Fictive Motion in Chinese and English Tourist Guidebooks

Peggy Wei-lun Tsai[a]; Shelley Ching-yu Hsieh[b], *

[a] English teacher, Institute of Foreign Languages and Literature, National Cheng Kung University, Taiwan.
[b] Professor, Institute of Foreign Languages and Literature, National Cheng Kung University, Taiwan.
* Corresponding Author.

Abstract

This study focuses on the usage of fictive motion in tourist guidebooks. The analysis for the study draws on the theories of image schema and metaphorical extension (Johnson, 1987; Lakoff, 1987 & 1989). Fictive motion is often used to depict the features of natural scenery and the movement of time. We concentrate on the spatial description of fictive motion with data taken from official tourist guidebooks for seven National Parks in Taiwan. Both the narrations in Chinese and in English versions are analyzed. From the comparison, we attempt to assist tourist comprehension of the narratives in tourist guidebooks. The research results indicate that fictive motion description is often used in the depiction of linear movement or for the location of scenic spots, as for example with The river starts from the mountain in English and yan2 shi2 huan2 rao4 si4 zhou1 'the rock surrounded' in Chinese. There are varied applications of fictive motion in Chinese and English, but fictive motion in both languages also shares common characteristics in spatial description.

Key words: Fictive motion; Tourist guidebooks; Image schema; Metaphorical extension; Spatial description

INTRODUCTION

What makes a tourist guidebook more understandable? When reading a tourist guidebooks, what are the cognition processes we deploy to form mental images of the scenery? This research is about cognitive linguistic differences in depictions in tourist guidebooks in English and Chinese. The data sources are tourist guidebooks from seven of the most famous and most frequently visited National Parks in Taiwan, which contain both Chinese and English versions. The main idea of doing the present study is to compare the tourist guidebooks in English and in Chinese to see the difference of fictive motion used in both languages. From the main data source, we got 287 articles introducing the scenery of the National park in Chinese and English. Each article contains more than five descriptions that fictive motion verbs are applied. The purpose of this study is to show the cognitive processes in spatial description, and give a comparison of narrative writing in tourist guidebooks. The analysis shows how fictive motion verbs help readers understand the linguistic cognitive process interacting with the environment. They can also help us imagine and understand the direction and the spatial relation more easily.

Motion verbs are verbs that show motion and action in the verb itself. For example, *Peter runs along the river.* The verb *run* is a motion verb which requires a subject to perform the action. However, fictive motions refer to descriptions of the embodied line of sight visual motion of the speaker through motion verbs without explicit motions in descriptions used for narrative writing (Matlock, 2004). As Talmy (2000) points out, in fictive motion, the subject itself does not move. For example, *The fence runs from the barn to the house*. The *fence* does not perform the action. It does not move. What actually moves is "the locus of visual or mental attention." This motion follows the source-path-goal schema. When a narrow object is in sight, people tend to scan it along its length, from one end (the source, say, *the barn*) to the other end (the goal,

say, *the house*). Another typical example is *The road goes along the mountain*. It is known that the road can not perform the action *go*. The road has its location, however, it cannot *go* anywhere else. Fictive motion verbs are often used in order to describe time and space. For example, *Time flows* and *The river goes along the mountain*. This study focuses on fictive motions used to describe the geographical scenery in tourist guidebooks from the point of view of the speaker or viewer, placing the reader into the consciousness of the tourist guidebooks on the spot. Examples are given to show the different usage and collocations of verbs in Chinese and English. Thus, the research questions are as follows, (1) Do fictive motion verbs exist in narrative writing that is used to describe spatial scenes in Chinese? (2) What is the difference between fictive motion verb phrases in Chinese and in English? (3) If differences do exist, what are the possible reasons behind the differences? The approaches of image schema and metaphorical extension (Johnson 1987; Lakoff, 1987 & 1989) are used in the analysis of both languages.

