



外语·文化·教学论丛

A Pragmatic Study
of Fictional Communication

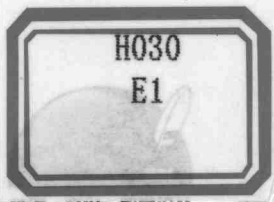
小说交际语用研究

梅美莲 著

by Meilian MEI



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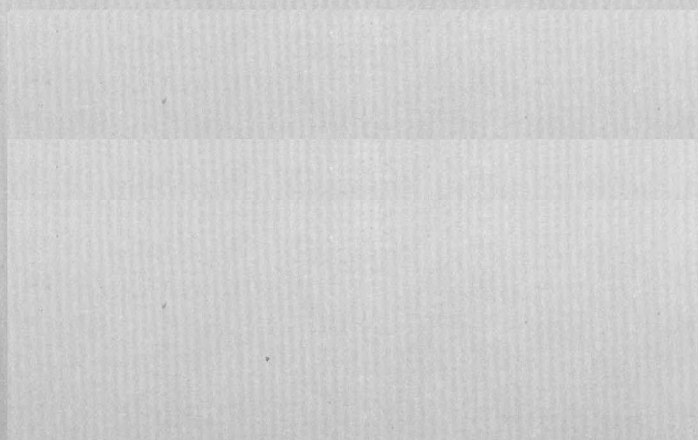
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文学的语用学研究是语用学研究领域中一个诱人但又亟待开发的方向。这方面的尝试国外和国内都有一些,国外已有 literary pragmatics 一说,也出现了这方面的论文和专著,但总的来说文学的语用学研究始终给人一种不温不热、不十分景气的感觉。文学也是一种交际方式,语用学是对语言交际的研究,这两个大前提是谁都不会否认的,那为什么会出现这样的情况呢?我个人认为,对文学做语用研究对研究者无疑有较高的要求,他(或她)必须在这两个领域都有一定的造诣;而对文学做语用研究目前尚缺少一个专门的、可行的理论框架,如果不满足于运用一些现有的语用理论和原则对文学作品进行有限的、局部的分析和研究的话,那么有意从事这方面研究的人必是个有勇气、有志向的人。我很高兴发现梅美莲博士正是如此一人。

小说毫无疑问是一种交际,是作者和读者之间的交际,但它又是一种特殊形式的交际,和一般意义上的语言交际有着明显的不同,因为交际的双方不见面,没有也不可能互动;作者的交际目的也不是通过他一个人的话语来向读者表白,而是通过他笔下的叙述、描述以及人物的对白来最终向读者传递他的信息。对于这样一种特殊的语言交际方式,梅博士首先作了具体、详尽的剖析,明确了小说交际是通过多种途径在多种语境中进行的。这是本专著的一个重要贡献,它为下一步的语用分析打下了基础,明确了分析的对象和途径。

如前所说,对文学做语用研究目前尚缺少一个专门的、可行的理论框架。这可能是令许多研究者对这个领域望而却步的主要原因。迄今为止,国内大多数的语用学研究基本上都是属于运用国外已有的理论,如合作原则、关联理论、顺应论等等对某些现象进行分析或解释的研究。敢于提出或设计出一个理论框架的极为鲜见。在语用的文学研究方面更是如此,因



为在这方面，国外的研究也没有给我们提供多少可供借鉴的东西。在这方面，梅美莲博士表现出相当的学术胆识。这部专著的另一个重大贡献就是她提出的对小说进行语用分析的理论框架。这是本专著的一个极为重要的创新点。她提出小说的交际过程实质上是作者建构意义和读者重建意义的过程。她明确地区分了不同层次的意义以及它们之间的关系，为分析小说的交际过程规划出一个很具操作性的、可行的分析框架。梅博士通过对一些小说片段的分析给我们证明了这个框架的可行性。这一框架的提出对今后文学作品的语用研究所具有的学术意义是不言自明的。

文学作品的语用学研究迄今还是一个亟待开发的研究领域，还有许多研究的可能性。有志于从事这方面研究者，我觉得除了从国外学者那里寻求帮助之外，不妨也朝国门内看一看。可能你会发现，梅博士的这个分析框架可以拿来就用。当然你也可能发现其中的不足甚至谬误，那就请大胆地提出批评和修改。我想梅博士一定会欢迎大家这样做。学术就是在这样的一个过程中前进的。同时也希望梅博士本人能在这一领域里继续深入，把我国的文学语用学研究提到一个更高的水平。

何兆熊

2008年3月

Abstract



between the author and the reader is carried out by means of the communication between the narrator and the reader and the communication between the characters at the macro level. At the micro level, fictional communication is carried out by the following five means: narrative language, character language, the facts of the fictional story, the structure of the fictional story, and the revelation of the fictional story.

