

An Analysis of Conceptual Metaphors in Harry Potter and the Philosophy's Stone from the Perspective of Cognitive Linguistics

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Abstract:

Metaphor is not only a rhetorical device but also can be seen as a cognitive tool and a kind of thinking method. Literature, especially novels, often uses plenty of conceptual metaphors to explain abstract concepts and phenomena. This paper takes the first volume of the Harry Potter series, "Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone," as its corpus, conducting a qualitative and quantitative analysis of the conceptual metaphors within it, which is based on the theory of Critical Metaphor Analysis. The aim is to explore the connotative meaning embedded in the conceptual metaphors and systematically summarize the functions of the conceptual metaphors of novels.

Keywords:

Conceptual metaphor
Critical metaphor analysis
Metaphorical functions
Novel
Harry potter

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1. Introduction

The term "metaphor" originates from the Greek word "metaphora," where "meta" signifies across and "pherein" denotes transfer^[1]. Therefore, literally, "metaphor" means a transfer from one point to another. Hawkes suggests that metaphor is a distinctive linguistic process^[2]. In this process, certain aspects of one thing are transferred onto another, allowing the latter to be described in a way similar to the former. Metaphor not only involves the matter of linguistics and rhetoric, but it also refers to philosophy and culture. It covers complex questions

related to the knowledge of aesthetics, poetics, linguistics, cultural studies, and philosophy^[3]. Addressing these questions requires a deep understanding that extends far beyond the confines of any single discipline, drawing upon the collective efforts of humans to understand the charm of language and connotative meaning concealed within. Lakoff and Johnson formally presented the cognitive role of metaphor and introduced the conceptual metaphor theory in their co-authored book *Metaphors We Live By*. They argued that metaphor is not merely a rhetorical tool, as traditionally perceived, but a cognitive

mechanism that appears not only in literary works but also in everyday language ^[1].

However, with further research development, some scholars questioned whether Conceptual Metaphor Theory attached too much importance to human cognition and ignored other factors. Until the year 2004, Charteris proposed Critical Metaphor Analysis. He introduced cognitive linguistics, pragmatics, and corpus analysis into metaphor analysis, which opened up a new way for metaphor analysis, broadened the scope of metaphor research, and made metaphor research more comprehensive ^[4]. According to Charteris, metaphor is not only cognitive, but also linguistic and pragmatic. Critical Metaphor Analysis has its model and steps for metaphor research, which provides scholars with a new method to study metaphor. Critical Metaphor Analysis takes society, thinking and language together into consideration to uncover the ideologies and power relations implied in discourse ^[4].

Up till now, the “Harry Potter” series, created by the British author J.K. Rowling, have been translated into nearly eighty languages and published in over two hundred countries and regions, with a global total sales nearly four hundred million, setting new records in publishing and literary history, which ranked the third in the literary charts in terms of the number of books sold, and only behind the Bible and Quotations from Chairman Mao Tse-tung. It is not an exaggeration to say that it is one of the most widely disseminated, commercially valuable, and socially influential literature in our post-industrial society.

From the text to phenomena, “Harry Potter” offers us more than a reading experience. Research on “Harry Potter” has gradually deepened, presenting a situation of diverse opinions both within and beyond the text ^[5]. However, there has been almost no research on the conceptual metaphors within “Harry Potter.” Many scholars, when studying the series, tend to concentrate on the protagonist, lacking a systematic and comprehensive study of the conceptual metaphors. Presently, most research on metaphor is based on Conceptual Metaphor Theory and Critical Metaphor Analysis. Conceptual Metaphor Theory is widely applied in discourse analysis of political discourse, news reports, and other types of texts ^[6]. Compared to these areas, this kind of research

rarely appears in literature, especially novels.

