physical and conceptual world. We break open a rock to see what is inside (another example from Lakoff and Johnson). More interestingly, however, "even where there is no
natural physical boundary that can be viewed as defining a container, we impose boundaries—marking off territory so that it has an inside and a bounding surface—whether a wall, a fence, or an abstract line or plane” (p.29).

To investigate the situation in Chinese the following sample sentences have been translated from English.

(1) He got into the tub.

他 迈进 浴盆.

*ta maijin zaopen.*

he enter bath

(2) The fish is in the water.

鱼 在 水 里.

*yu zai shui li.*

fish at water in

(3)-a There is a lot of land in Kansas.

KANSAS 很 大.

Kansas *hen da.*

Kansas very big

(3)-b KANSAS 土地 广大．
Kansas land big

(3)-c 在 KANSAS 有 许多 土地。

zai Kansas you xuduo tudi.

at Kansas have much land

(4) The bird is in the tree.

niao zai shu shang.

bird at tree on

In examples (1) and (2), the situation between Chinese and English appears to be identical. In both cases 漱盆 zaopen and ‘tub’ and 水 shui and ‘water’ are conceived of as containers, as indicated by the use of 进 jin ‘enter’ and 里 li ‘in’. Here we can observe that the physical basis for conceiving 漱盆 zaopen as container is so obvious that such conceptualization could be universal. 水 shui as container in Chinese was exemplified in sentence (20)-a in the previous section. With respect to land areas as containers we noticed in (20)-b, also in the previous section, that 园 yuan ‘garden’, a small land area, (typically enclosed by a wall?) was conceived as container as indicated by the use of 里. However, in example (3) above ‘Kansas,’ the name for a land area, is not conceived of as container of land area in Chinese--
unlike the situation in English. Instead, one finds three possibilities in Chinese: 1- that the name and land area are coextensive, as in (3)-a *Kansas hen da* (also possible for English); 2- that the name identifies topic in a topic-comment construction, as in (3)-b *Kansas tudi guangda* and 3- that the name identifies location in a so-called ‘presentative’ sentence with 有 you ‘have,’ as in (3)-c *Zai Kansas you xduo tudi.*

At any rate, container metaphor for the conceptualization of physical space in Chinese appears to be less operative than it is in English—even in the case of land area, which does have a fairly strong physical basis. In Chinese 园 yuan ‘garden’ in (20)-b, repeated below as (5), can be conceived as container, given that it can take 里 li ‘in’—as can 房间 fangjian ‘room’ (in example (6) from 现代汉语八百词 *Xiandai Hanyu Babai Ci* (p.322)) and 城 cheng ‘city’ and 林 shulin ‘forest’.

However, Kansas cannot. The conceptualizations of 园 yuan and 房间 fangjian and 城 cheng and 林 shulin are bounded in a way that ‘Kansas’, an artificial, political entity, is not. In other words the use of 里 li entails a level of discreteness/boundedness that does not apply to this political entity. The use of 内 nei ‘inside’ with the political entity 国 guo ‘country’ as in 在国内 zai guo-nei in example (7) is consistent with this interpretation; nei expresses ‘interiority’ without entailing the boundedness that true container would suggest. In terms of metaphor these examples indicate that Chinese is not inclined to extend the notion of container much beyond the purely physical. One may be inclined to see this resistance to the extension of container metaphor—relative to English—as indicative of a coherent
linguistic conceptualization that resists objectification generally—relative to English. We will have to compare other types of ontological metaphor in Chinese and English in order to more fully support this view.

(5) 园 里的果子你全部都可以吃. (2:16)

\[ yuan \ li \ de \ guozi \ ni \ quanbu \ dou \ keyi \ chi. \]

garden in POSS fruit you complete all can eat

'You are free to eat from any tree in the garden'

(6) 房间里有人

\[ fangjian-li \ you \ ren \]

room-in have person(s)

'There is someone in the room.'

(7) ...在 国内

\[ ...zai \ guo-nei \]

...at country-inside

'...in the country'

Another interesting case of contrast with English turns up in example (4), above. Whereas in English ‘tree’ is a bounded space that contains a bird, in Chinese 树 shu
appears to be a surface on which, 『shang, a bird is located. Taken at face value, this example indicates that for the conceptualization of trees, Chinese is again more literal than English. While both languages view trees as entities that can be landmarks; e.g.; 鸟在棵树的旁边; 鸟在棵树的前边 niao zai nei-ke shu de pangbiar; niao zai nei-ke shu de qianbiar ‘the bird is next to the tree’; ‘the bird is in front of the tree’, English elaborates tree metaphorically as container, but Chinese does not. Thus in 4) one can see that even for notions that are clearly nominalized, e.g., 树 shu ‘tree,’ further conceptualization as container may not show up. ¹

4.2 THE PROBLEM OF LOCATIVE IMPLICATIONS

Given that container metaphor is less productive in Chinese than in English, then two obvious questions arise: 1-why should it be less productive; and 2-what alternative metaphoric conceptualization, if any, should be suggested? The short answer to 1 must be that the metaphoric elaboration of metaphoric objects and indeed of physical objects is constrained in Chinese because objectification itself is problematic in Chinese. At the end of the previous chapter, it was observed that the application of container metaphor depended on two conditions; 1- that the notion be construed as an object, and 2- that the notion as object be further elaborated as a container. Thus container metaphor would be less productive if meeting either one or both of the above conditions were problematic. The facts of the Chinese language
that we have seen so far indicate that indeed both conditions are problematic.

Chinese does not objectify notions as freely as English does; and container metaphor, where it does apply in Chinese, is more physically based than it is in English. As for question 2, about what the Chinese alternative to the container metaphor should be, the short answer, as we have already hinted, is that in many cases where English would employ container metaphor, Chinese will depend on whole-part metaphor. We will observe that for a conceptual scheme that resists objectification generally, whole-part is more congenial than container-contained.

Chad Hansen (1983) developed a whole-part conceptualization to explain his famous (and controversial) mass-noun hypothesis. Stated briefly, Hansen’s hypothesis has it that if the syntax of a language does not indicate that nouns are countable, then that syntax must, by default, indicate that nouns are construed in terms of mass. Semantically, there are only these two possibilities; nouns either refer to individuals or to a mass. On the basis of this simple dichotomy, one can see that construing referents as individuals makes them amenable to different kinds of metaphoric elaboration than does construing referents as mass. A mass is typically amorphous and its constituent elements are typically homogeneous and indistinguishable; individuals are typically discrete, and as constituent elements of a class, they are typically bounded objects which can be distinguished and differentiated. If we imagine bounded objects as typically having a fixed form, then we can imagine an exterior and by extension we can imagine an interior as repository for the parts that
combine to make up the whole object. The whole-part relationship can thus be elaborated as container-contained. In contrast, an amorphous mass, having none of the attributes of discreteness or fixity can only be cut into constituent parts. The whole-part relationship cannot be further elaborated.

Returning now to the first question, which may be termed the problem of objectification, we can see that many of the insights offered in Zhou (1994), *Locative Implications of Chinese Nouns and Occurrence Conditions of Localizers*, are relevant here. Although her attention is focused on physical objects only (not on metaphorical objects), the claims that she makes about the human conceptualizations that underlie syntactic restrictions on the formation of Chinese locative phrases are consistent with the views expressed in our discussion of container metaphor. Her claim that the distinction between ‘inherent’ versus ‘acquired’ locative implication of NP’s is dependent on the perceptual salience of the referents named by those NP’s is, as we shall see, consistent with our view that objectification, i.e., the application of ontological metaphor, likewise is dependent on perceived qualities of NP referents. In other words, we both take Tai’s (1996, 1989) cognition-based functional approach to the explanation of syntactic phenomena. Also, not incidentally, the description of the construction of locative phrases as a two-step procedure, originally described by Hsieh (1989), requiring first the identification of the whole and then the specification of the part, tells us certainly that whole-part relation is productive in Chinese syntax, and indirectly lends credence to our view
that whole-part is a likely analog for the English container-contained. More importantly, however, the fact that Chinese wants this two-step procedure, as compared to English one-step, tells us that specific reference is more problematic in Chinese, requiring, as it were, more cumbersome syntactic paraphernalia than English does. If, as we are claiming, objectification generally is problematic then not surprisingly specificity, an attribute of objects, is also problematic.

Based on her notion of 'inherent' versus 'acquired' locative implication Zhou explains the three syntactic patterns for locative phrases in Chinese that use the word zai 在 'at';

- pattern 1: zai + NP,
- pattern 2: zai + NP + localizer (obligatory), and
- pattern 3: zai + NP + localizer (optional).

Pattern 1 contains NP’s that have inherent locative implication; for example NP’s that name specific locations, e.g., Beijing or Kansas in sentence (3) above. Localizers such as shangli 上/里 ‘on/in’ never go behind such NP’s. Pattern 2 contains NP’s that lack inherent locative implication and so must be followed by a localizer in any well-formed locative phrase, e.g., 房子 fangzi ‘house, room’, 袋子 daizi ‘bag’, 湖 hu ‘lake’. Pattern 3 contains NP’s that take localizers
optionally—but usually with a meaning distinction, e.g., institutions such as 面包房 mianbaofang ‘bakery’ and 学校 xuexiao ‘school’.

The following are examples of NP’s conforming to pattern 2, those not having inherent locative implication and that thus require localizers:

(8)-a 我就在这张床上睡罢

wo jiu zai zhe zhang chuang-shang shui ba

I just at this CL bed-on sleep PRT

‘It’s OK for me to sleep on this bed.’

(8)-b 工具书都放在这个书架上

gongjushu dou fang zai zhe ge shujia-shang

reference book all put at this CL bookshelf

‘All the reference books are put on this shelf.’

(8)-c 我就写在这张纸上罢

wo jiu xie zai zhe zhang zhi-shang ba

I just write at this CL paper-on PRT

‘I will just write on this paper.’

(8)-d 珠宝都放在这个盒子里

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Zhou, citing Hsieh (1989), observes that whereas English “uses a one-step method” to indicate spatial relations, Chinese uses a “two-step” method. “In the first step, Chinese uses the word *zai* to indicate that the relation...is...spatial. In the second step, Chinese elaborates the spatial relation by further delimiting the part of the region [that is] established by the reference object as [being] the location of the focal object” (Zhou, p.16). For example, in the phrase,

*zai hezi de limian(r)*

in the first step, *zai hezi* establishes the reference object, *hezi*, as a whole, together with all its associated physical and spatial features. The preposition, *zai*, merely establishes that our interest in the term, *hezi*, has to do with its role as a locational referent, but a referent that is not otherwise delimited. *de limian(r)*, as the second step, picks out the part of the whole object that is relevant to the locating of the...
focal object. Zhou cites Tai's (1993: 353) original formulation of this idea: “If the reference object defines the whole region, a part of the reference object defines a subregion. Thus, the whole-part relation holds for a description of the geometric relationship between the reference object and a subregion where the focal object is located” (emphasis added).

Up to this point in our discussion we have been concerned with describing the productivity of ontological metaphor in Chinese vis-à-vis English. In the particular case of container metaphor, a type of ontological metaphor, we have observed that it is less productive in Chinese than it is in English. In our search for a possible explanation we also noticed that two steps were involved, or rather two conditions were required, in the construction of a container metaphor in Chinese—or any language. First, that the referent had to be construed as a physical object; and second, that the (metaphorical) object had to be further elaborated as a container. In our discussion, we have been concerned as to whether an NP can take li so that we can know whether that NP can be construed as a container. From the above discussion we understand that common NP’s must take li (or shang, xia, etc.) before they can ever be construed as locations. From the description of the two-step procedure above we can understand that the crucial ingredient contributed by the localizer in that whole-part construction is specificity. The localizer contributes crucial specificity to the NP as referent by picking out only part of the whole. This specificity is necessary for the pragmatic function of localizer phrases; i.e., to locate
focal objects in physical space. If we take this pragmatic function to be a linguistic universal, then we can observe that Chinese and English achieve some measure of pragmatic parity, but that Chinese requires two steps to do what English does in one step. The difference in the syntactic patterns between the two languages is explained at the level of conceptualization by observing that locative implications inhere more easily to English NP’s than to Chinese NP’s.

