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语言的主观性

——对英语IF条件句构式多义性的认知研究

Language Subjectivity:
A Cognitive Study of the Diversification of the English IF-Conditional Construction

徐李洁 著

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总序

湖南科技大学外国语学院一批中青年教师刻苦攻博，学有所成，其博士论文展现了他们在各自学术领域的研究成果。湖南科技大学以及外国语学院决定把他们的作品汇编成“湖南科技大学英语语言文学学术专著系列”丛书出版，这是繁荣学术研究、提高学术水平的一个重要举措，也是为我国的人文学科学术发展作出的贡献，值得庆贺。

我读这些博士论文最大的感受是：作者都比较注意吸收国内外同行的相关的新思想、新理论，注意研究方法，特别是注意跟上研究范式的转换，所以论文中新意不少。该系列现在出版的这几本，都明显地表现出这一长处和特点。这也许是作者受到正规的学位训练和当代人文学科研究方法的熏陶的结果。我认为，作为博士的培养，这是极为重要的，是这些博士们得以成长的重要学术养分，也是他们今后学术发展的重要基础。

上世纪50年代以来，人文学科研究有了迅猛的发展。文学、语言学的研究同其他一些人文学科一样，着重解释性取向的研究，努力探索文学现象和语言现象表层背后的机理。这是人文学科研究范式的一次重大的转换。对这些现象的机理进行解释性研究的路子是多方面的。无论是什么路子、什么角度，都离不开两个方面：一、文学/语言的本体；二、文学作品/语言的生成者和接收者以及围绕着他们而同该产品有关的各种各样关系的总和。对于一项具体研究来说，这两个方面的研究是会有侧重的，例如着重文学或语言文本的本体、着重生产者/接受者、着重文本产生的社会推动力、着重文本的社会功能，等等；但是，文本总是人生产和使用的，文本各种各样的特点总是直接或间接折射出使用者明显或

隐蔽的认知特征和心态活动以及相关环境。这样，多方面的路子集中到一点：文学/语言学的研究，特别是解释性的研究，不能只顾作品不顾人；就是着重文本本体研究的，也是要以人为视角，才不会成为一堆冷冰冰的素材。这些博士论文的研究令我们耳目一新，注意到了研究范式的这一转换也许是一个重要的原因。

人文学科的研究强烈地受着世界观的影响。对世界怎样看直接影响到对文学和语言怎样看，从而折射到我们的研究中来，成为研究的方法论。

上世纪四五十年代出现的系统科学给我们提供了观察世界的一种新视角。但是当时的认识还受机械论、还原论的影响，所以在上个世纪六七十年代发展起来的第一代系统科学的研究范式还明显地表现出这样的倾向。文学研究、语言学研究中的某些机械论、还原论的倾向不能说同这样的认识毫无关系。随着系统论研究的深入，协同论、耗散结构理论、突变论给我们展示了一个更为复杂的世界的新图景；复杂性理论、非线性理论成为观察世界的一种新思维。部分地由于受复杂性理论的影响，系统科学研究出现了范式的转换，其多元的范式包括连通主义、新行为主义、复杂系统理论、动力系统理论等。当代认知科学研究扩展到心理语言与神经语言的转换、人的意识生成机制、大脑对内外世界的解释性假定性模型、意识性体验、心身互动关系等重要的前沿问题。它们共同的理论假设是：认知是涉身的、情境化的、发展的、是涉及复杂的脑神经动力系统的。当将人类的大脑及认知系统看作复杂系统来研究的时候，认知过程就被看作是动态的、生成的、开放的、表现出自组织的特性，而不是由一部分一部分简单相加构成的，是不可以还原为物理过程的。

这些研究的成果直接或间接地深刻影响着当前的人文学科的研究，明显地或潜移默化地成为人们思考问题的方法论。既然认知过程是动态的、生成的、开放的、表现出自组织的特性，人们大脑中的知识的形成和发展也必然表现出这样的特性；从研究的方法论来说，也就必然要体现生成整体论的方法论。大体说来，最重要是把整体性作为基本原则彻底贯彻下来，以整体、动态、生成的观念把握人类知识的形成、变化和

