



A PRAGMATIC STUDY
OF CHINESE

RHETORICAL QUESTIONS
反问句的语用研究

冯江鸿 著


 上海财经大学出版社

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序

对语用学的一种理解是认为语用学是一种视角,是对语言现象进行研究的一种视角,这一视角综合了社会、文化、心理、认知等方面的因素。我十分赞同欧洲学派对语用学研究的这一观点,由此出发我们可以认为语用学对语言的研究是从一个新的视点去看我们业已熟悉的语言现象。冯江鸿女士所完成的正是这样的一项工作。本专著题目的前半部分告诉我们作者研究的是一个极其传统的题目——反问句,但题目的后半部分告诉我们作者对这一现象的研究采用的是一种非传统的方法——语用的研究。这正是该项研究的价值所在。

对反问句的研究可以追溯到公元以前,但奇怪的是综观中外文献,对反问句的系统研究不仅在数量上不多,而且在研究的方法和途径上也大凡限于语法和修辞,因此对这一特定句式的交际价值、语用功能揭示甚少。在这方面,冯江鸿的研究无疑具有重要的开拓性的作用。她从中央电视台的《实话实说》节目,一些电视剧和其他剧本中收集了大量的语料,进行了细致的分析,从中找出了汉语反问句的特征和使用模式,更重要的是她没有把反问句看做是一种孤立的语言现象,而是把反问句返回到它原来的交际过程中去看它的作用和功能。本专著的主体是第5章和第6章,在这两章里,冯江鸿分别分析了对反问句的种种应答方式,和反问句在

脱口秀里所起的话语和论辩作用。这种对反问句的语用研究,以及由此得出的结论在先前的研究中都还没有看到。可以说该研究是对反问句研究的一个重要贡献。

冯女士所做的研究是认真的,她在语料的收集和分析上投入了大量的时间和精力,这点精神在事事、处处追求低投入高产出的今天显得尤为难能可贵;她的研究方法对今后反问句的进一步研究是很有借鉴价值的;她的语料虽然以汉语为主,但所得出的结论对其他语言中的反问句也同样具有意义。

总之,我很高兴、很乐意为冯江鸿女士的这部专著作序,希望能有更多的人能看到这部专著的意义和价值,并能在此基础上继续繁荣我国的语用学研究。

上海外国语大学 何兆熊
2004年7月

前 言

对于反问句,大多数人认为它是一种“明知故问”、“只问不答”的问句,是修辞手段的一种。而事实上,这一看似无足轻重的语言现象并非像它看上去那么简单。一直以来,学者们都对它有浓厚的兴趣。修辞学家关注反问句作为一种修辞格的说服效果;语法学家致力于描述反问句的形式特征。近年来,越来越多的学者开始从语用的角度来观察反问句,将反问句作为各种语用因素影响下言语交际的产物来加以分析,大大丰富了反问句研究。但遗憾的是,由于学者们研究的重点不同,方法不同,观点不一,因此,并没有形成一个系统的一致反问句语用分析模式。对于很多有关反问句的重要问题,例如,反问句究竟如何识别?如何区别于其他问句?反问句的本质是什么?理解反问句需要经过怎样的认知过程?反问句究竟有没有应答?有怎样的应答?为什么会有应答?应答有哪些功能?这些功能是怎样实现的?……我们很难找到满意的解释。在研究方法上,已有的研究多是对有限的个别的书面体语料进行静态的描述,缺乏对大量的新鲜的口语体语料在使用过程中的动态的分析。为此本研究选取语用的视角,运用了言语行为和间接言语行为理论,结合话语分析、会话分析和逻辑论辩研究的理论和方法对反问句的识别、理解、应答以及该语言现象在特定语篇中的特征和功能做了系统的研究,旨在提出一种反问句的语用研究模式。

本研究的第一部分致力于创建一种理论框架用以分析反问句

的区别性特征、理解过程及其应答系统。本研究的第二部分将所提出的理论框架应用于对特定语篇(脱口秀)中所使用的反问句的话语功能和论辩功能的理解和分析。

本研究中所持的主要观点是:反问句是问句的一种特殊使用。它们主要用于表达间接的陈述,并在此基础上用来实施各种断言类和指令类言语行为。其目的是引发受话方接受反问句中的隐含意义(断言类反问句)或者引出受话方的合意行为(指令类反问句)。同时,反问句既非只问不答,亦非无可回答。在反问和应答的关系上,我们必须区分应答是针对提问的回答还是针对隐含意义的反应。本研究强调对反问句的区别性特征及其功能的研究必须通过对参与其中的语用因素的分析来实现。这些语用因素包括所涉的话语类型、问句在话语中的位置、交际双方的共同知识和共有理念、双方的相互关系、各自的角色和目标、说话方的意图和受话方的期待,以及受话方和/或说话方所提供的应答等。

《反问句的语用研究》最终能够成书出版要感谢上海财经大学把它列入学校著作出版资助项目。在研究和撰写过程中,作者从始至终得到上海外国语大学何兆熊教授的热情指导和帮助。他不仅多次审阅书稿,而且提出了很多建设性的意见并为本书作序。在此,我谨向他表示衷心感谢。此外,作者要感谢上海财经大学孙铮副校长,外语系王晓群、周越美主任和冯润明书记在本书出版过程中的大力支持和热忱关怀。

由于作者学识浅薄,书中欠妥乃至谬误之处一定不少,谨请读者批评指正。

冯江鸿
2004年7月

Abstract

This book is intended to provide a pragmatic framework for a consistent and systematic analysis of Chinese rhetorical questions.