This answer to the question as to why one language should want two-steps to accomplish what another language accomplishes in one-step has to do with one of the most argued problems in the philosophy of language, the problem of noun phrase reference, and in this case, the problem of specific reference. If the operative semantic concept, cross-linguistically, in the pragmatic functioning of locative phrases is specificity, then the explanation for one language requiring different, and, as it were, more cumbersome syntactic paraphernalia than another to achieve the same pragmatic ends could be that specificity is somehow construed differently among those two languages.

That specificity is indeed the operative concept in the construction of well-formed locative phrases in Chinese is illustrated by comparing the following sentences (from Zhou 1994, p.36):

(9)-a *你在这张桌子

*ni zai zhezhang zhuozi
You study at this table.

You study at this table.'

Children play at that yard.

'Children play at that yard.'

You sit at this sofa, I sit at that sofa.
Comparing the deviant sentences in 'a' (sentences which would be fine in English) and the acceptable sentences in 'b' in (9) and (10), we get the idea that specificity of reference is crucial to the well-formedness of the locative phrases. With the addition of a main verb, e.g., xuexi in (9)-b and wan(r) in (10)-b, the locative phrase assumes pre-verbal position in the string. The NP's in the locative phrases in the b sentences now get a more specific reading based on the well-recognized given-new principle of constituent ordering in a sentence (cf. Chafe (1972) and Li & Thompson (1981)).

The same situation applies in (11). Having a VP at the end of the string has the effect of pushing the locative phrase NP leftward, which permits a more specific reading of those NP's. Thus, in these three sentences, we see that Chinese does sometimes permit a one-step construction of locative phrases, but only when the problem of specific reference has been solved by other means.

However, simply moving the locative phrase ahead of the verb does not always license one-step constructions. The preverbal locative phrase in (12), although analogous to (11), requires the localizer shang in order to be well-formed.

(12)-a 你在这张床上睡罢。

\[ni \ zai \ zhe\_zhang \ chuang\_shang \ shui \ ba.\]

you at this-CL bed-on sleep PRT

‘You sleep on this bed.’
Comparing (12)-a, which requires localizer, shang, in the preverbal locative phrase, with (13)-a, which does not require localizer, we see that (12) with 2nd person subject and particle ba, has the flavor of imperative sentence; whereas (13) is simply declarative. Thus in (12), we imagine a situation where sleeping arrangements is the topic and location is focused. Therefore, shang attaches to the preverbal locative phrase. However, in (13)-a, there no such focusing of the location and shang is (optionally) omitted. Support for our analysis that +/-specific is the
operative concept in deciding one-step versus two-step construction of locative phrases in Chinese, can be found in the contrast between (13)-a and (13)-b. In (13)-b, where the locative phrase is postverbal, the second step, attaching \textit{shang}, is obligatory.

Still, there are other cases, represented by the sentences in (14), below, where preverbal locative phrases require localizers, but that cannot be so easily explained (sentences from Zhou 1994).

\begin{itemize}
  \item (14)-a *在这杯咖啡放点儿糖
    \begin{itemize}
    \item *\textit{zai zhebei kafei fang dian(r) tang}
    \item *at this-cup coffee put little sugar
    \end{itemize}
  \item (14)-b *在这张纸写几个字
    \begin{itemize}
    \item *\textit{zai zhe-zhang zhi xie jige zi}
    \item *at this-CL paper write several characters
    \end{itemize}
\end{itemize}

Taking a cognition-based functional approach, one is compelled to speculate that there is something about (the conceptualization of) the reference objects, \textit{zhebei kafei} and \textit{zhezhang zhi}, that mitigates +specific interpretation and that thus requires localizers, i.e., \textit{li} and \textit{shang} respectively, to make the phrases be well-formed.\footnote{For Zhou (1994) the operative concept is saliency. Reference objects that have...}
inherent locative implication are perceptually more salient and turn up in one-step constructions. Other, less salient reference objects may acquire locative implication in two-step constructions. Thus, the cognitive notion, saliency, has its analog in the semantic notion, specificity.

Zhou (1994) makes clear the correlation between cognition, semantics, and syntax by first observing that the physical world contains various objects, some of which may be conceptualized by reference to one, two, or three dimensional space. "However, our conceptualization of these objects in language is not a simple copy of the real world. [Instead] our schematization of physical objects is [informed by] (a) the portions of objects that are deemed perceptually salient, (b) the portions of objects that are relevant to human activities, and (c) the communicative need we may have." In her discussion about which objects may more easily have locative implications ascribed to them, she observes that objects that are immobile and fixed and "prominent in space" can be more easily used as reference objects. Also, "among relatively less immobile objects, those that occupy more prominent positions in our conceptual space, such as furniture in a room, can more easily acquire locative implications than those small items in less prominent positions" (p.48). Again, prominent objects should show up in one-step constructions; less prominent objects should show up in two-step constructions.

In the case of those NP's which can turn up in either one-step or two-step constructions, we can see again that specificity is the crucial semantic concept--
particularly if we recognize that specificity is associated with physical distance from
the speaker. Zhou explains that NP’s in pattern 3, typically naming institutions,
may optionally delete the localizer, but with meaning distinction. If the localizer is
retained, these institutions as buildings may be construed as containing persons or
objects; e.g., 他在学校里 ta zai xuexiao-li ‘He is in the school’—versus ‘outside the
school’. On the other hand, if the localizer is omitted, these institutions as
institutions may then be construed from a distance, not as containers, but simply as
location points; e.g., 他在学校 ta zai xuexiao ‘He is at school’—versus ‘at work’ or
‘at play’. In her words, “...the near perspective represents places while the far
perspective represents institutions” (p.53). Two sample sentences illustrate the
contrast:

(15)-a 这个学校有五百人在看球赛。

zhege xuexiao you wubai ren zai kan qiusai.

this-CL school have five-hundred people PRT watch game

‘Five hundred people from this school are watching the game.’

(15)-b 这个学校里有五百人在看球赛。

zhege xuexiao-li you wubai ren zai kan qiusai.

this-CL school-in have five-hundred people PRT watch game.

‘Five hundred people are watching the game in this school.’
(15)-a, without localizer, implies that all the five hundred people are from this school, and says nothing about the location of the activity; (15)-b, on the other hand, with localizer, says that the activity is being done in the school. With respect to the problem of specificity, and, by implication, with respect to the problem of objectification in Chinese language, these facts tell us that there is a correlation between pragmatic specificity and physical conceptualization in terms of distance. Such a conceptualization is consistent with the most basic meaning of objectivity; i.e., the situation where something is true apart from any individual knower. Subjectivity, in contrast, is the situation where something is true primarily by reference to individual knowers. Objectivity then requires distance between knower and ‘object’; while subjectivity requires intimacy between knower and ‘object.’ The English particle, ‘the’ which marks NP referents as +specific is derived historically from the far demonstrative, ‘that’ (Celce-Murcia & Larsen-Freeman (1983)). In Chinese, these institutions, without localizers, are specific enough not to need whole-part schematization and ipso facto they are distant enough to be construed as points and not as containers. Zhou explains the situation thusly: “Since every institution occupies a specific piece of space, thus forming an enclosure, and since every building is itself an enclosure, from a near perspective, we can construe such an entity as a three-dimensional form with interior and exterior: while from a far perspective, such an enclosure will be reduced in size thus
giving the image of a point. When we profile such an entity as an enclosure, the
noun should take a localizer like -\(li\); when we view it as a point, the localizer should
be absent” (p53).

An important point to be recognized here is that again the application and the
elaboration of ontological metaphor in Chinese tends to be closely tied to the
physical facts of the matter. In the discussion of institutions, above, the omission of
localizer depends on a derivation, a reduction as it were, from the original, literal,
physically based three-dimensional construction.\(^6\)

There is another group of NP’s that also refer to ‘institutions’, but where the
presence or absence of localizer does not carry any particular semantic distinction,
and where the above-mentioned conceptualization in terms of physical distance
between knower and object has no relevance. These nouns refer to “institutionalized
objects”, and are exemplified by nouns such as 家 jia ‘home’ and 餐馆 guanzi
‘restaurant’ in the following examples.

(16) 他 在 餐馆 吃饭
ta zai guanzi chifan
he at restaurant eat
‘He is eating in the restaurant.’

(17) *他 在 房子 吃饭
(18) 他在家吃饭
   ta zai jia chifan
   he at home eat
   'he eats at home.'

(19) 他在房子里吃饭
   ta zai fangzi-li chifan
   he at house-in eat
   'He eats in a house.'

*ta zai fangzi chifan
*he at house eat

Jia and guanzi can occur in one-step constructions, while fangzi cannot, because these “...institutionalized objects are well known and used to refer to places having specific functions.” In Zhou’s terms, these usages are “conventionalized.” Because these referent objects are well known, “...an institutionalizable place noun has stronger locative implication than an uninstitutionalizable one” (p44). Probably specificity is not an issue here—unless we imagine these NP’s to be peripheral members of some prototype category +specific NP (of which proper names would be prototype members)—because in (16), for example, it need not be the case that a
particular restaurant is picked out. This would be analogous to the situation in English in sentences such as ‘She went to the post office’ where, although the specific particle ‘the’ is used, neither speaker nor hearer need have any particular post office in mind. It is fair to say that these institutional NP’s are a restricted set and do not much bear on our concerns about the relative productivity of objectification in Chinese.

However there is one more group of NP’s that does bear on our views about the relative non-productivity of objectification in Chinese. These are proper place names. Here we can see once again that the Chinese conceptualization of these NP’s in locative phrases depends on a reduction from an originally physical set-up.

The problem as to why Beijing, a proper place name, cannot take *li* while *Beijing-cheng* must is explained by Zhou as a three step “conceptual schematization process.” “The first step is to categorize those units—this is a city, a three-dimensional unit in the form of an enclosure, with interior and exterior; that is a street, a two-dimensional unit in linear form, etc....at this initial stage what we would profile are the spatial setups of the units, because the spatial setups are the key features without which the categorization is impossible. Thus, the spatial features are totally preserved in this step” (p56). One should notice how closely this analysis depends on an initially literal—i.e., actually physically based—conception of the entities in question. This analysis, however elaborate, is still consistent with our claim that Chinese conceptualization of entities as objects will be closely tied to
actual physical attributes of those entities. The second step is, "...to provide a specific name for the unit under consideration. In this stage, while a specific name is given, the spatial feature still remains, and the result is a combination of two elements between which there is a token-type relationship"; e.g., *Beijing cheng.*

"The last step is to give an abstract symbol or code to replace the token-type combination obtained in the second step. At this stage, all the spatial features are dropped." Note, this is a reduction from the original physical set-up, so Chinese is still 'pictorial' (Hsieh 1978), i.e. tied to the literal physical set-up. "Thus the geographic unit is represented solely by a non-dimensional proper name, which actually only refers to a point in space. These three steps can be schematized as follows:"

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>city</th>
<th>Beijing City</th>
<th>Beijing</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3-D</td>
<td>3-D</td>
<td>1-D</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Zhou concludes this part of her discussion by observing that:

Since the resulting proper name just refers to a one-dimensional point in space, it can naturally occur in the ‘zai...’ structure, which represents a one-dimensional spatial relation, and it can be expected not to be able to take localizers such as *li* and *shang*, which specify three-dimensional and two-dimensional relation respectively. It is interesting to note that those geographical units possessing a two-dimensional spatial feature like 'street' are forced to stop at the second step and cannot proceed to the third step to get an abstract symbol. Thus, we can use the abstract symbol 北京 ‘Beijing’ to refer to ‘the city named Beijing’, and we can use 陶然亭 Taoranting ‘Taoran Pavilion’ to refer to ‘the park named Taoranting’; while we cannot use 长安 ‘Chang’an’ to refer to ‘a street named Chang’an’. The different behavior can be traced to the difference in interrelations among the three spatial schemata mentioned above: a three-dimensional schema is
interchangeable with an [sic] one-dimensional schema, while the two-dimensional cannot be changed. This fact supports our analysis of the conceptual structure of proper names like Beijing (p57).

