

An Experimental Pragmatic
Study of the Spatial Demonstratives

空间指示语的 实验语用学研究

徐学平 著

中国社会科学出版社

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摘 要

本书从认知—体验视角研究汉语空间指示语“这”、“那”、“这里”、“那里”在具体情境中的使用,即它们的外指用法。以往的研究过多关注内指用法,而对貌似简单的外指用法忽视甚多。此外,以往对空间指示语的语义解释主要根据客观主义的意义观,即空间距离观,因此人们通常想当然地认为指示语的近指和远指形式分别指别较近和较远的实体或者处所。而且人们普遍认为,在具体情境中说话人对远近指示语的选择主要依赖于所指物与说话人之间物理距离的相对远近。本研究挑战这些传统观点,并且提出心理空间建构观,其基本假设是:决定说话人选择远近指示语的真正因素是心理距离,不是相对物理距离。本研究的理论基础是当代认知语言学的一些重要原则和理论,即经验现实主义(Lakoff 1987; Lakoff and Johnson 1999),背景理论(Langacker 1985, 1987),心理空间理论(Fauconnier 1985)和理想认知模式理论(Lakoff 1987)。这些理论的核心思想是,语言与现实之间的联系是以具有认知能力的人为中介的;语言并不直接反映客观现实世界,而是对人类所感知体验的现实世界的反映;意义根本上是体验性的。为了揭示说话人在具体情境中如何选用空间指示语,本研究针对一系列可能影响远近指示语选择的因素进行了一系列的实验。最终目标是建立一个理论框架来解释远近指示语在情境中的使用。

鉴于研究的取向是语言产出而非语言理解,研究的目标是探索情境中影响空间指示语选择的因素,实验所采用的方法主要是言语引发。为实验创设的情境主要有两种,即真实情境和模拟情境。在真实情境中进行的实验是完成几个桌面引发任务,研究涉及的因素有(1)所指物与说话人之间的相对距离、(2)指别方式、(3)所指物的可见性。在模拟情境中开展的实验是完成由图片组成的几个话语完型任务,研究的因

素包括(1)所指物的大小、(2)说话人对所指物的正负情感倾向、(3)指别两个实体的顺序、(4)言者领地与听者领地的区分。

为了探索空间距离与空间指示语之间的关系的本质,在实验中我们对所指物与说话人之间的空间关系进行了两种设计。一种是让说话人以不同指别方式去指别远近距离不同的所指物。其目的是既检验说话人是否一定使用远近指示语形式去指别空间距离相对远近的所指物,也检验指示语的选择是否受指别方式的影响。另一种设计是让说话人去指别两个远近距离相同的所指物,而且所指物还具有种种对照性的特征,如大与小、可见与不可见、言者领地与听者领地、正情感与负情感、先指别与后指别。其目的是既检验说话人是否一定使用相同的指示语形式去指别等距的所指物,也检验指示语的选择是否受其它因素的影响。换言之,这两种设计不仅能检验空间距离是否是决定远近指示语选择的绝对因素,而且有助于揭示出决定指示语选择的真正因素。

实验结果并不支持传统观点,同时强有力地证明远近指示语的选择不是依赖于所指物与说话人之间的物理距离,而是依赖于说话人的心理距离。根据实验结果和认知—体验意义观,首先,本研究探索性地建立了一个关于汉语空间指示语情境用法的理论框架。其中心思想与经验现实主义和认知语言学的基本原则相一致。具体地说,我们认为,既然语言并不直接对应外部世界,指示语的远近形式同样也不直接对应物理距离的远近。也就是说,说话人对指示语远近形式的选择并不依赖具体的空间距离。其次,既然意义从根本上说源于生活体验,同时又始终受到经验本身的制约,那么指示语的意义内部所编码的远近之分与人类感知对远近空间的切分是相联系的。人类感知对空间做远近切分是在生存压力之下通过劳动和交际长期演变的结果。第三,语言与现实之间的联系以人类的感知和认知系统为中介;意义指的是存在于概念化的世界之中的东西。因此,空间指示语所表示的远近之意源于能构建心理空间而且具有意象图式结构的指示语理想认知模式(ICM of deixis)。指示语所指物通过说话人的主观构建,或者处于心理空间中的某一心理界线之内,或者处于心理空间的某一心理界线之外。之内的就用近指形式来指别,之外的则用远指形式来指别。

