

# A Corpus-Based Explanation of Metaphors in *A House Divided*<sup>1</sup>

**Xia Zhao & Wen Zhou**

Jiangsu University of Science and Technology, China

## *Abstract*

Since Lakoff and Johnson proposed conceptual metaphors in 1980, an increasing number of metaphor studies have occurred in different disciplines, however, few of them are found in literary works from a corpus perspective. On this account, the study aims at revealing how meanings are constructed through conceptual metaphors in a novel. We selected the text version of *A House Divided* as the research data, which is one of the most important representative works of American writer Pearl S. Buck, the winner of the Nobel Prize for literature. With the help of WordSmith Tools 6.0 to retrieve them, we find that conceptual metaphors are pervasive in it and, among them, ontological metaphors occur most, followed by structural metaphors and orientation metaphors which occur least. Pearl S. Buck's cognitive contexts, as well as the Chinese social context in the 1930s, may be the key factors of her choice of metaphors in the writing.

**Keywords:** *A House Divided, Corpus, conceptual metaphor, context*

## **1. Introduction**

American writer Pearl S. Buck (1892-1973) was an outstanding international contributor to the spread of Chinese culture to the world, just as Italian traveler Marco Polo did in the 13th century. She won the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1938 for her

“rich and truly epic descriptions of peasant life in China” in the House of Earth trilogy. She is also the only American writer in the world who won both the Nobel Prize for Literature and the Pulitzer Prize for writing Chinese-themed works. Until the 1970s, according to UNESCO statistics, her works have been translated into 145 languages and she became “one of the most translated writers, second only to the two popular detective writers, George Simon and Agatha Christie” (Nora, 1983, p. 331). Her ideas in the works are also regarded as one of the motivations for the contemporary Western literary field to start a new idea on realism.

*A House Divided* is a follow-up to *the Good Earth* and *Sons* of Pearl S. Buck’s celebrated trilogy about the family of Wang Lung, the protagonist of *the Good Earth*. This book depicts his grandson, Wang Yuan, son of the warlord Wang the Tiger, a thoughtful, serious and willful young man who does not intend to follow his father’s footsteps, but instead feels an affinity with the earth and planting things as his grandfather Wang Lung did. Wang Yuan disobeys his father and flees to live in his grandfather’s old farmhouse, which starts a series of events that take him across the world. After Wang Yuan is arrested as a revolutionist, his family ransoms him and sends him to America, where he spends six years in attaining an advanced degree in horticulture. Since she won the Nobel Prize in Literature, her works has inspired worldwide scholars to study them from multiple perspectives. However, most of their focus is still on *The Good Earth*, and few studies are on *A House Divided*, especially, from the perspective of conceptual metaphors. In addition, few corpus-based studies, combined with Chinese socio-cultural context as well as the author’s cognitive context have been found so far. Thus, we intend to make an attempt to explore the author’s unique literary writing style, conceptual metaphors, as well as the implied social ideology in this novel.

## **2. Preliminaries**

After Lakoff and Johnson (1980) proposed conceptual metaphors, many scholars began to study metaphor from cognitive perspectives. According to Lakoff, metaphor is a mapping across conceptual domains grounded in human being’s experience and knowledge, which is a fixed set of ontological correspondences between entities in a source domain and entities in a target domain. When those fixed correspondences are activated, mappings can project source domain inference patterns onto target domain

inference patterns (Lakoff, 1992, p. 39).

However, Lakoff and Johnson (1980) often used ideal cases which are detached from reality. Therefore, it is impossible to reflect the actual situation of metaphor use accurately. Since the 1990s, corpus research methods have been widely used in metaphor research, with the systematicity of its observation, the sufficiency and objectivity of the interpretation, forming a useful supplement to the traditional introspection (Shu, 2013, p. 217).

