

# 英语中借代现象的认知研究

Cognitive Study of Metonymy in English

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# Abstract

This book tends to prove that language is not an autonomous system and various linguistic phenomena have their cognitive motivations through cognitive analysis of metonymy in English language. Language is the outcome of people's cognitive activity. Language structures and language rules are reflections of cognitive principles. This is the basic linguistic view of cognitive linguistics.

The basic method employed by this study is the descriptive one. This kind of method does not interfere with the research object and just records what is observed. On the basis of some evidences, assumptions are put forward as the pre-

condition of further investigation. Through analyzing various aspects of the research object, the conclusion is reached. From the epistemological perspective, the research activity of this study fits in the scientific recognizing process: from the concrete to the abstract, and returning to the concrete again.

This book consists of five parts all together. Chapter 1 is the introduction. It presents the theoretical background, writing intention, methodology, data sources and overall structure of this study.

Chapter 2 starts from discussing the figurative metonymy. Then it explains the necessity of investigating this linguistic phenomenon from cognitive perspective. The history of metonymy can be traced back to Aristotle. Since then, metonymy has always been the topic of rhetoric. In rhetorists' eyes, metonymy is the skillful use of language and is formed by violating certain grammatical rules. It is the deviation of the use of language, and is just a linguistic device to achieve expressive effects. So metonymy is treated as poetic language. But many instances of metonymy prove that it is not the case. The occurrence of metonymic relations has close relationship with people's experience in everyday life.

The metonymic relations are systematic, but not arbitrary. And the use of metonymy reflects people's way of understanding things. The rhetoric view of metonymy cannot explain these phenomena. It is necessary to explore the nature of metonymy from cognitive approach.

Chapter 3 focuses on the investigation of the cognitive motivation of metonymy. Traditionally, metonymy is defined as the substitution of names. But some instances of metonymy counter this view. Through analyzing the nature of language, we find that metonymy is to use one concept to substitute another concept. This is the reflection of people's cognitive ability – reference point ability (Langacker, 1999: 171). Langacker states that people's attention can be directed from one entity to another entity. This process operates on the conceptual level as well. People have the cognitive ability of accessing one concept (vehicle concept) via another concept (target concept). This kind of reference point ability is fundamental and ubiquitous in people's moment – to – moment experience. Metonymy in language is the reflection of this way of cognition. The nature of metonymy is to use one concept to evoke another concept instead of using one



name to substitute another name. For the most part, however, this kind of ability remains below the threshold of explicit attention.

Why the concept of one entity can be used to evoke the conception of another entity without causing confusion? Psychological studies show that there are three factors influencing the successful occurrence of metonymy in language. The first factor is the holistic feature of people's ICMs in cognition. Psychological experiments show that people's perception of entities or organism possesses holistic feature. ICM is people's basic tool of recognizing the world. It is the cluster of people's mental representations of various experiences. The understanding of any semantic unit cannot be separated from relevant knowledge of certain field. ICMs cover these knowledge. So elements of one ICM have fixed connections. This kind of connection is the "contiguity" discussed by scholars concerning metonymy. One ICM is a psychological whole. The whole ICM is easier to be processed and remembered than parts of it. Secondly, the Activation Spreading Model states that in people's memory system the activation tends to spread through a network from the presented concept to the

associated concept. Another important reason is the degree of salience. According to cognitive psychology, the salient entity is easier to be perceived and possess higher accessibility in psychology than the less salient one. There are some cognitive factors governing the salience of concepts, and there are subjective factors as well. These findings can account for the cognitive motivation of metonymy. Since two concepts involved in metonymy share one ICM, the presence of the vehicle concept can evoke the target concept. The vehicle concept is chosen as reference point to access the target concept because the former is more salient than the latter in cognition. All these cognitive and psychological factors make a distinctive mode of cognition ( 沈家煊, 1999:4 ). For the sake of convenience, we call it metonymic mode. Metonymy in language is the reflection of this kind of cognitive mode. Two basic metonymic relations are also analyzed within the frame of ICM.

Chapter 4 discusses various metonymic phenomena in language. Metonymic mode operates widely in the construction of language, both diachronically and synchronically. It influences people's use of language on semantic, grammatical

and pragmatic levels. Figurative metonymy is just one of various linguistic manifestations of metonymic mode. Many linguistic phenomena possess metonymic nature. Polysemy is a common phenomenon in language. In many cases, the formation of polysemy is through metonymic process. On the semantic level, both every language and idiomatic expressions have metonymic relations. On the grammatical level, the stative verbs can be used in imperative sentence and the nouns can be used as verbs metonymically. It is the same to pragmatic effect. One speech act can be used to stand for another speech act metonymically. These linguistic phenomena share the common nature with the figurative metonymy; all of them are linguistic manifestations of metonymic mode of thinking. These findings prove the function of cognition in language. At the same time, conventional and novel metonymies are differentiated from cognitive perspective.

