A Survey of Vision Conceptual Metaphor Mechanism:
A Comparative Study Based on the Corpus of Vision Metaphor in English and Chinese

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Li, Zunshuai & Lee, Heechul. (2024). A survey of vision conceptual metaphor mechanism: A comparative study based on the corpus of vision metaphor in English and Chinese. *The Linguistic Association of Korea Journal*, *32*(1), 127-155. This paper explores the role of vision metaphor in conceptual metaphors and its impact on cognitive processes. Within embodied philosophy and Cognitive Linguistics, a new theoretical framework called Vision Conceptual Metaphorical Mechanism (VCM) is proposed. The study collected vision metaphorical expressions in English and Chinese, enabling a systematic analysis and comparison. Through the analysis of a corpus of 400 examples, 48 vision conceptual metaphors were identified and classified into four categories: idea, judgment, expectation, and behavior. The findings demonstrate both universalities and diversities between English and Chinese vision metaphors. This research contributes to understanding of metaphor as a cognitive mechanism and provides insights into cross-linguistic differences. Key contributions include the introduction of VCM, a comprehensive survey of vision terminology, the identification of new vision conceptual metaphors, and the revelation of universal and diverse aspects of vision metaphors.

Key Words: Embodied philosophy, conceptual metaphor, cognition, VCM, cross-linguistic comparison

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1. Introduction

Vision perception serves as the primary sensory channel through which humans acquire knowledge about the world, forming the fundamental basis for comprehending reality. This realm of vision not only possesses intrinsic importance but also exerts significant influence on metaphorical mapping, as exemplified by the ubiquitous presence of vision metaphors in everyday language and literature. Expressions such as "I see what you mean" or "It's a transparent argument" vividly illustrate the metaphorical extension of the term "see" beyond its literal interpretation. Lexical semantic theories have traditionally categorized such instances as polysemy where the metaphorical relationship between senses erodes over time. However, with the advancement of cognitive semantics, scholars now recognize that the expanded meanings of words like "see" are intricately linked to abstract features.

Using the Vision Conceptual Metaphor mechanism (VCM), a theoretical framework that elucidates vision metaphors in both the English and Chinese languages was established. This present research collected vision metaphorical expressions in both languages, conducted a systematic analysis and compared some differences between the two languages within the framework of VCM. The objective is to identify the "four mappings" from vision to idea, judgment, expectation, and behavior. The paper comprises five parts, namely: introduction, literature review, theoretical framework (VCM), data analysis and discussion, and conclusion. The authors employed a combined approach that incorporated data-based analysis utilizing a closed corpus, as well as theory-based analysis employing the VCM framework. This study contributes to the field of conceptual metaphors by bridging gaps between previous approaches and offering suggestions for further research.

2. Literature Review

Traditionally, metaphors were considered as figures of speech, primarily confined to poetry, as stated by Aristotle (1954, p. 357). Aristotle's theory on metaphor lasted for about two millennia. In the 20th century, Richards (1936, p.80) introduced the terms "tenor" and "vehicle" to describe the components of a metaphor. Max Black further developed the Interaction Theory of metaphor, emphasizing its cognitive content and

interaction with literal frames (Black, 1979, p. 270). Then, the study of metaphor evolved into a cognitive perspective, with Lakoff & Johnson (1980, p.5) defining metaphor as understanding one conceptual domain in terms of another. Cognitive linguists and philosophers have recognized metaphors as powerful cognitive tools for conceptualizing abstract categories. For instance, the Conduit Metaphor by Reddy (1979) highlights the prevalence of metaphorical expressions in everyday language and their impact on thought.

Scholars, such as Lakoff & Johnson (1980), Sweetser (1990), and Harald (2002), have done extensive research into vision metaphors in English expressions. However, there remains a dearth of systematic studies on the contrastive analysis of Chinese and English vision conceptual metaphors. Similarly, Chinese scholars have conducted various studies on conceptual metaphors and the semantic extension of visual concepts but have rarely focused solely on vision metaphors or the contrastive study between Chinese and English vision metaphors.

To address these gaps, several Chinese scholars have made contributions in this field. Qin Xiugui (2008) conducted a comparative study of the metaphorical concept of "eye (眼)" in Chinese and English, mapping it onto four experiential domains: intelligence, emotion/attitude, social relations, and time/shape. Zhang Xuezhong and Dai Weiping (2007) analyzed the metaphorical mappings of "eye" and their role in reasoning and understanding less familiar concepts. Other scholars, including Chen Jia (2003), Dai Weiping (2005), Gou Ruilong (2003), Sun Hongjuan & Zhao Hongbo (2007), Wang Yueli & Ni Kunpeng (2008), Wu Xinmin (2006), and Zeng Lingling (2008), have also explored vision metaphors and related topics.

Chinese scholars' studies on visual metaphors also have several demerits. These include the lack of specific language data and examples to support their analyses, insufficient in-depth analyses of visual metaphors, and the absence of comprehensive corpus-based research. The studies often compared the metaphorical concepts between English and Chinese but failed to provide concrete evidence for their findings. Overall, these gaps have hindered a thorough understanding of visual metaphors and called for more extensive and data-driven research in this area of visual metaphors.

The theoretical basis of Vision Conceptual Metaphor mechanism (VCM) originates from the Conceptual Metaphor theory (CM) and is specifically designed to explain vision metaphors in English and Chinese.

Based on the corpus and the CM theory, VCM was used as a theoretical framework to interpret how vision concepts were mapped onto more abstract or less familiar

domains, such as idea, behavior, judgment, and expectation. It comprises four subcategories of mapping: "from vision to idea," "from vision to judgment," "from vision to expectation," and "from vision to behavior".

The three key characteristics of VCM include: 1) the subdivision of the target domain into four groups, 2) the division of the source domain into visual action and visual organ, and 3) the mapping from vision concepts to less familiar domains. The following two examples showcase the three key characteristics.

Table 1. Some English and Chinese examples in the four categories

Categories	Examples
From vision to idea	C: 我们要爱勇敢、思想开阔和有远大眼光的人。 (We need to love brave, open-minded and far-sighted people.) E: What is your view on school punishments?
From vision to judgment	C: 这车子挑的好，你真有眼力。(This car is good, you really have a good eye.) E: You do seem to have an eye for essentials.
From vision to expectation	C: 人们从过去看现在，从现在看未来。(People look/retrospect from the past to the present and look/expect from the present to the future.) E: John cast sheep's eyes at the new girl in class.
From vision to behavior	C: 他就是看了一辈子井的刘国恩。 (He is Liu Guoyen who has watched the well all his life.) E: You had better keep an eye on that fellow.

