

A Study of Biblical Metaphors: From a Cognitive Linguistics Perspective

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Formerly, it was usual that people thought of metaphor as essentially a decorative thing concerning only linguistic representation in rhetoric. However, as cognitive linguistic study has developed, metaphor has come to be regarded as something deeply concerned not only with languages, but also the cognitive effects of human beings. By metaphors, we describe abstract concepts of certain semantic domain based on images created in mind through specific physical experience. Metaphors which have this function are known as conceptual metaphor.

The aim of my thesis is to examine the ways which English or Japanese speakers grasp and conceptualize things through analysis of conceptual metaphor, and to make clear how much similarity and difference there is between English and Japanese. In the thesis, I have collected metaphorical expressions in the English and Japanese translations of the Bible, which is full of metaphors and parables, and classified them. In those examples, regarding what are common concepts between English and Japanese, I consider conceptual metaphors that can be read from these examples, and as for those which do not have any common concept, I examine what element is reflected in them. As a result, I found some features as follows.

In conceptual metaphors common in English and Japanese, I especially found the three types of conceptual metaphor: orientational metaphor, physical metaphor, and metaphor relating to evaluation. The reason why these metaphors were generated a lot in both English and Japanese is that these metaphors are tied to universality, such as the physical structure and habit of human beings exceeding a cultural framework. In addition, the metaphor concerning more basic habit of human beings produces more expressions.

Metaphors based on the different conception in English and Japanese are influenced by culture. The expressions derived from ancient culture still remain in Modern English. Besides, physical metaphors are also seen in metaphors based on the different conception in English and Japanese, for the body, which is the subject of Human beings, is closely concern with various cultural habits.