(20)-a 在北京城里

\textit{zai Beijingch\'eng-li}

at Beijing City-inside

(20)-b 在苏州府里

\textit{zai Suzhoufu-li}

at Suzhou Prefecture-inside

(20)-c 在爪哇国里

\textit{zai Zhaowagu\'o-li}

at Java country-inside

(20)-d 在台湾岛

\textit{zai Taiwandao-shang}

on Taiwan

(20)-e 在长安街上

\textit{zai Chang'an jie-shang}

at Chang'an avenue-on

'on Chang'an Avenue'

(20)-f 在天安门广场上

\textit{zai Tiananmen guangchang-shang}

at Tiananmen Square-on
‘on Tiananmen Square’

(20)-g 在陶然亭公园里

*zai Taoranting Gongyuan-li*

at Taoranting Park-in

‘in Taoranting Park’

(20)-h 在锦江饭店里

*zai Jinjiang Fandian-li*

at Jinjiang Hotel-in

‘in Jinjiang Hotel’

(20)-i 在四十五号楼里

*zai si-shi-wu hao lou-li*

at 45 no. building-in

‘in Building 45’

Two main points to be remembered from the above analysis are: one, that the three stage reduction is always tied to a literal, physical conceptualization of the situation; and two, that the reduction entails a distancing of the knower from the object; i.e., a movement from the near, *zai Beijing cheng-li*, which is a container, and which requires a localizer to solve the problem of specificity, to the far, *zai Beijing*, which is only a point, and which by virtue of its conceptual distance needs no further specification.
Finally, from this description of the restrictions on locative phrase formation in Chinese syntax, we should recognize the value of describing semantic properties in terms of human conceptualization. We should recognize that the cognitive notions of perceptual salience and physical distance from the knower have their analogs in the familiar semantic notions of specificity and objectivity. We should recognize the value of these cognitive and semantic notions for explaining syntactic phenomena. Furthermore, to explain the preponderance of two-step locative phrase constructions in Chinese, we should accept that this preponderance is indicative of a coherent linguistic conceptualization that resists objectification generally. As we have said, we stress the aspect of coherence in linguistic conceptualization—and hence the coherence of syntactic phenomena—because we believe, like Quine, that human understanding, and in this case human conceptualization, is best described as 'a fabric of belief'. In Quine's words, "the totality of our so-called knowledge or beliefs...is a man-made fabric which impinges on experience only along the edges...like a field of force whose boundary conditions are experience" (1953, p42). Where Quine speaks of 'knowledge or beliefs', we would substitute and speak of 'conceptualization'. From our point of view the crucial idea behind Quine's epistemology is his emphasis on 'fabric'. In our reading, this emphasis gives more weight to the human conceptual aspect of 'knowledge' and gives less weight to the empirical, experiential aspect of 'knowledge'. In other words, meaning is primarily a human construct that only marginally appeals to any independent verifiable reality.
Davidson later cut the thread on referential meaning, abolishing the Fregean sense-reference duality. The success of Davidson’s project can be seen from the fact that it is now a commonplace to view truth almost entirely as a social construct and to eschew any implications of essentialism or verificationism. Quine’s and Davidson’s emphasis on the aspect of coherence in human knowledge and their corresponding reduction of the referential aspect of human knowledge gives us license to remain agnostic about what ontological commitments, if any, on the part of speakers may or may not be entailed by the productivity or nonproductivity of particular conceptualizations in particular human languages. Simply stated, a non-referential semantics militates against making claims about ontological commitments. By assuming a non-referential semantics, we can speculate freely about human conceptualization without being lured into making demeaning and otherwise unsupportable claims about the intellectual capabilities of speakers.

Throughout this dissertation we are observing that ontological metaphor is less productive in Chinese than it is in English. However, in light of Quine’s insight, it should be stressed that this is just one thread of the fabric. In order to explain why this should be the case we must cast our net widely by first imagining what kind of conceptualization could underlie this phenomenon and second by examining other related features of the language to see whether they are consistent with such conceptualizations. In other words, coherence, both conceptual and syntactic, will be our test for any claims we make about Chinese language. The insights presented
in the section above tell us that our explanation for the relative non-productivity of ontological metaphor in Chinese—i.e., that it is indicative of a conceptualization that resists objectification generally—is on the right track. We have seen that Chinese locative phrases, where expressions of container metaphor very often show up, require a more cumbersome syntactic paraphernalia, i.e., two steps, to achieve the necessary degree of specificity for the location referent. That English locative phrases achieve the necessary degree of specificity, and what we assume to be pragmatic parity, in only one step is indicative of a conceptualization that readily objectifies notions. The only requirement in English locatives is that the location referent be marked by the specifier ‘the’—which, being derived historically from the far demonstrative ‘that’, tells us indeed that conceptual distance and objectivity/specificity are analogous. This is a clear example of conceptual-semantic-syntactic interface, the elucidation of which we take to be the heart of the cognition-based functional approach (Tai 1996, 1989). The absence of paraphernalia in locative phrase formation is coherent with, or, if you like, ‘interwoven with’ the relative absence of paraphernalia in a counting situation. The fact that English does not depend on classifiers to make nouns countable indicates, prima facie, that NP referents are more readily individuated in English than in Chinese. If they can be readily individuated from like members of their class then they can certainly be separated and distanced from knowers. A specific mass, if there can be such a creature, cannot serve as locational referent unless it is viewed
from such a distance that it shrinks to a point. In Chinese, we have seen that this typically is the situation with proper place names. Up close, specificity must be gotten by picking out a part of the whole mass. Obviously this is coherent with the essence of Hansen’s mass noun hypothesis.\(^7\)

4.3 VISUAL FIELD IS A CONTAINER

Another container metaphor in English that contrasts interestingly with Chinese is the VISUAL FIELD IS A CONTAINER metaphor. The examples below are also from Lakoff and Johnson.

(8) I have him in sight.

我 可以 看见 他.

wo keyi kanjian ta

I can look-see he

(9) He’s out of sight now.

我 看不见 他 了.

wo kanbujian ta le

I look-NEG-see he PERF

(10) There’s nothing in sight.
(11) The ship is coming into view.

(12) I can't see him—the tree is in the way.

我 看不见 他—树 拦 住 了 我 的 视线

wo kanbujian ta--shu dang--hu le wo de shixian

I look-NEG-see he--tree block PERF 1 POSS vision-line

(13) I can't get all the ships in sight at once.

一眼 看不完 那么 多 船

yiyan kanbuwan zenmo duo chuan

one-eye see-NEG-whole so much ship

(14) That's in the center of my field of vision.

那个 东西 在 我 视野 的 正中

neige dongxi zai wo shiye de zhengzhong

that-CL thing at I vision-field POSS center
A glance at the Chinese translations of sample sentences (8), (9), (10) and (11) involving VISUAL FIELD IS A CONTAINER metaphor in English, i.e., ‘in sight’ ‘out of sight’ ‘into view’, indicates that this metaphor is not operative in Chinese—sentences (10) and (11) are not even translatable. In sentence (12), rather than saying that the tree is in the way, Chinese has it that the tree blocks the way. Interestingly, ‘way’ in Chinese becomes 视线 shixian, literally ‘vision-line’. Presumably vision-as-a-line precludes the elaboration of vision as a container. The use of 眼 yan, literally ‘eye’, in (13) suggests a type of metaphor based on the principle of synecdoche where the functional part represents the whole. Humans see through the instrumentality of eyes. While this metaphor does suggest something about the scope of vision—眼 看不到 yiyan kanbuwan—it does not necessarily entail the notion of container. 眼 yan is elaborated here to mean ‘a glance’. It also can mean ‘small aperture’ as in 打个眼 da ge yan ‘drill a hole’; 眼 yan also turns up as a classifier term as in 两眼井 liang yan jing ‘two eye wells’. What these different uses suggest about the ‘field’ of vision in Chinese is that the scope of vision is narrow—a conceptualization that presumably is not easily elaborated as container. Sentence (14) in Chinese comes very close to the conceptualization found in English but falls just short of container metaphor. In the Chinese, 视野 的 正中 shiye de zhengzhong, the ‘field of vision’ has a ‘center’; however, unlike the situation in English, the ‘center’ itself is not elaborated as a container. In Chinese it suffices to conceive of 野 ye ‘open field’ as a thing which has a center but which is not
necessarily bounded. Once again, we have a case of Chinese language being more closely tied to the physical in that 野 ye 'open field' remains a two-dimensional area-it is not further elaborated as a three-dimensional container.

(15) 雷锋活在我们心中.

*Lei Feng huo zai women xinzhong*

*Lei Feng live at our heart-center*

'Lei Feng lives in our hearts.'

In (15), whereas English would say that Lei Feng lives in our hearts, Chinese has it that Lei Feng lives *at the center of our hearts.* The point here is the same as that mentioned in connection with (14), that is, that rather than locating things in containers, Chinese, according to these examples, prefers to locate things in the center of relatively unbounded regions. Some native speakers observe that 里 can substitute for 中 in (15), but in this sentence 中 may be preferred. The ambivalence can be explained by noticing that 心 when it denotes the physical organ of the body is an actual physical container; in which case 里 would be the appropriate choice. However, when 心 denotes human feelings and emotions it is a non-physical abstraction; in which case 中 is more appropriate. Given that the non-physical abstract xin is based on the physical xin, the interchangeability of zhong and li in this case is understandable. (16) is another example with 中 zhong 'center'.
Only have deep enter masses...then can really get heart-center have count
‘Only by going deep among the masses...can you really know how things
stand.’

心中 xinzhong, in the idiomatic expression, 心中 有 数 xinzhong you shu, carries
the idea of heart-center as the essence of the matter—certainly a metaphorical
extension of physical ‘heart’, but again with the use of 中 zhong, it describes a
relatively unbounded region. The point is that the application of ontological
metaphor is restricted in Chinese because there is a resistance to elaborating notions
much beyond the physical.
NOTES:

1. An alternative conceptualization for the tree example in Chinese has been suggested to me by Marjorie Chan such that the whole could be construed as representing its constituent parts; i.e., 'tree' stands for 'branch'. Thus, being 'on' the tree is the same as being 'on' the branch of the tree. This would be a reversal of the more commonly recognized situation of metonymy, where a salient part represents the whole, or of synecdoche, where a functional part represents the whole. Certainly, this is a plausible explanation. One would like to know how productive this type of conceptual metaphor is in Chinese. An example of the whole representing the part in English, also supplied by Chan, is 'The kettle is boiling' where kettle as a whole represents the water that is boiling.

2. Thus, where class membership becomes problematic, two different solutions are suggested. For (diverse) individuals, classification by critical attribute is most congenial—diversity is found, while unity is made. For the mass situation, classification by similarity to prototype is most congenial—unity is found, while diversity (individualization) is made.

3. The idea of whole-part as an important conceptual principle in shaping Chinese syntax has already been elaborated in Tai (1989, 1993a). For example Tai (1993a) observes that topic-comment syntactic construction falls out from the background to foreground pattern of information flow which itself may be conceptualized either by analogy to the 'flow' of time, i.e., the Principle of Temporal Sequence, or by analogy to physical structure, i.e., whole-before-part.