In light of this, this paper adopts Conceptual Metaphor Theory proposed by Lakoff and Johnson as its theoretical foundation, selecting the most typical work from the Harry Potter series, “Harry Potter and the Philosopher’s Stone,” as the corpus, and conducts a qualitative and quantitative analysis of the conceptual metaphors within it, combining with the theory of Critical Metaphor Analysis. The aim is to explore the meaning embedded in the conceptual metaphors of the novel, systematically summarize the functions of conceptual metaphors in novels, and, through the analysis based on Conceptual Metaphor Theory, help readers comprehend the expressions in the text.

2. Theoretical foundation

2.1. Features of conceptual metaphor

Metaphor was initially perceived as a rhetorical device. However, with the publication of the masterpiece *Metaphors We Live By*, George Lakoff and Mark Johnson in 1980 marked a turning point in metaphor research ^[1]. They argued that, according to conceptual metaphor theory, the essence of metaphor is to understand and experience one type of thing using another type of thing. It is not only a linguistic phenomenon, but also exists in the conceptual system of human thinking, and is a major feature of the human thought process ^[1]. The core idea of conceptual metaphor theory lies in viewing metaphor as a cognitive phenomenon, a way of acting shown by language. Abstract concepts such as “Debate is war” and “Love is journey” are conceptual metaphors, and metaphorical expressions refer to the use of actual language in a variety of ways to realize abstract concepts.

Lakoff and Johnson believed that, “The way we think is a result of metaphorical guidance” ^[1]. The concept of “mapping” is employed to explain the transformation from the source domain to the target domain in conceptual metaphor. Metaphorical meaning is constructed by language users in a one-way mapping between the source and target domains. The process of mapping usually consists of two aspects: through the source domain to the target domain. Source domains are generally known cognitive domains that are specific to people. The target domain, on the other hand, is generally

an unrecognized cognitive domain that is abstract and not easily understood. Even if the source and target domains are in one-to-one correspondence, a target domain can have multiple source domains, which means that an abstract concept can be expressed in terms of many different concrete things, and vice versa does not hold. The process of conceptual metaphor mapping is to take the meaning in the source domain and partially map it to the target domain. This process reflects the cognitive process of individuals, namely, the transition from the concrete to the abstract^[7]. Conceptual metaphor has three main distinctive features, and they help to distinguish between conceptual metaphor and rhetoric. The three distinctive features are prevalence, cognitive nature and systematic nature.

2.1.1. Prevalence of conceptual metaphor

Richards noted that metaphors pervade our everyday life^[8]. Ortony likewise argued that every language is inherently metaphorical^[9]. Further supporting this ubiquity, studies by Gibbs and McNeill demonstrated that metaphor is not confined to a handful of eloquent speakers or writers; rather, it is a pervasive phenomenon manifesting throughout the spoken and written language used by ordinary people in day-to-day contexts^[10].

2.1.2. Cognitive nature of conceptual metaphor

Lakoff and Johnson proposed that metaphor is deeply ingrained in human cognition, claiming it occurs not just in words but also in thought and action. In their view, the essence of a metaphor is understanding and experiencing one kind of thing in terms of another, which implies that metaphor is fundamentally a cognitive process by which experiences in one conceptual domain help us make sense of another domain^[1]. The publication of *Metaphors We Live By* was a watershed moment in metaphor research, ushering in what Steen later called the “cognitive turn” – a shift to viewing metaphor principally as a matter of thought rather than mere rhetoric^[11].

2.1.3. Systematic nature of conceptual metaphor

Conceptual metaphors operate through systematic correspondences, or “mappings,” between a source domain and a target domain. In such mappings, language users project knowledge from a concrete or well-

understood source domain onto a more abstract target domain in a unidirectional manner. This means that elements of the source domain systematically correspond to elements of the target domain^[12]. Typically, the source domain is a familiar, tangible realm of experience, while the target domain represents an abstract concept that is harder to grasp directly. Notably, a single target domain can be structured by multiple source domains—an abstract concept may be understood through several different concrete schemas, although each mapping itself is one-directional (a concrete source frames the abstract target, not vice versa). Through this partial transfer of structure from source to target, conceptual metaphor mapping allows us to utilize concrete experience to make sense of complex, intangible ideas. In sum, this systematic mapping process is a key cognitive mechanism that underlies how metaphors inform our understanding of abstract concepts.