发展。用这样的观点和方法来观察文学现象、语言现象，就会把文学文本、语言文本看成动态生成的、丰富生动的、由多方面作用力形成的产物；把这些文本的使用者的大脑看成是涉身的、情境化的、发展的，因而他们对文本的影响也是情景化的、复杂的；把这些文本产生的周围环境看成是动态的、开放的，因而其影响也会是多方面的。

以生成整体论作为文学作品和语言研究的方法论是个大问题，值得我们关注。我这个简短的序只是把问题提出来，供大家参考。我希望我们做文学、语言学研究的博士研究生朋友们充分注意这个重要的学术倾向。也许可以这样期待：谁能较早地在自己的研究中恰当地、灵活地、充分地把握体现生成整体论思想的研究方法论，谁就有可能较早地在自己的研究中做出新的突破。

随着湖南科技大学外国语学院攻读博士学位并学有所成的人越来越多，这套丛书必然越来越充实。我期待有更多更好的著作问世。

徐盛桓谨识

2007年3月29日于重庆

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序

自然语言是大自然赐给人类最珍贵的礼物，是人类物种身份最重要的标志。没有我们这个地球，人类或许会出现在另外一个星球上；但是没有语言，人类就不称其为人类，现代人这个物种就会随之消失。

语言激发并促进了人的思维、记忆和交流，促进了人类物质文明和精神文明的创造和发展，同时也促进了人类文明的积累和传承。因此，我们可以说，语言催生了现代人，语言造就了现代文明。

人类创造了语言，语言同时也塑造了人类。从这个意义上说，研究语言是人类的自我发现和自我认识。研究语言的过程就是人类发现自我、认识自我的过程。只要人类与语言共存，也许这个自我发现、自我认识的过程就只会有起点，而无终点。

我的学生徐李洁所完成的博士论文《语言的主观性：对英语 IF 条件句构式多义性的认知研究》代表了人类通过研究语言进而认识自我的一种努力。徐李洁是我的得意门生，眼前的《语言的主观性：对英语IF条件句构式多义性的认知研究》，则是她磨勘淬砺、仰屋笔耕三年之后的得意之作。得意之得意，雕镌研磨出了一部好著作。

语言的主观性是话语人在认知、感情、立场等方面留下的自我印记，这种印记往往体现为句子结构的多义性。徐李洁的著作通过观察英语IF条件句构式呈现的多义性，深入研究了语言的主观性，深刻阐释了主观性在句式结构变化中的作用以及主观化的生成机制，从而为我们认识自然语言的语法结构与话语人的认知结构之间的关系提供了一种科学

内容提要

语言的主观性（subjectivity）是指说话人在说出一段话语时会表明自己对这段话语的态度，从而在话语中留下自我的印记。Lyons (1995：337) 指出：“主观性指的是这样一种表现自我的性质，作为意识的主体（subject）、或施事的主体的性质，其中意识包括认知、感情和感觉。主观化（subjectivisation）就是语言为体现主观性而形成的相应的结构形式和经历的演变过程。本书的观点认为，主观性是句子结构形成和变化的重要契机。在交际过程中，说话者为了表达他/她自己的主观态度、情感和立场，会对原有的典型句子结构进行调整，使得典型句子结构发生变化，造成句子结构的多义性现象。

本书采用了Traugott（1986，1989，1991，1995）提出的主观化理论。这一理论认为主观化过程是一个渐变过程，可以表现在互相联系的多个方面。本书以英语IF条件句构式的多义性的建构为例，阐释主观性在句式结构变化中的作用和主观化的生成机制。我们重点研究事理（content）、认识（epistemic）和言语行为（speech act）条件句之间的关系和变化过程。与此同时，我们在认知、心理和语言结构的基础上，建立一套解释主观化过程的“四维连续统”分析模式，说明主观性动因如何诱发新的结构的产生，而相对独立的语法系统又是如何制约新的结构的扩展。