本研究对空间指示语以及整个指示现象有了新的见解。传统的空间

距离观常常认为指示中心是可触及的说话人所处的固定地点，而心理空间建构观则把指示中心定义为心理空间中的潜在说话人的视角。指示中心本质上是抽象的、象征性的，因而它可以进行心理转移。此外，传统的空间距离观认为空间指示语切分具体空间，而心理空间建构观则主张空间指示语表征概念化的空间领域，因而它们表示的是抽象的象征空间。再者，传统观点过多强调指示语的内指和外指用法之别，而心理空间建构观则认为这两种用法实际上以同样的方式运作，即人们使用指示语去表征由指示语理想认知模式所构建的、心理空间中所概念化的事物。

本研究采用认知—体验视角不仅揭示了空间距离观在解释空间指示语的语义时所表现出的不足和不严密性，而且拓宽了研究指示现象的方法，从理论上加深了对指示现象的认识。

关键词：空间指示语、认知-体验视角、指示语理想认知模式、心理空间、心理距离、主观性

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Abstract

This dissertation investigates the situational use of Chinese spatial demonstratives *zhe* (这), *na* (那), *zheli* (这里) and *nali* (那里) from a cognitive-experiential point of view. Previous studies pay too much attention to the endophoric use of demonstratives and comparatively overlook the situational/exophoric use which seems to be very simple. In addition, the previous explanation of the semantics of spatial demonstratives rests too much on the objectivist view of meaning, namely the spatialist view. Therefore, it is often taken for granted that the proximal and distal demonstrative forms refer respectively to close and distant entities or locations. And it is commonly accepted that the speaker's choice of proximal or distal forms mainly depends on the physical distance of the entity vis-à-vis the speaker. The present study challenges the traditional view and proposes the mental space building view, the basic hypothesis of which is that what really determines the speaker's choice of proximal or distal forms is psychological distance rather than relative physical distance. This study is theoretically grounded on those important principles or theories of modern cognitive linguistics, such as the experiential realism (Lakoff 1987; Lakoff and Johnson 1999), the ground theory (Langacker 1985, 1987), the mental space theory (Fauconnier 1985), and the theory of idealized cognitive models (ICMs) (Lakoff 1987). The basic ideas of these theories are briefly summarized as follows: The association between language and reality is mediated by human beings who have cognitive abilities; language does not reflect straightforwardly the objective world, instead language is a representation of the world perceived and experienced by humans; meaning is fundamentally embodied. In order to reveal how the speaker makes the choice of proximal and

distal demonstratives in specific situations, this study has explored, by conducting a series of experiments, a series of factors which may influence the choice of demonstratives. The ultimate goal is to establish a theoretical framework which can explain the situational use of proximal and distal demonstratives.

Since this study is production-orientated rather than comprehension-orientated and aims at exploring the factors influencing the choice of demonstratives in situations, the method adopted in the experiments is chiefly elicitation. Two main types of situations have been created in order to carry out the experiments, namely, real situations and simulated situations. In the real situations, several tabletop elicitation tasks are performed to examine the factors such as the relative distances of the entities vis-à-vis the speaker, the modes of pointing at the entities, and the visibility of the entities. In the simulated situations, a few discourse completion tasks (DCT), which consist of sets of pictures, are accomplished to explore the factors such as the sizes of the entities, the speaker's emotional preference toward the entities, the sequence of mentioning two entities, and the distinction of the speaker's territory and the addressee's territory.