At present, corpus-based metaphor research in China and the west can be roughly divided into the following four categories: the first type of study is based on the general corpus to verify the systematic nature of Conceptual Metaphor Theory or to summarize the grammatical features that cannot be observed in traditional metaphor research, thus making up for the deficiency of classical Conceptual Metaphor Theory (Deignan, 1995, 1999, 2006; Hanks, 2006; Semino, 2005). The second type of study mainly summarizes and analyzes the usage patterns of metaphors in a certain language (e.g. Boers, 1999). The third type of study is cross-language comparative research, which compares the metaphorical phenomena among different languages and analyzes the causes of differences and similarities in metaphorical phenomena (Charteris-Black & Ennis, 2001; Deignan et al., 1997; Semino, 2002; Simó, 2008). The fourth type of study is based on a self-built corpus which combines with critical discourse analysis to analyze the ideology behind the metaphor. These self-built corpora include political discourse (Wang & Feng, 2018; Zhu & Zeng, 2013), economic discourse (Chen, 2018), business discourse (Koller, 2004, 2006), news discourse (Sun, 2012), education discourse (Cameron, 2003), literary discourse (Zhao, Han & Zhao, 2019; Zhang & Liu, 2018) and so on. For Example, Semino (2008) systematically studied the rules of metaphor in the discourse of different genres and analyzed their related discourse strategies.

Since the publication of *A House Divided* in 1935, scholars have found that some of the contents in the novel are metaphorical (e.g. Zhu, 2008). Although they have achieved some results, few scholars have construed it from the perspective of conceptual metaphor contexts with a corpus method. Because of this, we attempt to conduct exploratory research into this area.

### **3. A Corpus-Based Study of Conceptual Metaphors in *A House Divided***

We first proposed the following two research questions: First, what kinds of

conceptual metaphors appeared in *A House Divided* and what is the implication of them? Second, what are the factors that affect the use of conceptual metaphors in this novel and how they are related to Chinese traditional culture in a certain social context? We employ the WordSmith Tools 6.0<sup>2</sup> to extract data, which is an integrated suite of programs for examining how words behave in texts (Mike, 2013, p. 2). It includes WordList, Concord, KeyWords and other utilities. The WordList tool shows that there is a list of all the words or word-clusters in a text, set out in an alphabetical or frequency order. Concord offers us a chance to see any word or phrase in a context. With KeyWords, we can find the keywords in a text (Mike, 2013, p. 2).

### **3.1 Identification of conceptual metaphors**

We employ three criteria for metaphor identification in this study. The first criterion is the Conceptual Metaphor Theory proposed by Lakoff and Johnson (1980), which classifies metaphors into three categories: ontological metaphor, structural metaphor, and orientational metaphor. Ontological metaphor relates to abstract and vague concepts such as emotions, thoughts, psychological activities and events as concrete and tangible entities. Once we can identify our experiences as entities or substances, we can refer to them, categorize them, group them, and quantify them and, by this means, reason about them (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980, p. 25). Structural metaphor is “a case where one concept is metaphorically structured in terms of another” (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980, p. 14). Orientational metaphor gives a concept a spatial orientation. Most of them have to do with spatial orientation: up-down, in-out, front-back, on-off, deep-shallow, central-peripheral (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980, p. 14).

The second criterion is on the basis of the Metaphor Identification Procedure (MIP) designed by Steen et al. (2010). First, the metaphorical words in discourse are identified. The recognition process is divided into the following four steps: 1) Identify the contextual meaning of the lexical unit; 2) Check if there is a more basic meaning of the lexical unit. If there is, establish its identity; 3) Determine whether the more basic meaning of the lexical unit is sufficiently distinct from the contextual meaning; 4) Examine whether the contextual meaning of the lexical unit can be related to the more basic meaning by some form of similarity (Steen et al., 2010, p. 33). If the results of instructions 2, 3, and 4 are positive, then a lexical unit should be marked as a metaphorical word. A more basic meaning of a lexical unit is defined as a more concrete, specific, and human-oriented sense in contemporary language use. Since

these meanings are basic, they are always to be found in a general users' dictionary (Steen et al., 2010, p. 35). We carefully identify them again to ensure the accuracy of the metaphor. *The Macmillan English Dictionary for Advanced Learners* (MED) (Rundell, 2002), a corpus dictionary based on a fairly recent corpus of contemporary English, was used as the main reference for judging contextual meaning and a basic meaning in this study. For example,

- (1) The iron gates sprang open, and out of their vastness came a slow thick stream of men and women and little children. (Buck, 2012, p. 218)

In example (1), MED shows that the contextual meaning of “stream” is “a continuous flow of people or things”, while its original meaning is “a continuous flow of liquid or gas”. We compared the two definitions and found that the former was more abstract and salient than the latter, and thus we marked “stream” as a metaphorical word.

