A Cognitive Reflection on the Viewpoint Phenomena in Construction and Discourse

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Abstract: The viewpoint phenomenon is an essential and constant task of human communication. To analyze the features of viewpoint, different linguistic terminologies and approaches, such as grammatical forms, narrative discourse, metonymy, mental spaces, and schematic networks, should be considered to explain and reflect on the possible methods that can be used in viewpoint phenomena. In this article, the features of viewpoint phenomena, construction, and discourse are defined based on the cognitive approach. To illustrate these points, the author discusses examples from discourse and construction based on the cognitive system to prove that viewpoint is a complicated process that includes language features mentally and constructively.

Keywords: Cognition, Viewpoint phenomena, Construction, Discourse

1.   Introduction

Viewpoint phenomena is an interdisciplinary area that has aroused many researchers' interests. It was defined as a conceptualizer's perspective regarding various events and scenes [1]. However, this is a problematic definition. Vandelanotte and Dancygier claimed that viewpoint analysis involves a network configuration combined with the framework of compressions, mental spaces and narrative spaces, metonymy, metaphorical blends, and image schemas in linguistics to help people reconcile and understand the viewpoint phenomena at all levels [2]. Hence, no concise definition can clearly explain what perspective and viewpoint are. Some researchers argue that all levels of linguistic structure should be considered in an analysis of meaning from the perspective of their viewpoint potential.

According to Vandelanotte and Dancygier [2], the viewpoint in linguistics worked as a discourse participant that functioned in direct, indirect, free indirect speech, and other modes of linguistic speech. This view reflects that a particular viewpoint lies in the language choice structured in different situations. For instance, the selection of discourse fragments and grammatical features, such as direct/indirect speech, tense, pronouns, etc., worked as a network that demonstrated the narrator's viewpoint.

The cognitive approach is essential in identifying the viewpoint phenomena. Noam Chomsky, in 1959, raised a linguistic analysis approach to reflect behaviorism to cognitivism in psychology. Therefore, Chomsky's linguistics proposed abandoning psychological reality but focusing more on rationalism and innate structures [3]. More specifically, Chomsky defined linguistics as a

fundamental commitment to universalism and the existence of a shared species-wide knowledge like syntax, semantics, and pragmatics in linguistics that is grounded in human biology [4].

However, Langacker was against this approach and thought that the use of language is for people to understand meanings. Thus, Language is all about meaning; the analyst who disregards this in favor of focusing only on formal issues badly degrades the natural and essential subject matter of the profession and eventually distorts the nature of the phenomena reported [5].

Saussure regarded language as a self-contained system, and in the context of linguistics, it had its organization and classification; that is to say, cognition is a separate realm compared with phonological, grammatical, and cultural forms [6]. This view reflects that structural semantics are entirely different from language and thoughts. Hence, to explain the perspective of linguistics, it is necessary to involve discourse construct communication, supplying information, eliciting information, and using various other communicative devices.

According to Barcelona, Valenzuela, and Murcia, mental and linguistic categories do not exist in an abstract, disembodied, or human-independent way [7]. Still, they are mainly based on our experiences imposed by our body and mind. The purposes and structures used in daily life are more or less by our personal experiences. Therefore, the human conceptual categories are not a combination of universal abstract features like words and sentences' meanings or linguistic characteristics. Hence, cognitive linguistic concepts are based on physical and sociocultural backgrounds.

Therefore, the mental space phenomena play a vital role in explaining the discourse construction through communication. Furthermore, Dancygier, in his study, argues that the mental space approach combined with other mechanisms can prove linguistic expression includes multiple viewpoints, and those viewpoints together form a coherent network [8-9]. This view was used in the construction and discourse analysis to identify the relationship between linguistic structure and cognition in presenting viewpoints in human communication [10].