2.2. Classification of conceptual metaphor

Classifying metaphors can be challenging due to their complexity, but Lakoff and Johnson established a clear taxonomy of three fundamental types of conceptual metaphors: orientational metaphors, ontological metaphors, and structural metaphors^[1]. The analysis in this paper relies heavily on this tripartite classification.

2.2.1. Structural metaphor

Structural metaphors allow one concept to be understood by means of another, more concrete concept’s structure^[13]. In these cases, the source domain offers a well-defined organizational schema that is applied to the target domain. A classic example is “Time As Money” – an abstract concept (time) is conceptualized using the structural framework of a concrete domain (money and finance). This metaphorical mapping yields familiar expressions like “spending time,” “saving time,” or “investing time,” which illustrate how the properties of money (something that can be earned, spent, budgeted, or wasted) give structure to our understanding of time. Through structural metaphors, an otherwise abstract or complex idea can be discussed and reasoned about in terms of a simpler, more concrete domain’s internal logic and relationships. Such metaphors are powerful because they carry over extensive inferences and implications

from the source domain to illuminate the target domain.

2.2.2. Orientational metaphor

Orientational metaphors structure entire domains of experience along spatial axes (e.g., up vs. down, inward vs. outward). They are grounded in universal human bodily experiences of space. For instance, many cultures associate “up” with positive or higher quantity and “down” with negative or lower quantity ^[14]. This association is reflected in everyday expressions: happiness is described as “feeling up” or “on top of the world,” whereas sadness is “downcast” or “feeling down.” In orientational metaphors, an abstract concept is systematically mapped onto a spatial orientation, imparting an intuitive physical structure to intangible experiences and allowing people to reason about them using spatial relationships.

2.2.3. Ontological metaphor

Ontological metaphors help us comprehend intangible phenomena by conceiving of them as tangible entities or substances ^[15]. In other words, abstract experiences or ideas are understood as if they were concrete objects, discrete substances, or even persons. This objectification makes it possible to quantify, categorize, or interact with abstract concepts. For example, we often talk about the mind as though it were a physical container (“my mind

is full of ideas”), or we discuss emotions and ideas as tangible objects that can be held or lost (“grasping an idea,” “losing hope”). Similarly, through personification (a subtype of ontological metaphor), we attribute human qualities or abilities to non-human or abstract entities — consider phrases like “justice is blind” or “inflation is eating away at our savings.” Such metaphors impose physical boundaries or characteristics onto abstract domains, thereby rendering them more accessible to human understanding and reasoning.

3. Analysis of conceptual metaphors in “Harry Potter and the Philosophy’s Stone”

Quantitative analysis aims to depict the frequency of conceptual metaphor use with quantitative statistics, and quantitative analysis can make the corpus more accurate and intuitive, and the research results more convincing. The quantitative analysis in this paper aims to describe the number and frequency of occurrences of metaphorical expressions using quantitative statistics. Following the theory proposed by Charteris-Black for Critical Metaphor Analysis ^[16], this study employs three steps: First, a thorough reading of the text is conducted to identify metaphors according to the MIP, recognizing

Table 1. Classification of metaphors

Type of metaphors	Keywords	Frequency	Percentage
Structural metaphor	Stage Set out Arrive	2	0.58%
Journey metaphor			
Building metaphor	Build Foundation Collapse	3	0.86%
War metaphor	Attack Won Defend	5	1.44%
Plant metaphor	Root Fruit Blossom	3	0.86%
Animal metaphor	Lion Eagle Badger Snake	46	13.25%
Color metaphor	Dark Gold	32	9.23%
Weather metaphor	Gloomy Coldly	11	3.17%
Water metaphor	Flood Flow Run	24	6.91%
Orientational metaphor Up/down metaphor	Up Down High Low	101	29.16%
Ontological metaphor	Wake Find Say	112	32.28%
Personification metaphor			
Container metaphor	Enter Invest Out	11	3.17%