In order to find out the nature of the relationship between spatial distance and spatial demonstratives, the present study carries out two types of experimental design in regard to the spatial relationship between the speaker and the referent. One type is to get the speaker to refer to some referents at different distances by means of different modes of pointing actions. This type of design aims to test whether or not the speaker is sure to employ the proximal and the distal forms to refer to the close and distant referents respectively and also test whether or not the choice of demonstrative forms is influenced by the modes of pointing. The other type of design is to get the speaker to refer to two referents at equal distance from the speaker. And the two referents contrast with each other in some feature, for example, large vs. small, visible vs. invisible, speaker territory vs. addressee territory, positive emotion vs. negative emotion, and earlier mention vs. later mention. The second type of design aims to

test whether or not the speaker is sure to employ the same demonstrative form to refer to the two referents of equal distance and also test whether or not the choice of demonstratives is influenced by other factors. In other words, the two types of design not only can verify whether spatial distance is the absolute factor determining the choice of demonstrative forms but also help to reveal the real fundamental factor determining the choice of demonstratives.

The results of all the experiments do not support the traditional view. In the meanwhile, they prove forcefully that the choice of demonstratives depends on the speaker's psychological distance rather than the physical distance of the entities vis-à-vis the speaker. Based on the results of the experiments and the cognitive-experiential view of meaning, a theoretical framework of the production of the Chinese demonstratives in situational use is established tentatively. The main idea of the framework is consistent with the basic principles of experiential realism and cognitive linguistics. Specifically speaking, since language does not directly refer to the outside world, the proximal-distal distinction of demonstratives does not straightforwardly refer to the near-far distinction of physical distance, either. The speaker's choice of proximal or distal forms does not depend on concrete spatial distance. Secondly, since meaning is fundamentally embodied and also constantly constrained by the nature of embodied experience, the proximal-distal meaning distinction encoded by demonstratives should be connected to the perceptual demarcation of near-far space. And human's perceptual demarcation of near-far space should arise evolutionarily from human labour and communication under the pressure of survival. Thirdly, the association between language and reality is mediated by human perceptual and cognitive mechanism; meaning refers to what is represented in the conceptualized world. In this sense, the proximal-distal meaning distinction arises from the ICM of deixis which structures a mental space and exhibits image-schematic structure. The referents of demonstratives are subjectively constructed by the speaker to be within or outside a certain psychological boundary in the mental space. Those that are located within the psychological boundary are referred to with the proximal form and those that are located outside are re-

ferred to with the distal form.

The present study sheds new light on the research of demonstratives as well as the deictic phenomenon as a whole. Contrary to the traditional spatialist view which often regards the deictic center as the fixed place occupied by the tangible speaker, the mental space building view defines it as the point of view of the potential speaker in the mental space. It is abstract and symbolic in nature and as a result it can be mentally shifted. In addition, contrary to the traditional spatialist view which holds that spatial demonstratives demarcate concrete spatial zones, the mental space building view maintains that spatial demonstratives represent the conceptualized spatial zones and therefore they mark abstract and symbolic spaces. Moreover, different from the traditional view which excessively emphasizes the distinction between the exophoric use and the endophoric use of deictic expressions, the mental space building view holds that the two types of use actually work in the same manner, that is, people employ deictic expressions to represent what are conceptualized in the mental space structured by the deictic ICM.

This study in a cognitive-experiential perspective not only reveals the insufficiency and impreciseness of the spatialist view of spatial demonstratives but also expands the research approaches for the study of deixis and theoretically deepens the understanding of deixis.