Rojo and Valenzuela (2003) found that fictive motion descriptions are applied in English, Japanese and Spanish. Matlock (2004) points out that processing fictive motion includes mental simulation. He did four experiments to read stories about traveling, and "then made a timed decision about a fictive motion sentence". Elsewhere Matlock (2006) studies fictive motion verbs as used to describe a static scene that contains spatial information which is related to the trajector (the subject). Drawings are used in his experiment and the result shows that figurative use of motion verbs can evoke the conceptual structure of what we perceive and how we enact motion in the world.

The following sections of the paper will first introduce the research framework of the study, then analyze the data obtained, followed by a discussion elucidating the differences of fictive motion verbs in Mandarin and English, and finally a conclusion that we hope may propel further research.

1. RESEARCH FRAMEWORK

Image schema, the process of human cognition of physical and social interaction with the environment, refers to mental pictures of the position of objects. Figures are seen as trajectors (TR) and the ground as landmark (LM) (Johnson, 1987; Lakoff, 1987 & 1989). The path traces the course of the movement. The three elements, the TRs, the LM and the path, together form the mental picture of the objects (Ungerer & Schmid 2006). Image schemata are often used to indicate the relative position of objects with different prepositions (Ungerer & Schmid 2006). Those TRs that include movement and actions can form the path.
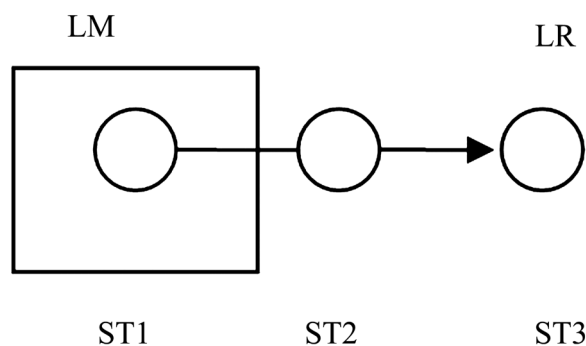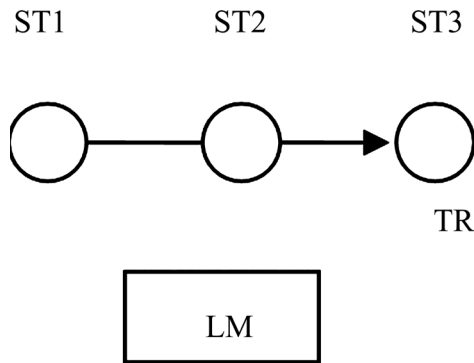

Figure 1
Image Schema for 'Out' (Ungerer & Schmid, 2006)

Figure 1 is the representation of the preposition 'out'. The circles represent the trajectory and the square is seen as the LM. The meaning of 'out' can be shown as the TRs moving out of the LM, and the three stages show the movement and form the path. We see the mental picture of image schema of the word 'out' in the figure. With different positions and movements, through image schema can form various mental pictures in the process of mental cognition

Metaphorical extension helps explain images that cannot be analyzed by schema alone but also contain metaphorical expressions (Ungerer & Schmid, 2006). That means sentences containing not only images of the location, but also needing to be explained by resort to metaphors.

(a). *She has a strange power over me.*
(b). *The government was overthrown.*

Examples (a) and (b) are taken from Lakoff (1987). In both examples, image schema of 'over' is used (see Fig. 2), while they also contain metaphors at the same time. The image schema of 'over' shows the higher position of the TRs above the LM. It shows the positional inequality in metaphorical meanings. The word 'over' in the two sentences can be seen as a spatial relation (Ungerer and Schmid 2006). The preposition 'over' shows the unequal position of the TRs and the LMs. The metaphorical meaning of 'power' in example (a) indicates that +CONTROL IS A UPWARD MOVEMENT/UPRIGHT POSITION+. The use of "power" in the sentence shows the control power is unequal and is in an upward and higher position. From the mental picture of image schema and the explanation of metaphor, the meaning of the two examples can be captured.