4. However, in principle one could also suppose the saliency of the focal object would also be significant, such that highly salient focal objects, by their nature, would be more easily located—which would reduce the value of the reference object for the purposes of location.

5. One could just as easily claim that specificity is a pragmatic concept. Certainly we would have no argument with that; we just choose to regard it as a semantic notion because we think that Lakoff-type conceptual metaphor is most relevant to the semantic level of description—especially as we will choose to remain agnostic about what ontological commitments the application of any particular ontological metaphor in any language may entail on the part of its speakers. Speaking of a conceptual-semantic relation is more comfortable for us than speaking of a conceptual-pragmatic relation because the term 'pragmatic' has connotations of essentialism and 'world-as-it-is'. In another light, pragmatic meanings also depend on situations in-the-moment, while conceptualizations and semantic meanings are more durable.
6. It could also be the case that the absence of localizer with institutions implies that the NP referent in such cases is -specific, analogous to British 'He is in hospital'. Such sentences could be well-formed in Chinese because these are not locative phrases in the typical pragmatic sense of serving to locate focal objects. Rather, they could be peripheral members of the prototype, 'stative predicate'. However, at this point we prefer to endorse Zhou’s analysis because we find her cognition-based functional explanation in terms of physical distance to be highly congenial to broad claims that we will later make about the relative intimacy of knower and object in Chinese versus English to explain the relative productivity of ontological metaphor in those two languages. We will appeal to our own notion, 'conceptual coherence', to rationalize our choice in this.

7. Here we should acknowledge something of the nature of the controversy surrounding Hansen’s idea and some of its limitations. A.C. Graham, particularly in his 1985 review of Hansen, strongly endorsed the mass-noun hypothesis as a solution to the Gongsun Long White Horse paradox (白马非马 bai ma fei ma ‘A white horse is not a horse’); i.e., that nominals and attributes in Classical Chinese refer to discontinuous mass and that reference entails picking part of the whole mass. Thus the combination of 'whiteness' and 'horseness' is not (just) 'horseness' since the part does not instantiate the whole. Graham (1986) shows less enthusiasm for other aspects of Hansen’s ideas; e.g., Hansen’s anachronistically attributing Lesniewski’s notion (cf. Luschei 1962) of mereological set to Chinese such that nominals and attributes refer to essences scattered throughout Einstein’s space-time continuum. Harbsmeier’s (1991) critique of Hansen (1983), focuses on the fact that ‘true’ mass terms in Classical Chinese behave much like ‘true’ mass terms in Modern Chinese and English, in both cases requiring measure terms in order to be quantified. Even so, Harbsmeier does concede that the later innovation of classifier terms in Chinese does sustain some version of the mass-noun hypothesis. Hansen would no doubt reply that the distinction between ‘true’ mass and mass in Classical Chinese existed as covert categories.
CHAPTER 5

THE CONDUIT METAPHOR

In chapter three of *Metaphors We Live By*, Lakoff and Johnson discuss another ontological metaphor in English called the “conduit metaphor,” originally elucidated by Michael Reddy (1979). Lakoff consistently acknowledges his intellectual debt to Reddy. In Ortony’s (1993) volume, Lakoff observes that, “the contemporary theory that metaphor is primarily conceptual, conventional, and part of the ordinary system of thought and language can be traced to Reddy’s... ‘The Conduit Metaphor’... which allows us to see... that ordinary everyday English is largely metaphorical, dispelling once and for all the traditional view that metaphor is primarily in the realm of poetic or ‘figurative language’” (203-04). Reddy shows that in English when we talk about communicating ideas (our “language about language”) we depend on a complex metaphor, i.e., a set of metaphors, collectively referred to as the conduit metaphor, as follows:

IDEAS (or MEANINGS) ARE OBJECTS;

LINGUISTIC EXPRESSIONS ARE CONTAINERS; and
COMMUNICATION IS SENDING.

Examples of the conduit metaphor in English offered by Lakoff and Johnson (p. 11)—with Chinese translations—are:

(1) I gave you that idea.

那个主意是我给你的
neige zhuyi shi wo gei ni de
that idea is I give you DE

(2) It's hard to get the idea across to him.

很难把这个想法跟他沟通
hen nan ba zheige xiangfa gen ta goutong
very hard take this idea with him link-up

(3) Your reasons came through to us.

我们终于想通了你的原因
women zhongyu xiangtong ninde yuanyin
we in-the-end think-through LE your reason

(4) His words carry little meaning.

他的话没有意义
Native informants feel that (1) is acceptable. In this example we can see that two of the three metaphors that comprise the larger conduit metaphor are operative, that IDEAS (or MEANINGS) ARE OBJECTS and COMMUNICATION IS SENDING. The expression, 这个主意 zheige zhuyi 'this idea,' preceded as it is by determiner and classifier term, 这个 zheige 'this CL,' indicates that ideas, being individualizable, can be conceived of as objects in Chinese. The use of the verb 给 gei 'give' indicates sending, as it does in English. Other examples of the metaphor COMMUNICATION IS SENDING, sentences (2) and (3), taken from Reddy and cited by Lakoff and Johnson, also translate into Chinese. In (2) and (3) the English notion of 'getting ideas across to people' shows up crucially in the verb 沟通 goutong 'link-up' in (2), and in the verb 想通 xiangtong 'think-through' in (3). However, in (3) it should be noticed that 原因 yuanxin 'reason' is not rendered as volitional agent in Chinese but as patient. Sentence (4), which in the conduit metaphor elaborates words as the vehicles of communication, does not show up in Chinese.
Sentences (5) through (9), below represent another part of the complex conduit metaphor, i.e., LINGUISTIC EXPRESSIONS ARE CONTAINERS. Not surprisingly, in view of our earlier discussion of restrictions on container metaphor generally in Chinese, the Chinese translations of these sentences, from Reddy, cited by Lakoff and Johnson, show further limitations on the application of the conduit metaphor in Chinese.

(5) When you *have* a good idea, try to *capture* it immediately *in* words.

当 你 有 一 个 思 想 火 花，你 应 该 立 即 把 它 记 录 下 来
dang ni you yige sixiang huohua ni yinggai liji ba ta jilu xi lai
just you have one-CL idea spark, you must immediately Ob.' it record down come

(6) It’s difficult to *put* my ideas *into* words.

这 个 想 法 很 难 用 语 言 表 达
zheige xiangfa hen nan yong yuyan biaoda
this idea very hard use language express

(7) Try to *pack* more thought *into* fewer words.

以 更 精 练 的 语 言 来 表 达 更 多 的 思 想
yi geng jinglian de yuyan lai biaoda geng duo de sixiang
use still-more concise DE language come represent still-more lots DE thought

(8) You can't simply stuff ideas into a sentence any old way.

(9) Don't force your meanings into the wrong words.

Container metaphor does not show up in the Chinese translation of (5). Rather than 'capturing the thought in words', Chinese, in this example, has the 'thought spark recorded down.' The use of 'down' 下 xia suggests a spatial metaphor, AMORPHOUS IS UP (in the air); CONCRETE IS DOWN (on the ground)—analogous to the English, e.g., 'write your ideas down.' (6) and (7) in English represent the concept of putting or packing ideas or thought into words. A fair and common Chinese translation of these sentences does show words as objects, but not as containers. Instead Chinese has words 'expressing' 表达 biaoda 'ideas' 想法 xiangfa or 'thought' 思想 sixiang. In (8) and (9) what many English speakers would regard as more fanciful extensions of the LINGUISTIC EXPRESSIONS ARE CONTAINERS metaphor, involving stuffing and forcing ideas into words, are not easily translated into Chinese. However, as the counterexamples (10) and (11)
show, the difficulty may not be with the conception of words-as-containers but with the conception of human-agents-putting-the-meaning-into-the-words.

(10) The meaning is right there in the words.

这句话的意义就包含在这些字里/每个字里

zheiju hua de yi yi jiu baohan zai zhei xie zili meige zili

this-CL speech POSS meaning contain at this few word(s)-in/ each-CL word-
in

(11) Your words are hollow.

你的话是空的

nide hua shi kongde

you-POSS speech is hollow

(10), which clearly shows LINGUISTIC EXPRESSIONS ARE CONTAINERS metaphor, differs from (6) through (9) in that there is no implication of human agency. In (10), a literal translation of the Chinese has ‘the meaning’ ‘contained in the words’包含在这些字里 baohan zai zhei xie zili. In (11) it can be seen that in Chinese, as in English, if meaningful expressions contain meaning, then by analogy meaningless expressions can be ‘empty’ or ‘hollow’空的 kongde.

Examples (12) through (14) indicate, however, that while words may be containers
of ideas in Chinese, the metaphor does not appear to extend much beyond the word level.

(12) The sentence is *without* meaning.

a- 这个 句子 没有 意义
   ? zheige juzi meiyou yiyi
   this sentence NEG-have meaning (or)

b- 这 不是 句子
   zhei bu shi juzi
   this NEG-is sentence (preferred--any sentence has meaning)

(13) The idea is *buried in* terribly dense paragraphs.

(14) The introduction *has a great deal of thought content*.

a- 引言 介绍 作者 主要 的 思想
   qianyan jieshao le zuozhe zhuyao de sixiang
   introduction introduce-PERP author important thought

b- 引言 的 内容 很 丰富
   yinyan de neirong hen fengfu
   introduction POSS content very rich
The first Chinese translation in (12) appears to permit the conceptualization of sentences as having or not having meaning, as does English, i.e., 这个句子 没有意义 zheige juzi meiyou yiyi. However, two considerations belie that appearance; 1) many native speakers think this translation is only marginally acceptable; and 2) this translation is more naturally analyzed as a topic-comment structure with 这个句子 zheige juzi as topic and 没有意义 meiyou yiyi as presentative sentence, analogous to English ‘there is no meaning.’ Of course, even if 句子 juzi ‘sentence’ were the possessor of 意义 yiyi ‘meaning’, possessor is still not conceptualized as container.

The ‘b-’ translation, which is more comfortable for many native speakers of Chinese, side-steps the container metaphor altogether by conceptualizing sentences without meaning are simply not being sentences. In this example meaning is an intrinsic attribute of sentences; not merely something that sentences contain. The extension of container metaphor from words to portions of text is exemplified in (13) and (14). The container metaphor fails altogether in (13), and works only partly in (14). In (14)-a the introduction introduces the author’s thought, but there is no reference to container. In (14)-b the introduction’s content is rich, but there is no reference to the author’s thought.

For Reddy the productivity of the conduit metaphor in English means that it is determinative of how English speakers conceive of communication. Up to this point in our discussion, we have said that metaphor is indicative of conceptualization but
not that it is determinative of conceptualization. We have taken the productivity or non-productivity of a particular metaphor to be no more than evidence of a particular human conceptualization. Thus, we share the mentalistic bias of most modern linguists (including Chomsky). We feel that the direction is one-way; i.e., that conceptualization is determinative of metaphor, and not that metaphor (or language) is determinative of conceptualization—that would be the old strong Whorfian idea of 'linguistic determinism', which we do not endorse. If we are agnostic about metaphor's determinative role in conceptualization, then by extension, we are also agnostic about metaphor having any determinative role in behavior. If behavioral correlates could be established between language and behavior, we would rather say that it is the conceptualization that determined the behavior.

However, Reddy, having no compunction in that regard, feels that the conduit metaphor has the deplorable effect of making communication in English appear to be effortless; when in fact it requires serious effort of construction not just on the sender's part but on the receiver's part as well. One unfortunate effect of this metaphor is that it presumably lures English speakers into regarding communication breakdown as being principally the fault of the sender rather than of the receiver. In Reddy's words, "This model of communication objectifies meaning in a misleading and dehumanizing fashion. It influences us to talk and think about thoughts as if they had the same kind of external, intersubjective reality as lamps and tables."