the similarities between the source domain and the target domain. Second, identified metaphors are analyzed, eliminating those without clear mapping relationships. Suitable metaphors are then classified. Third, based on the framework for Critical Metaphor Analysis, the connotative meanings conveyed through metaphors and the author's intentions are analyzed. From "Harry Potter and the Philosophy's Stone," numerous metaphors have been found. They are categorized and summarized based on their source domains, including journey metaphors, building metaphors, war metaphors, plant metaphors, animal metaphors, color metaphors, weather metaphors, water metaphors, personification metaphors, container metaphors, and up/down metaphors, a total of 11 main types. The specific distribution is presented in the table below.

From **Table 1**, it is evident that the most frequently used metaphor in this novel is the personification metaphor. Other kinds of metaphors include animal metaphor, up/down metaphor, color metaphor, and water metaphor. The container metaphor, weather metaphor, and war metaphor are also used relatively frequently. The keywords for personification metaphor are mostly verbs, while the keywords for other metaphors are mostly nouns and adjectives. Detailed explanations of the forms and mapping processes of these main metaphors will be provided in the following sections.

3.1. Structural metaphor

As mentioned earlier, metaphor is a cognitive phenomenon, and the mapping between the source domain and the target domain in metaphors is a process where people, based on their experiences, use familiar and concrete concepts to understand less familiar and abstract concepts^[7]. Analyzing specific source and target domains helps us comprehend abstract concepts and understand the role of conceptual metaphors. The types of structural metaphors and their mapping relationships will be detailed in the following sections.

3.1.1. War metaphor

War has deeply influenced language, culture, and thought. Generally, war refers to fierce conflicts between several countries, regions, or groups for political or economic interests, characterized by their long duration and difficulty. War has become an effective tool in people's everyday

discourse, used to describe complex and abstract events. War metaphors portray non-war activities or events by analogizing them to real-world warfare^[17], establishing mappings between the war domain and various other conceptual domains (**Table 2**).

Table 2. War metaphor with source and target domains

Type of metaphor	Source domain	Target domain
War metaphor	War	Argument

Example 1: "She attacked every point in my argument," said Ron (P84). In the given context, Ron is complaining about Hermione, and the word "attack" is typically associated with war. The argument between Hermione and Ron is framed as a war, with opposing sides requiring both offensive and defensive strategies. The real meaning of this sentence is that Hemione always argues with Ron. The war metaphor helps readers realize the urgency of this debate, making the conflict vivid and portraying Hermione's character as knowledgeable, talented, and sensitive. This contributes to helping readers understand the author's intention.

3.1.2. Journey metaphor

A journey includes several fundamental elements such as the route and the destination, making it a highly effective source domain^[18]. Keywords like "stage," "set out," and "arrive" are used in the journey metaphor. This metaphor frequently appears in the novel, using specific stages of displacement of people to map the development of abstract events. This approach allows the author to vividly present abstract concepts and phenomena (**Table 3**).

Table 3. Journey metaphor with source and target domains

Type of metaphor	Source domain	Target domain
Journey metaphor	Journey	Life

Example 2: He hadn't expected something like this the moment they arrived (P142). In context, this is Harry's inner monologue before taking part in the Quidditch. He believes he hasn't learned enough since arriving at Hogwarts, feeling extremely nervous. Life is compared to a journey, and this is a moment that has never occurred

before. The word “arrive” associated with a journey reflects Harry’s anxiety, aiding readers in understanding the situation at that moment and contributing to creating Harry’s character.

3.1.3. Building metaphor

In conceptual metaphor, abstract concepts are often seen as buildings, which can be constructed, reinforced, or collapse ^[19]. Mapping buildings onto more abstract target domains helps to change abstraction to concrete, facilitating a deep understanding of the text’s meaning (Table 4).