ST1   ST2   ST3

TR

LM

Figure 2
Image Schema for 'Over' (Ungerer & Schmid, 2006)

The present study employs image schema, from identifying TRs and LMs, it shows how fictive motion verbs transcribed by image schema that helps readers to understand the scenery and locate their own related metaphorical extensions.

2. DATA ANALYSIS

The data are first analyzed by image schema to point out the geographical position and the mental pictures that may form to reflect the description in the cognitive processes. Then we go on to analyze the metaphorical extensions for each example.

2.1 Fictive Motion in Chinese

Chinese examples are chosen based on different descriptions of geographical features to examine if fictive motion description is used in the language.

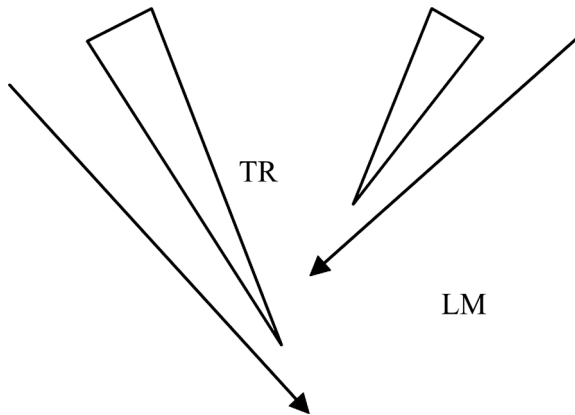(1)*wen1 quan2 huo3 shan1 qun2 suo3 qie1 ge1 chu1 lai2 de di4 mao4*

溫泉火山群所切割出的地貌

'the face of the ground cut by the volcano and nearby hot springs'

(2)*feng1 hua4 yan2 huan2 rao4 si4 zhou1*

風化岩環繞四周

'The efflorescence rock completely surrounded' on all four sides

TR

LM

Figure 3
Image Schema for (1) *The face of the ground cut by the spring volcano*

In example (1), as analyzed by image schema, the volcano which cut the ground is taken to be the TR and the ground is defined as the LM. The description of the ground cut by the volcano shows the view of the ground separated by the volcano. Therefore, the path can be the stretch line of the volcano that, in the human perception of space, *divided* the ground (see Fig. 3). For Figure 3, the two triangles represent the volcano that exists on the ground. In this example the landmark is the ground. The volcano appears as if it cuts the ground, and the two arrows show the path of the cutting action. In metaphorical extension, the stretch of the mountain, here meaning the volcano, is presumed as a knife that cut across the land, +MOUNTAIN IS A KNIFE+. In example 1, the volcano is like a knife that cuts the ground. The reason why this metaphor turns out to be +MOUNTAIN IS A KNIFE+ results from the original text in Chinese.

Example (2) is a similar description: the rock can be the TR that surrounds the ground which is the LM in this sentence. As in metaphorical extension in Example (2), the rock is assumed to be the fence (+ROCK IS A FENCE+) which separates the area into regions. As in example 1, the volcano can have the function of cutting the ground. Example 2 shows another type of the rock that divides the ground.

(3)*leng2 xian4 de0 lun2 kuo4 cong2 bai2 ri4 yan2 xu4 dao4 ye4 wan3*

稜線的輪廓從白日延續到夜晚

'The outline of the ridgeline stretched from day to night.'

(4)*dang1 yang2 guang1 sa3 luo4 shi2*

當陽光灑落時

'When the sunshine pours down,…'

(5)*sheng1 zhang2 zai4 zhe4 li3 de0 zhi2 wu4, zhi3 neng2 rang4 zi4 ji3 bian4 de0 geng4 jian1 qiang2*

生長在這裡的植物，只能讓自己變的更堅強

'The plant born here can only make itself stronger.'

