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In English News Reports of
Epidemic Situation Update

英语疫情新闻中
言据性语篇特征的系统功能研究

· 汤斌 著



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前 言

言据性是一个语言学范畴。这一语言现象早在 20 世纪初便受到语言学家的关注,如 Boas (1911)、Sapir (1921)、Swadesh (1939)、Lee (1938, 1944, 1950, 1959)。早期的研究以强屈折性语言为主。Roman Jakobson (1957) 首先使用了“证素”(evidential)这一术语。80 年代以来,国外言据性研究发展迅速,成果突出,如 Chafe 和 Nichols (1986)、Saeed (1997)、Mushin (2000, 2001)、Palmer (2001)、Aikhenvald 和 Dixon (2003) 及 Aikhenvald (2004)。以上研究同时涉及强屈折性语言与弱屈折性语言如英语,但前者的研究远远超过后者。国内学者在语言言据性方面也进行了研究,其中包括胡壮麟 (1994a, 1994b, 1995)、张伯江 (1997)、严辰松 (2000)、徐盛桓 (2004)、牛保义 (2005)、房红梅 (2005, 2006)、朱永生 (2006) 等。国内言据性研究可分为四类:言据性概念引介、汉语中言据性研究、言据性概念运用与言据性概念的再解析。与此同时,言据性语篇特征也引起了语言学专家与学者的注意,如 Chafe (1986)、Friedman (1986)、Mushin (2000, 2001)、Precht (2003) 和 Aikhenvald (2003, 2004)。然而,该领域的研究才刚刚起步,许多方面亟待完善与补充,尤其是专门探讨言据性与语类关系的研究。

选择英语新闻中言据性语篇特征为研究课题基于以下四个



原因：第一，在言据性研究的文献中，强屈折性语言的言据性特征要比英语研究得详细，也正由于这个原因，英语的言据性语篇特征研究相对较少；第二，以往对新闻报道中言据性语篇特征的研究并不详尽；第三，以往对言据性语篇特征的研究缺乏系统性，基本上以分析交际中证素的语用功能为主，没有将其纳入一个完整的理论框架中进行讨论；第四，以前的研究很少涉及证素的建构作用，特别是证素的语类意识形态建构功能。

选择疫情新闻为研究语料基于以下两点：第一，该类新闻记者通常十分重视消息的来源，以及在什么时候、如何表达自己对报道消息真实度的承诺。换言之，在新闻撰写过程中，记者会特别关注证素的使用。第二，该类新闻报道事件的敏感度预示记者会非常频繁地与读者进行隐匿的、潜意识的意识形态磋商与联盟。因此，疫情新闻为研究证素的语篇特征及其意识形态自然化功能提供了很好的语料。

本书采用一种动态视角分析言据性在新闻报道中的语篇特征。该研究课题涉及三项研究任务：以系统功能语言学为框架，区分并总结出各类证素在英语疫情新闻报道中的概念意义与人际意义语篇特征；揭示证素的使用与英语疫情新闻背后意识形态之间的建构关系；揭示新闻语类中言据性的词汇语法特征。

本书以 Halliday 的系统功能语法与 Martin 的语类、语域理论为研究框架，分析了不同的证素在英语疫情新闻中的概念意义与人际意义语篇特征，以及这些特征如何实现新闻背后潜在的意识形态。这里的意识形态与记者怎样通过语篇实现其交际意图有关。我们认为，隐性劝诱自然化过程是新闻语类的社会功能之一，且集中反映了该语类背后的意识形态意义。因此本书的最终目的在于分析证素语篇特征与隐性劝诱自然化过程的

关系。

本书将集中探讨两大研究问题：

(1) 在概念意义方面，言据性在英语疫情新闻中体现的语篇特征是什么？

(2) 在人际意义方面，言据性在英语疫情新闻中体现的语篇特征是什么？

第一个大问题包括 4 个小问题：

(1) 不同证素体现的过程特征是什么？

(2) 不同证素实现什么样的参与者角色？

(3) 不同证素体现什么样的指称世界？指称世界转移的修辞效果是什么？

(4) 言据性概念意义语篇特征如何促成疫情新闻中交际意图的自然化？

第二个大问题也包括 4 个小问题：

(1) 言据性如何体现知识的可信度？

(2) 言据性与情态之间的关系如何？

(3) 不同证素体现的介入特征是什么？

(4) 言据性人际意义语篇特征如何促成疫情新闻中交际意图的自然化？

本书按照一定要求收集了 47 篇英语疫情新闻报道进行了定量与定性分析。定量分析的目的在于找出该类新闻语篇中证素使用的概念意义与人际意义语篇特征并将其系统化，分析对象包括零标记证素、传闻证素、引语证素与推断证素。在定量分析的基础上进行定性分析，目的在于明晰定量分析的结果，揭示证素的语篇特征如何体现疫情新闻中潜在的意识形态意义。