Based on the characteristics of the means of fictional communication, it is claimed that fictional communication takes place in four types of context: the context where the author writes fiction, the context where the reader reads fiction, the context where the narrator tells the fictional story, and the context where the characters of the fictional story use language. To carry out fictional communication successfully the author and the reader should share sufficient contextual knowledge about the four types of contexts. Contextual knowledge includes linguistic knowledge, co-textual knowledge, intertextual knowledge, situational knowledge, background knowledge and mutual knowledge.

Since fictional communication is carried out by various means in various kinds of contexts, it is highly necessary for the author to employ pragmatic strategies to communicate transactional implicature and/or create and maintain good relationships with the reader. It is pointed out that the author may employ the following pragmatic strategies: flouting of the maxims of CP, pragmatic ambivalence, discourse role switching, and politeness strategies.

Communicating by various means in various kinds of contexts, the author constructs eight types of meanings in addition to abstract meaning and contextual meaning. It is argued that the author's meanings have hierarchical relationships with each other: character meaning communicated by character language at the first and lowest level, then narrator meaning communicated by narrative language and narrator meaning communicated by character language at the second level, author meaning communicated by narrative language and author meaning communicated by character language at the third level, author meaning communicated by the facts of the fictional story at the fourth level, author meaning communicated by the structure of the fictional story at the fifth level, and finally author meaning communicated by the revelation of the fictional story at the sixth and highest level. The author constructs the meanings from the ones at the lower levels to the ones at the higher levels through the five means at the micro level by employing pragmatic strategies or by observing CP and its

List of Abbreviations

CP	the cooperative principle
PP	the politeness principle
FTA	face threatening act
CMCCL	character meaning communicated by character language
NMCCL	narrator meaning communicated by character language
NMCNL	narrator meaning communicated by narrative language
AMCCL	author meaning communicated by character language
AMCNL	author meaning communicated by narrative language
AMCFFS	author meaning communicated by the facts of the fictional story
AMCSFS	author meaning communicated by the structure of the fictional story
AMCRFS	author meaning communicated by the revelation of the fictional story



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Introduction

1.2 Rationale of the study



respectively the linguistic features of literary texts on the aspects of grammar, vocabulary and pronunciation, the narrative structure of literary works, and literary communication. Stylistic studies indicate that different writers and works have different features of language use (e.g. Leech & Short, 2001; Cook, 1994, etc.), narratological studies suggest that writers can arrange the narrative structure in different ways (e.g. Chatman, 1980, etc.), and communicative studies demonstrate that not only the author and the reader but also the narrator, the characters, and the performers take part in literary communication and literary communication takes place in social, cultural and intertextual contexts (e.g. Booth, 1961; Chatman, 1980; Bakhtin, 1981; Jakobson, 1987e; Cook, 1994, etc.). Linguistic studies pave the way for the study of literary communication by showing the possible ways of studying the use of literary language and the possible frameworks of literary communication. So it is possible to study literature and/or literary communication from the pragmatic perspective.

Together with Austin's proposal of speech act theory in the 1950s, emerged the pragmatic studies of literature, which can be categorized into two types: theoretical and empirical. Empirical studies can again be categorized into three types: those studying pragmatic theories with literary data to improve the theories, those studying the applicability of pragmatic theories to the study of literary language, and those studying literary language with pragmatic theories. It is found that speech act theory can explain the author's intention in using literary language (Ryder, 1999; Dahlgren, 2005), politeness theory can account for the author's use of literary language (Buck, 1997; Piazza, 1999; Skewis, 2003), conversational implicature theory can explain the reader's interpretation of the author's intention (Gautam, 1987; Chen, 1993, 1996), and relevance theory is useful in explaining both the author's use and the reader's interpretation of literary language (Pilkington, 1991). Theoretical pragmatic studies can also be categorized into three types: those on the applicability of pragmatic theories to the study of literature, those on the objective and methodology of pragmatic studies of literature, and those on the process of literary communication. The discussion about the applicability of pragmatic theories starts from Austin (1962) and Searle (1975). Though there is some doubt, it is argued that literary works are means to perform speech acts (Ohmann, 1971; Searle, 1975; Levin, 1976; Pratt, 1977; Petrey, 1990; Miller, 2001), conversational implicature theory can be applied to the study of the author's use of literary language and the reader's interpretation of literary language (Pratt, 1977), and politeness theory is applicable to the study of the use of literary language (Sell, 1991b). As to the objective and methodology of pragmatic studies, it is proposed that pragmatics should account for the conditions for literary speech acts "in terms of an explicit pragmatic theory of natural language" (van Dijk, 1976b: 25), that it "must