Example (3) is a type of linear extension of time. The crest line of the mountain stretches from day to night. It is a fictive motion concomitantly related to spatial and time descriptions. In image schema, the ridgeline is the TR and time is the path which stretches from the day time through to the night. This is an example of fictive motion used to describe the passage and extension of time flow. The concrete crest line is used to describe the abstract time flow. In terms of the metaphorical extension, the outline is depicted to be stretching through time that goes from day to night (+TIME IS A LINE+), due to changes of light. The expression demonstrates the mutual interaction of time and space within a given area. The line of the mountain stretches just like the way time keeps moving forward.
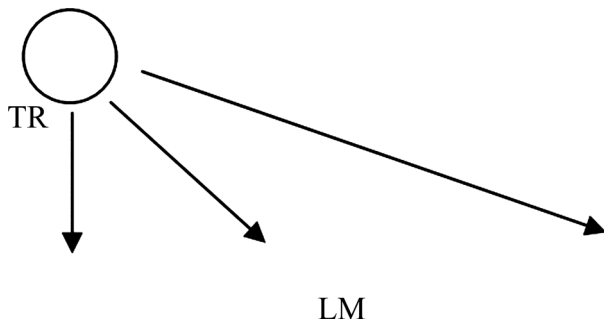
Figure 4
Image Schema for (4) *When the sunshine pours down.*

In example (4), the sunshine can be seen as the TR and the LM is assumed to be the ground as shown in Fig. 4. The light of the sunshine is described as a movement that just comes down from the sky. The path can be the trace of the light from the sky. The metaphorical extension presents the light as if it were water, +LIGHT IS WATER+. Sunshine is described as water that flows from high to low, from the sky to the earth.

Example (5) is a different metaphor. The plant struggles to make itself stronger. The plant can be seen as the TR. The place where the plant grows is the LM and the motion is the very tiny action of the plant growing and struggling. The plant struggling to get stronger so as to survive in the harsh environment, constitutes the mental picture in this image schema. For metaphorical extension, the plant is described as an animal (+PLANT IS A PERSON+). It struggles and makes itself become stronger in a terribly unfriendly (hostile) environment. This is a kind of personification to describe the plant as a person that makes efforts in trying to survive.

We see that there are at least five metaphorical extensions in the tourist guidebooks that we collected, i.e., +MOUNTAIN IS A KNIFE+, +ROCK IS FENCE+, +TIME IS A LINE+, +LIGHT IS WATER+, +PLANT IS AN ANIMAL+. We will give a further discussion of them by comparison with the English extensions.

3.2 Fictive Motion in English

Fictive motions used in spatial descriptions in English are often used in expressions relating to rivers, roads and a range of areas, like parks or lakes. The examples collected are also from the tourist guidebooks of National Parks in Taiwan in order to compare data from the same source. In English language examples, verbs are used more repetitively. However, the descriptions express the spatial image of the fictive motion.

(6) The park extends across the Hengchun Valley Plain from south to north.
(7) The park spans three climates: warm, temperate and cold climates.
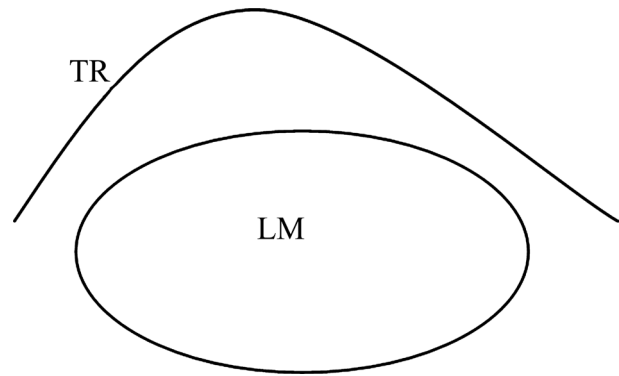
Figure 5
**Image Schema for (6)** *The park extends across the Hengchun Valley Plain from south to north.*

As in Example (6) and (7), the park can extend and span. In example (6), the park extends across space (see Fig. 5). In example (7), the park spans through different climates, which implies that the range of the park contain three kinds of climatic seasons. The TR of the first two examples for both the park and the path of the description can be the trace of the extension. For metaphorical extension, in the first two examples in English, the park is personified as a person (+A PARK IS A PERSON+) thus it can stretch and extend just like a person that raises hands and stretches legs.

