A Cognitive Approach to Metonymy in Language
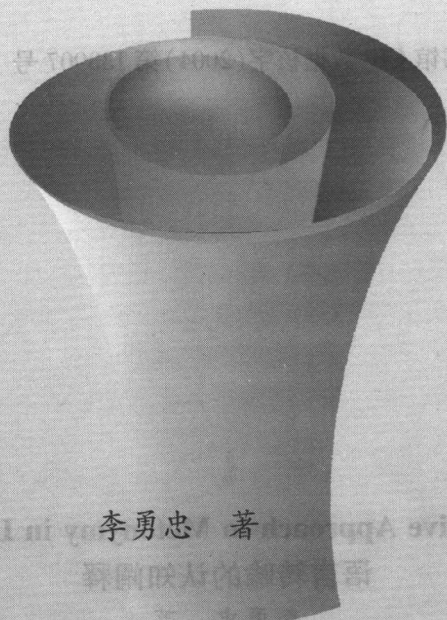
语言转喻的认知阐释

李勇忠 著

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序

　　提起转喻,人们一般会自然想到某种修辞格,即取得某种交际效果的语言手段。这方面的文献已经很多,而李勇忠先生的这本书,采纳的是一种新的切入点,具有如下的特点:特点一是把转喻当作一种认知手段来看待,即人领悟世界、处理信息的方法。一般说来,人在处理外部信息时,不可能穷尽所有的细节。人具有先天性的以经济原则为基础的选择能力,这种能力在感知、加工、储存和激活信息的过程中起着至关重要的作用。又由于大千世界具有多维性的特征,通过语言这一中介,人在与世界的互动或相互作用的过程中,信息处理者或语用者就会自动地或本能地选择一个起点。该起点既不可能是最大单位,也不会是最小单位,而是在最大和最小中间的某种认知层次上的一点。这样一来,用部分来代替整体就成为语言和世界同构运行中的一个无论如何也回避不了的事实。部分和整体关系是转喻的初衷。从认知的角度考虑,转喻现象无所不在,因为人对世界的认识和表达都牵涉部分与整体,甚至有人认为"开门"、"走路"等也是转喻性质的过程。这样一来,转喻的认知观和转喻的传统修辞学观点大相径庭。传统修辞学用"壶开了"(即 the kettle is boiling)这一经典例子来显示其替代"水开了"而产生的文字和感觉上的精彩,而这种精彩的语言使用和"水开了"这一"平凡"语

言使用相比,在语料上仅占很小的比例,从而给人们留下了"物以稀为贵"的印象。然而,假如一种现象是一切,那么也就没有研究的必要了。属认知方式诸种中的一种的转喻,毕竟与其他认知方式(如隐喻)有所差别,这就牵涉到本书的第二个切入点,即具有"邻近性"的特点。本书综合了几位认知语言学和认知语义学大家(如 R. Langacker G. Lakoff)的基本观点,用他们所共识的"理想化认知模式"ICM 来给所涉及的世界的一个焦点区域划定一个 ICM,并用其中的一个部分去替代其邻近的另一个部分,或者说习惯性地用认知可及性更高的那部分去替代认知可及性相对较低的另一部分,以满足交际所必须遵守的"省力原则"。这是与传统修辞学所讨论的转喻现象的另一个不同之处。

本书的精华应该是从转喻的角度来研究"句式语法"现象。我们知道,自 G. Frege 提出语言组构原则以来,似乎语言的构造过程就是一加一等于二。其实不然。当代句式语法认为,假如一句话内有五个词语,按组构原则的说法,运用这五个词构成的语句的语义理所当然地应该是这五个词的意义加上它们彼此之间的语法意义的总和。然而按照句式语法的观点,除了这两方面外,这五个词语的安排顺序还有特定的句式意义,即传统语法所说的句型意义。当句型意义与语句内部的关键词语的意义在交际上发生冲突时,就会产生某种形式上的调整,而这种调整是通过所谓的"压制"来完成的。传统语法并未考虑到这一点,而

