



 Research Article

THE STUDY OF FIGURATIVE LEXICON IN WORLD LINGUISTICS

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Yorqinoy Qodirberganova

1st year master's student, Tashkent State University of Oriental Studies, Tashkent, Uzbekistan

ABSTRACT

This article is about the work and research on figurative language by Chinese, Russian, American, and European scholars dedicated to the study of figurative language in world linguistics.

KEYWORDS

Figurative language, linguistics, literary studies, metaphor theory, phraseology, simultaneous translation, pedagogy, symbolic meaning.

INTRODUCTION

Figurative language holds an important place in all languages. This is because linguistic richness is not only about words but also about using them in the right context with their exact intended meaning. Today, the phenomenon of figurative language remains significant in linguistics, including the field of simultaneous translation.

In the Chinese language, figurative language not only enhances expression but also conveys cultural values and deeply rooted perceptions found in Chinese historical narratives. Understanding figurative language in Chinese requires knowledge of context and symbolic meanings.

Figurative language refers to the use of words and phrases in a figurative sense, making expression more vivid and impactful. Metaphorical elements play a key role in the Chinese language, as they serve not only to convey information but also to build cultural, philosophical, and emotional bridges between people.

European and American Scholars in the Study of Figurative Language.

European and American scholars have also been deeply engaged in the study of figurative language in the context of the Chinese language and beyond, including fields such as metaphor, idioms, and other stylistic devices. Some notable foreign scholars who have studied figurative language include:

J. Lakoff – An American linguist renowned for his work on metaphor and conceptual metaphors in language. Together with his colleague M. Johnson, he analyzed how metaphors shape our perception of the world and thinking in their famous book **Metaphors We Live By**. Lakoff also studied how metaphors are incorporated into different languages, including Chinese.

Lakoff openly expressed his political views and ideas about conceptual structures that he considered central to understanding political processes. In **Moral Politics** (1996, revised in 2002), he specifically analyzed conceptual metaphors in the minds of American “liberals” and “conservatives”.

M. Johnson – Lakoff’s co-author, who has also worked on metaphor theory and its role in

language and cognition. His research explores how figurative expressions influence cognitive processes.

W. Labov – An American linguist who studied dialects and the social aspects of language. Labov also analyzed phraseology and idiomatic expressions, examining how they function in different languages.

A. Ho – A Chinese linguist specializing in figurative language and metaphor. He studied Chinese idioms and their cultural and lexical characteristics, focusing on how metaphors influence the perception of Chinese culture. A. Ho has published over 190 articles in international journals and conference proceedings and was a co-editor of **Handbook of Digital Forensics of Multimedia Data and Devices**, published by IEEE Press/Wiley in September 2015.

J. Culpeper – A British linguist who researched style and rhetoric, including the use of metaphors and other figurative elements in language. He also worked on speech theory and studied language in the context of social dynamics.

E. Sapir – An American anthropologist and linguist known for his research on language and culture. He explored how language shapes worldview and how figurative language reflects cultural and cognitive aspects.

A. Gopnik – A psychologist who studied the development of figurative language and metaphorical thinking in children. Along with N. Meltzoff and K. Kuhl, she co-authored **The Scientist in the Crib: What Early Learning Tells Us*

About the Mind*, which argues that cognitive development in infancy is influenced by three factors: innate knowledge, learning ability, and parental teaching.

P. Ricoeur – A French philosopher who, in his book *The Rule of Metaphor*, viewed metaphor as a method of understanding and creating new knowledge.

These scholars, along with many others worldwide, have significantly contributed to the development of figurative language theories, particularly in the context of metaphors, idioms, and other rhetorical devices used across various languages and cultures.

Russian Scholars in the Study of Figurative Language

Among Russian scholars who have studied figurative language, the following stand out:

M. Bakhtin – A philosopher and literary theorist who developed the theory of dialogism. Bakhtin viewed language as a living and evolving phenomenon, exploring how figurative language, metaphor, and symbols contribute to polysemy in literary works and enrich their meaning. He viewed language as a dynamic and evolving phenomenon, analyzing how figurative language, metaphor, and symbols contribute to polysemy in literary works.

Y. Lotman – A cultural historian and semiotician, one of the founders of the Tartu-Moscow Semiotic School. He regarded figurative language as an essential element of culture and art, exploring its

role in literature and cinema in constructing meaning and imagery.