2. Viewpoint Phenomena

2.1. Perspective Taking and Viewpoint

Perspective and viewpoint phenomena serve as an essential function in cognitive standpoint to explain the meaning of various contexts across linguistics and show the complexity of language using conceptual structures. Sweetser and Dancygier claimed that linguistic structure does not lose its description of the objective but offers that a single mind might have a different viewpoint on the same scene [11]. For example, the sentence "I placed a jar in Tennessee, and round it was upon a hill…" in "the anecdote of the jar" from Wallace Stevens's poem explains the perspective among "jar," "Tennessee hilltop," "wilderness," and "human." That is, although no word is mentioned about human beings, the jar as a human artifact reminds the human presence of the narrator. At the same time, the hilltop and wilderness represent the natural reminders of the landmarks and surroundings, thus showing human cognition of the whole surroundings [11]. Therefore, in some circumstances, perspective taking and viewpoint can represent human cognition and communication, as it links human neural architecture and experience with multiple linguistic perspective construal.

Linguistic perspective and viewpoint refer to the form or meaning-pairing in language, which includes two essential aspects: the speaker and the hearer's side. The former indicates the conception expressed in language, while the latter means constructing mental representation in language. From the perspective of cognitive linguistics, perspective-taking is a spontaneous process. It is the ability to identify or understand people's thoughts in a specific situation. Also, it is a skill that emerges relatively early in life but develops and becomes more complicated and flexible with age and experience. Gehlbach mentioned that perspective-taking refers to people's ability to

understand other people's situations and how that person reacts cognitively and emotionally [12]. Thus, it has been proposed that perspective taking includes "organizing knowledge structures, leveraging social presence and social interaction, and through embodiment" [13]. More specifically, perspective taking is the stance people hold during the speech to reduce linguistic ambiguity by speakers, their own, and a shared perspective. As an example, a sentence of "I want an apple" contains ambiguity; thus, different people will hold various perspectives, as the object "apple" can refer to the natural fruit apple, the computer, or a picture of an apple. To reduce the ambiguity in this sentence should include people's cognition and communication skills.

On the other hand, researchers divided viewpoints from three perspectives: conceptual, linguistic, and gestural. Firstly, a conceptual viewpoint involves knowledge that can extend physical location, which helps people realize some information is inaccessible to other entities. Thus, it is necessary to combine spatial information such as non-linguistic or co-speech gestures to bridge between "viewpoint in the sense of a conceptualizer's location, and viewpoint in a more abstract linguistic sense" [14]. For example, Bryant and Tversky proved that people's responses to the two-dimensional and three-dimensional models differ according to the scene [15]. Secondly, in the linguistic viewpoint, the linguistic device plays a vital role in reflecting the instance of conceptual viewpoint partially or schematically, such as pronoun choice, word order, modals, and definiteness can serve as an instructional model to reflect viewpoint. For instance, the sentence "I cut the apple, as compared to he cut the apple" was described to the participants using the pronouns I or you to indicate the narrator's perspective [15]. Finally, considering the spatial information from a linguistic viewpoint, body and hand gestures are used to support the understanding of the conceptual viewpoint. It reflects that the conceptualizers form their perspective either outside or inside the scene. For instance, gestures in which the speaker uses her hands or body as though she is a character in the narrative (e.g., pumping the arms as though running while talking about someone running) have been called character viewpoint gestures [16]. Therefore, gestures functions as a visual viewpoint that help the speakers and receivers to encode the spatial object in mind.

To sum up, perspective and viewpoint are complicated cognitive processes that combine various linguistic constructional and discourse modes to encode meaning and thoughts.

2.2. Viewpoint Network and Compression

A systematic method is necessary to explain the viewpoint's diversity in terms of compression and networks [2]. First, compression refers to general cognition, which reduces the redundancy of realistic images in visual sight [18]. In comparison, network analysis is essential in cognitive linguistics to explain how language integrates with other kinds of knowledge. Without such cognitive flexibility, humans could not cooperate and communicate at the high level unique to our species and universal to neural and developmentally typical members of the species [19].