Table 1 above reveals that visual conceptual metaphors can generally be categorized into four domains. In the first domain, "from vision to idea," terms like "眼光(sight)" and "view" express conceptual ideas through visual concepts. In the second domain, "from vision to judgment," expressions like "好眼力(good eye)" and "have an eye for" essentially use visual concepts to convey judgment. In the third domain, "from vision to expectation," phrases like "看未来(look from the present to the future)" and "cast sheep's eye" use visual concepts to express expectations for future life or a particular individual. In the final domain, "from vision to behavior," expressions like "看井(watch the well)" and "keep an eye on" convey meanings related to protection or monitoring using visual concepts.

The authors posits that human thoughts, judgments, and expectations constitute rational aspects, while behavior is a practical activity guided by rational knowledge.

Rational knowledge, in turn, originates from sensory knowledge, with visual information being a primary and reliable source, leading to the prevalence of conceptual metaphors mapping from specific visual domains to other abstract domains in everyday language.

The vision metaphorical concepts involves various attributes such as the actor, content, instrument, and purpose of seeing, which are mapped onto their counterparts in the domain of knowing. For example, visual focusing corresponds to mental attention, and mental intellectual acuity relates to visual acuity. The metaphor also encompasses a physical viewpoint corresponding to a mental viewpoint, and visible obstructions like being blind or having the wool pulled over one's eyes symbolize impediments to knowing. The cognitive context provides essential background information for the realization of this metaphorical meaning. In the sentence, "you see what I think," the content of "seeing" pertains to invisible ideas.
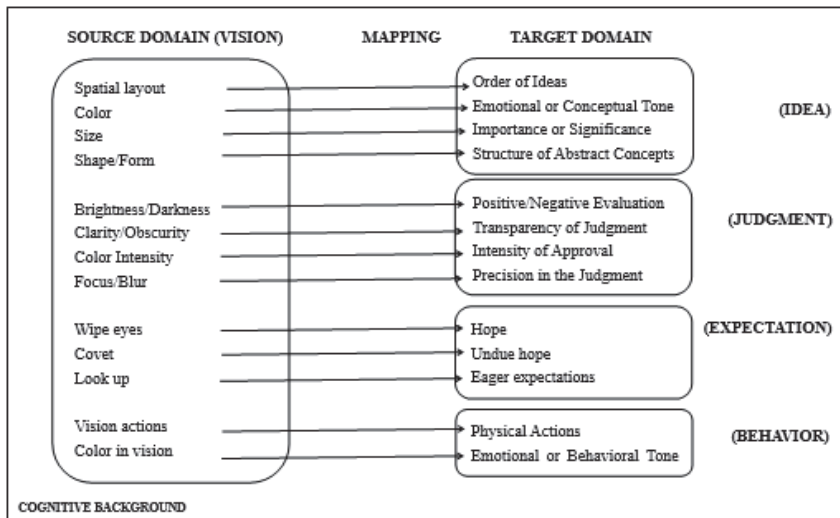

Figure 1. VCM metaphorical projection mechanism

From Figure 1 above, we can see that visual conceptual metaphor is essentially a mapping process of different attributes between semantic domains. In this mapping process, different attributes in the visual source domain are mapped onto the attributes corresponding to the destination domain. For example, the attribute of "spatial layout" in the visual semantic domain is projected onto the attribute of "order of ideas" in the destination domain. The lightness and darkness features in the visual source domain are

projected onto the positive or negative evaluation attributes in the judgment semantic domain. The concept of "wipe your eyes" in the visual semantic domain is projected onto the "hope" property of the "expectation" semantic domain. Visual behaviors, on the other hand, often correspond to physical behaviors in the behavioral semantic domain.

As can be seen from the case study above, the visual metaphorical expressions in English or Chinese are employed to express more abstract concepts (such as idea, expectation or judgment, etc.) through relatively more concrete concepts (visual). As shown in figure 1, in the process of generating and understanding metaphorical expressions, attributes and features in the visual conceptual domain are mapped onto the abstract conceptual domain.

It is worth noting that not all the attributes of the origin domain are mapped. Only those attributes of the origin domain that are most prominent and typical of the expression needs in a given context will be mapped to the destination domain.

3. Data Analysis and Discussion

To examine different types of vision metaphors in English and Chinese, 200 Chinese expressions and 200 English expressions were selected from the Sketch Engine Website. Vision metaphorical expressions with abstract target domains were categorized into four mappings: "from vision to idea," "from vision to judgment," "from vision to expectation," and "from vision to behavior." Then, a total of 41 vision conceptual metaphors (21 in Chinese and 20 in English) were identified from the corpus. The vision concepts were represented by five vision verbs and two vision nouns in Chinese and English.

3.1. From Concreteness to Concreteness

This group comprises vision conceptual metaphors with target domains like "a leader," or "孔洞(hole)." In the Chinese corpus, there were four identified metaphors, with a total of 10 expressions (5%). Examples include "眼是孔洞(eyes are holes)" and "眼是珍贵物(eyes are precious things)" with three instances each (1.5% each). "眼是打听者(eyes are inquirers)" and "目是首领(eyes are leaders)" had two specific linguistic expressions each (1.0% each) in the Chinese corpus. An example from this group was the conceptual metaphor "眼是孔洞(eyes are holes)," which projected the similarity in shape or appearance

between the concrete concepts of "眼(eyes)" (source) and "孔洞(holes)" (target). In the English corpus, three metaphors were identified with a total of eight expressions (4%). Examples included "view/eye is a container" and "eye is a hole," each with three specific metaphorical expressions (1.5% each). The least-used metaphor was "eye is prier" with only two expressions (1.0%) in the English corpus.

Table 2. Vision conceptual metaphors in "from concreteness to concreteness"

Vision Conceptual Metaphor "from Concreteness to Concreteness" in the Corpus			Num ber	Rate (num /200)	Examples
Chinese	1	眼是孔洞 The eye is the hole	3	1.5%	这样的人而欲广交朋友, 岂不等于驼想钻针眼吗? (Such a person who wants to make friends, is not the same as a camel that wants to drill the eye of a needle?)
	2	眼是珍贵物 The eye is a precious thing	3	1.5%	把钞票当眼珠子看待的, 是工薪族。(The one who treats the banknotes as eyelets is the salaried worker.)
	3	眼是打听者 The eye is the inquirer	2	1.0%	蛇头大都是黑道上的, 眼线多。(Most of the snakeheads are in the mob and have many eyes.)
	4	目是首领 The eye is the chief	2	1.0%	塔利班的指挥官称：基地头目仍活着。(Taliban commanders say: the head of the base is still alive.)
English	1	view/eye is a container	3	1.5%	I could see fear in his eyes.
	2	eye is hole	3	1.5%	Is it possible for a camel to go through the eye of a needle?
	3	eye is prier	2	1.0%	Her boyfriend Barry is a former policeman who is now a private eye.

