

Metaphor and Qualia: Embodiment or Eventuality?

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The Contemporary Theory of Metaphor heralded a whole generation of research by positing that metaphor is used because we refer to concrete and familiar object to explain abstract and potentially novel ideas. Ensuing research, picking up the two strands, can be largely classified as those focusing on embodiment (i.e. referring to familiar objects) or experiential mapping. Among those proposing mapping theories is the Conceptual Mapping Model proposed by Ahrens (2002, 2010) in which she proposes a mapping rule template that requires the description of an event. And Huang et al. (2007) adopts this approach and show that it can be mapped to ontology.

The underlining question we may ask, is whether metaphor is object-embodiment based or event-experiential driven? And if it is event-experiential driven, how can it be captured theoretically? We point out in this talk that many metaphors, especially those captured by Ahrens' mapping theory, cannot be fully explained without referring to the different event types in the qualia structure. Most shape metaphors, for instance, requires the understanding of the shaping and/or shape perception process, and can be easily captured as the agentive qualia complementing a small number of object-based metaphors which can be described by the formal qualia. For instance, a *love triangle* refers to the complex relations between three lovers because we know that a triangle is made by linking lines (as relations) among three apexes (as the three lovers). Hence, we seem to look into the formal qualae of a triangle. A vicious/virtuous circle can either spiral or be broken because we make the circle by tracing the point of the circumference. This seems to require information of the agentive qualae. And in Chinese, 规矩 *gui1ju3* compass+try-square/set-square refers to rules because they are the tools to ensure that perfect circles and squares are drawn. This seems to require the telic qualae of the tools.

We propose that conceptual mapping of metaphor is experiential-eventual and makes uses of qualia structure by showing that the conceptual mapping theory of Ahrens (2002, 2010) can be better formalized and constrained with GL theory.

Selected Bibliography

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