"...to the extent that the conduit metaphor does see communication as requiring
some slight expenditure of energy, it localizes this expenditure almost totally in the
speaker or writer. The function of the reader or listener is trivialized” (p.186).

Lakoff and Johnson reinforce the point when they observe that the conduit metaphor,
“...entails that words (and sentences) have meanings,...independent of contexts and
speakers” (p.11).

It may be the case that insofar as the conduit metaphor is much less productive in
Chinese, then the role of the reader/listener in the construction of communication
will not be trivialized, as it apparently is in English. Indeed, if Tsao Feng-fu’s
(1977) characterization of Chinese as a discourse-oriented language (versus English
as a sentence-oriented language) is correct then that suggests that the role of
interlocutors cannot be trivialized—all parties must participate more or less equally in
the construction of communication. Tsao, as well as Li and Thompson (1976), was
inspired to make this typological distinction for Chinese based principally on the
predominance of topic structures in Chinese and the corresponding prevalence of
zero-anaphora—as opposed to sentence structures in English and the prevalence of
pronominalization. Given that pronominalization depends on objectification, then
its is not surprising that ontological metaphor, also depending on objectification,
should be more productive in English than in Chinese. For Li and Thompson, the
analogous distinction was between Chinese as a topic-prominent language and
English as a subject-prominent language. These facts might suggest a line of inquiry
analogous to what Bloom has tried to do on the question of counterfactuals. That is,
one might try to establish behavioral correlates such that given the relative non-productivity of conduit metaphor in Chinese, failures in communication among Chinese speakers would not be considered to be the fault of the speaker/sender but rather would be shared among the interlocutors.

However, as we have said, given the difficulty of establishing causal links between conceptualization and behavior, we will remain agnostic about any such determinisms. We will instead continue to focus on ontological metaphor as merely indicative of conceptualization.
CHAPTER 6

PERSONIFICATION

Another species of ontological metaphor, which Lakoff and Johnson call “perhaps the most obvious...metaphor” (p.33) is personification. Personification, in their words, “allows us to comprehend a wide variety of experiences with nonhuman entities in terms of human motivations, characteristics, and activities” (p.33). Their examples are:

(1) Life has cheated me.

? 生活 欺骗 了 我.

shenghuo qipian le wo.

life cheat PERF me

(2) Inflation is eating up our profits.

通货膨胀 在 吞食 着 我们的 利润.

tonghuo pengzhang zai tunshi zhe women de lirun.
currency inflation at devour PROG our POSS profit

(3) Cancer finally caught up with him.

癌症 终于 夺去了 他的 生命。

aizheng zhongyu duo qu le tade shengming.
cancer finally catch go PERF he-POSS life.

(4) His theory explained to me the behavior of chickens raised in factories.

a-他 的 理论 使 我 明白 了 在 鸡厂 里 长大的 鸡的 行为。

ta de lilun shi wo mingbai le zai jichang li zhangda ji de xingwei.
he POSS theory cause I understand PERF at chicken-factory in raise chicken

POSS behavior

b-他 的 理论 解释 了 了 行为。

ta de lilun jieshi le...xingwei.
he POSS theory explain PERF...behavior.

‘his theory explained...the behavior.’

c-? 他 的 理论 对 我 解释 了 了 行为。

? ta de lilun dui wo jieshi le...xingwei

? he POSS theory to me explain ASP...behavior

? ‘his theory explained to me...the behavior.’
(5) This fact argues against the standard theories.

这个事实对一般规范的理论是一个反驳。

zhege shishi dui yiban guifan de lilun shi yige fanbo.

this-CL fact against most standard POSS theory is one-CL refutation.

(6) The Michelson-Morley experiment gave birth to a new physical theory.

在Michelson-Morley的试验过程中产生了

一个新的物理理论。

zai Michelson-Morley de shiyan guocheng zhong chansheng le

yige xinde wuli lilun.

at Michelson-Morley POSS experiment process middle engender PERF

one-CL new-DE physics theory

Examples (1) and (2), above, 'Life has cheated me' and 'Inflation is eating up our profits', translate directly into Chinese (although some informants view (1) as awkward or poetic), indicating that personification metaphor is operative in Chinese. Example (3), 'Cancer finally caught up with him', also translates easily into Chinese. However, it should be observed that 'cancer' is animate (as is 'life' in (1)?), a distinctive feature that it shares with persons, so that in terms of degree of metaphoricity, (3) is less metaphorical than (1) or (2). Examples (4), (5), and (6) are all problematic in Chinese. In (4)-a, rather than having a theory 'explain' something
to someone, as is the case in English, the Chinese has the theory 'causing (someone)
to understand' something. However, the causality expressed in the Chinese version
of (4) does not depend on personification of 理论 lilun 'theory.' Indeed the
Chinese selection of 使 shi 'cause' instead of 解释 jieshi 'explain' neatly avoids
personification metaphor. It is interesting to notice that the Chinese version is just
the compositional semantic equivalent of the English 'explain'—analogous to
McCawley's compositional analysis of English 'kill' as 'cause someone to become
dead.' Given that the key distinctive feature for agents in expressions involving
personification metaphor is volitionality—a preeminently human feature, then the
selection of the compositional equivalent of 'explain' should be understood as a
strategy to maintain 理论 lilun 'theory' as 'subject' of the sentence but that does
not resort to personification metaphor. The predicate 使 shi 'cause' does not require
human agent as one of its arguments. Some native informants observe that 解释
jieshi is possible, as in (4)-b, but that it sounds awkward when the dative object-
recipient 我 wo is included as in (4)-c. The explanation for the marginality of (4)-c
lies in the intuition that including 对 我 dui wo gives too much personification to
理论 lilun.

The Chinese version in (5) can be viewed as representing yet another strategy that
preserves the original English 'subject' while also circumventing personification
metaphor. In this case the strategy is to nominalize the verb. Whereas, English has
it that ‘the fact argues against the standard theories,’ Chinese has it that ‘the fact, with respect to the standard theories, is a refutation.’

The Chinese version in (6) can be viewed as representing a third strategy that circumvents personification metaphor. Unlike in (4) and (5) above where the English subject was preserved, in (6) it is the English verb that is preserved—as a pseudo-passive—while the English subject is embedded in an adverbial phrase. Whereas English has it that ‘the experiment gave birth to a new theory,’ Chinese has it that ‘in the course of the experiment a new theory was given birth.’

In the examples above we see again that another type of ontological metaphor, personification, that is productive in English appears to be much less so in Chinese. In light of Lakoff and Johnson’s idea that personification metaphor “…allows us to comprehend…experiences with non-human entities in terms of human motivations, characteristics, and activities,” one wonders why a metaphor of such apparent utility should be less productive in one language than in another. Why should Chinese allow ‘life’ to ‘cheat’ and ‘inflation’ to ‘eat’ but not let ‘facts’ ‘argue?’ It is hard to imagine ‘inflation’ being any less abstract than ‘facts.’ Similarly, it is hard to imagine ‘eating’ being less strict than ‘arguing’ in its specification of +human in its argument structure. Perhaps the explanation is not only conceptual but syntactic or typological (which may of course be tied to larger conceptual constraints). In the English examples above we know that non-human entities are metaphorically elaborated as persons because they appear as agents of action verbs that normally
specify '+human' in their argument structures. Thus, human qualities are imputed to these non-human entities. Lakoff and Johnson claim that this metaphorical elaboration is motivated by our need to make sense of situations and experiences. Personification is effective in this regard because by making abstract entities, such as 'theory,' 'fact,' and 'experiment,' analogous to a concrete thing with which we are most intimately familiar—our human selves—it gives us the (illusory?) feeling that we comprehend the situation. We imagine that we can understand the behavior of these personified abstractions when we give them human qualities that can motivate their behavior. 'Life' is devious, so it 'cheats;' 'inflation' is hungry, so it 'eats.' The false-human entity, 'facts,' 'argue' things in English because it presumably has the human qualities of rationality, and eloquence, and the desire to make a point, imputed to it by the verb 'argue.' And although it could be the case that Chinese conceptualizes these entities and activities more literally and narrowly than English does, it could also be the case that Chinese resists personification in these examples because typologically Chinese generally is less concerned with the agent-action relation than English is—which at the level of conceptualization would entail perhaps a greater concern about effects than about causes.¹

Here one will recognize that we are appealing once again to the claim put forth by Tai (1984): That is, that English, as a subject-prominent, agent-oriented language, is more concerned with the agent-action relation; while Chinese, as a topic prominent, patient-oriented language, is more concerned with the action-result relation. In the
above English examples all of the personified entities take the role of agent in the
English sentences. However, if, as Tai's claim suggests, agency is not usually as
salient in Chinese argument structures as it is in English then it should not be
surprising that personification be less productive in Chinese. In this case we have a
categorical constraint on the elaboration of ontological metaphor that is coherent
with an already recognized syntactic/typological constraint.2

At the beginning we had said that the power of Lakoff and Johnson's insight
about metaphor was that it could explain syntactic phenomena; e.g., recognition of
container metaphor explains the selection of prepositions such as 里 'in' versus 上:
shang 'on'. We had said that insofar as a particular metaphor reflects a
conceptualization of situations or experiences, then the application of that metaphor
is also constrained by human conceptualization. However, in the examples above
involving personification it is hard to imagine a conceptual constraint that can
explain the metaphor's applicability to 'inflation' but not to 'facts.' Thus we are
forced to look for syntactic constraints—which themselves are informed by larger
categorical constraints. In other words, if the conceptual constraints reflected in the
application of Lakoff and Johnson type metaphor can explain things at the lexical
level, then by the same principle, human conceptualization should be allowed to
explain things at the sentence and indeed at the typological level.

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1. Many of the insights in King (1989) regarding the comparative structuring of emotional experience in English and Chinese are relevant here. He notices generally that English tends to treat emotions such as anger and fear as entities and further that English shows an abiding interest in elaborating emotions as agents: For example, ‘he was gripped by anger’; ‘he was paralyzed with fear.’ Chinese, on the other hand tends to not entity emotions, and to express emotions somatically; i.e., in terms of the effects that emotions have on the human body: For example, 他气死了 ta qi si wo le ‘he angered me to death’; 他吓得脸色发白 ta xia de lian fa bai ‘he was scared (to the extent that his) face turned white.’ Thus, expressions that depend on personification in English would usually not turn up in Chinese; e.g., ‘Fear crept up on her’, ‘Fear was lurking in her heart’, ‘Her fear overcame her’. Obviously, these facts are consistent with Tai’s (1984) observation (as cited in Tai (1989:199)) that “…given the same situation, English is more interested in finding out who does what, while Chinese is more concerned with what has happened.”

2. We should not fail to recognize in this connection the original contribution made by Y.R. Chao (1968) who observed that “The grammatical meaning of subject and predicate in a Chinese sentence is topic and comment, rather than actor and action”(p69). This is an early recognition of the fact that the agent role will be generally less prominent in Chinese argument structures as compared to English.
Another interesting ontological metaphor in English identified by Lakoff and Johnson is the structuring of time as a moving object. The metaphor, TIME IS A MOVING OBJECT, shows up in the following examples:

(1) The time has long since gone when you could buy a Coke for a nickel.

五分钱就能买一瓶可口可乐的时代早已过去了.

wufen qian jiu neng mai yi-ping ke-kou-ke-le de shidai zao yi guo qu le.

five cents money just can buy one-CL Coke DE era early already pass go PERF

(2) The time for action has arrived.

行动的时候到了.

xingdong de shihou dao le.

action DE time arrive PERF
(3) Time flies.

时间在飞行。

shijian zai feixing.

time at fly-go

(4) The time will come when you will appreciate me.