However, the "from concreteness to concreteness" group is not the primary focus of this study as the relationship between the source and target in those metaphors is straightforward. Therefore, the detailed analysis and discussion was dedicated to the "from concreteness to abstractness" group of metaphors.

3.2. From Concreteness to Abstractness

The "from concreteness to abstractness" group, which was the main focus of this study, consists of vision conceptual metaphors with target domains that are abstract and intangible concepts related to ideas, judgments, expectations, or behaviors. The comprehensive analysis and computation of the established corpus revealed clear information about the four categories of conceptual metaphors, as illustrated in the following table.

Table 3. Vision conceptual metaphors in "from concreteness to abstractness"

Categories	Vision conceptual metaphors	Number (Rate)
	Chinese	English
From vision to idea	85 (42.5%)	80 (40.0%)
From vision to judgment	30 (15.0%)	8 (4.0%)
From vision to expectation	20 (10.0%)	24 (12.0%)
From vision to behavior	55 (27.5%)	80 (40.0%)

The table shows the significant similarities between Chinese and English vision conceptual metaphors. "From vision to idea" was the most prominent category in both languages, comprising 85 expressions (42.5%) in Chinese and 80 expressions (40%) in English. The category "from vision to behavior" held the second largest share, with 55 expressions (27.5%) in Chinese and 80 expressions (40%) in English. The categories "from vision to judgment" and "from vision to expectation" were less common. The embodied philosophy provides a convincing explanation for this linguistic phenomenon. Abstract concepts like "idea" are mapped onto the more familiar and concrete domain of "vision." Similarly, complex behaviors are expressed metaphorically using prominent aspects of "vision." The interrelatedness of these categories is depicted in the figure below.
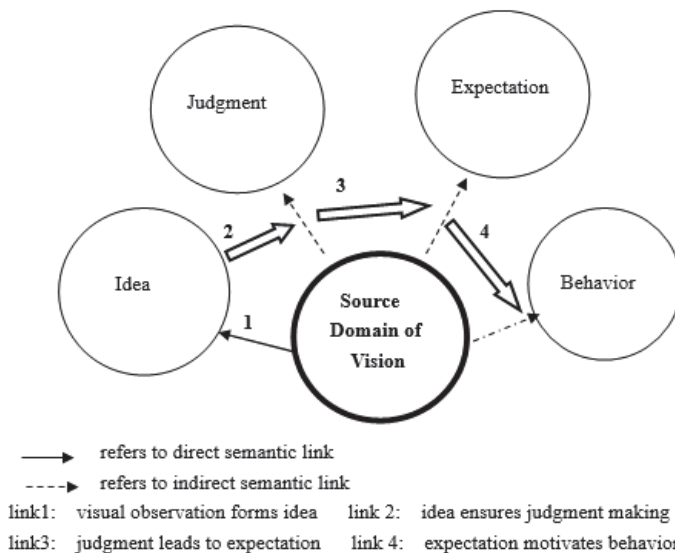

Figure 2. The semantic mapping chains between the four categories

As shown in the Figure 2 above, the mapping relationships among the four conceptual metaphorical categories are not equal. Rather, there is a hierarchical relationship in terms of the number of mappings. Logically, they show a sequential relationship. The judgment purpose domain is first generated based on the projection from the visual domain to the mental domain, and the expectation purpose domain is generated based on the judgment purpose domain. Based on the previous three abstract conceptual purpose domains, the behavioral purpose domain with practical color is finally generated.

3.3. Vision Conceptual Metaphors in the Chinese Corpus

In Chinese corpus, there were total of 25 vision conceptual metaphors extracted from 200 vision metaphorical expressions. The study identified eight new Chinese vision metaphors, which are presented below:

Table 4. 8 newly-identified vision conceptual metaphors in Chinese corpus

Vision Conceptual Metaphors	Examples
1. "看是期待" - "Seeing is anticipating."	1. 从现在看未来，了解人类从哪里走来。 - "Eyes are leaders. Looking from the present to the future, understanding where humanity has come from."
2. "看是评价" - "Seeing is evaluating."	2. 她对运动员使用兴奋剂一事怎么看？ - "How does she view the issue of athletes using performance-enhancing drugs?"
3. "看是检查" - "Seeing is inspecting."	3. 村民看小病不出村，老年人看病免费。 - "Villagers receive treatment for minor illnesses without leaving the village, and healthcare is free for the elderly."
4. "察是调查" - "Observing is investigating."	4. 差你往齐东村明察暗访。 - "It is up to you to conduct a thorough investigation in Qidong Village."
5. "眼是作证" - "Eyes are witness."	5. 让地方公司作眼，将梁家家财变卖了。 - "Enlisting the local company as an observer, the Liang family's assets were sold."
6. "眼是珍贵之物" - "Eyes are precious possessions."	6. 把钞票当眼珠子看待的，是工薪族。 - "Considering banknotes as precious, that's how the wage-earning class sees them."
7. "眼是角度" - "Eyes are perspectives."	7. 以战略的眼光来看待技术管理问题。 - "To view technology management issues with a strategic perspective."
8. "目是领导" - "Eyes are leaders."	8. 塔利班的指挥官称：基地头目仍活着。 - "The Taliban commander claimed that the leader of the terrorist organization is still alive."

All of the vision conceptual metaphors whose target domains are abstract concepts can be divided into four categories as follows:

3.3.1. Category of Idea

Category of "idea" includes the vision conceptual metaphors in which the source domain of "vision" is mapped onto its target domain of idea in a metaphorical

expression. "Idea" is closely linked to one's thinking and mentality (they are in the same domain of mental manipulation) and it is actually the result of one's mind after some time's thinking and reflection. The "idea" is formed on the direct basis of observing or seeing a situation for some time and also on basis of the processing of what one sees. Eleven vision conceptual metaphors identified in this category are as follows:

