

# 误解的 认知研究

孙 亚 著

安徽大学出版社

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江苏工业学院图书馆 亚 著  
藏书章

安徽大学出版社

## 图书在版编目(CIP)数据

误解的认知研究 / 孙 亚 著. —合肥: 安徽大学出版社, 2006. 12

ISBN 7 - 81110 - 228 - 5

I. 误... II. 孙... III. 认知科学: 语言学 - 研究  
IV. H0 - 05

中国版本图书馆 CIP 数据核字(2006)第 145205 号

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出版发行	安徽大学出版社	印 刷	合肥现代印务有限公司
	(合肥市肥西路3号 邮编230039)	开 本	850 × 1168 1/32
联系电话	编辑室 0551 - 5108458	印 张	6.75
	发行部 0551 - 5107784	字 数	170 千
电子信箱	ahdxchps@mail.hf.ah.cn	版 次	2006 年 12 月第 1 版
责任编辑	徐 建	印 次	2006 年 12 月第 1 次印刷
封面设计	孟献辉		

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ISBN 7 - 81110 - 228 - 5 / H · 121

定价 18.00 元

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如有影响阅读的印装质量问题,请与出版社发行部联系调换

# Acknowledgements

First of all, I am greatly indebted to my supervisor, Dr Xiong Xueliang, Professor of linguistics in Fudan University, whose constructive suggestions, incisive comments and helpful criticism have contributed a lot to the completion of the present dissertation. Besides academic support, I owe him special thanks for his dedicated efforts in the process of my hunting for a job. No small thanks should go to Professor Chu Xiaoquan and Professor Qu Weiguo for their motivating questions and illuminating arguments, which have helped me sharpen my ideas on several issues that are presented in the dissertation.

My sincere thanks also extend to Professor Zhu Yue of Anhui University for helping me enhance great enthusiasm towards linguistics during my postgraduate studies, Professor Ouyang of Anhui Normal University for leading me into the field of linguistics during my undergraduate studies, and Professor Wang Mingzen of West Anhui University for his fatherly love and constant care. No small thanks are due to other teachers in West Anhui University, Anhui Normal University, Anhui University, and Fudan University, which record my studies from 1990 to 2003.

I would also like to thank all kind-hearted classmates, colleagues and friends who have given me support and help in various ways. Last but not least, I would contribute my best love and gratitude to my great mother.

# Abstract

Misunderstanding, as a form of unsuccessful communication, has been receiving extensive attention from linguists, sociologists, psychologists, researchers of communication, etc. Misunderstanding may produce an effect as slight as humorous and funny jokes, or as serious as quarrels, conflicts and even fighting. Further research may help people recognize the inevitability of misunderstanding, minimize negative consequences, and ensure harmonious interpersonal relationship. The dissertation expects to obtain new findings from a cognitive perspective.

The dissertation, which is composed of eight chapters, is divided into three parts: the introductory part (Chapter 1 and Chapter 2), the body (from Chapter 3 to Chapter 5), and the concluding part (Chapter 6).

The aim of Chapter 1 is to make initial attempts for the dissertation, i. e. formulating objectives, providing the rationale for the current study, and clarifying the scope and methodology of the current study. Chapter 2 offers a review of three major points concerning misunderstanding: definition, origins and types of misunderstanding. Misunderstanding is mainly defined as the result of

the mismatch between the speaker's intended meaning and the hearer's interpreted meaning, which is characterized by being inevitable and unintentional by default. The inevitable misunderstanding is due to various factors regarding the nature of communication, language use, and communicators. In general, previous work tends to be more descriptive than explanatory, to be based more on intercultural communication than on intracultural communication, and to be grounded in objectivist theories of understanding.

The body part is a process of hypothesis formation (Chapter 3) and hypothesis evaluation (Chapter 4 and Chapter 5). Chapter 3 presents a theoretical framework for examining misunderstanding. In this chapter, the widely accepted models of communication and understanding are investigated to reveal their objectivist nature. Then an experiential view of understanding is outlined within the framework of cognitive linguistics, especially Lakoff's theory of idealized cognitive models (ICMs). At the end of the chapter, hypotheses are raised about origins of misunderstanding based on the new framework: ICMs' conflict (both external and internal), and ICMs' indeterminate reasoning.