本书第一章为绪言部分，首先对本书探讨的 IF 条件句的范围进行限定，提出本书将要回答的三个问题：1）事理、认识和言语行为条件句之间是什么关系；2）主观性是如何作用于条件句典型构式的扩展的；3）不同域的条件句构式有哪些特点。另外该章还简要说明了本书研究的

方法以及本书的篇章结构。第二章简要回顾以往研究 IF 条件句构式所提出的不同理论模式和分类，重点介绍 Sweetser 的分类。第三章介绍研究采用的理论和方法。在这一章里，我们首先简述主观性和主观化理论的发展和研究焦点；重点介绍两个代表人物 Langacker 和 Traugott 的观点，并根据 Traugott 的理论，在认知、心理和语言结构的基础上建立一个“四维连续统”分析模式，以阐释 IF 条件句构式多义性的建构过程。第四章对典型 IF 条件句进行详细的分析，确立它在逻辑、语义、句法和语用这四方面的典型特征。在第五章和第六章，我们运用“四维连续统”这一分析模式，分别对认识条件句和言语行为条件句的逻辑、语义、句法和语用特征进行分析，验证分析模式所指出的主观化演变过程。在第七章中，我们对贯穿全书的观点进行总结，回答绪言部分提出的三个问题，阐述该项研究的理论意义，并指出今后的研究方向。

Foreword

Subjectivity is identified as the expression of self and the representation of a speaker's (or, more generally, a locutionary agent's) perspective or point of view in discourse. In turn, subjectivisation refers to the structures and strategies that languages evolve in the linguistic realization of subjectivity or to the relevant processes of linguistic evolution themselves. Cognitive linguistics holds that, in the course of perceiving the world, the speaker's/ conceptulizer's attitudes, beliefs and emotions will inevitably permeate and affect the process and product of the interpretation of events, states of affairs and their relations. This study holds a view that subjectivity is an important motivation to the formation and development of syntactic structures. In the course of communication, the speaker may intentionally modify the linguistic structures for the purpose of expressiveness and informativeness, which results in the alternation and diversification of the prototypical syntactic constructions. The theoretical framework adopted for this study is developed by Traugott (1986,1989,1991,1995), who argues that subjectivisation is a gradual phenomenon which can operate at separated processes involving correlated diachronic continua.

The present study focuses on the relationship and development of the English if-conditional construction in three domains, namely, content, epistemic and speech-act domains. We also establish a set of analytical model of "four-dimensional correlated continua of subjectivisation" on the basis of cognitive, psychological and linguistic foundations with an attempt to show the role of subjectivity in the development of syntactic structures and the generative mechanism of subjectivisation.

Chapter 1, Introduction, first defines the scope of the research on

the if-conditional construction. It then presents three questions for the research: 1) How are the content, epistemic and speech-act conditionals related to each other? 2) How does subjectivity motivate the extension of the construction? 3) What are the specific features of the construction in each of the three domains? In addition, this chapter gives a brief introduction of the methodology and the structure of the study. In Chapter 2, we give a brief introduction of previous approaches and classifications of the English if-conditionals, with an emphasis on the classification conducted by Sweetser. Chapter 3 introduces the theoretical apparatus and the analytical model that we are going to employ for the analysis in the subsequent chapters. We first look briefly at the evolution of the subjectivity and subjectivisation theory, focusing on the presentation of two representative views by Langacker and Traugott. Following Traugott's view, we establish a set of analytical model of "four-dimensional correlated *continua of subjectivisation*" *on the basis of cognitive, psychological and* linguistic foundations and elaborate on the process of the diversification of the if-conditional construction. Chapter 4 makes a thorough investigation of the logical, semantic, syntactic and pragmatic features of prototypical if-conditional construction. In Chapter 5 and 6, the focus of the study is on the logical, semantic, syntactic and pragmatic features of epistemic and speech-act if-conditionals with the analytical model of "four-dimensional correlated continua of subjectivisation" in an attempt to demonstrate the process of subjectivisation. Chapter 7 concludes with the answers to the three questions proposed in Chapter 1, explains the theoretical implications of the study, and it also considers implications for further research.

