Embodied Cognition and Metaphorical Structuring in Jeet Kune Do: An Interdisciplinary Analysis of Movement, Language, and Brain

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Abstract

This study explores the interdisciplinary nexus between Jeet Kune Do (JKD), Bruce Lee's martial art emphasizing adaptability and embodied fluidity, and cognitive linguistics, particularly embodied cognition and conceptual metaphor theory. It argues that JKD's core principles mirror the sensorimotor grounding and dynamic conceptualization central to linguistic meaning-making. Employing qualitative theoretical analysis, we synthesized JKD philosophy and cognitive linguistic frameworks. Primary sources included foundational JKD texts and cognitive linguistics literature (e.g., Conceptual Metaphor Theory). Analysis focused on adaptability, embodiment, metaphor (e.g., "be like water"), and categorization across both domains. Key convergences emerged: (1) JKD's rejection of rigid forms aligns with cognitive linguistics' fluid categorization; (2) "Be like water" exemplifies conceptual metaphors structuring physical/abstract thought; (3) JKD's real-time perception-action cycles embody cognitive simulation processes. These reveal shared mechanisms of context-sensitive adaptability grounded in bodily experience. JKD provides a naturalistic model of embodied cognition, demonstrating how movement practices enact conceptual metaphors. This synergy suggests applications in martial arts pedagogy (metaphor-enhanced training) and cognitive science (studying predictive coding). The study underscores the co-constitution of movement and language in adaptive cognition.

Keywords: Jeet Kune Do, Embodied cognition, Conceptual metaphor, Cognitive linguistics, Adaptability

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