Table 4. Building metaphor with source and target domains

Type of metaphor	Source domain	Target domain
Building metaphor	Building	Pain

Example 3: Quirrell screamed and tried to throw Harry off. The pain in Harry’s head was building, he couldn’t see, he could only hear Quirrell’s terrible shrieks and Voldemort’s yells of, “KILL HIM! (P188) In this context, the description is about Harry’s fight with Professor Quirrell, during which Harry begins to have a headache. “Build” is a word commonly used in the context of construction. Now, pain is likened to a building that can be established. This building metaphor vividly illustrates the process of Harry’s headache, making the abstract experience more tangible. It allows readers to feel the pain as if they were there, showing Harry’s characteristics – brave and strong. Even as the scar on his head starts to pain, he doesn’t give up and continues to battle with Voldemort.

3.1.4. Plant metaphor

The growth process of plants, including rooting, sprouting and flowering, shares similarities with the processes of events happening, development, and outcomes ^[20]. Plant metaphors leverage people’s understanding of roots, stems, flowers, fruits, soil, and the plant’s growth environment, mapping plant-related structures onto the characters, aiding in the understanding of specific situations (Table 5).

Table 5. Plant metaphor with source and target domains

Type of metaphor	Source domain	Target domain
Plant metaphor	Plant	Dudley

Example 4: Dudley stood rooted to the spot (P11). In the context, it is evident that Harry’s cousin Dudley is very frightened. The word “root” had a metaphorical meaning. Dudley is described as if he were a plant growing on the ground. The exact meaning of this sentence is that Mr. Dudley is standing still. This metaphor vividly portrays the tense situation and shapes Dudley’s character as extremely timid.

3.1.5. Animal metaphor

In “Harry Potter,” J.K. Rowling establishes mappings between “people or concepts” and “animals” based on their similarities in behavior or cultural cognition, using numerous animal metaphors to shape characters or expound the theme. Rowling extensively uses animal metaphors in this book, making the story lively and interesting while revealing themes like “life and death” and “love and courage” in a way that is easily understood by readers. Some notable animal metaphors include the animals of the four major houses, Sirius Black’s “dog” Patronus, and Dumbledore’s phoenix, Fawkes (Table 6).

Table 6. Animal metaphor with source and target domains

Type of metaphor	Source domain	Target domain
Animal metaphor	Lion Snake Dog Phoenix	Students Hope Love

(1) Lion, Badger, Eagle, Snake

In the novel, Rowling divides Hogwarts into four houses: Gryffindor, Hufflepuff, Ravenclaw, and Slytherin, using the lion, badger, eagle, and snake as representative animals for each house. According to Rowling’s descriptions in this book, each house favors students with corresponding traits. Therefore, these animals not only represent the spirit of a particular house but also imply common characteristics of certain types of characters. Gryffindor, where the protagonist Harry and most positive characters study, focuses on cultivating qualities of bravery and honor. Lions are known for their strength and

fierceness, often symbolizing bravery in Western culture.

Unlike Gryffindor, Hufflepuff, represented by the badger, prefers honest and hardworking students. Badgers, animals living deep in the soil, often give the impression of being “low-key and honest” in Western culture. Eagles are known for their keen eyesight, symbolizing intellect when mapped onto humans. Eagles have high status in this house, as seen in the eagle-shaped door knocker at the entrance to their dormitory, which only opens when students answer questions correctly. Slytherin, represented by the snake, especially favors students with a desire for power and ambition. Snakes are skilled at capturing prey in nature, and some are venomous. Therefore, snakes are often labeled as sly and cunning. Characters from Slytherin in the novel often exhibit a strong desire for fame and fortune, intending to get their way by hook, such as Voldemort’s craving for immortality by killing. Rowling’s use of the snake easily leaves a lasting impression on readers as “evil and ambitious,” also reflecting the theme of good versus evil in this literature.

(2) Dog

Sirius Black transforms into a dog, symbolizing loyalty and misfortune in the Western world. Sirius Black is portrayed as a character who is loyal to his beliefs and friends. He advocates for equality and opposes Voldemort’s rule. The black dog metaphor not only signifies Sirius Black’s loyal and courageous characteristics but also alludes to the tragic aspects of his life, hinting at his ultimate sacrifice to protect Harry.