Chapter 5 is the conclusion. Drawing all the threads together, we say that metonymy in language is the reflection of people's metonymic mode of thinking. This way of cognition influences people's use of language directly. So language is not an autonomous system, and linguistic phenomena have

their cognitive motivations. At the same time, this book gives new explanations to some linguistic phenomena. So the research is significant for the study of both cognition and language.

## 内容摘要

本书以认知语言学的语言观为其基本理论导向,旨在通过对英语语言中借代现象认知理据的分析,证明语言不是一个自足的体系,语言结构和语言规律是人类认知活动的反映。

本研究主要采用描述性研究方法,即不干预研究对象,在已有材料基础上进行研究,而后运用其研究结果来分析更多同性质的研究对象,以期进一步论证其结果。从认识论的角度,本文的研究过程符合从具体到抽象,再从抽象到具体的辩证的认识过程。

本书共分五部分。第一章为导论。主要包括文章的理论导向、写作意图、研究方法、语料来源及基本结构。

第二章主要讨论修辞性借代。借代一直是修辞学家的研究课题,其渊源可追溯至亚里士多德。从修辞学的角度,借代是语言的技巧性应用,为了追求某种表达效果而故意偏离语言常规的使用规则。但语言中诸多的借代例子表明,借代与人们的日常经验密切相关;借代关系具有一定的规律性而非任意的;借代的使用往往是人们理解事物的一种方式。对于借代的上述特点,传统的借代理论便显得捉襟见肘。因此,对借代的本质进行认知性分析,探寻其发生理据是必要的。

第三章重点分析借代的认知理据。首先,借代中进行替换的是概念而非名称。这是人们认知能力的体现。兰盖克(1999: 171)指出:人们具有被称为指称点现象的认知方式,即思维从一个概念导向另一个概念。人们往往用一个概念为参照点来接近另一概念。这种基本认知方式的作用过程常常不为人们所意识到。在借代中,人们使用一个概念(工具概念)来接近另一个概念(目标概念),正是这种认知方式的反映。两个概念之所以能形成借代关系源于人们心理的某些特征。第一是因为人们大脑中的 ICM 具有心理上的整体性。ICM 是某一方面各种经验心理表征的集合,它是人们认知世界的基本途径,易被整体感知。因此其中一个因素的激活可带动整个认知

模式。第二是人们的记忆系统的激活扩散模型。在记忆储存的网络中,一个概念的激发会沿着知识网络传至下一个相邻的概念。第三是心理显著度问题。突显度高的实体概念更容易被感知、被加工,具有更高的心理可及性。在认知因素之外,还有一些主观因素,如交际的需求也同样影响概念的突显程度。通过这些分析可得知借代的认知理据。由于工具概念较目标概念显著度高,因而更容易被感知,在感知时较易被选作参照点。因为两个概念共存于一个 ICM,因此一个概念的激活会带动另一个概念的激活。这是借代产生的根本原因。所有这些认知的、心理的因素形成了一种具有特色的认知方式(沈家煊,1999:4)。为了叙述方便,我们称之为借代模式。语言中的借代正是这种认知方式的体现。本章还以 ICM 为基本框架分析了两种最基本的借代关系。

第四章主要探讨语言中的各种借代现象。借代模式广泛地影响着语言的使用,既有历时性的,也有共时性的。修辞性借代只是其体现方式之一。这种认知模式在语义、语法、语用等各个层面影响语言的运作。例如一词多义现象,词类活用现象,间接言语行为现象等。它们在本质上同修辞性借代是相同的,都是人们借代认知方式的体现。这进一步证明了人们认知活动对语言的影响。

同时,从认知的角度分析了习惯性借代和创新性借代的区别。

第五章是本书的结论部分。总而言之,我们可以说,修辞性借代不仅是一种语言技巧,更是人们认知方式的反映。这种认知方式直接地影响着语言的应用,这证明了认知与语言的关系。语言不是一个自足的体系,它受认知规律支配,语言现象都有其认知理据。此项研究对于了解认知规律及语言本质都具有积极意义。



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