This book is slightly adapted from my Ph.D. dissertation, the completion of which would not have been possible without the help and encouragement from a wide spectrum of sources, to whom I owe more than I can say.

I would first express my appreciations to Professor Mei Deming, my supervisor, whose guidance, support and constructive criticism made all the difference in the processes of this and other projects and whose sincere

encouragement helped me through numerous difficult moments.

My thanks also go to Shanghai International Studies University, where I obtained the Ph.D. degree after three years of hard work, where I attended numerous enlightening lectures on which I drew heavily in the formation and writing of this book. The professors at SISU with their insightful views, extensive information and learning and particularly, with their serious attitude towards academic work have left us deep impressions. They are: Professor He Zhaoxiong, Professor Xu Yulong, Professor Shu Dingfang, Professor Hu Shuzhong, Professor Feng Qinghua and Professor Li Ji'an. I am extremely indebted to Professor Xu Shenghuan of Henan University for his timely advice, valuable comments as well as his enlightening talks.

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Last but not the least, I'd like to express my gratitude to my family: my parents, my husband and my son for their love, their spiritual support and their understanding. Without their encouragement and support, I could not have completed this work.

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Chapter 1 Introduction

This is a synchronic study of the English if-conditional construction within the framework of cognitive linguistics. The English conditional sentences, composed of the main clause (sometimes also called *q*, or the apodosis or consequent) and a subordinate clause (*p*, or the protasis or antecedent)[1] introduced by a conjunction *if* can give rise to an imposing variety of forms, and a still more overwhelming variety of interpretations. It is this productivity of the seemingly simple conditional construction that makes it an interesting arena for theoretical explorations and linguistic descriptions.

The analysis of conditionals attempted here will focus on providing an explanation of how the various meanings that the conditional sentences express are interrelated. The special claim that we have argued for is that the mechanism of subjectivisation is the factor which motivates the extension of the if-conditional construction, whereby certain objectively construed aspects of the conceived scene denoted by the prototypical if-conditional construction receive a more subjective construal in the extended uses of the structure in question.

Language not only expresses propositional meanings, but also conveys the speaker's/conceptulizer's construal of a situation as well as his intentions and emotions. This subjective involvement will inevitably affect the semantic and syntactic structures. However, the notion of a

1 In this book, terms of "antecedent and consequent" will be used mainly to refer to the logical and conditional relation between the propositional contents of the two parts, and terms of "*if*-clause and main clause" will be used mainly to refer to the grammatical functions of the two parts.

subjective construal has not been exploited in the description of conditional semantics. What we aim to show is, precisely, that subjectivisation allows a unified and systematic description of the structural extension of the English if-conditional construction and perhaps of conditionals more generally. Therefore the present study not only provides a new approach for the study of conditionals but also lays a foundation for the future research on subjectivity and subjectivisation.

1.1 Diversified Interpretations of the English If-Conditional Construction

Ramsey argues that "true conditionals are the hypothetical counterparts of causal constructions; or, that 'If ***A, B***' is exactly equivalent to 'Because ***A, B***', where 'A' is hypothetical" (1931: 248). Comrie further argues that "in most instances this link is causal, i.e. the content of the protasis must be interpretable as a cause of the content of the apodosis. We therefore take this as a second requirement in the characterization of conditionals in natural language" (1986: 80). If these statements are true about the relationship between the antecedent and consequent in the if-conditional construction, how do we explain the following conditional sentences[1]:

(1) I met your girl friend Caroline last night, if Caroline is your girl friend.[2] (1098)
(2) The war was started by the other side, if you remember your history lessons.

The propositions in the antecedent of (1) (2) do not cause the propositions in the consequent. We can hardly say that "Caroline being your girl friend" causes "my having met her last night", neither is it possible to believe that "remembering your history lessons" will cause "the war to

1 Examples (1-6) are taken from Quirk *et al* (eds.), 1985. *A Comprehensive Grammar of the English Language.*

2 Quirk *et al* classifies these conditionals as indirect conditionals.

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