In the description process, the language purpose overrides the phrase or sentence level; hence, the viewpoint is a discourse phenomenon that is not only based on the sentence structure but also includes people's cognitive ability to comprehend the above information at different linguistic levels [8-9]. However, the description of the entire world is included in the viewpoint of linguistic structure. In cognitive linguistics, it indicated that grammatical knowledge and construction grammar was alternative as form and function are separated into distinct components and organized in a network in a speaker's mind [20]. Therefore, a process of compression and cognitive networks is necessary for comprehension when dealing with a linguistic mechanism like pronouns, nouns, semantics, alternative construal, and sentence structures. While for a better understanding of human cognition, mental space and discourse viewpoint space are used in discourse viewpoint networks and compression in narrative discourse [2]. These approaches link non-linguistic descriptions at the sentence level with mental space networks to explain the viewpoint configuration.

Fauconnier expounded on mental space to identify spaces when dealing with conceptual structures, then expanded and applied it to illustrate the discourse flow in cognitive linguistics [21]. Therefore, mental spaces included linguistic, pragmatic, and cultural strategies in everyday speaking and reasoning when constructing meanings. For example, using temporal and conditional conjunctions will lead to mental spaces. The sentence "when I finish my work" or "if I finish my work" can help illustrate how mental space occurs. As the adverbial clauses move one mentally into a future or hypothetical situation wherein the work is finished. Then the speaker can explore the described situations to infer the possible outcomes; thus, these adverbial clauses could be completed with main clauses such as I'll travel to Beijing, or I'll take a rest [8-9]. During the adverbial clause "when" and the hypothetical forms "-if," a mental space is set up from the current perspective to the future perspective. This space formed networks as the "finish my work" space is based on the current "reality" space and then submitted to the space of "travel to Beijing" as a consequence of the if-space that is embedded further in the network. In other words, the mental space approach allows us to explain the discourse flow at a lower level according to temporal relations, causality relations, and cross-references.

However, the mental space approach cannot address all the issues in the conceptual situation; more complex spaces are required for corporate events, from lower level to high-level descriptions such as fictional narratives. Therefore, to process the narrative story, the discourse viewpoint space approach is used to explain the narrator's story-telling viewpoint that is present in the story. The discourse viewpoint space thus provides current narrative situation explanation in viewpoint structure.

A brief example from a fictional narrative is provided as follows to introduce the framework:

(1) "From birth, I was addicted to questions. When the delivering nurse slapped my rump, instead of howling, I blinked inquisitively. As a child I pushed the "why" cycle to break point. At six, I demanded to know why people cried. Mother launched into the authorized version of the uses of sorrow. At the end of the extended explanation, it came out that I wanted the hydromechanics of tear ducts. […] By her account, I worsened with each year's new vocabulary. […] So it righted a cosmic imbalance in her eyes that I answered others' questions for a living. (Richard Powers, The Gold Bug Variations, 35)" [9].

This story's plot structure contained two space levels: the event and the sub-stories. The event covered the narrator's adult life; the sub-stories included why the narrator worked in the library to answer questions for library patrons. The reader must use lower-level narrative space to construct the narrator's life during this narrative process. For instance, the time sequence used in this story indicated the network spaces, such as the "birth," followed by the nurse slapping the baby and the baby's reaction. Then moved to the next space, "childhood," and the situation of "at six." Also, the perspective changed from the narrator to her mother is another network space. All these spaces show characters' various viewpoints and how narrators as a person construct their perspectives. To sum up, the viewpoint that relies on the network space structure and constructed viewpoint is needed in discourse viewpoint space to give coherence and salience to the viewpoint-constructing pattern exemplified.