The third criterion is Aristotle's classification of metaphor (Aristotle, 2005). He classified simile as metaphor. Therefore, we regarded the sentence pattern “A is like B” as a metaphor. For example,

- (2) The **bread** they held ready in their mouths to swallow went dry and stuck in their throats like **stones**. (Buck, 2012, p. 13)

In example (2), the word “stones” directly establishes a cross-domain mapping on “bread”. Thus, we classify the metaphorical words in *A House Divided* and confirm those related to ontological metaphor are: “tiger”, “mind”, “wall”, “choke”, “seed”, “stream”; those that belong to structural metaphors are: “love”, “war”, “flower”; and those in relation to orientational metaphors are: “up”, “down”, “high”, “low”, etc. While determining the keywords, the various forms of the keywords are taken into account, especially, in the plural form, so as not to miss some metaphors.

After we identified the above metaphorical words, we put them into the corpus tool and got the number of occurrences of each metaphorical word. The results are shown in Table 1.

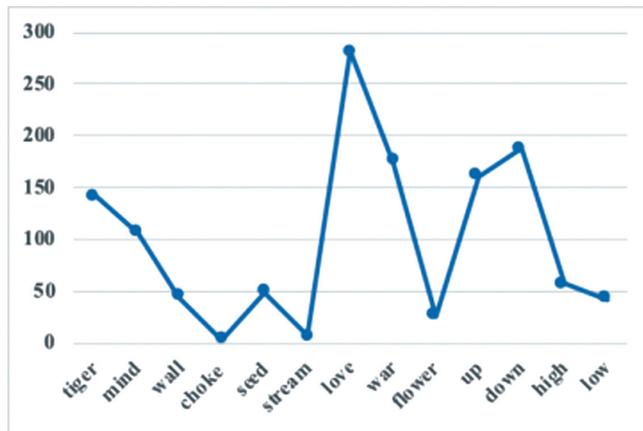
Table 1. Frequency of three categories of conceptual metaphors in the novel

<b>Categories</b>	<b>Occurrences</b>	<b>Frequencies (%)</b>
Ontological Metaphor	56	48.3
Structural Metaphor	32	27.6
Oriental Metaphor	28	24.1

Table 1 presents a significant difference in frequencies of occurrences of the three categories of conceptual metaphors in the novel, with 56 ontological metaphors, 32 structural metaphors, 28 orientational metaphors, accounting for 48.3%, 27.6%, 24.1% of the total number of metaphors respectively. Among them, ontological metaphors appear most while orientational metaphors least.

Figure 1 shows that among the occurrences of ontological metaphorical words, “tiger” and “mind” rank top 2, at 142 and 106 respectively; while “choke” occurs least, at 2. As for the structural metaphorical words, “love” appears the most, at 281; which is followed by “war” and “flower”, with the occurrences of 176 and 26 respectively. In terms of the orientational metaphorical words, “down” ranks first, appearing 187 times. Metaphorical words like “up” and “high” appear with a frequency of 161 and 57 respectively and “low” the lowest at 42. All the above metaphors reveal the main theme of the novel, increasingly deeper generation gap between the father and the son. This fact implies the sharp contradiction between feudal Chinese traditional ideas and new ideas. This contradiction becomes intensified and leads to the disintegration of the Wang’s family. Conceptual metaphors in Figure 1 vividly highlight the theme of the novel and the occurrences of each metaphorical word are shown in Figure 1.