(3) Phoenix

Albus Dumbledore’s Patronus is the phoenix Fawkes. Phoenixes have long been regarded as lucky creatures in Western literature. If their owner or friend is harmed, they fearlessly engage in battle against evil. In the novel, the phoenix represents justice and has extraordinary magical abilities. The phoenix undergoes a process of rebirth through self-immolation, symbolizing the eternal essence of life. Its tears can heal the wound, and it sacrifices itself to save its owner and friends. The phoenix’s embodiment is Dumbledore, and all aspects of him are closely related to the phoenix, which is linked with hope and life.

3.1.6. Color metaphor

Color metaphor refers to using different colors as the source domain to establish a mapping between “people

or concepts” and “colors” through similarities of cultural cognitive^[21]. Different colors carry different connotations, and there are differences between cultures. In Western culture, black represents evil and darkness, while gold symbolizes glory, and orange represents passion and romance (Table 7).

Table 7. Color metaphor with source and target domains

Type of metaphor	Source domain	Target domain
Color metaphor	Color	Abstract Entities

In the Harry Potter series, “Dark Art” is referred to as twisted and unknown magic, while the golden architecture of the lion represents glory and greatness. Through color metaphors, the author vividly portrays the characteristics of things, making it easier for readers to understand.

3.1.7. Weather metaphor

The weather is always changing, ranging from sunny to rainy, from overcast to calm. Weather metaphor involves mapping weather onto abstract entities such as a person’s mood, creating a more vivid and imaginative representation that helps the reader understand (Table 8)^[22].

Table 8. Weather metaphor with source and target domains

Type of metaphor	Source domain	Target domain
Weather metaphor	Weather	Voice

Example 5: “I’m sure Firenze thought he was acting for the best,” he said in his gloomy voice (P229). In context, Professor Snape is mocking Professor Firenze, who teaches Defense Against the Dark Arts class, implying that he is arrogant. The word “gloomy,” originally used to describe weather, is utilized here to characterize a person’s voice. This metaphor contributes to the creation of an oppressive atmosphere. It allows readers to immerse themselves in the scene and aids in shaping the character of Professor Snape – sensitive, suspicious, and unsmiling.

3.1.7. Water metaphor

Water can exist in various forms, either flowing into

the sea or rushing and dispersing in different directions. The water metaphor refers to using water as the source domain and mapping it onto people or animals as the target domain, making expressions more concise, vivid, and aiding readers in deep understanding (Table 9)^[23].

Table 9. Water metaphor with source and target domains

Type of metaphor	Source domain	Target domain
Water metaphor	Water	Owl

Example 6: As the owls flooded into the Great Hall as usual, everyone's attention was caught at once by a long, thin package carried by six large screech owls (P151). In this context, it describes the Christmas scene at Hogwarts, using the source domain of water with the word "flood." When reading the word "flood," readers can imagine the scene of a place covered with water and the approaching Christmas, with numerous owls delivering letters to students. This highlights the bustling activity and the abundance of owls at Hogwarts, making this picture more vivid.

3.2. Ontological metaphor

As mentioned above, ontological metaphor involves perceiving abstract concepts as if they were concrete objects or substances^[15]. It helps people understand abstract concepts such as events, emotions, and activities by treating them as tangible entities or substances. The mapping relationships in ontological metaphor are illustrated in Table 10.

Table 10. Type of conceptual metaphor with source and target domains

Type of conceptual metaphor	Source domain	Target domain
Personification metaphor	Human	Hogwarts
Container metaphor	Container	Ideas
Entity metaphor	Entity	Abstract concepts

3.2.1. Personification metaphor

The personification metaphor is to see the thing as having a human nature, which is a very obvious

ontological metaphor^[24]. It allows us to understand a range of non-human activities by human motivations and characteristics. The source domain refers to humans, which can indicate the human itself, such as flesh, bones.