Chapter 4 investigates the emergence of misunderstanding due to ICMs' conflict, i. e. the conflict between Speaker ICM and Hearer ICM. ICMs' conflict is further divided into external conflict and internal conflict, i. e. conflict across ICMs and conflict within ICMs. Specifically, the former indicates the case in which speakers and hearers trigger different ICMs. When it comes to the latter, speakers and hearers may refer to different entities in the same reference-ICM, or retrieve different instantiations in applying the same event-ICM, even though they share the same reference-ICM or event-ICM.

These conflicts confirm three views of cognitive linguistics: the experiential view, the prominence view and the attentional view. Since linguistic expressions play the role of triggering ICMs, this chapter focuses on how ICMs' conflict originates from the following cases: underinformativeness and overinformativeness of linguistic expressions, problematic reference, improper choice of linguistic expressions in terms of prototypical effects and granularity, and prominence on language use.

Chapter 5 is concerned with the relation of misunderstanding and cognitive reasoning. It confirms the imaginative nature of reasoning and presents three basic inference patterns ( image-schematic structuring, metaphoric mapping and metonymic reasoning ) to facilitate human understanding. The indeterminacy of those patterns creates the possibility of misunderstanding, specifically the transferability of image-schematic structuring and metaphoric mapping, the case of mapping a concept metaphorically onto different domains, the removability of metonymic reasoning.

Chapter 8 presents a gist of all the chapters and summarizes main findings. Through the process of hypothesis formation and hypothesis evaluation, the dissertation has achieved the following findings and implications:

1. The current study has clarified the relationship between misunderstanding and coherence. Lack of coherence is certain to lead to misunderstanding, but coherence does not ensure that misunderstanding will not occur because it is diverging on some occasions.

2. The dissertation has identified some cognitive principles underlying communication, i. e. the principle of iconicity and

economy, the principle of implicitness, the principle of prototypical interpretation, and the principle of accessibility. In addition, the dissertation has confirmed the imaginative nature of reasoning and summarized inference patterns: image-schematic structuring, metaphoric mapping, and metonymic reasoning.

3. The dissertation has offered new lights on describing understanding and misunderstanding from a cognitive approach. Cognitive understanding is a process of triggering ICMs, instantiating ICMs, and constructing experience, while cognitive misunderstanding is described as the case of cognitive disparity between Speaker ICM and Hearer ICM in terms of instantiating ICMs differently, failing to share the same ICM, and employing different inference patterns.

4. The dissertation contributes to an on-going dialogue between pragmatics and cognitive linguistics by applying theories of ICMs to pragmatic issues.



## 中文摘要

语言学家、社会学家、心理学家、交际学家等都一直关注着误解这个课题,各派学者都从不同角度做了大量细致的研究。本书试图从认知的视点出发以期获得新的发现。本文由八章组成,分为三个部分:引言部分(第一、二章),主体部分(从第三章至第五章)、结论部分(第六章)。

第一章主要阐释研究目的和动机,探讨研究方法和范围,以及说明语料收集的途径。第二章是文献回顾,主要归纳了以往研究中比较集中的三个问题:误解的定义、来源和分类。一般以为,误解是说话人意欲表达的意义与听话人所获得的意义之间不等同的情形。大量事实证明误解是不可避免的,这主要取决于言语交际的性质、语言使用的特点以及语用者本身。

假设形成和假设验证构成了主体部分。第三章首先审视了文献回顾中涉及的言语交际和理解的诸多模式,并揭示出了它们以真值条件为基础的客观主义性质。传统模式忽略了人的认知在言语交际中的作用,而经验主义认知观强调语言是人类认知活动的结果,强调认知来源于人类的物理和社会经验,尤其强调人的身体经验和想象性思维在言语交际中的作用。因此,本文以认知语言学特别是 Lakoff 的理想化认知模式为基础刻画了言语交际和理解的理论框架,重点在理想化认知模式如何影响言语理解,并以此形成了关于误解来源的假设,即理想化认知模式之间或内部的冲突