Figure 1. Occurrences of each metaphorical word in the corpus



### 3.2 Interpretation of metaphor in *A House Divided*

As Lakoff states, metaphor is ubiquitous in everyday life, not just in language but in thought and action (2003, p. 4). From Figure 1, we can see conceptual metaphors occur differently in numbers in the novel. Pearl's ordinary conceptual system, in terms of her thinking and writing, is fundamentally metaphorical in nature.

#### 3.2.1 Interpretation of ontological metaphor

Figure 1 shows that "tiger" and "mind" rank top 2 among the ontological metaphors in the novel, having profound meanings. For example,

(3) But the lad saw him often angry or seeming angry with others, for the Tiger used his **anger** as a **weapon** with which to rule his men, and in the darkness of the night the lad shivered beneath his quilts when he remembered his father's rounded, glaring eyes and the way he jerked his coarse black whiskers when he raged. It had been a joke among the men, a half-fearful joke, to say, "It is better not to pull the Tiger's whiskers!" (Buck, 2012, p. 6)

(4) Yuan seemed to see the **Tiger** again as he had often seen him, sitting stately in his great carved chair, the tiger skin behind him, before him the copper brazier of burning coals, and all his guard about him, a very **king**. (Buck, 2012, p. 123)

(5) for now, in this new day the **Tiger** seemed as futile as an old **actor** on a forgotten stage. (Buck, 2012, p. 177)

In example (3), the attribute of the source domain “weapon” is mapped on the target domain “anger”, indicating that Wang the Tiger’s anger is very lethal, powerful and frightening. In example (4), the characteristics of the source domain “king” is mapped onto the target domain “Wang the Tiger”, highlighting the king’s manner of him and his arrogance as a warlord. Whether in the military or at home, he has supreme power and always uses anger as a weapon to rule others. Therefore, no one, even his son, dares to offend him. In example (5), the target domain “the **Tiger**” is linked to the source domain “old actor”. The implication is that in the new era, the old warlord has become an old, useless man, just like an old actor is abandoned and forgotten on the stage by young people. The use of conceptual metaphors makes it easy for readers to understand the contradictions and conflicts between the father and the son and the fierce collision of the concepts of the two generations. For example,

(6) Between them was a **wall** of delicacy, of **mind**, of a withdrawal native to them both. (Buck, 2012, p. 146)

(7) Yet did he live in two **worlds** of **mind** and spirit, and Yuan, exploring into those two worlds with many questions and long listening silences when he sat and heard the old man speak out his knowledge and beliefs, felt no narrowness here, but the wide ranging simple vastness of a mind unlimited by time or space, to which all things were possible in man and god. (Buck, 2012, p. 149)

(8) Why now should she come to his **mind** as clearly as though a **door** were opened to show her there, as he had been used to see her on a windy day in spring across the sea, her fine dark hair blown about her face, her skin white and red, her eyes their steady grey? (Buck, 2012, p. 198)

In the above three examples, the features of the source domains “wall”, “world”, and “door” are mapped onto the target domain “mind”. In example (6) “mind” is compared with “wall”, showing a huge obstacle of communication between Chinese and the West. They show biased opinions towards each other’s culture and cannot broaden their minds. Their thoughts are separated by a wall, and no one can cross this obstacle. In example (7), “mind” is linked to the “world”. In the novel, Wang Yuan has been shackled between the two worlds, trying to explore ways to complement and integrate the two cultures. Through the context, readers can understand the difficulties and confusion of Wang Yuan. In example (8), the

open door is similar to an open mind. The attribute of the source domain “door” is mapped onto the target domain “mind” to express the meaning that Mary suddenly appears in Wang Yuan’s heart. He felt that he did not fall in love with Mary because she only knew something good in Wang Yuan’s country but did not know the poverty and backwardness in reality.