Example 7: One morning in mid-December, Hogwarts woke to find itself covered in several feet of snow (P231). In the context, this sentence describes the scene at Hogwarts on a December morning. It portrays Hogwarts as if it were a person waking up and "discovering" the snow. The author projects human actions onto the abstract concept, giving it qualities of awakening. By this metaphor, readers can feel the surprise and delight of the students when seeing the snow. The metaphor creates a joyful and serene atmosphere.

3.2.2. Container metaphor

The container metaphor is to consider the ontology as a kind of container, so that it has boundaries, can be quantified, and can enter and exit^[25]. The most representative and typical of ontological metaphors is the container metaphor. People are entities independent of the world around them, and each person is a container by himself, with sub-interfaces, inside and outside, etc. The container metaphor is that people project their bodily experiences onto the objective world outside the body. The world outside includes rooms and buildings with obvious container features, to forests and open spaces with less obvious container features and even abstract horizons, events, activities and states that can be conceptualized as containers^[25].

Example 8: Mr. Dudley gave himself a little shake and put the cat out of his mind (P14). In the given context, this sentence is the psychological description of Harry's cousin, Dudley. Dudley meets a strange cat at the doorstep, which is, in fact, Professor McGonagall. And then, he tries to calm himself and forget about it. Here, the metaphorical use of "mind" and "idea" as containers makes the abstract concept more tangible. It emphasizes Dudley's effort to forget the cat.

3.2.3. Entity metaphor

Example 9: This was why Harry spent as much time as possible out of the house, wandering around and thinking about the end of the holidays, where he could see a tiny ray of hope (P22). In this context, this sentence describes

Harry's mental state as he anticipates a turning point in his life, hoping to escape the long-term abuse from Uncle Vernon's family. A cliché metaphor, "a ray of hope," is used in this sentence. This metaphor has been used a lot and has lost its original effect and novelty. The phrase "a ray of" is employed as a quantifier to describe hope, transforming the intangible concept of hope into something concrete. This metaphor vividly portrays Harry's difficult position—detested by his aunt's family with nowhere else to go, laying the groundwork for his entry into the magic world.

Example 10: Sometimes, when he strained his memory during long hours in his cupboard, he came up with a strange vision: a blinding flash of green light and a burning pain on his forehead (P16). In the given context, this sentence describes Harry's painful recollections. The exact meaning is that whenever he begins to recall Voldemort, his scar hurts. Memory is typically an abstract concept, and "strain" is usually associated with concrete items like ropes. It is used as a verb to describe memory, turning the abstract concept into something tangible. This metaphor emphasizes Harry's painful experience, shaping his character as someone who, despite the pain, repeatedly recalls because he doesn't want to forget his parents.

These forms of language have become so prevalent that people are generally no longer aware of their metaphorical nature. This just shows that people's way of thinking has automatically compared two things and thought, experienced, and talked about abstract things in terms of concrete things, so that abstract things seem to have the characteristics of concrete things to systematically describe the disorganized external world. Metaphorical way of thinking, like other perceptions, has become the basic way people know the world and live by.

3.3. Orientational metaphor

Orientational metaphor is based on people's perception of their bodies, constructing an independently comprehensive conceptual system in which elements are interconnected and adhere to spatial orientation with respect to each other. The up/down metaphor, grounded in both bodily and cultural experience, introduces spatial concepts, facilitating a clearer understanding of the logical relationships between various entities for the reader^[14].

Table 11. Orientational metaphor with source and target domains

Type of metaphor	Source domain	Target domain
Up/down metaphor	Up/down	Quality or Grade

Example 11: "But what does a Ministry of Magic do?" "Well, their main job is to keep it from the Muggles that there's still witches and wizards up and down the country (P29). In the context, Hagrid is introducing the Ministry of Magic to Harry, expressing his dissatisfaction with the Ministry's lack of efficiency. The speaker utilizes the experience of space, illustrating quality and grade within a spatial structure. According to Lakoff's opinion, "Up is good, down is bad"^[1], when quality is at a high level, it is good, and when it's at a low level, it is undesirable. In this sentence, 'up' refers to wizards with high status, while 'down' refers to those with lower status. This orientational metaphor vividly illustrates the hierarchy difference between the two kinds of wizards, making the description clear and plain.