和理想化认知模式的不确定推理。

第四章研究由于说话人理想化认知模式与听话人理想化认知模式之间的冲突所造成的误解。这种冲突有外部冲突与内部冲突之分,前者指言语交际中说话人和听话人激活了不同的理想化认知模式;如果说话人和听话人共享同一理想化认知模式,但在将此理想化认知模式投入使用时出现了差异,则是内部冲突。

由于言语表达对激活理想化认知模式起着关键作用,所以把两种冲突主要归纳为如下五种情形:言语表达的信息过少、言语表达的信息过多、不恰当的言语表达选择、言语表达被语用者赋予不同的突显和注意、指称表达的或然性。

第五章阐述了由于认知推理的不确定性所造成的误解。想象性的认知推理主要有三种模式:意象图式、隐喻映射和转喻推理。造成误解的不确定认知推理表现在三个方面:意象图式和隐喻映射之间的可转换性;转喻推理的可取消性;同一概念被隐喻映射至不同领域的可能性。

第八章总结本文研究的成果并指出其局限性。经过验证假设,本文取得了预期的目标。首先,归纳了误解与连贯的双重关系,语篇缺乏连贯必产生误解,但具备语篇连贯并不保证交际成功。其次,归纳了言语交际中的认知原则(如经济原则、可及性原则、理解典型化原则)和推理模式。再者,刻画了认知理解和认知误解,认为认知理解就是激活理想化认知模式、投入理想化认知模式、构建经验的过程,而语用者激活了不同的理想化认知模式或投入理想化认知模式时产生差异或运用了不同的认知推理模式,于是产生认知误解。最后,本文运用认知语言学的原理解决语用学课题,促进了语用学和认知语言学两学科的融合和对话。

# List of Abbreviations

<b>MIS</b>	misunderstanding
<b>ICMs</b>	idealized cognitive models
<b>RICM</b>	reference – ICM
<b>EICM</b>	event – ICM
<b>HICM</b>	hearer ICM
<b>SICM</b>	speaker ICM
<b>IE</b>	individual experience
<b>CE</b>	collective experience

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# Introduction

## 1.1 Preamble

More and more linguists, who have been increasingly interested in the study of language use, have reached an agreement that the most important use of language is for the purpose of communication between human beings. As far as language use and communication are concerned, language production and language comprehension (understanding), speaker (writer, addresser) and hearer (reader, addressee) come into focus. Successful communication between human beings, either within a culture or across cultures, requires that the message and meaning intended by the speaker be correctly received and interpreted by the hearer. Successful communication is always the highest goal pursued by both the speaker and the hearer. However, there is some degree of miscommunication in most human interactions. The endeavor to achieve the goal, like any other human activity, can go wrong or amiss in a variety of ways.



The Oxford English Dictionary includes many words indicating unsuccessful communication, which make up a ‘mis-’ family, such as *misapply*, *misapprehend*, *miscalculate*, *mishear*, *misinform*, *misinterpret*, *misname*, *mispronounce*, *misquote*, *misread*, *misrepresent*, *misspell*, *misunderstand*, *misuse*. Misunderstanding<sup>①</sup> (MIS for short) is so commonplace and universal that it has been receiving extensive attention from linguists, sociologists, psychologists, researchers of communication, etc. Though intensive studies have been done on this issue from various perspectives, the dissertation still expects to obtain new findings through careful research on MIS from a cognitive point of view.

## 1.2 Rationale and objectives

It is not hard to imagine how often MIS appears in everyday communication. Apparently, people misunderstand each other’s words, silence, gestures or attitudes all the time. MIS happens not only between people with different languages or cultures, but also between close friends, spouses, adults and children, doctors and their patients, and teachers and their students, in all walks of life. Consequently, “it is widely assumed that misunderstanding is ubiquitous—an assumption supported by the availability of specific repair structures in conversational turns and their frequent use”

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① “Misunderstanding”, in its single form as an uncountable noun, is used to refer to a pragmatic phenomenon as a whole, while its single or plural form as a countable noun refers to actual cases.