### 3.2.2 Interpretation of structural metaphor

The results in Figure 1 show that “love” and “war” rank top 2 of the number of occurrences of structural metaphors. For example,

(9) He knew it and he feared it, for this love was like an **anger**, too, it was so hot and petulant, and it lay so heavy on the child. (Buck, 2012, p. 7)

(10) Therefore, to Yuan his father had been everything of love and fear, and this mingled love and fear were hidden **hands** upon him. (Buck, 2012, p. 7)

(11) In this one **love** of his heart **flowed** out and all his many feelings fused most ardently into this one swift course. (Buck, 2012, p. 247)

In examples (9) and (10), the attributes of the source domains “anger” and “hands” are mapped onto the target domain “love (Wang the Tiger’s love for Wang Yuan)”. Similarity in metaphorical structuring is indispensable (Wang & Hu, 2018, p, 104). In example (9), there is a similarity between the wild anger and passionate love, thus revealing the father’s deep love for Wang Yuan, but in Wang Yuan’s view, this love is like an invisible hand which bounds his freedom, making him unable to choose his career and love. Therefore, these two sentences highlight the love between the father and the son with a strong feudal parental style.

In example (11), the contextual meaning of “flow” is “a supply of something that continues without stopping” (MED). However, it is distinct from its basic meaning, which is “the continuous movement of a liquid in one direction” (MED). It symbolizes “Wang Yuan’s love for Mei-ling” as “flow” to illustrate Wang Yuan’s forever love for Mei-ling, which reflects Buck’s affirmation of the long-lasting romantic love in the concept of marriage.

(12) It is not wise nor well for two of different flesh to wed each other. There is the outer difficulty of the two races, neither of which likes such union. But there is also the inner

**struggle** against each other, and this pull away from each other goes as deep as **blood** does—there is no end to that **war** between two different bloods. (Buck, 2012, p. 150)

(13) ...he led his **pupils**, forming them like a small **army** into fours, and he marched through the city streets at their head, but instead of **guns** he bought **hoes** for them, and these they carried over their shoulders. “Well, I see a new thing every day in this city now, but this is the newest thing I ever did see, to go to war with hoes!” Then Yuan grinned to hear this and he answered, “It is the newest army of the revolution!” This was truly a sort of army, the only sort of army he would ever lead, an **army** of young men who went out to **sow seed** on the land. (Buck, 2012, p. 233)

In example 12, the contextual meaning of “war” is “a situation in which two people or groups of people fight, argue, or are extremely unpleasant to each other” (MED). However, the basic meaning of “war” is “fighting between two or more countries that involves the use of armed forces and usually continues for a long time” (MED). The basic meaning is distinct from its contextual meaning. The struggle between the two races is just like a war. Based on the similarity between them, the structure of “war” in the source domain “war” is mapped onto “struggle” in the target domain. Wang Yuan believes that there is no harmony between different nationalities. The struggle between different celebrities was as endless as war. Similarly, in his view of marriage, he believes that only the combination of people of his nation can be harmonious and permanent, therefore, he rejected Mary’s love. Here, Pearl expresses Wang Yuan’s narrow nationalism metaphorically.

In example 13, Pearl Buck refers to the structure of “war” to construct “farming” and compares “pupils” and “peasants” to armies and compares “hoes” to “guns”. As a descendant of peasants, Wang Yuan has deep feelings for land. He believed that agriculture is as important a way to achieve national prosperity as war. Therefore, after returning to China, he applied advanced Western agricultural knowledge and technology to practice. Finally, Wang Yuan found the truth and completed the transcendence of the three generations in the “land”.

### *3.2.3 Interpretation of orientational metaphor*

The results in Figure 1 show that the words “up” and “down” rank top two of the occurrences of orientational metaphor. For example,

(14) he gathered **up** his weary wits to do this duty for his son before he let him go. (Buck, 2012, p. 28)

(15) For often in the springtime as he bent himself upon the earth, some content rose **up** in him which he had never known. (Buck, 2012, p. 68)

(16) “Yes, **down** with Confucius!” and they said, “Let’s put him **down** and keep him down with all those old things which we hate him and his filial piety!” (Buck, 2012, p. 169)

In the above examples, the cross-domain mappings of the source domain “up” in the target domain “wits” and “content” illustrates Wang the Tiger’s responsibility for his son and Wang Yuan’s love for land. In (14), Wang the Tiger racks his brains and tries to arrange Wang Yuan’s marriage to fulfill his responsibility of carrying on the family line. Here, Pearl reveals that in traditional Chinese families, marriage is “the command of parents and the words of matchmaker.” In example (15), the orientation “up” means the increase of “content”, which indicates that Wang Yuan suddenly realizes his special feelings for land.