4. Metaphorical functions in novels

4.1. Explanation

Thomson pointed out that metaphor, as a tool of expression, acts as a bridge connecting discourse and the audience^[3]. People can express opinions about the real world through metaphor. Due to its property, metaphor serves an explanatory function. Firstly, metaphor is a unique language phenomenon whose essence lies in humans using a specific symbolic system to interpret their own and others' understanding of the same things or concepts. Secondly, metaphor is also a way of thinking, which is often closely linked to our experiences^[26]. When people transform one concept (experience) into another, similar feelings and understanding arise due to the similarity between the concepts and experiences. Therefore, metaphor carries some elements, such as people's thoughts and behaviors. Thirdly, metaphor plays a unique role in constructing the connection between the source domain and the target domain. Metaphor allows people to think from their perspectives, rather than viewing the same things with the same viewpoint^[27]. In summary, metaphor serves as a bridge between an abstract concept (experience) and another concrete concept

(experience). Conceptual metaphor in novels not only paves the road to understanding the essence of things but also serves an ideological function.

4.2. Empathy

It refers to establishing the same emotional identification and attitudes with the author through metaphor, allowing readers to share the same emotions and stance. The depiction in the novel is also a process of conveying emotions, with a focus on expressing characters' feelings and portraying the characters by conceptual metaphors, thereby showing attitudes to the readers. Metaphor plays a role in "empathy" in novels, making it an indispensable part. Through conceptual metaphor, the emotional influence of literature can be strengthened, providing a deeper understanding of characters' thoughts, thereby striking an empathetic chord with readers.

4.3. Character portrayal

Conceptual metaphor contributes to creating well-rounded characters. The characteristics of characters change with different types of conceptual metaphors, achieving a comprehensive image of characters. For instance, the protagonist, Harry, the author shapes his brave and passionate character through an animal metaphor, the Gryffindor lions. Additionally, other kinds of metaphors are employed to show Harry's other personalities, including humor and sincerity.

4.4. Persuasion

Conceptual metaphors, with a powerful reasoning system, can persuade readers, prompting them to think of the true intentions of the narrator or the author. For example, the color metaphor in this novel, *Dark Art*. All the professors in Hogwarts warn the students to stay away from it, using this color to represent its danger and evil. It is this unspoken

metaphor that sparks readers' imagination, achieving the purpose of persuasion. At the same time, the author also uses this metaphor to tell the readers: to keep away from dark, dirty things, to be open-minded and pure, highlighting the theme of "love and hope" and "good and evil."

5. Conclusion

In contrast to traditional metaphor theory, Lakoff's conceptual metaphor theory argues that metaphor not only plays a rhetorical role at the linguistic level, but also cognitive way of understanding the world and an emphasis on the role of people's living experience and cognitive abilities in discourse comprehension. Conceptual metaphors are extensively used in English novels, making characters' complex thoughts and experiences more vivid and concrete, which also arouse special associations for readers, enhancing their understanding of the text and contributing to the creation of well-rounded characters.

This paper focuses on conceptual metaphors in "Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone" based on the Critical Metaphor Analysis. It categorizes the types and mapping mechanisms of conceptual metaphors in this novel, exploring their underlying meanings. The study concludes with an analysis of the functions of conceptual metaphors in the novel, which also reveals that the most frequently used metaphor in this novel is personification metaphor, with other prevalent types including building metaphor, journey metaphor, war metaphor, plant metaphor, water metaphor, container metaphor, weather metaphor and others. The classification and analysis of conceptual metaphors in literature contribute to enhancing the understanding of this cognitive tool for English learners. This, in turn, improves their reading skills and enables a more accurate comprehension of the author's intentions and a deeper understanding of characters in English novels.

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The author declares no conflict of interest.

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