我们从及物性过程、外界信息源与新闻记者的语义角色及



指称世界特征三个维度分析了证素的概念意义语篇特征,发现三类特征促成了三种权力特征的建构:第一,外界信息源拥有权势与话语权;第二,新闻记者拥有权势与话语权;第三,新闻记者是客观公正的信息提供者。证素人际意义语篇特征的分析基于以下三个维度:证素与知识可靠性的关系,证素与情态的关系,证素与介入的关系。发现这三类特征促成了外界信息源、记者与读者之间三种权力关系的建构,分别体现为证素的使用可提高信息的可信度、共识性、权威性。以上三种权力特征、三种权力关系的建构均促成了新闻语篇隐性劝诱自然化功能的实现。

本书的理论意义在于进一步明晰了言据性语言现象的本质,系统地总结出了英语疫情新闻中各证素的语篇特征,揭示了言据性与意识形态之间的关系。本书的实际意义在于应用了一个系统的研究框架,分析了言据性在新闻语篇中的特征,并为今后该领域的研究提供一个可行的分析模式,有利于培养读者对英语新闻进行批评性阅读。



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Chapter One INTRODUCTION

1.1 Overview of Evidentiality

Evidentiality is a linguistic category. It began to attract linguists' attention in the early part of the 20th century. Franz Boas (1911) notes that in some inflectional American Indian languages some suffixes are used to specify the sources and certainty of the information carried by the speakers' expressions. The study of evidentiality has also been taken up by Boas's student Edward Sapir (1921) and Sapir's student Morris Swadesh (1939). Dorothy D. Lee has also done detailed research in this area by noticing the strong bond between certain suffixes and sources of information in some North American Indian languages (1938, 1944, 1950, 1959). Roman Jakobson (1957) first adopts the term evidential for the linguistic category. Ever since the 1980s, the research on evidentiality has been growing by leaps and bounds, with works done by various scholars such as Chafe and Nichols (1986), Saeed (1997), Mushin (2000, 2001), Palmer (2001), Aikhenvald and Dixon (2003) and Aikhenvald (2004). Domestically, the topic of evidentiality has been studied by researchers such as Hu (1994a, 1994b, 1995), Zhang (1997), Yan (2000), Xu (2004), Niu (2005), Fang (2005, 2006), and Zhu (2006). Domestic researches



can be classified into four types: introduction, evidential analysis in Chinese, application and reanalysis of the nature of evidentiality. The introduction of the theory of evidentiality is mainly done by Hu (1994b), Zhang (1997), Yan (2000), Niu (2005). With regard to the evidential analysis in Chinese, Hu (1995) analyses the evidential features of Chinese texts and Zhu (2006) concentrates his analysis on the Chinese evidentials. Hu (1994a) and Xu (2004) adopt evidentiality respectively to address different linguistic problems. The former analyses the generic structural differences between news reports and debating texts. The latter applies the theory to the analysis of English IF conditional clauses. Fang (2005) reanalyzes the nature of evidentiality from the perspective of systemic-functional linguistics.

Here in this study, the author will adopt a new model of evidentiality based upon the works by Chafe (1986), Palmer (2001), Mushin (2000, 2001) and Aikhenvald (2003, 2004). In this new model, we maintain that evidentiality is closely associated with the cognitive process of the speaker's epistemological assessment and classification, which takes into account the evidence quality and the genre specification and, as its output, produces two results: adoption of epistemological stance and knowledge reliability judgment. The two outputs bear directly on the linguistic coding of evidentiality in discourse. In the main, the new model will adopt the broad interpretation of evidentiality proposed by Chafe (1986) and emphasize the theoretical significance of evidence quality and epistemological assessment of evidence.