In example 16, the basic meaning of “down” is “to or towards a lower place” (MED). However, the contextual meaning of “down” is “used for showing that you are opposed to a leader, government etc. and you want to get rid of them” (MED). There is incongruity. “Down” is a metaphor for the completely westernized Chinese youth who have completely abandoned Confucianism. This metaphor reflects Pearl’s critique of total Westernization of Chinese youth at that time.

## 4. Explanation of Context-Boundness of Metaphors in the Novel

### 4.1 Cognitive context

In the traditional view, a context includes a context of language, time, place, way of speaking, social and cultural background, etc. In terms of cognitive linguistics, Sperber and Wilson define a context as follows,

a psychological construct, a subset of the hearer’s assumptions about the world. A context in this sense is not limited to information about the immediate physical environment or the immediately preceding utterances: expectations about the future, scientific hypotheses or religious beliefs, anecdotal memories, general cultural assumptions, beliefs about the mental state of the speaker, may all play a role in interpretation. (Sperber & Wilson, 1986,

pp. 15-16)

The essence of metaphor lies in an interaction between a metaphorical expression and the context in which it is used (Ungerer & Schmid, 2001, p. 116). In other words, interaction between contexts can realize the meaning of metaphors.

A cognitive context is a cognitive construction network that conceptualizes a certain concept based on experience (Zhao, 2008, p. 22). In a dynamic cognitive context, the subject is not passively controlled by the objective context, but actively chooses and utilizes certain factors to achieve the communicative purpose. Therefore, a context of a subject plays an important role in the construction of metaphor. Pearl lived in China for 40 years in the midst of a conflict between China and the West and she presented a system of traditional Chinese family in the novel. As she states,

their traditional family system, wherein every individual man, woman and child belonged to a clan and each clan was responsible for all individuals in it, was a sound basis for a new kind of modern democracy. (Buck, 2013, p. 119)

Wang Yuan is the representative of the last part of Pearl's trilogy and she described his confusion in the conflict between the old and the new in the novel. Even if Wang Yuan once studied in the United States, he still could not feel relieved and get rid of distress. Wang Yuan is actually the prototype of Pearl and his entire story is consistent with Pearl's experience. Firstly, in the novel Wang Yuan has to escape with his cousin to the United States to save his life because he participated in the revolution. However, due to the skin and the characteristics of the East, he is excluded by the American society. His situation in the United States is actually very similar to the experience of Pearl in China.

Secondly, when Wang Yuan returned to China with his compatriots, he was so deeply influenced by the United States that all the strangers and relatives treated him as a foreigner. Therefore, whether it is in the United States or China, Wang Yuan has become an "outsider". Such a kind of double education did not bring him happiness but loneliness. Wang Yuan's pain lies in his isolation by the two cultures. In fact, it is such experience and a mixed identity that create his unique cross-cultural vision.

The metaphorical expression of "divided" means that the end of the day is also a new start, just like new things emerge in spring. This is not in line with the classical

Chinese saying, “When everything becomes empty, it will return to the sadness of the starting point.” Pearl adopts a large number of ontological metaphors to imply Wang the Tiger’s autocracy and the traditional Chinese patriarchal system in this novel. In the view of traditional Chinese family, marriage is a major event in the family and the key to the family’s continual prosperity. As Pearl points out, “usually love did develop after marriage, sometimes romantic and passionate love, but it was not an essential (Buck, 2013, p. 105). Confucianism has far-reaching implications for traditional Chinese family ethics that was focused on “three principles and five virtues” patriarchal system, while the Western concept of marriage attaches importance to mutual affection and freedom of marriage. Under the influence of Western thoughts,

young couples began to want “small family” homes instead of living in the traditional manner with the clan, and much of the literature one read in Chinese magazines and books of the period had to do with the sorrows of young lovers parted from each other by family betrothals. (Buck, 2013, p. 321)

Pearl describes the arranged marriage of Chinese feudal society and the ideal love between Wang Yuan and Mei-ling which integrates both Chinese and Western cultures through orientational metaphors. The combination of Wang Yuan and Mei-ling marks the beginning of a new life, for the couple is neither conservative nor completely westernized. From the concept of value, their mental state and moral appearance indicate the transcendence of their predecessors.