总有一天你会珍惜我。

zong you yi tian ni hui zhenxi wo.

inevitably have one day you will appreciate I /me

As can be seen in examples (1), (2), and (3), in both Chinese and in English time can ‘pass’ 时代 ... 过去了shidai...guo qu le; time can ‘arrive’ 时候到了shihou dao le; and time can ‘fly’ 时间在飞行shijian zai feixing. In each example it can be seen that TIME IS A MOVING OBJECT metaphor is operative in both languages. However, a fair and common translation of (4) into Chinese does not depend on the metaphor TIME IS A MOVING OBJECT. Rather than saying that ‘time will come’, the Chinese has it that ‘inevitably there (will) be a day’ 总有一天 zong you yi tian.

There are a couple of ways in which the TIME IS A MOVING OBJECT metaphor can be elaborated in English. According to Lakoff and Johnson, one
significant aspect of this metaphor is that we humans are physically oriented toward this moving object in such a way that we imagine ourselves to be facing the future. Thus:

(5) Coming up in the weeks ahead...

在未来几星期之内，

*zai weilai ji xingqi zhi nei...*

at have-not-come several week of-which inside...

(6) I look forward to the arrival of Christmas.

我盼望圣诞节的到来。

*wo panwang shengdanjie de daolai.*

I hope-for Christmas DE arrival

(7) Before us is a great opportunity, and we don’t want it to pass us by.

在我们面前有这么好的机会，我们就不能错过。

*zai women mianqian you zhome hao de jihui, women jiu bu neng cuoguo.*

at we face-front have such good DE opportunity, we just not can wrong-pass

However, as can be seen in the above examples, those English expressions that make explicit the notion that humans are facing the future do not have any
counterparts in the Chinese translations. In (5), although the concept of time as a moving object shows up in the composition of the Chinese word meaning ‘future’ as 未来 weilai (literally) ‘have-not come’, the notion that the future weeks are ‘ahead’ does not show up. Likewise, in (6), although Christmas does ‘arrive’, the concept of facing ‘forward’ towards that advent time does not show up in Chinese; one simply ‘hopes for Christmas’s arrival’ ...盼望 这 圣诞节 的到来 ...panwang zhe shengdanjie de daolai. The first clause in (7) translates directly from English into Chinese: ‘Before us is a great opportunity,...’ 在 我们 面前 有 这么 好 的 机会, . . . zai women mianqian you zheme hao de jihui... However, in the second clause it is not the abstract opportunity that passes us by; instead it is we who wrongly let ourselves pass the opportunity by. The conceptualization thus indicated in the Chinese translation is that the ‘opportunity’ is a stationary object in front of us and we miss the opportunity by moving right past it.¹

Lakoff and Johnson also observe that since TIME IS A MOVING OBJECT, it receives a front-back orientation just as any other moving object would. Thus not only are we facing the future (in English), but the future is facing us as it moves toward us.

(8) I can’t face the future.

我 没法 面对 未来.

wo mei fa miandui weilai.

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(9) The face of things to come.

未来的趋势。

weilai de qu shi.

have-not-come DE trend

(10) Let's meet the future head-on.

让我们迎接未来。

rang women yingjie weilai.

let us welcome have-not-come

(8) translates fairly directly into Chinese. Clearly from this example, both languages have the conceptualization of humans ‘facing the future.’ However, it is not clear to what extent this example actually illustrates Lakoff and Johnson’s claim that here the future is also facing us. In English, the future gets a ‘face’ by virtue of the fact that notions which are conceived of as being moving objects may be further elaborated as having a front and a back. Thus objects will have a ‘face’ on the front, leading part and a back on the trailing part. The future will have a face because as we stand on a presumably horizontal plane the future, as a moving object, is coming toward us and we see its front or face. However, in (8), for both English
and Chinese, although humans are facing the future, it is not clear that the future itself has a face. Humans can also ‘face’ stationary ‘objects’; e.g., 面对 现实 miandui xianshi ‘face reality.’

(9) and (10), however, do make the case that in English the future is elaborated as facing us just as we are facing the future—but fair and common translations of those sentences into Chinese do not show such elaboration. The concept of ‘the things to come’ having a face in (9) is rendered more prosaically in Chinese as ‘future trend(s)’ 未来 的 趋势 weilai de qushi. In (10), rather than meeting the future ‘head-on’, one simply ‘meets the future.’ Thus, although Chinese does conceive TIME AS A MOVING OBJECT, the elaboration of that metaphor that conceives time as having a face as it moves towards us appears to be less prominent in Chinese. ²

Also time as a moving object entails times with respect to times, so that in English there are expressions like:

(11) Next week and the week following it.
    下星期 和 下下个星期.
    xia xingqi he xia xia ge xingqi.
    down week and down down CL week

(12) In the following weeks his health deteriorated.
(11) shows a profound difference in the conceptualization of time between English and Chinese. Whereas English has future weeks ‘following’ each other, presumably along a horizontal path, Chinese has weeks piling on top of each other along some vertical axis. So in Chinese we find a metaphor, THE FUTURE IS BELOW; THE PAST IS ABOVE. Although both languages conceive time as a moving object, that movement in some cases is along different spatial dimensions. Other examples of this metaphor are:

(13)-a 上/下月

shang xia yue
above/below month
‘last/next month’

(13)-b 上/下 一次

shang xia yici
above/below one-time
‘last/next time’

(13)-c 上/下学期
There is a folk etymology about these uses of *shang* ‘up/above/on’ for past time and *xia* ‘down/below/off’ for future time that is recited by some teachers of Chinese language that appeals to the fact that Chinese calendars were arranged so that on a 2-dimensional surface the calendar reads from top-to-bottom, like Chinese scroll writing. Thus, with respect to any point of time, previous time would be above that point, and future time would be below that point. Be that as it may, English-speaking learners of Chinese have difficulty acquiring this construction. A likely explanation could be that viewing the past as above and future as below runs directly counter to an English metaphor, *FUTURE IS UP*; as in expressions like, ‘upcoming events,’ and ‘no one knows what’s up ahead.’ Incidentally, this English metaphor *THE FUTURE IS UP* is coherent with another metaphor, *AMORPHOUS IS UP* and *CONCRETE IS DOWN*; as in expressions like, ‘everything’s up in the air;’ and ‘What’s up?’ --a metaphor which, as we saw in the discussion of conduit metaphor, is also operative in Chinese.

In the examples in (14) for past time and in the examples (12) and (15) for future time, however, we can see that in other cases the *PAST IS ABOVE; FUTURE IS BELOW* metaphor is supplanted to some extent by the *PAST IS IN FRONT;*
FUTURE IS IN BACK metaphor. Nevertheless, the two metaphors are not inconsistent with each other. Rather, they are different elaborations of the same larger metaphor, TIME IS A MOVING OBJECT. 'In front' and 'behind' merely indicate linear spatial sequence without specifying along which dimension—although one might imagine a default interpretation such that the sequence moves along a horizontal axis/plane with humans standing vertically and facing the future. Thus, PAST IS ABOVE; FUTURE IS BELOW can be seen simply as a specification of PAST IS IN FRONT; FUTURE IS BEHIND metaphor in that it further specifies the sequential movement as being along a vertical axis.

(14)-a 今天/年

*jin tian nian*

present day/year

‘today/this year’

(14)-b 昨天

*zuotian*

yesterday day

‘yesterday’

(14)-c 去年

*qunian*

go-year
‘last year’

(14)-d 前天/年

qian tian nian

in-front day/year

‘day before yesterday/year before last’

(14)-e 大前天/年

da qian tian nian

big in-front day/year

‘three days/years ago’

(15)-a 明天/年

mingtian nian

clear-open day/year

‘tomorrow/next year’

(15)-b 后天/年

hou tian nian

in-back day/year

‘day after tomorrow/year after next’

(15)-c 大后天/年

da hou tian nian

big in-back day/year
In examples (14)a, it can be seen that the Chinese expressions meaning ‘today,’ and ‘this year,’ 今天 / 今年 jintian jinnian, referring to present time do not indicate movement, which is consistent with the metaphor, TIME IS A MOVING OBJECT, insofar as present time is thus conceived as being stationary. In (14)-b and -c there is asymmetry in the expressions for ‘yesterday’ versus ‘last year:’ 昨天 zuotian ‘yesterday’ does not indicate movement, whereas 去年 qunian lit. go-year ‘last year’ does indicate TIME IS A MOVING OBJECT in the sense of a year having come(?) and now having gone. Symmetry returns to past expressions with 天/年 tian nian in (14)-d and -e as the metaphor PAST IS IN FRONT; FUTURE IS IN BACK takes over. Thus in a linear temporal sequence with present time as a reference point and with humans observing the procession of time marching towards them there are the metaphorical expressions 前 天/年 qian tian nian lit. in-front day/year ‘two days/years ago;’ and 大 前 天/年 da qian tian lit. big (i.e., more-further) in-front day/year ‘three days/years ago.’ For future time the expressions in (15)-a for ‘tomorrow’ and ‘next year’ 明天/年 ming tian nian lit. clear-open day/year, which are one remove from the present reference time, do not depend on the TIME IS A MOVING OBJECT metaphor, but the expressions that are two and three removes from the present time do. Thus in (15)-b and -c there are the metaphorical
expressions 后 天/年 hou tian nian lit. behind day/year and 大后 天/年 da hou tian nian lit. big (i.e., more-further) in-back day/year.

16)-a 一小时 以前

yi xiaoshi yiqian

one hour before

‘one hour ago’

(16)-b 上个钟点

shangge zhongdian

above-CL hour

‘one hour ago’

(16)-c 在过 一个 小时

zai guo yige xiaoshi

again pass one-CL hour

‘one hour from now’

On the basis of the above discussion it can be concluded that for both English and Chinese, the TIME IS A MOVING OBJECT metaphor is highly productive. However there is at least one major difference in the elaboration of that metaphor; that is, that time in Chinese is occasionally represented as moving along a vertical axis as opposed to the horizontal axis in English. This difference can account for the
relative non-productivity of the conceptualization that time itself has a face as it moves towards us. This would fall out from the fact that humans would normally be conceived as standing vertically when viewing the (conceptual) world; in this way a person can 'face' the future as it moves toward that person. It is less natural, therefore, to imagine facing this future if the person has to deliberately look down to do so.

For the most part, however, it can be seen that both languages represent the abstract notion, time, as an object that moves through space. Given that English and Chinese are mutually exotic, when such conceptual similarity is identified one is tempted to hypothesize the existence of a human conceptual universal. Though it is clearly beyond the scope of this dissertation, future research should be directed toward finding out to what extent the TIME IS A MOVING OBJECT metaphor applies across human languages. George Lakoff argued for the importance of elucidating the system of conceptual metaphor at the end of his CLS presentation in 1993: “Our huge system of conceptual metaphor...dwarfs our grammatical systems, both in size and profundity. The metaphor system tells us how we conceptualize our deepest and most important ideas, from time, to events, to causation, to morality, to the self, to the mind, to love, and on and on. Exploring grammar has an endless fascination. But exploring the metaphor system affords an unprecedented opportunity to peer into the innermost reaches of the human mind” (pp 238-9).
NOTES:

1. The analysis of the lexeme weilai as being indicative of time as a moving object may be problematic if one views weilai as a frozen form—much like the word ‘breakfast’ in English. Speakers of English no longer conceive of the morning meal as the ‘breaking’ of a ‘fast’ that started the night before. Similarly, speakers of Chinese no longer (consciously) conceive of weilai ‘future’ as ‘(that which) has not come.’ Thus weilai by itself is no more interesting than ‘breakfast.’ However, if the expression is coherent with other, larger ontological metaphor, then it is interesting. Lakoff and Johnson use the English example ‘foot of the mountain’ to illustrate those metaphorical expressions that are “…idiosyncratic, unsystematic, and isolated.” In their view, if such expressions “…do not interact with other metaphors, play no particularly interesting role in our conceptual system, and hence are not metaphors that we live by…[they]are dead…though they do have a spark of life, in that they are understood partly in terms of marginal metaphorical concepts like A MOUNTAIN IS A PERSON” (p.55). The expression weilai, however, is coherent with the important ontological metaphor TIME IS MOVING OBJECT. As Lakoff and Johnson observe, “the fact that …[metaphors] are conventionally fixed within the lexicon of…[a language] makes them no less alive” (p55).

