

## ABSTRACT

This is a study of the conceptual metaphors about women in the Chinese novel *Fortress Besieged* and its English translation. The study is based on the framework of Lakoff et al. in *Contemporary Metaphor Theory*. According to Lakoff and Johnson (1980: 3), “Metaphors are pervasive in everyday life, not just in language but in thought and action. Our ordinary conceptual system, in terms of which we both think and act, is fundamentally metaphorical in nature.”

In this study, the researcher collected all the expressions about women in the Chinese novel *Fortress Besieged* and its English translation. According to the contexts, those expressions about women were classified into five categories: Social Roles, Attitudes, Emotions, Physical Descriptions and Personality. The findings show the conceptual patterns underlying those expressions. There are similarities as well as differences among the expressions referring to women in the Chinese data and the English translation. Owing to the logographic writing system of the Chinese character, the iconic metaphor in Chinese characters was also been included in the analysis of the Chinese data.

The findings indicate that some conceptual metaphoric patterns are shared between Chinese and English languages. These patterns include WOMEN AS ENTITIES, WOMEN AS FOOD, A BEAUTIFUL WOMAN IS POWERFUL. There is only one pattern which is WOMEN AS BODY PARTS appeared in Chinese only.

By analyzing the Chinese characters which are a combination of the Chinese radical

女 [nǚ] (woman) combined with other characters, social attitudes towards women are revealed. It was found that among these characters, there are more negative than positive terms in the Chinese data, which generally imply a negative attitude toward women in both traditional and contemporary Chinese usage.

The analysis showed that some social roles about women in Chinese and English are marked forms, and revealed that stereotypes about women are deeply ingrained in Chinese society.

The findings of the conceptual metaphor patterns about women in the novel reflect the socio-cultural attitude toward women. This research will be beneficial for English or Chinese foreign language learners in gaining a better understanding about conceptual metaphors, especially with regard to the role of women today.