1.2 Need for Studying Discourse Features of English Evidentiality

Discourse features of evidentiality have already attracted the attention of linguistic experts and researchers. Chafe (1986: 261-272) makes a comparison between conversational English and academic English writing in terms of evidential use. Friedman (1986: 168-187) finds that evidentials in some Balkans languages carry different pragmatic forces in communication. Mushin (2000, 2001) probes the pragmatics of evidentials in the genre of narrative retelling discourse. Her finding is that there is no one-to-one correspondence between the actual source of information and the evidential used in the discourse and the bond between them can be flouted by some pragmatic factors developed in the ongoing discourse. Precht (2003) focuses on the comparison of the stance-marking functions of evidentiality in both British and American conversations and finds that cultural differences can affect the way communicators use evidentials to express their stance moods. Aikhenvald (2003, 2004) mentions that in some highly inflectional indigenous languages use of different evidentials conveys different pragmatic meanings. Domestically, Hu (1994a) uses the theory of evidentiality in analyzing the differences between news reporting and debating discourse and finds that hearsay evidentials occur more frequently in news reporting and belief, inferential evidentials together with reliability qualifiers outnumber other evidentials in debating discourse.

The need for studying discourse features of English evidentiality



in news reports is based upon the following four grounds. First, in the literature of evidentiality, the evidential systems of highly inflectional languages are much better documented than those of English and consequently the studies of discourse features in English are outnumbered by those in the highly inflectional languages. Second, the treatment of discourse features of evidentiality in the genre of news reporting is far from exhaustive. Third, the treatment of discourse features of evidentiality in the past is anything but systematic. It is based upon the pragmatics of evidentials in communication. In other words, discourse features of evidentiality have not been treated under a comprehensive theoretical framework. Last but not least, few previous studies on discourse features of evidentiality concentrate on the construction role of evidentials in discourse. Fang (2006) points out that more studies on evidentiality should be devoted to the analysis of social, cultural, cognitive and ideological mechanisms behind the use of evidentials. As far as the relationship between evidentiality and ideology is concerned, more studies are needed. Discourse features of evidentiality in a certain genre not only possess pragmatic meanings, but also serve to code into text the ideologies embedded in the genre. The ideologies involved are expressed by the genre's social functions. The construction role of evidentials can be approached from two perspectives: from the social perspective, we can study how evidentials are used to realize the genre's social functions; from the psychological perspective, we can study how evidentials are used to realize the speaker or writer's communicative intentions.

Based upon the above-mentioned four grounds, English news

reports are chosen as the language data for analysis and three main research tasks can be pinned down in the book: first, to analyze discourse features of evidentiality in English under the framework of systemic-functional linguistics and supplement with new findings the existent studies on discourse features of evidentiality in the genre of news reporting; second, to find out the relationship between discourse features of evidentiality and coding of communicative intentions into news reports, namely, how different evidentials help reporters realize the ideology of the news genre socially and the communicative intentions behind the news reports psychologically; and third, to reveal the lexicogrammatical features of evidentiality in the genre of news reporting.

1.3 Reasons for Choosing News Reports of Epidemic Situation Update

In many famous world newspapers, medical news reports occupy a very important position. People are interested in these news reports because they are concerned with their health and care. Among the subject matters reported, there is one especially devoted to epidemic situation update. This group of reports focuses on the epidemic situations such as the bird flu. It aims at bringing the public the latest updates on epidemic situations. Reporters covering this news have to be extremely cautious with regard to the reported contents, since any exaggeration or under-reporting will lead to public panic or negligence. Consequently, they will take great care in news writing



when it comes to evidentials. They will pay attention to the information sources and when and how they will express their commitment to the factuality of the reported information. The subtlety of this type of news reporting presupposes a great deal of covert subconscious ideological negotiation and alignment between the reporter and the reader. Beneath the familiar objective and routine façade of daily reporting, the reporter is constantly engaged in naturalizing the communicative intentions, which are embedded in the news report. Since this study is aimed at probing how reporter deploys different evidentials in order to naturalize communicative intentions in news reporting, the research demands frequent occurrences of ideological alignment between the reporter and the reader. So we are justified to say that the news reports of epidemic situation update are a good specimen for studying discourse features of evidentiality and the ideology-naturalizing functions of evidentials. News reports of epidemic situation update feature different epidemics. In this study we focus on the bird flu. Over the past ten years few contagious diseases span such a long time and take such a toll on many areas of society as the avian influenza. The disease emerged in Hong Kong in 1997 and re-emerged in 2003 and still poses threat until now. Given its seriousness and effects upon society, bird flu is regarded as a real epidemic over the past decade. So news reports on bird flu can be treated as typical examples of news reports of epidemic situation update and can reflect major characteristics of news reports on this subject matter. Considering all these, I choose bird flu as the reported subject of epidemic situation update news in this book.