(8) The extensive surface of Longluan Lake lies silently at the bottom of the valley. Two extended arms intrude to the ocean southward from the park.
(9) The Liwu River starts from Hehuan Mountain.
(10) The granite hills are surrounded by lower plateaus
(11) Two sand ridges extend to the west of the island embracing a small lagoon.
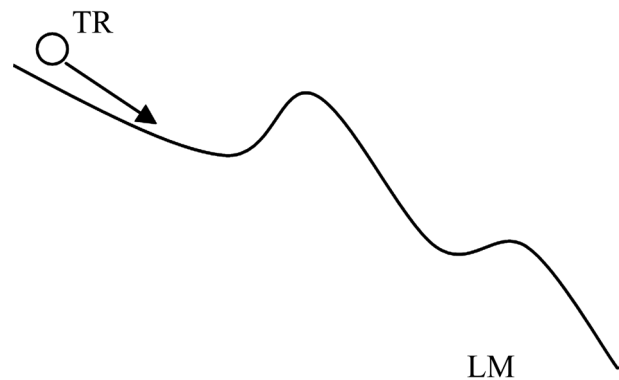
Fig. 6.
Image Schema for (9) *The Liwu River starts from Hehuan Mountain.*

In example (8) and (9), the river and the lake are identified to be the TR. The valley and the mountain are the LM. As in example (8), the lake is located at the bottom of the valley. With the flapping of water, the lake is personified as if its arms of water extended to the ocean that the other side of the lake connects. In Example

(9), the river originates far in the mountain. The river flows from the mountain to the sea, just like a trip from the mountain to the sea (see Fig. 6). In metaphorical extension, we see from (8) that the lake is like a person who extends its arm (+A LAKE IS A PERSON+). In example (9), the flow of the river is seen as a trip to the sea (+A RIVER IS A TRIP+). From the two examples, water that may flow from high to low can also share the fictive motion verbs of stretching and extending.

Examples (10) and (11) are about the plateau and the sand ridge. As in the Chinese examples, the hill and the mountain can be described as surrounding and extending to the ground. Through image schema, in example (10), the TR may be identified as the plateau which surrounds the hill, and in example (11), the TR is the sand ridge that extends and embraces a lagoon. The hills are the LM in example (10), whereas in example (11), the island and the lagoon may be treated as the LM. In example (10), the lower plateau surrounded the hill. Thus, the plateau which also is related to the hill can be seen as a natural fence that surrounds and separates this area (+A PLATEAU IS A FENCE+). Finally, we examine the sand ridge that extends to the west of the island and embraces a lagoon in example (11). The description of the sand ridge is just like a person who stretches his or her arm and embraces another person or animal (+SAND RIDGE IS A PERSON+).

3. DISCUSSION

The analysis above reveals the different expressions of fictive motion verbs in Chinese and English. However, the ways the two languages form personifications in their metaphorical extensions share common depictions. Descriptions of fictive motion are often used in the expressions of the stretching of the river or road, which refers to a linear image that goes on and on, forming some kind of natural boundary that marks the area. In Chinese, there are various metaphorical expressions and these tourist guidebooks were all written in Taiwan and introduce the local scenery. The familiarity of language can cause different uses of verbs and description. The following Table compares and contrasts how metaphorical extensions are made in the two languages from the example sentences.