当代句式语法考虑到了,从而增加了语法研究的细度。如此这般地分析,认定句式意义是整体,内部词语是部分,整体和部分的冲突,冲突一方对另一方的"压制",以及最后一方"妥协"而在意念上被替代,就是一种句法转喻现象。当然,本书仅讨论了若干英语例句,其实这种方法照样可以用来分析相应的汉语现象,因此很有发展前途。

最后,本书用"脚本"的概念分析了宏观言语行为的操作状态。传统的言语行为分直接和间接两种,但总嫌零散、欠系统性和复叠太多,即所分出的类别之间的界线并不十分清楚,一类中的部分言语行为可以出现在另一类中,等等。而以脚本为基础的转喻法就很好地解决的这一问题,其操作初衷是,人常用脚本中的某一部分去表达另一部分。具体说来,假如请人做事,既可以直接说"请做",也可以问"你能做吗?"传统言语行为理论把前者说成是直接言语行为的实施,把后者说成的间接言语行为的实施,但我的研究已证明这种理论方法有时达不到足够的说服力度。以脚本为基础的转喻论则认为,做任何事情的脚本都含有"起始"、"核心"和"结果"等宏观关键部分。明明请人做事,却不直说,而先问人是否有相应的能力,就是用脚本中的"起始"部分去代替"核心"部分及行事本身的做法,故是典型的转喻现象。我认为这样分析的说服力和清晰度比传统言语行为理论中的"间接言语行为"推导的说法要强很多。但为什么要间接说

呢？在本书在纯语用学部分，作者对这种分析法做了支持性的讨论。

    本书源于李勇忠的博士论文。在复旦寒窗三载，经历了多少不眠之夜，只有他自己知道。但终于苦尽甘来，修得硕果累累。三年中他在学术杂志上共发表了二十三篇论文，做了一般英语教授可能终身都做不到的事，并且至少在发表数量方面也打破了我的博士生先前创下的读博三年发表论文十六篇的记录。这本专著是李勇忠著作类的处女作，颇有新意，读起来还是很有味道的，是为序。

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熊学亮
2004 年 8 月 22 日

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前　言

　　传统研究一直把转喻视为词语之间的相互借代,它被当作一种文学和修辞的工具。从它的释义可见一斑,"转喻又称为借代,它是指借用与本体有着现实的实际联系的事物的名称来代替本体事物"。随着认知语言学在过去的几十年中的发展,人们普遍认识到转喻与隐喻一样,不仅仅是一种语言手段,更是一种认知和推理的过程。当代认知语言学把隐喻和转喻看作是同为重要的认知机制,影响着我们的知识结构。

　　正如书名所示,该研究旨在从认知的角度阐释转喻。转喻与思维密不可分,这已经是认知语言学界不争的事实。从广义而言,转喻充斥着人类的语言交际,它直接影响着我们的知识和思维。本书的第三章主要探讨转喻和隐喻的关系以及转喻思维的基本特性。在回顾学界具有代表性的转喻释义后,我们提出了更为精致的、操作性更强的定义。"激活",作为一个在转喻运作机制中不可替代的术语,在我们的释义中被赋予了重要的位置。同时,我们还研究了在转喻运作过程中具有极强阐释力的典型理论,如 Langacker 的参照点和活跃区转喻,视角突显以及范畴延伸理论。

　　毋庸讳言,转喻的运作机制还应该包括诸如社会、文化和修辞等方面。我们在第二章回顾了以往结构主义和语用学对转喻

所作出的阐释。而转喻的语用功能以及转喻与语用推理的关系问题,我们在论文第六章探讨。

当前的认知语言学一致认为,转喻不是简单的修辞装饰,它是在同一理想化认知模型(ICM)中运作的一种概念现象和认知过程。"邻近性"是大多数转喻定义的核心概念,传统研究把邻近关系看作是现实世界的具体的空间接近关系,而认知语言学则把它理解为概念层面上的接近关系。Lakoff(1987)更是把转喻邻近放到同一理想化认知模型的框架中来审视;Croft(1993)从体现在同一认知域或域矩阵(domain matrix)的百科知识出发来考察转喻的邻近性;Blank(1999)和 Panther & Thornburg(1999)分别启用框架和脚本两概念来描述概念邻近网络。我们认为理想化认知模型更能概括转喻过程的本质,因此,在第四章,理想化认知模型成了研究的重点。我们把处于同一理想化认知模型中的能生成转喻的概念关系称为"转喻生成关系"。处于 ICM 中的转喻生成关系主要产生于两个高层概念结构中。它们是:1.整体 ICM 与各部分;2. ICM 中的部分与部分。整体与部分结构生成借代人和事物的转喻,部分与部分结构主要生成表达事件和状态的述谓(predications)转喻。ICM 在转喻的理解和生成过程中起着非常重要的作用。