2. The reader will recognize that much of this discussion has been anticipated in Tai (1989) and indeed that the time as a spatial metaphor was worked out by H. Clark (1973).

3. In a review article, Chan, (1989), offers a detailed discussion of this problem from the point of view of teaching Chinese to L-1 speakers of English. She suggests several images that could be used to help students acquire PAST IS ABOVE; FUTURE IS BELOW metaphor; e.g., imagining time as analogous to the scrolling of text on the word processor with ‘arrow up’ ‘page up’ keys accessing previous text, and vice versa. Another point she mentions, also in connection with written text, is the fact that English already has the expressions, ‘the above-mentioned’ and ‘what will be discussed below.’
8.1 CONCEPTUAL METAPHOR IN SYNTAX

We began with the intuition that Lakoff and Johnson's ideas about conceptual metaphor as elucidated in *Metaphors We Live By* (1980) should have implications for syntax. Their original formulation of the idea, based on Reddy's description of the conduit metaphor, dealt exclusively at the lexical level, explaining, for example, how the ARGUMENT IS WAR metaphor in English motivates the choice of expressions that are used to talk about the abstract notion, argument. Of the three types of conceptual metaphor suggested by Lakoff and Johnson—structural, orientational, and ontological—we thought that one type, ontological metaphor, in particular would have the most direct relevance to syntax since it is ontological metaphor that allows abstractions to be conceptualized as physical objects and thus to be realized as nominal expressions in the syntax of the language.

Given the generally covert nature of conceptual metaphor, we thought that comparing Chinese to some other, unrelated natural language would be a good way
to 'make the familiar strange.' Apart from our fluency in that language, English was chosen to compare and contrast with Chinese because it is also the only language for which conceptual metaphor has been worked out to any extent. We also hoped that the elucidation of ontological metaphor in Chinese would permit some generalization about the productivity of nominalization generally in that language.

This hope was inspired by Lyons' original attempt to characterize natural languages in terms of substantive syntactic universals. The promise was that by appeal to these substantive universals it would be possible to describe in just what way grammatical categories and features may be differently arranged across languages. In other words, the elucidation of ontological metaphor would tell us a lot about the range of notions that can and cannot be treated as nouns.

Finally it was expected that the elucidation of ontological metaphor in Chinese would lead to typological claims. This expectation was based on the idea that conceptual metaphors, being reliable indicators of human conceptualizations of experience, should above all represent conceptualizations that are coherent. It is our reading of Quine that causes us to lay the greatest possible stress on the idea that human belief systems should be coherent. The value of this principle of conceptual coherence is that it allows us to predict and explain other facts about the syntax of a language because these facts cohere conceptually with already known facts. For example, if it were known that nominalization was relatively nonproductive in a language then it would be expected that modification in terms of quantity and quality
would be done adverbially rather than adjectivally. We would call this a typological claim.

8.2 FINDINGS

We have found that ontological metaphors are operative in Chinese, but to a lesser extent than in English. Specifically this means that Chinese is less inclined to ascribe first-order features—such as, having constant perceptual properties, occupying 3-dimensional space, and being subject to individualization—to higher order notions. Chinese tends to resist conceptualizing verbal expressions as nominal expressions. Thus, events are objects, e.g., 看比赛 kan bisai ‘watch race’, but not container objects, e.g., 比赛一半儿 bisai yiban(r) ‘race one-half’ not ‘halfway into the race’—this second example suggesting whole-part metaphor for event rather container-contained. Activities tend to not be nominalized, e.g. ‘running’ in the English sentence, ‘There was a lot of good running in that race’ shows up as 那场比赛很多人跑得很好 na-chang bisai hen duo ren pao de hen hao ‘As for that race, many people ran well.’ Where activities would show up as containers in English, they appear as adverbial clauses of time in Chinese; e.g., the English sentence, ‘In washing the window, I splashed water all over the floor’ shows up as 洗窗户的时候，我洒了一地水 ca chuanghu de shihou，wo sa yi di shui ‘When (I) washed the windows, I splashed water all over the floor.’ Where activities may be construed as process (i.e., be more amenable to nominalization), they may
appear with 中 zhong ‘center/middle’ but not with 里 li ‘in’. For example the English sentence, ‘History develops in struggle’ shows up as 历史在斗争中发展 lishi zai doucheng zhong fazhan ‘History at struggle center develops’. We think that the use of 中 zhong ‘center/middle’ but not 里 li ‘in’ is analogous to expressions such as 月中 yue zhong ‘during the month’ where time frame is a mass with a center, but is not a container. Metaphorical containers where they do show up in Chinese must have an actual physical basis, for example as substances or entities and not as abstractions, such as one finds in English. For example in the phrase 树从里 shu cong li ‘in a clump of trees’, having a strong physical basis, container metaphor works. However, even for the conceptualization of physical space, container is still less productive in Chinese than it is in English. For example the phrase 在国内 zai guo-nei ‘at country interior’ (which English would render as ‘in the country’), with 内 nei does express interiority but not necessarily container. Similarly the phrase 在树上 zai shu shang ‘at tree on’ (which English would render as ‘in the tree’), with 上 shang shows a two-dimensional space not a three-dimensional space, i.e., not a container. Thus, even for notions that are clearly nominalized further conceptualization as container may not show up. If we assume Lyons’ general criterion for first-order nominals, that they occupy three-dimensional space, it is not clear to what extent 树 shu ‘tree’ in this example can meet that criterion, since the elaboration as container obviously depends on conceiving the object as being three-dimensional. Related to the productivity of container metaphor is the applicability of
conduit metaphor for communication. Insofar as conduit metaphor depends on container metaphor it is also less productive in Chinese than it is in English. For example rather than saying ‘it is difficult to put this idea into words’ as English allows, one says instead that ‘This idea, (it is) very hard (to) use language to express’ 这个想法很难用语言表达 zheige xiangfa hen nan yong yuyan biaoda.

Personification, which often entails ascribing agentive quality to nominals is also relatively less productive in Chinese. For example where English has it that ‘the fact argues against the standard theories, Chinese has it that ‘the fact, with respect to the standard theories, is a refutation’ 这个事实对一般规范的理论是一个反驳 zhege shishi dui yiban guifan de lilun shi yige fanbo. The Chinese version keeps the same subject while circumventing personification metaphor altogether.

Finally, in both English and Chinese, the TIME IS A MOVING OBJECT metaphor is highly productive. However there is at least one major difference in the elaboration of that metaphor; that is, that time in Chinese is occasionally represented as moving along a vertical axis as opposed to the horizontal axis in English. This difference can account for the relative non-productivity of the conceptualization that time itself has a face as it moves towards us. For example ‘the face of things to come’ translates more prosaically as 未来的趋势 weilai de qu shi ‘future trends.’
8.3 EXPLANATION OF THE FINDINGS

A careful reading of Lakoff and Johnson's discussion of ontological metaphor in English shows that the typical ontological metaphor is one that views an abstraction as an object. In terms of English syntax, and based on the examples that Lakoff and Johnson offer, this often involves the nominalization of some activity otherwise described by a verb. Given that ontological metaphors of this typical kind are less productive in Chinese, then two obvious questions arise: 1-why should they be less productive; and 2-what alternative metaphoric conceptualization, if any, should be suggested?

The answer to 1 is that the metaphoric elaboration of metaphoric objects and indeed of physical objects is constrained in Chinese because objectification itself is problematic in Chinese. We have observed that the application of container metaphor depends on two conditions; 1- that the notion be construed as an object, and 2- that the notion as object be further elaborated as a container. Thus container metaphor would be less productive if meeting either one or both of the above conditions were problematic. The facts of the Chinese language that we have seen indicate that indeed both conditions are problematic. Chinese does not objectify notions as freely as English does; and container metaphor, where it does apply in Chinese, is more physically based than it is in English.

As for question 2, about what the Chinese alternative to the container metaphor should be, the answer, as we have already hinted, is that in many cases where
English would employ container metaphor, Chinese will depend on whole-part metaphor. For example in English the nominal expression ‘development’ is conceived of as a process that contains it ‘stages’. Thus one can say ‘there are three stages in adolescent development.’ However, in Chinese one will say instead ‘adolescent development has three stages’ 青春 的 发展 有 三个 阶段 qingchun de fazhan you sange jieduan. Alternatively, in Chinese the nominal expression of process can be replaced by an expression of the time frame that encompasses the process; this time frame can then be divided into parts. Thus one can also say 青春期, 分 三个 阶段 qingchun qi, fen san ge jieduan. ‘adolescent period, divide three CL stages.’ Both the above examples are variations on a whole-part metaphor that work in place of the container metaphor that shows up in English. Of course the notion of whole-part as a powerful conceptual principle in the shaping of Chinese syntax has already been elaborated by Tai (1989, 1993), so it is not surprising that this same conceptualization should turn up in the metaphoric elaboration of abstract notions such as process.

In fact for a conceptual scheme that resists objectification generally, whole-part metaphor is more congenial than container-contained metaphor. To explain why this should be so, we appeal to a version of Hansen’s (1983) mass-noun hypothesis that also depends on a whole-part conceptualization for nominal expressions in Chinese. Stated briefly, Hansen’s hypothesis has it that if the syntax of a language does not indicate that nouns are countable, then that syntax must, by default, indicate that
nouns are construed in terms of mass. Semantically, there are only these two possibilities; nouns either refer to individuals or to a mass. On the basis of this simple dichotomy, one can see that construing referents as individuals makes them amenable to different kinds of metaphoric elaboration than does construing referents as mass. A mass is typically amorphous and its constituent elements are typically homogeneous and indistinguishable; individuals are typically discrete, and as constituent elements of a class, they are typically bounded objects which can be distinguished and differentiated. If we imagine bounded objects as typically having a fixed form, then we can imagine an exterior and by extension we can imagine an interior as repository for the parts that combine to make up the whole object. The whole-part relationship can thus be elaborated as container-contained. In contrast, an amorphous mass, having none of the attributes of discreteness or fixity can only be cut into constituent parts. The whole-part relationship cannot be further elaborated.

In terms of Lyons' substantive universals for parts of speech, common nominal expressions in Chinese, then, are viewed as meeting two—and sometimes three—of his four general suggested criteria. The criteria, as we have mentioned, are that first-order nominals: 1-have relatively constant perceptual properties, 2-be publicly observable, 3-occupy three-dimensional space, and 4-be individualizable. As we have seen 3 is sometimes a problem, and 4 must be accomplished with the aid of classifier terms. Thus the fact that ontological metaphor and container metaphor
specifically is constrained in Chinese is coherent with Lyons’ idea that first-order nominals should be characterized by certain substantive universal features and is coherent with Hansen’s idea that common nouns in Chinese are construed as mass rather than as individuals, placing them higher on the nominal expression hierarchy than prototypical first-order nominals.