Table 5. Category of idea in Chinese vision metaphorical expressions

Category		Vision Conceptual Metaphor	Num ber	Freq	Examples
category of idea (number:85, rate:42.5%)	1	"看/视是认为" - "Seeing/Viewing is believing."	15	7.5%	他把党与人民的血肉之情看得极重要。He regards (see) the flesh-and-blood relationship between the party and the people as extremely important.
	2	"看是明白" - "Seeing is understanding."	15	7.5%	他的险恶用心难道你还看不出来吗？Can't you see his sinister intentions?
	3	"眼/观/见是观点" - "Eyes/Observation/Seeing is a perspective."	9	4.5%	我们要爱勇敢、思想开阔和有远大眼光的人。We need to love brave, open-minded and far-sighted people.
	4	"看/见是了解" - "Seeing is knowing/understanding."	9	4.5%	妇女干部要看世界，农村妇女也要看世界。Women cadres need to see the world, and rural women need to see the world.
	5	"眼是注意" - "Eyes are attention."	7	3.5%	把布告贴在最显眼的地方。Put up the bulletin in the most eye-catching place.
	6	"眼是角度" - "Eyes are perspectives."	7	3.5%	以战略的眼光来看待技术管理问题。Take a strategic view of technology management issues.
	7	"眼是态度" - "Eyes are attitudes."	6	3.0%	我们总是遇到冷眼。We always meet with cold eyes.
	8	"眼/目喻现在" - "Eyes/Vision symbolizes the present."	6	3.0%	以后的事以后再说,眼底下的事要紧。We'll talk about the future later, but what's at hand (under eyes) is important.
	9	"眼是要点" - "Eyes are focal points."	5	2.5%	就在节骨眼上，出了奸细，给官军引路。Right at the juncture eyes, a spy came out and led the way for the official army.
	10	"看是小心" - "Seeing is being careful."	4	2.0%	哪里走，看打！Where to go, see the fight!
	11	"眼是见识" - "Eyes are insights/knowledge."	2	1.0%	快把那几幅名画拿出来，让大家开开眼。Quickly take out those famous paintings, let everyone open their eyes.

Table 5 lists the 11 vision conceptual metaphors in this category, representing 42.5% of the corpus. Notably, "看/视是认为(Seeing/Viewing is believing)" and "看是明白(Seeing is understanding)" each have 15 metaphorical expressions (7.5% each), while "眼是观点 (Eyes/Observation/Seeing is a perspective)" and "看是了解(Eyes/Observation/Seeing is

understanding)" have 9 expressions (4.5% each). The metaphor "眼是见识(Eyes are insights/knowledge)" was least used with 2 expressions only (1.0%). These vision verbs initially conveyed visual concepts but had metaphorical meanings of "thinking" due to semantic extension. The strong correlation between vision and thinking domains was reflected in the top metaphors. Less-used metaphors reflect concrete concepts like "要点(points)", "小心(carefulness)", or "见识(knowledge)."

The realization of the vision conceptual metaphor "看是明白(seeing is understanding)" is based on the mapping from source domain "看(seeing)" onto the target domain "明白(understanding)". The two domains both have their own subjects, angle, content and process of "seeing". Based on these similarities, mapping between different attributes in both domains can be accomplished and based on these mappings process between attributes in different domains, a metaphorical concept "看是明白(seeing is understanding)" can be achieved.

(1) *他的险恶用心难道你还看不出来吗? Can't you see his sinister intentions?*

The above example sentence shows that some properties of the semantic domain of relatively specific visual concepts are projected onto the relevant properties of the semantic domain of judgmental cognition. Specifically, there is a mapping between the subject of judging and the subject of seeing; between the object of judging (sinister intentions) and the object of seeing (visual images); between the way of judging (rational thinking) and the way of seeing (seeing the smallest things). The generation of metaphorical meaning is the result of mutual projection between these attributes.

3.3.2. Category of judgment

Source domains of the vision conceptual metaphors in this category were related to vision action and vision organs, while target domains involve actions of judging, distinguishing, and deciding. Specific acts such as "评价(evaluation)", "鉴别(identification)" and "判断(judgment)" were often metaphorized by vision concepts such as "眼(eye)" and "看(see)". Unlike the domain of "idea", which is static and more directly connected with the vision domain, "judgment" was indirectly connected with the vision domain but more closely related to domain of mental action.

Table 6. Category of judgment in Chinese vision metaphorical expressions

Category	Vision Conceptual Metaphor		Num ber	Rate (num /200)	Examples
category of judgment (number:30, rate:15.0%)	1	看是评价 Seeing is evaluating	13	6.5%	她对有关运动员使用兴奋剂一事怎么看？What does she think about the doping of the athletes in question?
	2	眼/看是鉴别 Eye/seeing is identification	9	4.5%	这车子挑的好，你真有眼力。This car is good, you really have a good eye.
	3	看 / 察 是 判 断 Seeing/Inspecting is judging	8	4.0%	群众看共产党，还不就是看咱这些共产党干不干实事嘛。The masses look at the Communist Party and see whether we Communists do real work or not.

Table 6 presents three judgment conceptual metaphors, accounting for 15.0% of the 200 metaphorical sentences. They were instantiated by a total of 30 vision metaphorical expressions. "看是评价(Seeing is evaluating)" is the most prominent among them, representing almost 6.5% of the Chinese corpus. The second metaphor, "眼/看是鉴别(Eye/seeing is identification)" had 9 instances (4.5%). Conversely, "察/看是判断(Seeing/Inspecting is judging)" is less popular with 8 examples (4.0%).

Due attention should also be paid to the most-used and least welcome vision conceptual metaphors in the category. On the one hand, "看是评价(Seeing is evaluating)" is the most popular vision conceptual metaphor in this category. It seems that "看是评价 (Seeing is evaluating)" may root in Chinese traditional value of "being prompt in response and being prudent in judgment", which means that people tend to judge something very carefully and attempt to avoid hurtful and direct language expressions. That is why they prefer to use vision concepts to convey concepts of judgment. And hence this kind of vision conceptual metaphor of "看是评价(Seeing is evaluating)" comes into being.

"看是评价(Seeing is evaluating)" also conveys another subtle fact: Chinese people usually judge a person by seeing whether he or she is working well or not. Most Chinese will turn to vision information when they attempt to making decisions. However, in English, vision verbs are seldom used to convey the meaning of "judgment or considering", because usually English people will employ nouns such as "eye" to imply such a meaning. And one English example of "in your father's eyes, you are still a child" can best illustrate such a preference in English vision metaphorical expression.

On the other hand, the target domain in the least-employed vision conceptual metaphors is "判断(judging)". It is a more concrete concept than "评价(evaluating)" or "鉴

别(identification)". That is the reason why "看是判断(judging)" has only 8 specific metaphorical linguistic expressions and "看是评价(evaluating)" holds the largest proportion in this category in the Chinese corpus.

And now, the following is the specific VCM illustration of the vision conceptual metaphor: "看是鉴别(seeing is identification)". It means "eyes have judging or appreciating ability". When people look at something or someone, they would unconsciously make a judgment in their minds according to all the information they collect by eyes. That is the basis of the vision metaphorical mapping from vision domain to judgment domain.

According to the second example in table 6, the metaphorical meaning of the "眼力(eye ability)" is achieved through the mapping from attributes like "subject", "object" and "ability" of "seeing" in source domain onto those relevant attributes " in the target domain.

(2) 这车子挑的好，你真有眼力。*This car is good, you really have a good eye.*

"眼力(eye ability)" in the above example refers to the ability in picking out the right commodities. In the given context of market, the meaning of "力(ability)" could be metaphorized. During the process of understanding the phrase "眼力", the mapping happens between the vision domain and mental domain.