Furthermore, to explain the network phenomena more explicitly, the mechanism of viewpoint compression is introduced in the analysis of discourse viewpoint space. This mechanism refers to general cognition, which works in different levels of narrative structure. The process of compression allows people to control and grasp logical reasoning and global meanings in conceptual integration [22]. In example (1), the story was told in the first-person narrator's

viewpoint, which contained various spaces of narrative in the story. This process combined the sub-plots and other narrators' perspectives. In short, there are several sub-narratives in the plot with different choices of viewpoint (present or past, first person or third person, same or other characters, etc.). The viewpoint compression existed in all levels of description, such as timeline, cross-narrative identities, and character behaviors throughout the story [8-9].

However, Fauconnier and Turner argued that compression is a conceptual integration phenomenon that deals with physical and social-cultural human experiences, which are called vital relations (cause-effect, change, time, identity, representation, visual images, etc.) [22]. Taking the following plot from a newspaper as an example to identify a speaker's identity in vital relation required vast and powerful resources to complete the compression process. The plot is:

```
(2)"The pronghorn runs as fast as it does because it is being
chased by ghosts---the ghosts of predators past… As researchers
begin to take, such ghosts appear to be more evidence, with
studies of other species showing that even predators have been
gone for hundreds of thousands of years, their prey may not have
forgotten them (Ghosts of Predators Past)" [22].
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In example (2), it is clear that this short plot is complicated that includes several networks and work of compression. The first compression is regarding the "pronghorn" as the "ghost" to signal that people had no clue about what it was in the past. But in the modern world, we do not think that the "ghost" really represents the real pronghorn; this requires further compression about the deep meaning and why people know how to connect "ghost" to "pronghorn." Viewpoint space forms an integration network in this plot in which there is a single pronghorn, and the pronghorn remembers its predators and chased it in the past. Thus, the compression process is a complex procedure that works together with the viewpoint network in construction and discourse [8-9].

3. Construction and Discourse

3.1. Discourse Viewpoint (direct discourse, indirect discourse, free indirect discourse)

Explaining the viewpoint phenomena required us to analyze the linguistic construction and discourse straightforwardly. According to leech and Short, there are five types of speech modes that can be used to explain the discourse features: Direct speech/Thought (DS/DT), Indirect Speech/Thought (IS/IT), Free Direct Speech/Thought (FDT/FDT), Free Indirect Speech/Thought (FIS/FIT), and Narrative report of a Speech/Thought Act (NRSA) [23-24]. Each mode works separately or together to allow the speakers and hears to understand each other's speaking topic and information. However, direct, indirect, and free indirect are the most notable features of linguistic description.

Direct Speech (DS) is the term that describes direct information about what someone said in another context; we can identify this situation by following examples [23].

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Example:
1. Philippe said, "I'll come if I have the time."
2. My roommate said, "Clean the place up, or get out of here!"
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According to the two sentences, we can figure out the speaker's viewpoint through two spaces, and the first space was the third person pronouns representing who the speaker is. In contrast, using "I" as the first-person pronoun gives more information about who is speaking and what is the information construction.

Indirect Speech (IS), on the other hand, represent how people make indirect statements without using quotes [23]. Three situations can help illustrate this situation. First, when the speech includes conjugation, there must be a que added in the sentence, and the order of the address has to change to

retain the sentence's logic. Second, when there are verbs like talk, permit, order, and demand in a sentence to instruct people to do something, then an infinitive construction must be used in the speech to indicate viewpoint. Finally, it is necessary to pay attention to the use of verb tense, as it will reflect the change of context from direct discourse to indirect discourse. The following examples can examine these phenomena [23].

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Example1:
Direct discourse: He told me, "You're stupid."
Indirect discourse: He told me [that] I was stupid.
Example 2:
Direct discourse:  He told me, "Write to me."
Indirect discourse: He told me to write him.
Example 3:
Direct discourse: She said, "I will be on time."
Indirect discourse:  She said she would be on time.
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Free Indirect Speech (FIS) was thought to be a device that confined the literary text; it combined direct and indirect discourse to denote a particular speech representation. This speech process mixes or merges the character's words from syntactic domination, such as the following example presents that the surface is free from mental domination by the narrator [25].