Pearl employs conceptual metaphors to show her profound feelings for Chinese farmers and land in the novel, while in terms of American land, she states,

American land is rebellious, and, besides, our own land had been ill-treated. Generations of farmers had neglected to fertilize and had further robbed the earth by planting nothing but corn. ...I had been taught in my Chinese world that earth is a sacred possession. (Buck, 2013, pp. 366-367)

For thousands of years, Chinese farmers have devoted their life to land and maintained harmony with nature. Therefore, the lifestyle of Chinese farmers is also respected by Pearl. When she went back to America, she tried to make those woolly

acres look like a Chinese farm, neat and green and fruitful. As she said in her book, she felt that the time had come really to farm, as she had been secretly longing to do. Pearl believes that land has nurtured the Chinese people, and only by adhering to the foundation of land can Chinese peasants flourish. However, she also realizes the problems of the traditional Chinese agricultural society under the influence of the rapid development of Western science and technology. She deems that in order to solve this problem, only by combining the traditional virtues of Chinese farmers and Western technology, can China be prosperous and strong. Pearl describes Wang Yuan's transcendental ideal return by using orientational metaphors. She based her description of the disillusionment of Wang Yuan with American society on her own college experience. She remained steadfastly independent as an observer of Chinese life, rejecting the orthodoxy of American missionaries. Pearl's horror at the cruelty and pathos of Chinese life comes through vividly, while she shows respect for many Chinese traditions. In short, she succeeded in sympathetically interpreting Chinese people to Americans in this novel.

#### **4.2 Cultural context**

Malinowski put forward his explanation of context in 1923 that context can be defined as a language-specific cultural convention and social norm. Kramsch further developed Malinowski's concept. Until the 20th century, he defines "cultural context" as the historical knowledge, the beliefs, attitudes, values shared by members of a discourse community, which contribute to the meaning of their verbal exchange (Kramsch, 2000, p. 27).

By creating language, people can reflect their social and cultural environment, so there is a very close relationship between language and culture. The comprehension of metaphorical language cannot be separated from the cultural context. Pearl was deeply influenced by Chinese and Western cultures since her childhood. As she said in *My Several Worlds*,

when in the morning I sat over American schoolbooks and learned the lessons assigned to me by my mother who faithfully followed the Calvert system in my education, while in the afternoon I studied under the wholly different tutelage of Mr. Kung. I became mentally bifocal. (Buck, 2013, p. 51)

Pearl uses the ontological and orientational metaphor to demonstrate the advocacy of complementary communication between heterogeneous cultures in the novel. As a foreigner in America, Wang Yuan began to think about his own beliefs, feelings and prejudices. He is doubly introspective when he comes back to China and finds his country anew through foreign eyes. Wang Yuan falls into a trap by his education, not belonging entirely to either the old China or the new, his heart as divided as his family, half lives in the modern city and half in the countryside. Wang Yuan's introspection makes him the most well-developed and conflicted character in this multi-generational story. Wang Yuan gets exposed to, but never really embraces, the westernized party lifestyle of the revolutionary activities of his cousins Sheng and Meng. In this novel, from a perspective of an unofficial foreigner, Pearl describes the deep thoughts, difficulties, confusion and choices experienced by Wang Yuan in the violent collision between Chinese and Western cultures. She also criticizes over-westernization and narrow nationalism. She holds that,

the young Chinese had cut themselves off too abruptly from their traditional roots and had been trained too quickly and superficially in Western cultures. ...There were no modern Chinese in fact, there were only Westernized Chinese. (Buck, 2013, pp. 171-172)

The orientational metaphors are used to reflect the over-westernization of Chinese youth. Pearl has a good awareness of advanced technology of America compared with Chinese cultures, but she criticized those Americans who have a prejudice of Chinese culture and pointed out that the attitude to other cultures determines American own development. As she states in her autobiography, "One thing I could not understand and do not yet and this was the apparent lack of interest or curiosity in Americans about other countries and peoples" (Buck, 2013, p. 91). In terms of culture, "they thought of the great and beautiful country as a land of beggars and savages instead of the most ancient existing civilization in the world, with a culture older than any in Europe" (Buck, 2013, p, 102).