Table 1.
Metaphorical Extension of Examples in Chinese and in English

Metaphorical Extensions			
Example No	**In Chinese**	**Example No**	**In English**
1	+MOUNTAIN IS A KNIFE+	6	+A PARK IS A PERSON+
2	+ROCK IS FENCE+	7	
3	+TIME IS A LINE+	8	+A LAKE IS A PERSON+
4	+LIGHT IS WATER+	9	+A RIVER IS A TRIP+
5	+PLANT IS A PERSON+	10	+ A PLATEAU IS A FENCE+
		11	+SAND RIDGE IS A PERSON+

The Chinese column lists fictive motions that are used in describing quite different objects. The location and spread of mountains is explained as a knife that separates the ground. Rocks are also depicted as sharing the characteristics of mountains, in that they surround the area forming a kind of division between the part inside the rock circle and the part outside. Light, too, is compared to water that pours down from high above. Plants in the descriptions of the tourist guide possess the metaphorical extension of human beings, as they are represented as people who make effort to rich their power and survive from the environment. According to Lakoff and Turner's (1989) conceptual metaphor PEOPLE ARE PLANTS, plants share a common characteristic with people and animals in that they also strive to grow and make themselves stronger. In Chang (2008) states that plants are used in the description of both genders of people. An abstract element is discovered in the analyses of these fictive descriptions, which is about the passage of time. The passing of time may be expressed by a linear movement as the time keeps going from day to night.

As for fictive motions in English, the examples can be categorized as entailing three main features. In the first two examples, the park is presumed to be a person. Just like a person can raise and stretch his arm and leg, the park stretches and extends across its territory. For the second feature, a lake and a river that both contain the element of water are used. The motions of flow are described as going forward in fictive motion. In the last two examples, mountains and hills are depicted. Just as the descriptions in Chinese from the examples, the mountain (here refers to the plateau and the sand ridge) can be described in fictive motion words that can *surround* like a fence, *extend* and *embrace* like a person.

As we can see from the above figures, the descriptions of Chinese examples are seen to show more specific and complete mental pictures in image schema. In Figures 3 and 4, image schema can express the TRs, the LMs and the path clearly. On the other hand, the English examples as shown in Figures 5 and 6, one cannot clearly point out the target and destination of the path because the expressions in the two languages show different descriptions. Fictive motion verbs in Chinese are more often used in tourism guidebooks written to describe local

scenes in Taiwan.

Comparing examples in Chinese and in English as above, Chinese examples shows various descriptions in the use verbs for fictive motion, e.g., the meaning of "stretch" can be described as wan yan蜿蜒, yan zhan延展, yan xu延續, and even more. However, in English, the descriptions express the scene more vivid and lively, like stretch and span seem to make the act personalized. From different languages used in fictive motion, we can see that multiple verbs are used for the expression. On the other hand, the vivid image contained in the verbs seems to be more important in English.

CONCLUSION

The study shows that fictive motions not only exist in English expressions, but also in various descriptions in Chinese. As Rojo and Valenzuela (2003) pointed out, Spanish speakers seem to mention less motion verbs and less detail about the manner of motion. For the different ways of description in different language, we may conclude that fictive motion verbs are applied in the description of scene. Fictive motion verbs are often used in describing figures that may extend and stretch. In Chinese, there are examples of abstract descriptions. The application in Chinese contains multiple descriptions not only in spatial description, but also in abstract objects (such as for the time and light). Chinese contains various descriptions in the use of fictive motion, especially the different terms and verbs that are used in the description; whereas, in English, the description tends to be related to the action of humanity. The usage of fictive motion in Chinese and in English are not only related to the description of the object itself, but also to the different verb components and the different ways of descriptions in the respective languages.

The result of the analysis about fictive motions in tourist guidebooks in both Chinese and English translations of those guides shows the difference in spatial description and the difference of usage of verbs in the two languages. The use of fictive motion verbs reveal the processes of cognition involved in tourists while reading the sentences in tourist guidebooks. We hope to have formulated an appreciation of how readers may perceive the idea of imagery from the descriptions in tourist guidebooks and realize how the process of mental pictures forms in the processes of cognition.

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