转喻的分类向来是学界关注的焦点,它关涉到对转喻本质的理解。通过对以往较有影响的分类的比较,我们赞同 Ruiz de Mendoza 的看法,简约地并高度图式化地把转喻分为"低层"和

"高层"两类。高层转喻对语法结构有重要影响,我们把它放在第五章单独研究。

转喻对语言结构的影响是最近才被学界认识到的。至今,就我们所知,只有为数不多的学者注意到了这一重要的现象。Panther 和 Thornburg 是其中的代表人物。另外 Hobbs(2001)也对此作出重要贡献,但他采取了与 Panther & Thornburg 不同的研究路向,从形式化的角度研究转喻对语言结构的影响是他的研究特色。我们借鉴 Panther & Thornburg 的方法,结合目前较有影响的"构式语法",从认知角度来考察转喻与语法构式的关系。在第五章,我们分析了一系列非动态谓词与构式的关系,并探讨了它们进入典型行动构式的充要条件。同时提出了一种字面上属于非动态谓词进入行动构式的压制性解释。而且,借助自然推理图式"结果代行动"这一概念转喻解释了静态构式中的构式义对词汇义的压制机制。本章的焦点主要集中在概念转喻"结果代行动"与压制的关系上,分析了一些典型的构式如 be + Adj/NP,被动句和否定句等。本章的后半部分讨论了两种构式"*What's X doing Y?*"和"*What's that N?*"内的词汇义对构式义的压制,对"*What's that N?*"构式作了比较深入的分析,指出该构式的原型意义会转喻性地生成至少两种更具体的意义:分类义和致使义。换言之,两种意义是由原型义的详细解释"What is a relevant property of that N"促成的。

随着越来越多的人认识到转喻对语言结构的影响以及转喻
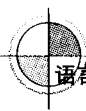
在话语理解中的作用,压制与转喻的关系将会逐渐成为认知语言学研究的新课题。据 Panther & Thornburg(1999b),概念转喻至少有如下两种解释作用:其一,当构式义与另一意义(词汇义或另一构式义)发生冲突时,它能帮助我们推导出压制义。当句子中无法建立如"结果代行动"这样的转喻关系,则压制失败,句子不合格。其二,当句子呈现构式的原型义时,概念转喻可以帮助我们识别具体的意义。在这种情况下,概念转喻如"类属代具体"(Generic For Specific 即分类义)和"效果代原因"(Effect For Cause 即致使义)可以把构式义转化为更加具体的意义。

转喻与语法结构的关系研究前景看好,我们已在国内外语类核心刊物发表了两篇相关的论文,本文是此基础上的扩展和延伸。该领域研究区间甚大,以后我们还将作进一步的研究。

Panther & Thornburg 从认知的角度来研究间接言语行为,提出了颇有影响的言语行为转喻理论。他们的理论一提出,犹如一石击起千层浪,引起了学界的高度重视。该理论从一种崭新的视角来考察间接言语行为,完全有别于传统的语用学研究。然而,我们认为,他们忽视了一个事实,言语交际是动态的互动过程而非静态的,不考虑语用参数,单独地从认知角度对动态的言语行为进行阐释,缺点是可想而知的。在论文第六章,我们系统地研究了言语行为转喻理论,并提出了全面解释间接言语行为所应考虑的语用参数,如礼貌程度、选择自由度、交际双方的权势关系等等。利用命题 ICM 能更好地描述言语行为范畴,命题

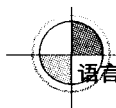ICM 包括 Panther & Thornburg 的脚本,同时还包括了解释间接言语行为所需的语用参数。