If objectification is problematic then, on the principle of conceptual coherence, one should not be surprised to find that specificity is also problematic. That this is indeed the case was born out in our discussion of locative phrases in Chinese. The idea that specific reference takes two steps (cf. Hsieh (1989)) where English takes one step helps explain that indeed specificity is a problem in Chinese, requiring, as it were, more cumbersome syntactic paraphernalia than English does. Interestingly, this analysis of locative phrases also depends on a whole-part scheme (cf. Tai 1993a,b, 1989) such that fei zai identifies a mass term in the first step and a localizer expression, as suffix, (e.g., 里 li ‘in’, or 上 shang ‘on’, or 中 zhong ‘center/middle’) picks out a specific part of the whole mass in the second step. That English locative phrases achieve the necessary degree of specificity, and what we assume to be pragmatic parity, in only one step is indicative of a conceptualization that readily objectifies notions. The only requirement in English locatives is that the location referent be marked by the specifier ‘the’—which, being derived historically from the far demonstrative ‘that’, tells us indeed that conceptual distance and objectivity/specificity are analogous.
This is a clear example of conceptual-semantic-syntactic interface, the elucidation of which we take to be the heart of Tai’s (1989) cognition-based functional approach. The absence of paraphernalia in locative phrase formation is coherent with, or, if you like, ‘interwoven with’ the relative absence of paraphernalia in a counting situation. The fact that English does not depend on classifiers to make nouns countable indicates, *prima facie*, that NP referents are more readily individuated in English than in Chinese. If they can be readily individuated from like members of their class then they can certainly be separated and distanced from knowers. A specific mass, if there can be such a creature, cannot serve as locational referent unless it is viewed from such a distance that it shrinks to a point. In Chinese, we have seen that this typically is the situation with proper place names. Up close, specificity must be gotten by picking out a part of the whole mass.

Conceptual coherence shows up in connection with personification metaphor as well. Personification metaphor is relatively less productive in Chinese because, typologically, Chinese generally is less concerned with the agent-action relation than English is. Here we are appealing to the typological distinction put forth by Tai (1984): That is, that English, as an agent-oriented language, is more concerned with the agent-action relation; while Chinese, as a patient-oriented language, is more concerned with the action-result relation. In English, personified entities generally take the role of agent in English sentences. However, if, as Tai observes, agency is not usually as salient in Chinese argument structures as it is in English, then it should
not be surprising that personification be less productive in Chinese. In this case we have a conceptual constraint on the elaboration of ontological metaphor that is coherent with Tai’s already recognized syntactic/typological constraint.

However, by claiming that ontological metaphor, and hence nominalization, is relatively less productive in Chinese it seems that we may be running counter to a claim put forth by Chan Ning-ping (1985, 1987) and tacitly endorsed by Tai (1997); i.e., that nominalization is productive in Modern Chinese. In fact our differences are largely a matter of degree. If, as Chan observes, nominalization is becoming more productive in Modern Chinese, there is still no reason to think that it is as productive as it is in English. Indeed, based on Tai’s (1997) observations, it appears that the general pattern is to let verbs stay verbs and nouns stay nouns. In other words, this admittedly recent innovation is an exception to the general character of Chinese language; i.e., the generally iconic character of Chinese language elucidated in so much of Tai’s work.

Taking a diachronic and a purely syntactic approach, Chan, along with Chao (1968), notices that in this century disyllabicity has come to characterize many Chinese nouns, especially neologisms coined as representations of foreign scientific terms, which, coming from European languages, are often characterized by suffixation. Thus, according to Chan, disyllabicity came to be associated with ‘nouniness’. The (subsequent?) innovation of disyllabic verbs then makes nominalization possible because these verbs are already wearing a “nouny disguise”.

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The motivation for this nominalization is based on what she sees as an important change in Chinese sentence patterns; i.e., the movement toward longer sentences and the corresponding need to nominalize previously mentioned activities for reference purposes and for cohesion in extended discourse. We do not question Chan's claims; however, since she takes a purely syntactic (descriptive) approach, it is difficult to establish a point of departure for our ideas expressed here, which depend on a cognition-based functional (explanatory) approach (cf. Tai (1989)). It could be the case, however, that many of the disyllabic verbs that are subject to nominalization are just those that denote abstract activities as opposed to concrete visible activities—hence along some continuum from pristine verbals to pristine (1st order) nominals they are already peripheral to the verb category.

Tai (1997) appears to claim that verbs can freely be nominalized in Chinese, saying, “...words denoting actions and events...can, in general, function both as nouns and as verbs” (p.447). However, an important qualification appears later in the article:

It seems that in Chinese, words naming visible actions, such as those of hitting and kicking are more restricted to their verbal status than more abstract concepts, such as love and hate. From another vantage point, visible action verbs are prototypically more verbal than abstract stative verbs. With respect to the verbal status of a word, there also appears to be a continuum, from visible action verbs to abstract stative verbs (p.451).

Tai supports the idea of continuum with the sample sentences that we cited in section 2.6.2 (pp42-43), illustrating the usage of verbs like 跑 / 跳 pao tiao ‘run/jump’, which represent prototypical visible actions, to verbs like 哭 / 笑 ku bu xiao ‘cry/smile’.
ku xiao ‘cry/laugh’, to verbs like 爱 / 恨 ai hen ‘love/hate’, which represent abstract statives.

Actually, Tai’s main claim in the article is a response to Hopper and Thompson’s (1982) putative universal that the morphological asymmetry found between the process of nominalization on one hand (having rich morphology), and the process of verbalization on the other hand (lacking morphology) is motivated by a conceptual asymmetry. That is, humans have reason to nominalize events, “...because human cognition can deal with concrete entities more easily than with abstractions” (Hopper and Thompson (1984:746)). In contrast, there is less reason to transform what is already a manageable concrete entity into a presumably less manageable abstraction, i.e., an activity.

Tai accepts the universal claim about conceptual asymmetry, as do we, but rejects the claim about morphological asymmetry (which he supports with examples from a variety of languages). What interests us, however, is a further comparative claim that he makes about Chinese language; i.e., because Chinese is “...rich in iconic motivations...it is not surprising to find conceptual asymmetry more clearly reflected in Chinese than in other languages, including English. The general absence of denominal verbs in Chinese provides yet another instance of iconicity in Chinese grammar, alongside temporal sequence and other iconic motivations” (Tai 1997:464; also cf. Tai 1985, 1993a).
Tai’s point is that verbalization, though not highly productive in either language, is much less productive in Chinese than it is in English. In other words, nouns tend to stay nouns—they do not shift categories. This makes Chinese more iconic than English because the grammar reflects more directly the world as it is conceived and experienced. With reference to Lyons’ substantive universals, 1st-order nominals, referring to persons and concrete things, stay nominals. Similarly, we have observed in this dissertation that nominalization is much less productive in Chinese than it is in English. That is, verbs tend to remain verbs—particularly as compared to the situation in English. This too, then, is another instance of iconicity in Chinese.

Thus, with respect to the project suggested by Lyons of trying to describe in just what way grammatical categories and features may be differently arranged across languages, we can say that Chinese generally adheres to a categorization that reflects the world as it is conceived and experienced. In other words, grammatical categorization, in line with Tai’s insights, is iconically motivated. In terms of Lyons’ three-part taxonomy, we can say, then, that in Chinese 1st-order entities and visible actions are firmly anchored on opposite ends of the continuum, especially as compared with English (with qualities presumably occupying the middle ground). Tai would call this “strong iconicity”.

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8.4 IMPLICATIONS

We began researching this topic a few years ago with the intuition that Lakoff and Johnson's ideas about conceptual metaphor as elucidated in *Metaphors We Live By* (1980) should have implications for syntax. At that time Lakoff himself had not yet pursued this direction in any of his publications. As such this dissertation is a reasonable and possibly significant extension of their idea. We chose to look at ontological metaphor because we thought that it would have the most direct relevance to syntax insofar as it entails ascribing first order characteristics to higher order notions—it shows up commonly in the conceptualization of verbal expressions as nominal expressions, e.g., events as objects. We took the relativistic approach of comparing Chinese with English in researching this issue of conceptual metaphor in syntax because of the covert nature of this phenomenon. That is, insofar as speakers are 'living by these metaphors', i.e., insofar as these metaphors inform our linguistic conceptualizations, speakers may not recognize them as metaphorical at all. Our principal finding that ontological metaphor, and specifically container metaphor, is less productive in Chinese relative to English supports the view that there is a coherent linguistic conceptualization in Chinese that resists objectification generally. However, pursuing the fabric of belief metaphor, it should be stressed that this is just one thread of the fabric. In order to explain why this should be the case we must cast our net widely by first imagining what kind of conceptualization could underlie this phenomenon and second by examining other related features of the language to
see whether they are coherent with such conceptualizations. In other words, coherence, both conceptual and syntactic, will be the test for any claims that we may make about Chinese language. Our principal finding, that ontological metaphor, and specifically container metaphor, is less productive in Chinese relative to English, supports the view that there is a coherent linguistic conceptualization in Chinese that resists objectification generally.

In describing the productivity of ontological metaphor in Chinese, we also imagine that we have in a small way pushed forward the project suggested by Lyons of trying to describe in just what way grammatical categories and features may be differently arranged across languages. Another way to describe the relative non-productivity of ontological metaphor in Chinese in terms of Lyons’ substantive universals for parts of speech is to say that the range of notions that may be termed first-order nominals in Chinese is narrower than it is in English.

What linguists have wanted is a meaningful and objective way to compare and contrast the conceptualizations that are indicated by syntactic differences across languages. We think that Lakoff’s conceptual metaphor, informed by Lyons’ substantive universals for parts of speech, and motivated by Tai’s cognition-based functional approach, can make discussion of language contrast both meaningful and objective. Furthermore, if this project can be guided and constrained by reference to the idea of conceptual coherence, then claims can be still more convincing. Past claims about linguistic relativism have not been convincing because they are only
fragmentary at best. For example, the mass noun hypothesis for Chinese must remain a hypothesis until it can be proven to be conceptually coherent with the broadest possible range of related syntactic phenomena.

Within the scope of this dissertation we have only dealt decisively with a few of the notions that may be treated as nominals in Chinese, principally with events, activities, and processes. Our methodology depended heavily on translations from English into Chinese. Although to some extent this is desirable as way to make the familiar strange, future research should look more at Chinese data and in its own terms, i.e., by reference to the notion of conceptual coherence. Given that the range of notions that may be described as first order nominals in Chinese is relatively narrower than in English, a likely area for further research would be to see how this fact impinges on how qualities are treated in Chinese—the hypothesis being that if the range of nominals is restricted then adjectival modification should be less productive than adverbial modification (an hypothesis already formulated in Tai 1982). For example, the English phrase, 'new teacher', must be rendered in Chinese as 新来的老师 xin lai de laoshi lit. 'new come DE teacher' or 'newly arrived teacher'—the quality of newness attaches to a verb in Chinese rather than to the noun. By the same token one might, for example, view the relative proliferation of stative verbs in Chinese compared to English as a related phenomenon; i.e., qualities which are realized as stative verbs rather than adjectives retain more of their verbal quality in Chinese compared to English. By pursuing the guiding idea of conceptual
coherence, what is essentially a negative claim, that the range of first order nominals is relatively narrow in Chinese, can some day be rephrased as a positive claim.
NOTES:

1. As we mentioned in section 2.6.1, Tai (1982) already initiates the research in this area.

2. Marjorie Chan has pointed out to me that these are existential sentences. Where English prefers a BE form, Chinese requires a HAVE form: thus, the English sentence, ‘There are three stages in adolescent development;’ contrasts with the Chinese sentence, 青春的 发展 有三个 阶段 qingchun de fazhan you sange jieduan ‘Adolescent development has three stages.’ This begs the question as to what differences in conceptualization, if any, underlie the use of existential BE versus HAVE across languages. It would be too glib at this point to suggest that for languages selecting BE objectification of notions is relatively more productive, while for languages selecting HAVE, objectification is relatively less productive. Y.C. Li (1972), taking a Fillmore case grammar approach, describes the facts about the usages in Chinese. Duff (1993) provides useful cross linguistic data and discussion from the point of view of L-1 interference in the context of L-2 learning.

3. In defense of this methodology, we should point out that if anything this tactic should tend to reduce the comparative differences between the two languages—thus making our relativistic claims even stronger. If English patterns tend to anglicize the Chinese translations then whatever differences do persist must be true differences indeed.

4. This example was suggested to me by Galal Walker.
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