The above quotations show that Pearl criticized western people for ignoring the powerful wisdom and power of Chinese farmers. As she states,

It seemed to me that the Chinese peasant, who comprised eighty-five percent of China's population, was so superior a human group, that it was a loss to humanity that he was also

voiceless because he was illiterate. (Buck, 2013, p. 246)

Pearl found Chinese and Western cultures were separated. She says,

It was serious, I felt, that they learned nothing at all about American life. For that matter, the Americans, too, were missing a rich chance to learn something about the Chinese, for even then I was beginning to perceive that unless there could be understanding between East and West there would someday be terrible conflict between them. (Buck, 2013, p. 196)

Pearl points out that the hegemonism of Western culture will eventually hinder the development of its own culture by missing out excellent heterogeneous culture. However, Pearl's unique personal experience has restricted her vision. She has never been able to jump out of this limitation and put the issue into a broad historical and realistic background. She does not have a profound understanding of the future of Chinese politics and the Chinese revolution, and even had a serious bias (Guo, 2006). Pearl creates the character of Wang Yuan and lets him plant the western seeds on the land of the East. However, the seeding of Wang Yuan in the novel does not succeed. Although Wang Yuan takes good care of the Western seeds, these seeds die because of the lack of suitable water and soil. This means that in the process of cultural exchanges between China and the West, Western science and technology cannot be introduced to China blindly. It is necessary to adapt to local conditions and integrate Chinese and Western cultures.

## 5. Conclusion

This study chooses the English version of Pearl S. Buck's novel *A House Divided* as a corpus and uses WordSmith Tools 6.0 to analyze metaphors in it. The results of the study show that Pearl employs a large number of metaphors in the novel, among which ontological metaphors appear most, followed by structural metaphors and orientation metaphors. Conceptual metaphor is one of the important linguistic features of Pearl's writing techniques which highlight the charm of Chinese culture. Contexts of Pearl's cognition and culture are the main factors that prompt the occurrence of a number of conceptual metaphors in her novel, which reflect the social

ideology at that time. According to Pearl, in the collision of Chinese and Western civilizations, Chinese people should inherit the fine cultural traditions, retain Chinese characteristics, and also draw on the essence of Western culture and abandon the dross. Both sides should learn from each other in light of the limitations of their own culture, develop and innovate based on inheritance, and achieve cultural co-prosperity. As Pearl hopes, China needs to learn from American advanced technology, while America needs to learn from Chinese people's protection and use of land.

## Notes

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- 2 [http://www.lexically.net/publications/copyright\\_permission\\_for\\_screenshots](http://www.lexically.net/publications/copyright_permission_for_screenshots)

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### **About the authors**

Xia Zhao (xiazhaozj@just.edu.cn) is a professor at the English Department, School of Foreign Languages, Jiangsu University of Science and Technology, China. She got her PhD in English language and literature from Soochow University. She was

an academic visitor funded by China Scholarship Council at the School of English, Communication and Philosophy, Cardiff University, UK in 2018. Her research areas include functional linguistics, cognitive linguistics, discourse analysis and philosophy of language, with a special focus on metaphor, semiotics, corpus linguistics, etc. She is currently a member of International Association for Systemic Functional Linguistics, the directorate of China Discourse Analysis Association and Chinese Cognitive Neurolinguistics Association. She has published a book *Research on Language Constructivism Based on Evolutionary Theory of Meaning* (2015) and over 30 articles on a great variety of topics.

Wen Zhou (1575478136@qq.com) is a postgraduate student at Jiangsu University of Science and Technology. Her research interests include cognitive linguistics.