3.3.3. Category of Expectation

Category of expectation involved more dynamic forces although such forces are not much obvious and they are only restricted to our brain or mental operation. There were only two vision conceptual metaphors in this category, but the number of vision conceptual metaphorical expressions adopting these two conceptual metaphors was large enough to prove that the mapping between "seeing" and "expecting" was also common in Chinese language.

Table 7. Category of expectation in Chinese vision metaphorical expressions

Category		Vision Conceptual Metaphor	Num ber	Rate	Examples
category of expectation (number:20, rate:10%)	1	看（望）是期待 - "Seeing (looking) is anticipating."	16	8.0%	人们从过去看现在，从现在看未来。People look from the past to the present, from the present to the future.
	2	眼 是 情 感 - "Eyes are emotions."	4	2.0%	野兽未必肯在享用你以前,跟你飞眼送秋波,可方鸿渐不是野兽,只能算家畜。The beast may not be willing to enjoy you before, with your eyes, but Fang Hongjian is not a beast, can only be considered domestic animals.

Table 7 shows that there are totally 20 vision metaphorical expressions grouped in the category of "看是期待(seeing is expectation)" which stands 10.0% in Chinese corpus. In the conceptual metaphor "看是期待(seeing is expectation)", the relationship between "看(seeing)" and "期待(expecting)" may easily arouse our imagination that a child is standing at the threshold waiting for his or her parents with expectant eyes. In Chinese, we have phrases like "翘首以盼(looking forward to it)" and "望穿秋水(looking through the autumn water to expect)". Thus, we can suppose that "看是期待(seeing is expectation)" could be treated as a mapping from the concrete visual-act domain onto the mental domain (from the vision activity onto the mental activity of expectation). There is another good example worth mentioning here. The Chinese character "盼(see/expect)" is a good illustration for this vision conceptual metaphor. "盼(see/expect)" has both a literal meaning "looking" and a metaphorical meaning "expectation". And the latter meaning was taken into the dictionary as one of a new entry which is now already seen as a conventional metaphor now.

In the example of "看是是期待(seeing is expectation)", we can see that in the process of realizing the visual metaphor "looking is expectation", a mapping is formed between the person who keeps expectations and the person who is looking, between what is expected and what is looked at, and between the mood of looking and the mood of anticipation.

On the one hand, eye is a window of inner heart. Eye is one of the most important ways to express the inner emotions. Therefore, we have phrases liked "含情脉脉((In the eyes) with love and affection)", "秋波频传(The autumn waves (deep love eyes) pass frequently)" in Chinese language. And I think this phenomenon might imply the close contact between the different domains of "vision" and "emotion", which produces a very strong correlation in our language. It is the close correlation that causes the metaphorical projection from original senses of vision domains onto their extended meanings.

On the other hand, among all the emotions conveyed by eyes, happiness, anxiety and eagerness are highly profiled. When one feels happy or yearns for something, he would always open his eyes widely while he closes his eyes tightly when he feels lost or upset. That is why "看是情感(seeing is emotion)" has only 4 specific metaphorical linguistic expressions while "看是期待(seeing is expectation)" has 16 ones in the category of expectation in the Chinese corpus.

(3) *人们从过去看现在，从现在看未来。People look from the past to the present, from the present to the future.*

In example (3), there is a mapping between the physical action of "looking" and the mental activity of "expecting", and between what is looked at and what is expected. You keep looking because you expect something to happen or someone to come. The anticipatory mood is revealed by always looking at a certain person or object or direction. This is why visual metaphors are often used in literature to express romantic feelings.

3.3.4. Category of Behavior

In this section, the target domains are the specific actions or reactions of something or someone under a specified circumstance. There were 5 vision conceptual metaphors in this category. The target domains of those vision conceptual metaphors were respectively related to actions of "检查(inspecting)", "监控(monitoring)", "照顾(caring)" and "作证 (testifying)"(Table 9):

Table 8. Category of behavior in Chinese vision metaphorical expressions

Category		Vision Conceptual Metaphor	Number	Rate	Examples
Category of behavior (number:55, rate: 27.5%)	1	看是检查 - "Seeing is inspecting."	13	6.5%	村民看小病不出村，老年人看病免费。 Villagers see minor diseases without leaving the village, and the elderly see the doctor for free.
	2	看是监控 - "Seeing is monitoring."	11	5.5%	他就是看了一辈子井的刘国恩。He is Liu Guoyen who has watched the well all his life.
	3	眼是照顾 - "Eyes are caring."	11	5.5%	婆婆不替我看宝宝我很伤心。I am sad that my mother-in-law does not watch the baby for me.
	4	察是调查 - "察 is investigating."	10	5.0%	差你往齐东村明察暗访。Almost you to the village of Qidong to inspect.
	5	眼是作证 - "Eyes are testifying."	10	5.0%	让地方公司作眼，将梁家家财变卖了。Let the local company as an eye, the Liang family fortune sold.

The data in Table 8 shows that the number of examples in this category is 55 which weigh 27.5% of the total Chinese vision metaphorical expressions. The vision conceptual metaphor "看是检查(Seeing is inspecting)" has 13 supporting sentences, which make it rank first in this category. The proportions of the "看是监控(Seeing is monitoring)" and "眼是照顾(eyes are caring)" are both 5.5% of the total. "眼是作证(eyes are testifying)" only has 10 vision metaphorical expressions, which stands 5.0%. Among the five concepts in target domains, "检查(inspecting)" and "监控(monitoring)" are more practical work than "作证(testifying)".

First of all, the "看是检查(Seeing is inspecting)" is the most popular vision conceptual metaphor in the category of behavior. And the numbers of instances in "看是监控(Seeing is monitoring)" and "眼是照顾(caring)" are both 11, which weighs 5.5%. From the above examples, we can find that protecting and examining are such complicated operations and tasks that they can hardly be fulfilled without the aid of eyes.

Secondly, Compared with the former two concepts, "作证(testifying)" needs much more participation of the brain in stead of eyes, so it is not hard to understand why the number of the linguistic expressions in "眼是作证(eyes are testifying)" is less than the other three vision conceptual metaphors.

As can be seen from the above diagram, VCM "Seeing is monitoring" is achieved by mapping from the subject of seeing to the monitor, from the object of seeing to the monitored person/object, from the way of seeing to the monitoring device, etc.

All in all, the world is mysterious, sophisticated and always changing. So both the Chinese and English people intend to express and metaphorize the human activities by means of vision concepts. And now, the following is the specific VCM illustration of the vision conceptual metaphor "看是监控(Seeing is monitoring)" and "看是照顾(caring)".