Key words: spatial demonstratives; cognitive-experiential perspective; ICM of deixis; mental space; psychological distance; subjectivity

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Contents

Chapter 1 Introduction	(1)
1.1 The preliminary	(1)
1.2 The special status of demonstratives in language	(3)
1.3 The rationale for this study	(4)
1.4 The key research questions of this study	(7)
1.5 The significance of this study	(8)
1.6 The organization of the thesis	(9)
Chapter 2 Literature Review	(11)
2.1 Introduction	(11)
2.2 Studies of demonstratives in the philosophic approach	(12)
2.3 Studies of demonstratives in the pragmatic approach	(17)
2.4 Studies of demonstratives in the discourse analysis approach	(21)
2.5 Studies of demonstratives in the linguistic approach	(29)
2.6 Studies of demonstratives in the cognitive approach	(33)
2.7 A critique of the previous analysis of deixis and demonstratives	(41)
2.8 Summary	(44)
Chapter 3 Theoretical Foundations and Research Framework	(45)
3.1 Introduction	(45)
3.2 Theoretical Foundations	(45)
3.3 Research framework	(71)

Chapter 4 Experiment 1: Relationship between Distances and Modes of Pointing and the Choice of Demonstratives	(80)
4.1 Introduction	(80)
4.2 Target of research	(81)
4.3 Hypothesis	(81)
4.4 Method	(82)
4.5 Results	(86)
4.6 Discussion	(93)
Chapter 5 Experiment 2: Relationship between Visibility and the Choice of Demonstratives	(100)
5.1 Introduction	(100)
5.2 Target of research	(101)
5.3 Hypothesis	(101)
5.4 Method	(102)
5.5 Results	(103)
5.6 Discussion	(105)
Chapter 6 Experiment 3: Relationship between Size and the Choice of Demonstratives	(109)
6.1 Introduction	(109)
6.2 Target of research	(109)
6.3 Hypothesis	(110)
6.4 Method	(110)
6.5 Results	(116)
6.6 Discussion	(124)
Chapter 7 Experiment 4: Relationship between Emotions and the Choice of Demonstratives	(127)
7.1 Introduction	(127)
7.2 Target of research	(128)
7.3 Hypothesis	(128)
7.4 Method	(129)

7.5	Results	(132)
7.6	Discussion	(139)
Chapter 8 Experiment 5: Relationship between the Sequence		
	and the Choice of Demonstratives	(144)
8.1	Introduction	(144)
8.2	Target of research	(145)
8.3	Hypothesis	(145)
8.4	Method	(146)
8.5	Results	(146)
8.6	Discussion	(153)
Chapter 9 Experiment 6: Relationship between Speaker's		
	or Addressee's Territory and the Choice of	
	Demonstratives	(157)
9.1	Introduction	(157)
9.2	Target of research	(159)
9.3	Hypothesis	(159)
9.4	Method	(160)
9.5	Results	(162)
9.6	Discussion	(168)
Chapter 10 General Discussion		
	(171)	
10.1	Introduction	(171)
10.2	The factors influencing the speaker's choice of spatial demonstratives	(171)
10.3	The nature of the relationship between distance and spatial demonstratives	(174)
10.4	A theoretical framework for the situational use of spatial demonstratives	(175)
10.5	The physio-psychological bases for the mental space building view	(182)
10.6	The advantages of the mental space building view of spatial demonstratives	(187)

10.7	Implications for the relationship between cognition, language and reality	(188)
Chapter 11	Conclusions, Limitations, and Suggestions for Future Research	(194)
11.1	Introduction	(194)
11.2	Conclusions	(194)
11.3	Limitations	(197)
11.4	Suggestions for future research	(199)
Appendix A	The Results of DCT (A) (with the Instruction: Fill in the blank with one word)	(202)
Appendix B	The Results of DCT (B) (with the Instruction: Fill in the blank with <i>zhe</i> or <i>na</i>)	(209)
Appendix C	The Results of Experiment 1	(216)
Appendix D	The Results of Experiment 2	(225)
Appendix E	Tasks about the Size and the Sequence	(227)
Appendix F	Tasks about Territories	(233)
Appendix G	Tasks about the Emotions and the Sequence	(238)
References	(243)