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Example:
…, and of course, he was coming to her party tonight, Evelyn
insisted, … (Virginia Woolf: Mrs. Dalloway)
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To sum up, the use of different modes of language construction and discourse will help illustrate the speaker of the narrator's viewpoint or perspective.

3.2. Using Metonymy and Metaphorical Blends to Explain Viewpoint Phenomena

3.2.1. Metonymy

A viewpoint phenomenon is a complicated phenomenon combined with various linguistic mechanisms that help to illustrate the same language features mentally and physically. Thus, except for the mentioned mental space approach that can help prove the viewpoint phenomena in construction and discourse, other mechanisms like metonymy, metaphorical blends, and image schema allow people to present their viewpoint according to various situations.

The focus on metonymy in the language is associated with a cognitive mechanism in cognitive linguistics that deals with ubiquitous traits of daily speech [26]. Hence, Kock defined that with the help of the trope of metaphor, which derives its meaning from nearby and familiar objects, we can understand things that aren't given their proper names. [27]. Take the following sentences as an example; we can see how they show people's viewpoints using metonymic terms.

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Example:
1.    This song is a dream.
2.    The song is like a dream.
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In the example, the song and dream do not have a direct relationship in the sentences. However, according to Kövecses, if a phrase may link two elements X and Y by using the phrase "X is like Y," the relation is metaphoric; if not, it is metonymic. A phrase can identify two things beyond their apparent differences in referential value. [26]. Thus, a metaphor that appears in the sentence makes a special connection among entities [27]. Therefore, the decision to use a specific metonymy in a context shows a relation between two objects, and the context indicates only one domain. Still, it links two separate things as the target domain. For example, in the sentence "all hands on deck," the "hand" represents "sailors."

3.2.2. Metaphorical Blend

When dealing with language construction and discourse analysis, metaphor is a linguistic phenomenon that cannot be ignored. The researchers like Lakoff, Johnson, Fauconnier, and Turner all worked on the study of metaphorical approaches to examine the linguistics being used in real or contextual situations [22]. Within this field, the commonly discussed topics in metaphor are "source domains," "target domains," "invariance," and "mapping" in linguistic and conceptual phenomena [29]. The two domains of source and target domain are constructed as stable and systematic in metaphor expression. The sentence "the committee has kept me in the dark about this matter" indicated that sentence construction from the "source" domain is worked as a description of the "target" domain for comprehension. Therefore, a mapping relationship exists in the phrase "in the dark" between the source target and the conceptual metaphor. The experienced knowledge structure is stored in our long-term memory, which helps us link different elements to construct viewpoints as a metaphor [29-30].

However, in the cognitive organization, the basic unit is the "mental space," not the "source and target domain." Since the "mental space" is "a partial and temporary representational structure which speakers construct when thinking or talking about a perceived, imagined, past, present, or future situation" [29]. Hence, the domains lay in the mental spaces to represent special situations structured by given domains. In short, a particular domain with a general and stable knowledge structure was included in the short-term construction of mental space.

4. Conclusion

This paper reflects theoretical approaches to illustrate the viewpoint phenomena in construction and discourse. Viewpoint phenomena as a linguistic feature combined language structures with human cognition to represent multiple viewpoints in various situations. Humbold considered language and thought as two different perspectives. On the other hand, Saussure saw language as a self-contained system with content organization and classification. While according to the latest research, language has to work with real-world information to express the property of thought.

Since cognitive model contains various aspects that can be used to express the language features and thoughts, such as metaphor, gesture, constructions, and discourse. These models functioned uniquely to illustrate why and how people use specific languages to receive and deliver information. Thus, combined with the mental space and discourse space approach, this paper figured out that identifying people's perspectives and viewpoints by connecting psychological or neural approaches is necessary for supporting why people say or think so. And there are still many other more aspects that will influence people's minds and speech; thus, further research, such as gestures or visual images, may also consider the factors that will affect people's viewpoints.

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