"看是监控(Seeing is monitoring)" can also be regarded as the mapping from vision domain to a behavior domain (specifically, the purpose domain). It is admitted that when we keep eyes on something or somebody, we are paying attention to them. At this time, both our eyesight and attention are focused on the objects. Accordingly, when we attempt to protect something, we will always fix our eyes on it. Based on the similarity of attention, mapping between the vision act domain and the behavior domain could be realized.

(4) *他就是看了一辈子井的刘国恩。He is Liu Guoyen who has watched the well all his life.*

In (4), "Seeing" is the way of protection, and "protection" is the function of seeing. The subject, object and way inside the semantic domain of vision are projected onto the corresponding attributes inside the semantic domain of protection, respectively. Thus, a docking between the visual semantic domain and the behavioral semantic domain is achieved.

3.4. Vision Conceptual Metaphors in the English Corpus

This part centers on the detailed analysis and discussion of the all the 200 English vision metaphorical expressions and 23 English vision conceptual metaphors abstracted from the vision metaphorical expression in the English corpus under VCM. All the metaphorical expressions whose target domain are abstract concepts are to be divided into four parts which are category of idea, category of judgment, category of expectation and category of behavior.

All of the English vision conceptual metaphors whose target domains are abstract concepts will be categorized into four classes for further discussion in the following paragraphs. The following is an explanation of the VCM "seeing is understanding" mapping mechanism:
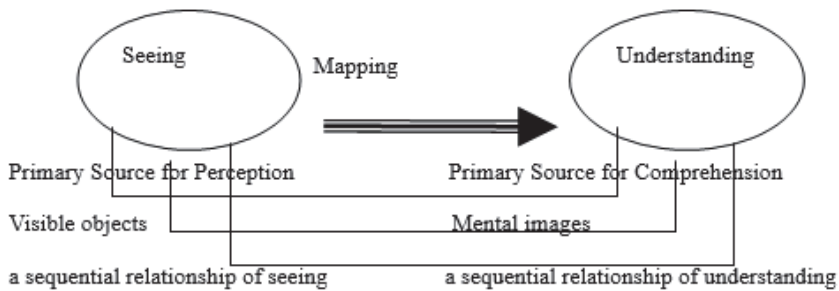
Figure 3. VCM illustration of "seeing is understanding"

In the process of mapping, parts of the different attributes in the source domain will be projected onto their relative attributes while the similar attributes in both domains will serve as the correlative context. Because the mapping mechanism of visual metaphorical expressions in English is the same as that in Chinese, the authors do not elaborate on the categories of visual conceptual metaphors in English separately with graphics when discussing them below.

If we compare the above summary with previous related research, it is encouraging to see that 8 new vision conceptual metaphors have been identified in the English corpus, which may also be regard as one of contributions of the present study. And the following illustrates the additional conceptual metaphors in the English corpus which are actually serving as a complement for the previous achievements.

Table 9. 8 newly-identified vision conceptual metaphors in English corpus

Vision Conceptual Metaphors	Examples
1. looking is investigation	He promised to look into if the clash was designed.
2. watching is alerting	Please watch your head.
3. looking is facing	Many new buildings look south.
4. eye/seeing is judging	You seem to have an eye for essentials.
5. watching is waiting	To watch a chance need enough patience.
6. watching is guarding	She is watching a flock of sheep.
7. eye is interest	She only has eyes for Mark.
8. eye is hope/wish	Since she left school she's had an eye to marriage.

All of the vision conceptual metaphors whose target domains are abstract concepts in Table 9 can be divided into four categories as follows:

3.4.1. Category of idea

As the old proverb goes, "the eye is the window of heart". It is well-known to all of us that eye is the primary tunnel or channel to collect the information needed from the outside world. And there are times when the authenticity of visible information could decide the validity of decisions made by us. And the following table displays very clearly the seven vision conceptual metaphors in the idea category summarized in the corpus.

Table 10. Category of idea in English vision metaphorical expressions

Category		Vision Conceptual Metaphor	Number	Rate	Examples
Category of idea (number:80, rate:40.0%)	1	viewing/eye is opinion/idea	15	7.5%	What is your view on school punishments?
	2	seeing is understanding	15	7.5%	He didn't see the joke.
	3	eye is focus of attention	12	6.0%	He was in the public eye all his life.
	4	looking/eye/seeing is thinking	11	5.5%	Government should look round well before taking measures.
	5	eye/sight is knowledge	11	5.5%	For me it was such an eye-opener.
	6	seeing is knowing	9	4.5%	So that Fergus felt as if John was seeing into his mind.
	7	eye is perspective	7	3.5%	To my eye, the decoration is excellent.

Table 10 shows that among the 80 metaphorical expressions in the category of idea, the number of the examples with the concept "seeing is understanding" and "Viewing/eye is opinion/idea" are largest. These two vision conceptual metaphors are most used with 15 vision metaphorical expressions each and each constitutes at almost 7.5% of the total. The 80 examples (about 40.0%) proves that metaphorical mapping between domain of vision and domain of idea is one of the most eminent and important methods in English to create new specific metaphorical linguistic expressions.

And now, the following is the specific VCM illustration of the more popular vision conceptual metaphor in this group "seeing is understanding".

The visible knowledge collected by eyes is just the perceptual or direct knowledge which is stored in your brain. Only by mental processing in brain, can the superficial and perceptual knowledge become our conceptualized and rational knowledge. The processing of perceptual knowledge in brain is mostly realized by the process of metaphorical mapping.

Such as:

(5) *Be around. Like a daughter? Well, you see, that's how I think.*
(6) *Waited for a young man to find him a cab, I saw my chance.*

In (5), "see" means "to understand". When the word "see" is collocated with mental concepts like "think" or "idea", the metaphorical meaning behind the vision verb "see" will be activated. In (6), the concept of "chance" is invisible, but still we can find it by analyzing the situation based on the visible clues.

3.4.2. Category of Judgment

After our understanding of the information collected by eyes, we would consequently make a certain judgment in mind. Category of "judgment" includes those vision metaphorical expressions whose target domains are normally concepts like "conducting an assessment of something" based on the information we have. Category of judgment in English includes 2 vision conceptual metaphors as the following table shows.

Table 11. Category of judgment in English vision metaphorical expressions

Category	Vision Conceptual Metaphor	Number	Rate (num/200)	Examples
Category of judgment (number:8, rate:4.0%)	1.Eye/seeing is judging	8	4 .0%	You do seem to have an eye for essentials. "You wait and see," she said, "You know, Dorothy."

Table 11 presents the total number of the examples in the category of judgment. The total number of examples in this category is 8 and its proportion in English corpus is 4.0%. It seems that people in English-speaking countries are more rational in making judgment or decision while Chinese people depend more on the vision information by eyes. That is why "Eye/seeing is judging" holds the small proportion in this category of judgment in the English corpus.