The first part of the study proposes a theoretical frame of analysis in order to account for the distinctive features, interpretation process and the response system of rhetorical questions. In the second part, the proposed theoretical frame of analysis is applied to the interpretation of the discursive and argumentative functions of rhetorical questions in talk shows.

The major claims made in this study are that rhetorical questions are a special use of questions instead of a special category of questions. They are basically interpreted as indirect statements and can be used to perform various assertives and directives with the purpose of inducing the addressee's acceptance of or compliance with their implications. They are neither answerless nor unanswerable questions. They can be used not only as discursive acts but also as argumentative acts.

The results of the study support the hypothesis that the distinctive features and functions of rhetorical questions can be accounted for by pragmatic factors which mainly include the type of discourse, the sequential position in discourse, the addresser

and the addressee's mutual knowledge and beliefs, the relation between the addresser and the addressee, the specific roles assumed and the goals pursued by each of them, the addresser's intentions and the addressee's expectations, and the sort of response provided by the addressee or by the addresser him/herself.

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Chapter 1

Introduction

1.0 Introduction

Chinese utterances which are marked as interrogatives but not understood as questions are called *fanwenju* (Alleton 1988: 281). Sharing the basic definition with *rhetorical questions*: “interrogative form with assertive meaning and inversion of the negation” (ibid), *fanwenju* are termed Chinese rhetorical questions for the sake of convenience in our discussion of the use of rhetorical questions as a whole. Though we specify the rhetorical questions in our framework as Chinese ones, we do not aim to establish a contrast between rhetorical questions in Chinese and those in other languages, though they may differ one way or another. A comparison between Chinese rhetorical questions and rhetorical questions used in other languages is beyond the scope of the present research. The current study is particularly focused on the pragmatic analyses of rhetorical questions used in Chinese contexts, which are based on the data we collected in oral and written interactions among native speakers of mandarin Chinese.

Chinese rhetorical questions have captured the interest of

rhetoricians, grammarians and pragmaticians alike. Rhetoricians focus on the persuasive effect of rhetorical questions in argumentation since they first emerged as one of the rhetorical figures; grammarians are interested in describing their formal regularities; pragmaticians focus their attention on the interpretation of rhetorical questions as a linguistic product of communicators under the influence of diversified contextual factors.

With these approaches, various aspects of Chinese rhetorical questions have been addressed and profound findings have been obtained. Whatever interest the researchers have displayed and whatever conclusions they have reached, all the existing studies have evidenced that Chinese rhetorical questions are an inviting and valuable topic worth probing into.

Although many contributions have been made to the exploration of Chinese rhetorical questions, there are many questions awaiting answers. For example, the framework for analyzing Chinese rhetorical questions has not been established yet. There is still a great deal of vagueness and inconsistency about the definition and interpretation of these rhetorical questions. As a result, a systematic study of Chinese rhetorical questions is needed.

Among all the candidate approaches, a pragmatic approach with its focus on the dynamic aspects of language communication has proved to be very promising. It has offered the most recent and exciting findings in the research on Chinese rhetorical questions. The present study, therefore, attempts a pragmatic perspective and endeavors to contribute to setting up a framework for a systematic and consistent analysis of the questions.

The following are the main research topics we aim to pin down in this study: firstly, to identify rhetorical questions, we would like to specify the distinctive features of rhetorical questions which distinguish rhetorical questions from other types of questions; secondly, the cognitive process of interpreting rhetorical questions is to be explored; thirdly, responses to rhetorical questions are to be categorized and their functions are to be analyzed; fourthly, the discursive features and argumentative functions of rhetorical questions in talk shows are to be examined as an application of the framework established in the current research.

1.1 The rationale of the present study

The importance and significance of a systematic study of Chinese rhetorical questions from the pragmatic perspective can be described on such dimensions as indirectness of language use, the function of questions, cross-cultural studies, and the current research situation.

Firstly, sounding like questions but used to perform other illocutionary acts, rhetorical questions are an important topic for the research on indirect speech acts. Without an understanding of how rhetorical questions are used, the study of indirect language use may not be complete since they are a most frequently used type of indirect language in our oral and written interactions. By exploring the interpretation process of rhetorical questions and their response system, such a research may bring to light the cognitive process involved in the perception of the indirectness of language use and the perlocutionary effects that such indirect language use may achieve.