　　近年的转喻研究更多的局限于认知范畴,大多数学者热衷于它的分类、认知理据和与隐喻的对比,转喻的语用层面备受冷落。本章的后半部分我们在回顾 Grice 和 Sperber & Wilson 的语用推理后,详细地研究了从转喻角度进行语用推理的可行性。同时指出转喻的语用功能大体可分为以下四种:经济省力、加强语境效果、人际元功能和修辞功能。诚然,我们的分类无法穷尽转喻的所有功能,如何更精确的描述出其功能,连同转喻对句法的影响以及言语行为转喻与语用推理都将成为我们今后研究的课题。

Preface

Metonymy is traditionally viewed as a figure of speech that involves a process of substituting one linguistic expression for another. It was basically thought of as a matter of language, especially literary or figurative language. This view is reflected in standard definitions, which tend to describe metonymy as "a figure of speech that consists in using the name of one thing for that of something else with which it is associated". In the last decades, with the advent of cognitive linguistics, it is generally believed that metonymy as well as metaphor is more than a linguistic device; rather it is seen as a reasoning and inferential process. Contemporary cognitive linguists generally views both metaphor and metonymy as fundamental to the structuring of our conceptual knowledge.

As the title suggests, this book is intended to study metonymy from the perspective of cognition. Metonymy and thought are closely related to each other, which has been accepted by almost all cognitive linguists. In a broad sense, metonymy is prevalent in human language, it structures our knowledge, influences our thinking. Chapter three is mainly about the relation between metaphor and metonymy, the basic characters of metonymic thinking. After surveying some representative definitions, we have formulated our own working definition which in our opinion is more elaborated. Activation, which plays an irreplaceable part in the mechanism of metonymy, has been attached great importance. Apart from this, a few typical mechanisms such as Langacker's reference point and active zone metonymy, perspective salience and category extension have been commented on.

Without doubt, the operational mechanisms should include other aspects, such as social, cultural and rhetorical. We have surveyed the pre-

vious accounts of metonymy contributed by structuralism and pragmatics in chapter 2. As for the pragmatic functions of metonymy, we purposefully leave them to chapter six together with the relations between metonymy and pragmatic inference.

Current cognitive linguists generally claim that metonymy is more than a mere rhetoric device, rather it is regarded as a conceptual phenomenon and a cognitive process which operates within an idealized cognitive model.
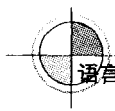
The notion of "contiguity" is at the core of most definitions of metonymy. Traditional approaches locate contiguity relationships in the world of reality, whereas cognitive approaches locate them at the conceptual level. Lakoff (1987) accounts for metonymic contiguity within the framework of idealized cognitive models (ICMs), Croft (1993) deals with contiguity relations in terms of encyclopedic knowledge representing within a domain or domain matrix. Blank (1999) and Panther and Thornburg (1999) describe the network of conceptual contiguity by using the notion of frame and scenario, respectively. We believe that ICM can capture metonymic processes best. This is the reason why we put ICM and metonymy into the central focus in chapter four. We call conceptual relationships within an ICM which give rise to metonymy "metonymy-producing relationships". ICMs which include metonymy-generating relationships are mainly subsumed under two high-level conceptual configurations: (i) whole ICM and its parts and (ii) parts of an ICM. The whole-part configuration produces metonymies involving things, while the part-part configuration primarily applies to metonymies involving predications in events and states. We strongly believe that ICM plays a significant part in the generation and understanding of metonymy.

Since classification of metonymies is connected to the desire to understand the exact nature of metonymy, we have compared some of the influential taxonomies and put forward a simple and schematic classifica-

tion: low-level metonymies and high-level metonymies. We believe that high-level metonymies play an important role in grammatical structure, which we discuss in chapter five.