"Eye is judging" always occurs in expressions like "have an eye for something". It refers to the ability to judge whether a thing is attractive (or valuable) or not. The special and professional eyesight could act as the background of the projection. Such as,

(7) *You do seem to have an eye for painting.*

In the above example, the professional eyesight is highlighted. Here "eye" implies the ability for judging and appreciating the painting.

"Seeing is judging" belongs to the mapping from the vision domain to the mental domain. When we attempt to judge whether a person or the material is good or bad, true or false, we may employ lots of means, especially our five sensory organs: eyes, ears, the nose, the mouth, and the tongue. Sometimes we even can feel it directly by touching with our skins. Of course, among them, as one of the most indispensable organs, eyes are most frequently used in the process.

(8) *She just laughed. "You wait and see," she said. "You know, Dorothy."*

Here in (8), "wait and see" could be explained as "to depend on what would happen and decide what to do".

3.4.3. Category of Expectation

The target domains of the vision metaphorical expressions in the category of expectation include beliefs about (or mental picture of) the future and the feelings that something is about to happen. The vision conceptual metaphors abstracted from 200 vision metaphorical expressions are illustrated as follows:

Table 12. Category of expectation in English vision metaphorical expressions

Category	Vision Conceptual Metaphor		Number	Rate (num/200)	Examples
Category of expectation (number:24, rate:12%)	1	eye is affection	10	5.0%	John cast sheep's eyes at the new girl in class.
	2	Eye/seeing/looking/prospecting is expectation or plan	10	5.0%	Since she left school she's had an eye to marriage.
	3	Eye is interest	4	2.0%	She only has eyes for Mark.

Table 12 shows that there are three vision conceptual metaphors in the "category of expectation" with totally 24 vision metaphorical expressions in the English corpus. Among the three vision conceptual metaphors, both of the "eye is affection" and "Eye/seeing/looking/prospecting is expectation or plan" has 10 vision metaphorical expressions, which weighs 5.0% of the total. The least welcome vision conceptual metaphor is "eye is interest", with 4 linguistic expressions, which weighs 2.0% of the English corpus.

On one hand, as the mirror of heart, the vision organ can serve as the medium of the emotions. The top vision conceptual metaphor in this category is "eye is affection" and "Eye/seeing/looking/prospecting is expectation or plan". And this phenomenon might imply the close contact between the different domain of "vision" and "expectation". It is the close relationship that produces the metaphorical mapping from original senses of vision domains onto their extended meanings.

On the other hand, the least-used the target domain in the category of expectation is "eye is interest". It is a more concrete concept than "affection" or "expectation". There are still many other more familiar concepts we can use to understand or name the concept of "interest", such as "chicken soup", "coffee" or "chocolate". That is why "eye is interest" has only 4 specific metaphorical linguistic expressions and "eye is affection" and "Eye/seeing/looking/prospecting is expectation or plan" hold the larger proportion in the category of expectation in the English corpus.

"Seeing" in "Seeing is expectation" can also refer to "looking forward to" in English. That is to say, the meaning of "expecting" also originates from the word "seeing". When we stand at the door of our house, expecting or waiting for our family members' return, we would naturally cast our eyesight into the distance or the direction they may appear.

(9) *I can't see myself allowing people to cheat me.*

In the above example, the concept of "allowing people to cheat" is invisible. After the mapping occurs from the vision domain to the mental domain, the abstract situation becomes mentally visible and the sentence becomes semantically acceptable.

3.4.4. Category of Behavior

The target domains of the vision metaphorical expressions in the category of behavior include different manners in which one behaves or controls oneself under specified circumstances. And specific information of this category is illustrated clearly in the following table.

Table 13. Category of behavior in English vision metaphorical expressions

Category	Vision Conceptual Metaphor		Number	Rate	Examples
Category of behavior (number:80, rate:40%)	1	seeing is experiencing	13	7.0%	Our London Home Care service saw 103 deaths in the same area.
	2	seeing is touching	11	5.5%	I can't take my eyes off her.
	3	eye is supervision	10	5%	You had better keep an eye on that fellow.
	4	looking is investigation	9	4.5%	The mayor promised to look into whether the clash was designed
	5	watching is alerting	9	4.5%	So please watch your back, you don't know who will hurt.
	6	looking is facing	8	4.5%	Many new buildings look south.
	7	watching is waiting	8	4.0%	To watch a chance (an opportunity) need enough patience.
	8	Watching is guarding	7	3.5%	The shepherd is watching a flock of sheep.
	9	Seeing is eating	5	2.5%	Feast your eyes on this beauty

In Table 13, there are 80 sentences in the behavior category in the English corpus which stands 40.0% of the total. In addition, "seeing is experiencing" has 13 vision metaphorical expressions and tops others in number. "Seeing is touching", as the second largest in this category, has 11 examples and its proportion is 5.5%. Both "watching is alerting" and "looking is investigation" have 9 linguistic expressions, which stands 4.5% of the total. Among the nine vision conceptual metaphors, "watching is alerting" and "looking is facing" are particular ones which only exist in English. The examples in Table 15 are all based on the belief that eye is the critical organ to know the world and the most reliable tunnel in information collection.

Firstly, it is shown from the above table that three target domains in the top five vision conceptual metaphors are all related to complex human action such as "experiencing, supervising, and investigating". Based on the close relationship between domains of "vision" and "behavior", the metaphorical projection from original senses of vision domains onto their extended meanings of human behavior is generated. During the long course of the linguistic development, this correlation of meaning becomes more and more stable gradually.

Secondly, the target domains in the least-used five vision conceptual metaphors are related to "waiting, guarding" and "eating". In "watching is eating", the action of "eating" almost doesn't need any mental effort. It is a simpler concept than "investigating" or "supervising". That is why the proportion of "Seeing is eating" is smallest in this category. And "seeing is experiencing" and its similar conceptual metaphors hold the larger proportion in the category of behavior in the English corpus.

And now, the following is the specific VCM illustration of the more popular vision conceptual metaphor in this group "seeing is experiencing".

When subjects of vision verbs are some inanimate concepts, the vision features would be added onto them by activating the similarities between animate and inanimate concepts. Thus a metaphorical meaning can be generated. Look at the following examples.

(10) *The last 12 months have seen further dramatic growth for ACET at home.*
(11) *Our London Home Care service saw 103 deaths in the same area.*
(12) *Criticism came in the eighteenth century which saw the foundation of aesthetics and the rise.*
(13) *Venture began in 1842, the year also saw the founding of satirical journals. That was a memorable year.*

The verb "seen" in (10) could be explained as "witness" or "experience" and "The last 12 months" in it is an inanimate concept referring to time. As we all know that only living things like persons or animals are equipped with vision faculty, how can an abstract concept "see" with eyes? When the phrase "the last 12 months" is collocated with the verb "see", similarities between person and inanimate concept are activated, and thus the new metaphorical meaning can be achieved by mapping between animate and inanimate concepts, or between seeing and experiencing concepts, etc.

