# Analyzing Language as Material

Edited by Ming-Yu Tseng
（曾銘裕）

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Austronesian linguistics
anguage
Metaphor
Pragmatics
yntax-pragmatics interface

Center for the Humanities
National Sun Yat-sen University

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This volume consists of seven articles which share two important areas in language studies in a global multilingual context. First, the contributors were invited to reflect on and develop language-as-material perspectives. Language can be regarded as material in that it is symbolic material with its form and structure, it is used and can be combined for various purposes and in diverse fields, and it constitutes and shapes society and culture. Second, the book centers on languages spoken, used and/or learned and taught in Taiwan and on discourse produced in these languages: Mandarin, Taiwanese, Yami, and English. The material forms of the languages investigated cover Chinese and Isbukun Bunun corpora, Taiwanese oracular poetry, Yami digital archiving, Yami stories, and English picture books.

這本合輯專書有七篇論文，皆以語言多元使用為前提，聚焦於二個語言研究的領域。一是思索語言乃物質的觀點，語言是符號，有形式結構，亦有功能目的，用於各種場域，甚至形塑社會文化，就像物質一樣。另一共同關注的議題則是以臺灣所用的語言狀況做為題材，語言涵蓋華語、臺灣話、雅美語、郡群布農語及英語，分析這些語言使用的物質形式，含華語及郡群布農語語料庫、臺灣籤詩、達悟語數位典藏、達悟神話故事、英文圖畫書等。

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# Linguistic materiality and conceptual metaphoricity
# in English picture books for children

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## Abstract

As a specific type of printed material or reading matter, picture books for children indicate various worlds beyond themselves. They move beyond material boundaries and allow children to experience a world unlike the material one, providing linguistic and visual inputs for children and facilitating children's mental and conceptual development. The association between the matter (or objective reality) and ideas (or constructed/invented imaginary reality in which both real and unreal things exist), in the cognitive linguistic view, is operationalized largely via metaphorical mappings. In cognitive linguistics, the ubiquity of metaphor in language has been highlighted. But the degree to which metaphorical expressions occur in the textual materials for children has received little attention in the literature. The present chapter aims to fill up this gap.

More specifically, explored in this chapter are the linguistic materiality and conceptual metaphoricity in English picture books for children. The data for this study comprise 31 English picture books for children collected from the library of Wenzao Ursuline University of Languages. They are all the Caldecott Medal winning books among the 4,797 English picture books for children contained in the library of the university. From these 31 books, 1,203 metaphoric lexical units were identified using the MIPVU method (Pragglejaz Group, 2007; Steen et al., 2010a). From analysis of the identified metaphorical lexical units it is concluded that metaphorical words/units occur far less frequently in English picture books for children than the four registers of discourse primarily for and by adults (academic discourse, news, fiction, and conversation) examined in Steen et al. (2010b). Where these English picture books for children are concerned, it is also found that personification prevails among the identified metaphoric lexical units and that the actions by and upon the human body form abundant materials for the conceptual metaphoricity.

Keywords: English picture books for children, conceptual metaphor, lexical units,
          MIPVU, personification, embodiment

## INTRODUCTION

Picture books for children are specific printed material or reading matter. They vide children with textual material for conceptual understanding and imagery. ? linguistic signs and pictorial illustrations in the books can serve as scaffold terials for mental and conceptual development in childhood. Such material or tter in the objective world points beyond its boundaries toward an intellectual and iginative realm. The association between the matter (or objective reality) and ideas constructed/invented imaginary reality in which both real and unreal things exist), he cognitive linguistic view, is operationalized largely via metaphorical mappings. nceptual Metaphor Theory has recognized and confirmed the ubiquity of metaphor language (cf. Deignan, 2008; Kövecses, 2002; Lakoff & Johnson, 1980). But the ree to which metaphorical expressions occur in the textual materials for children ; been left out of consideration in the literature. The present chapter seeks to lress this omission in the literature and focuses on the linguistic materiality and iceptual metaphoricity in English picture books for children.

The data for this study comprise the texts of 31 English picture books for ildren (henceforth 'the database') collected from the library of Wenzao Ursuline iiversity of Languages. All but one of the 31 books are picture storybooks. The 31 oks are all the Caldecott Medal winning books among the 4,797 English picture oks for children contained in the library of the university. A textual survey of these oks was carried out and the ensuing analysis was conducted to address the llowing questions: (1) Is the language in the 31 English picture books for children metaphorical as adults' language?[1] (2) What are the features of the linguistic aterials for metaphorical mappings in these English picture books for children? To proach these questions, the present two authors engaged in the textual survey, entifying and analyzing metaphoric lexical units from the database using the IPVU method (Pragglejaz Group, 2007; Steen, Dorst, Herrmann, Kaal, Krennmayr, Pasma, 2010a), which will be introduced in the next section.

As units of analysis in this study, 'lexical units' are form-meaning complexes ith stable and discrete semantic properties (Cruse, 1986, p. 49), such as single words, ilywords (e.g., *in fact* and *of course*), phrasal verbs, compounds (e.g., *power plant*), ioms (e.g., *spill the beans*), and proper names. By 'metaphoric lexical units,' here is .eant lexical units that express metaphorical meaning in usage, namely indirect word .eaning arising out of a contrast between the contextual meaning of the lexical unit in .iestion and its more basic contemporary meaning in other contexts, the latter being

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Pictorial metaphors are rare in the 31 picture books. We will return to this at the end of the fourth section.

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