It is not until very recently that people begin to realize the impact of metonymy on linguistic structure. So far, to the best of our knowledge, there are so few linguists who show interests in this field that we could not find much literature concerned. Panther and Thornburg take the lead in this research. Hobbs (2001) is also one of them. But Hobbs takes the different way from Panther and Thornburg in that he tries to approach the impact of metonymy on linguistic structure from the formal perspective. Our approach is similar to Panther and Thornburg's. In chapter five, we have considered a range of non-actional predicates and constructions in English and have explored their possible acceptability in prototypical action constructions. We have also proposed the coerced actional interpretations of literally non-actional predicates. Furthermore, we expound that non-actional constructions are achieved coercively by means of a natural inference schema, namely the RESULT FOR ACTION metonymy. We focus our attention on coercion and the conceptual metonymy RESULT FOR ACTION. Some of the typical constructions such as *be + Adj / NP*, *Passive and Negation* have been analyzed. In the second half of this chapter, the phenomenon of the coercion from lexical item to construction meaning is the main topic. Our focus is on the two constructions: *What's X doing Y?* and *What's that N?*. In particular, an in-depth analysis has been made on the construction *What's that N?*, it is assumed that the very general sense of this construction yields to at least two more specific senses that metonymically induced, the taxonomic sense and the causal sense. In other words, the two senses are motivated specifications of the general sense 'What is a relevant property of that N?'.

The relation between coercion and metonymy is a new topic for cognitive linguistics, since more and more people realize the fact that meton-

ymy has a strong impact on linguistic structure, and metonymy plays a central role in the interpretation of discourse. According to Panther and Thornburg (1999b), the conceptual metonymy is involved in at least two interpretative processes: (i) it may help to identify coerced meanings when a construction meaning conflict with another meaning (lexical or constructional). In these cases metonymy facilitates the task of retrieving coerced meaning. When no metonymic link such as RESULT FOR ACTION can be established then no coercion occurs and the sentence becomes unacceptable. (ii) Conceptual metonymy may help to identify specified meanings when construction meaning is general. In these cases conceptual metonymies such as GENERIC FOR SPECIFIC (taxonomic sense) and EFFECT FOR CAUSE (causal sense) narrow down the general construction meaning to more specific senses.

To a certain degree, we may say that metonymy's impact on linguistic structure is a promising field that needs to be more cultivated. This chapter is only about our preliminary step on this field. Surely we will devote more energy to it in future research.

Panther and Thornburg deal with indirect speech act from the angle of cognition and propose the speech act metonymy. Without doubt, their theory has aroused great interests in the new perspective towards speech acts among linguistic researchers. Truly, their theory gives a reasonable account for speech acts that is entirely distinct from pragmatic approaches. However, what they ignore is the fact that language in communication is not static but dynamic. Accounting for dynamic language merely from the perspective of cognition without taking into consideration pragmatic parameters is far from enough. In chapter six, we have reviewed Panther and Thornburg's speech act metonymy and argued that current accounts of directive categories in terms of scenarios do not exhaust the wealth of knowledge that speakers have about illocutionary acts. In order to substantiate this claim, we have provided evidences that interactional

aspects like politeness, optionality, speaker's relative power status, and degree of speaker's willingness are essential in the interpretation of indirect speech acts. Consequently, we have proposed that speech act categories are better described in terms of propositional ICMs, which would include Panther and Thornburg's scenarios, plus all the other pieces of information needed in the interpretation of a given illocutionary act.

Speech act metonymy is a new claim in the field of cognitive linguistics. Chapter six is only a tentative step. Surely it will have a promising future so long as linguists put more energy on this topic.

In the last decades, metonymy has mainly been studied from the cognitive perspective. Most scholars are engaged in the classifying, cognitive motivation and the comparison and contrast between metaphor and metonymy. The pragmatic aspects have received relatively little attention. In this chapter, in order to analyze the role metonymy plays in the pragmatic inference, we have reviewed Grice and his followers' view on inference and pointed out their weakness. Sperber and Wilson's theory will shed new lights on the explanation of the nature and the function of metonymy in communication. A tentative conclusion has been drawn in the final part that metonymy has four functions: economy, strengthening contextual effects, interpersonal metafunction and rhetoric effects. There is no doubt metonymy's functions cannot all be included in our model. This gives metonymy more appeal for us to further our study in the coming days.

All in all, metonymy, inextricably intertwined with our thought and our behavior just like metaphor, is not a mere ornamentally figurative tool but a fundamental thinking mode that leads us to further research.