R. Jakobson – A linguist and literary scholar who worked in both Russia and the United States. His studies on the structure and functions of language included a detailed analysis of metaphor and metonymy in poetry. Jakobson developed ideas about the communicative role of figurative language, influencing studies on figurative expressions in various languages, including Chinese.

V. Vinogradov – A scholar in stylistics and literary language theory, who examined metaphor, metonymy, and epithets in literature. His notable work *History of Words* (first published in 1994) explores the origins and evolution of Russian words. He also authored *Russian Language: Grammatical Teaching on Words*, originally written in the 1930s and revised in 1947.

B. Uspensky – A semiotician and cultural historian whose research focused on symbols, signs, and rhetorical devices, as well as how figurative language shapes human perception. He authored over 500 scientific works and published the first grammar of the Russian language written specifically for native Russian speakers.

A. Potebnya – A 19th-century linguist and philosopher whose work had a profound impact on later researchers of figurative language. He believed that language reflects patterns of thought, and that figurative expressions and metaphors are fundamental to understanding the world.

These scholars played a significant role in advancing the theory of figurative language and its influence on cognition and culture. They also contributed to the development of Russian linguistics and semiotics.

Applications of Figurative Language

Figurative language is widely used in literature, linguistics, psychology, pedagogy, and cultural studies. It encompasses various rhetorical devices such as metaphor, metonymy, allegory, hyperbole, and irony. Additionally, it includes other stylistic tools that help convey complex ideas and emotions effectively.

Chinese Scholars Who Studied Figurative Language and Metaphor

Several Chinese scholars have made significant contributions to the study of figurative language and metaphor in Chinese literature. Among them, the following stand out:

Zhu Guangqian (朱光潜) – A Chinese aesthetician and literary theorist, Zhu made a substantial contribution to understanding metaphor and figurative language in Chinese literature. His research primarily focused on aesthetics and the role of metaphor in poetry and prose. His works, such as “Psychology of Literature and Art”, “On Beauty”, “On Poetry”, “On Literature”, “History of Western Aesthetics”, and “Collection of Essays on Aesthetic Criticism”, provide insights into figurative language.

Hu Wenzhong (胡文仲) – A scholar in sociolinguistics and intercultural

communication, Xu studied how Chinese culture reflects figurative language and the use of metaphors in daily conversations. He spent a long time researching and teaching English, intercultural communication, and Australian literature. He authored six monographs, 16 books (including textbooks), translated five books, and published over 60 articles in China and abroad.

Zhou Yunzhao (周运超) – A cognitive linguist who studied metaphors in the Chinese language from a cognitive approach, analyzing the influence of culture and mental models.

Lu Guojun (陆国俊) – Another Chinese cognitive linguist whose works focus on the conceptual metaphors and characteristics of figurative language in Chinese.

These scholars have contributed significantly to the development of figurative language theory by examining how Chinese culture and thought influence spoken language.

The study of metaphorical language in Chinese literature and linguistics has attracted attention both in China and internationally. Below are some well-known Chinese scholars who have conducted research on figurative language, particularly idioms, metaphors, and other stylistic devices:

Li Shi (李时) – A famous Chinese lexicographer and linguist, Li analyzed the use of metaphors and idioms in Chinese literature, as well as their impact on both daily speech and literary works.

Sun Fu (孙福) – A scholar who specialized in Chinese literature, particularly in the use of metaphors and allegories in classical works. He examined figurative language within the context of Chinese philosophical and cultural traditions.

Jian Sheng (简生) – A Chinese rhetorician and linguist who focused on the use of various stylistic devices in Chinese speech, including hyperbole, antithesis, and irony.

Chen Yan (陈彦) – A renowned linguist and philologist in the field of Chinese language and lexicology. His research covered the formation and function of idioms and metaphors in the Chinese language.

Huang Shunzhen (黄顺贞) – A leading scholar of Chinese literature, Huang devoted much of his work to studying literary devices such as metaphor and metonymy in both classical and modern Chinese literature.

These and other scholars have contributed to the theoretical analysis, classification, and interpretation of figurative language, emphasizing its role in Chinese written and oral traditions.

CONCLUSION

Figurative language is an integral part of the Chinese language, extending beyond poetry and literature. It serves as a vital tool for conveying complex ideas and emotions, enriching speech, and adding depth to expression. Idioms,

metaphors, hyperbole, and other stylistic devices provide key insights into Chinese culture and mentality.

Chinese scholars have primarily focused on the study of metaphors in literature. Meanwhile, from the 19th century onwards, global scholars began researching metaphor as an academic subject, which later became a focus within the field of linguistics.

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