In the vision conceptual metaphor "Watching is alerting", action of alerting always depends on watching the circumstance we are staying in and thus we could be ready to find out the threat around us so as to avoid being hurt.

Look at the following examples:

(14) *You must learn to watch the development of affairs.*
(15) *Watch out! The milk boiling over.*

"Development" in the sentence (14) is the invisible tendency, which cannot be seen by naked eyes but can be seen by "mental" ones. One could feel and guess the concept of development after mapping between vision domain and trend domain based on information collected by senses like vision, touch and smell, etc. But among them, the eye plays the most important role in the whole process.

3.5. Universality of Vision Conceptual Metaphors in Both Languages

With 25 types of vision conceptual metaphors in Chinese and 23 in English, there exist commonalities due to similar living conditions and cognitive strategies. Table 16 reveals that the eyes and vision activities (look, see, watch) are prominent source domains in both languages. These shared metaphors may stem from similar embodiment foundations and interactive mechanisms between humans and the external world, leading to comparable conceptualization mechanisms in English and Chinese.

Table 14. The 20 vision conceptual metaphors shared by both languages

English Conceptual Metaphors	Chinese Conceptual Metaphors	Category
1. eye is idea	1. 眼/观/见是观点	idea
2. eye is hole	2. 眼是孔洞	idea
3. eye is container	3. 眼是容器	idea
4. eye/sight is knowledge	4. 眼是见识	idea
5. eye is prier	5. 眼是打听者	idea
6. eye is focus of attention	6. 眼是注意	idea
7. eye/view is perspective	7. 眼是角度	idea
8. eye/seeing/looking is considering	8. 看是认为	idea
9. seeing is thinking	9. 看是思考	idea
10. seeing is knowing	10. 看见是了解	idea
11. seeing is understanding	11. 看是明白	idea
12. eye is identifying	12. 眼是鉴别	judgment
13. seeing is judging	13. 看是判断	judgment
14. eye/seeing/looking is expectation	14. 看是期待	expectation
15. eye is affection/interest	15. 眼是情感	expectation
16. seeing is experiencing	16. 看是经历	behavior
17. seeing is evaluating	17. 看是评价	behavior
18. eye is supervision	18. 看是监控	behavior
19. watching is guarding	19. 眼是照顾	behavior
20. looking is investigation	20. 察是调查	behavior

Table 14 summarizes that most shared vision metaphors in Chinese and English pertain to the category of "idea." This is attributed to the strong connection between "vision" and "idea" in human cognition. Additionally, both languages seem to exhibit shared metaphors in the category of "behavior," where "see" plays a primary role in expressing certain behaviors or acts. The universality of these metaphors may need further exploring based on common vision perception, cognitive mechanisms, and living environments. Physiological research reveals the dependence of vision perception on eye structure, light stimulus, and the eye-to-brain pathway, while cognitive psychology emphasizes the development of cognition from concrete to abstract, making metaphorical and metonymic strategies prevalent. Furthermore, the shared activities and understanding of the external world in similar environments contribute to the adoption of vision conceptual metaphors.

3.6. Diversity of Vision Conceptual Metaphors in Both Languages

Unique conceptual metaphors exist in each language, and even within the same metaphor, cultural variations can be observed. Emphasizing the significance of diversity, the provided table summarizes the distinct conceptual metaphors in Chinese and English vision expressions.

Table 15. Unique vision conceptual metaphors in both languages

English Conceptual Metaphors	Chinese Conceptual Metaphors
1. seeing is eating 2. looking is facing 3. watching is waiting	1. 眼是珍贵物The eyes are precious objects. 2. 眼底/目前/眼前喻现在metaphorically mean "now" or "at present." 3. 目是首领The eyes are the leader. 4. 看是体检Seeing is examining. 5. 眼是作证The eyes are a testimony.

The table presents unique vision conceptual metaphors in Chinese and English. Each language has its own distinctive metaphors, and even when they share a conceptual metaphor, the linguistic manifestations differ. The differences can be attributed to cultural values and living conditions. Cultural values influence the selection of metaphorical expressions, while diverse living conditions lead to varied experiences and metaphorical choices. The subsequent analysis focuses on the unique metaphors found in each language, including "眼是珍贵物" (eyes are precious objects), "Watching is facing," and "Watching or looking is waiting." The examples provided illustrate the differences in metaphorical expressions between English and Chinese languages.

4. Conclusion

4.1. Contributions of the Study

In conclusion, the significance and contributions in the present study are listed as follows:

1. Based on the reflection of the theories of metaphor, including the vision conceptual metaphors, the authors propose VCM for the first time.
2. The authors make a comprehensive survey on 14 vision vocabularies (7 in Chinese

and 7 in English), establish a closed corpus with 400 examples, and attempt to analyze their similarities and differences systematically, with some relevant data.

3. The analysis of the corpus unfolds some important findings: totally 48 conceptual metaphors being abstracted from the corpus (25 in Chinese, 23 in English); the top three in Chinese and English vision conceptual metaphors are respectively: "看是期待(seeing is expectation)(16)", "看/视是认为(seeing is believing) (15)" and "看是明白 (seeing is understanding) (15)", "Viewing/eye is opinion/idea (15)", "seeing is understanding (15)" and "seeing is experience (13)". And also in both corpora the categories of idea hold the largest percentage with 42.5 % and 40.0 % in both the Chinese and English languages.

4. 16 vision conceptual metaphors (8 in Chinese and 8 in English corpora) have been added to the previous research.

5. Through comparison and contrast, this research reveals that vision metaphors show some universalities and diversities between English and Chinese.

In general, the empirical studies presented herein reinforce the view that metaphor is the main mechanism through which human beings comprehend abstract concepts and perform abstract reasoning. These conceptual metaphors are grounded in our basic human experiences that may be universal to all human beings.

4.2. Limitations and Suggestions for Further Study

So far, the basic goal of this study has been fulfilled: to sort out the cognitive foundation of metaphor and to provide cultural explanations to the universalities and diversities from the comparative perspective between English and Chinese linguistic data. By this it does not mean that the current research is exhaustive and all-inclusive. Instead, from a macro-level perspective, the research presented in this paper is still very limited in breadth and depth. So there is still a long way to go to test whether the findings in this research can apply to other languages. With further investigation into more languages in the vision domain and other domains, the study of metaphor will further reveal more of its charm.

Moreover, the four categories abstracted from the corpus cannot cover all the linguistic expressions with a couple of exceptions which are not easy to group into. Further studies may focus on them or forward new approaches of categorizations in terms of interpreting the vision metaphors in both languages.

And also VCM, especially proposed for this study, may also prove to be of great use when applied and extended to explanation of other perception conceptual metaphors.

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