An Empirical Study
of the Word Class Status of Modern
Chinese Localizers

Lei Weiyin

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词类地位实证研究

雷蔚茵◎著

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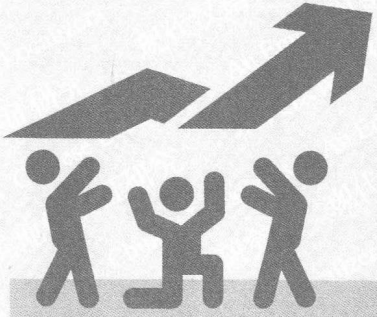

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Preface

Word classes or parts of speech (hereinafter POS for short) are the foundation of grammar study. Naturally, the POS labeling becomes an important part in the Chinese lexicography. As the most authoritative and influential dictionary of China, The Contemporary Chinese Dictionary (5th edition) (2005) (hereinafter CCD5 for short) is the first edition in its history to have made POS labeling for all its lexemes. In the labeling system adopted by CCD5, the modern Chinese localizers are classified into the category of nouns. They are treated as subcategories of nouns with time words. Since the word class status of localizers has long been controversial, whether the POS labeling of the localizers in CCD5 is reasonable or not needs further investigation. Moreover, the word class status of the modern Chinese localizers in modern Chinese grammar system needs reconfirmation.

Therefore, on the basis of quantitative research, this thesis discusses the POS labeling of localizers in CCD5 by using the theories of categorization (including decategorization and recategorization) and

cognitive mechanism –grammatical metaphor with the aid of the Modern Chinese Corpus of Center for Chinese Linguistics of Peking University (hereinafter CCL Corpus for short) and DIY databases of the modern Chinese localizers labeled in CCD5 and what they are labeled in The Standard Dictionary of Modern Chinese (2004) (hereinafter SDMC for short). This research makes practical surveys of the 90 localizers labeled in CCD5 and compares with what they are labeled in SDMC. The comparative results are discussed and case studies of some specially labeled localizers are made at the same time.

It is found that the word classes of the localizers are dynamic and changeable. The word class conversions of the localizers are realized in the dynamic process of categorization, decategorization and recategorization. Behind the word class conversions of localizers, there is in –depth cognitive motivation and grammatical metaphor plays an important role. Grammatical metaphor is one mode of human being thinking, which is also an important mechanism of word class conversions. The POS labeling of the modern Chinese localizers in CCD5 is unpersuasive. Theoretically, localizers are semantic category, which does not correspond to the definition that word classes are classification of words in grammar. Practically, it is mismatched with the POS labeling standard of grammatical category in dictionary compilation, and results in the discordance of the POS labeling of modern Chinese localizers in CCD5 with the real situation of

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language use in Chinese community. Hence, the modern Chinese localizers should be recategorized into grammatical categories according to their own grammatical functions and correctly labeled in dictionaries on the basis of usage pattern surveys in the large balanced corpora.

This research is not only helpful in deepening the ontological study of Chinese grammar but also beneficial in modern Chinese lexicography, especially POS labeling.

前　言

词类是语法研究的基础，词类标注也是词典编撰的一个重要环节。作为中国最具有权威和影响力的词典，《现代汉语词典》（第5版）在其编撰历史上第一次系统标注了所有词的词类，其中方位词被划归为名词，和时间词一起作为名词附类。由于方位词的词类地位一直以来都有争议，《现汉》中方位词的词类标注是否合理，需要进一步的考证。同时，方位词在现代汉语语法体系中的词类地位也需要重新确认。

本研究基于北京大学现代汉语语料库和自建的《现代汉语词典》（第5版）及《现代汉语规范词典》（2004）方位词数据库，在定量研究的基础上，利用范畴化理论（包括去范畴化和再范畴化理论）及其生成机制语法隐喻来探讨《现代汉语词典》（第五版）中方位词的标注情况。本研究对《现代汉语词典》（第5版）中所标出的90个方位词的词类标注情况逐一进行了考察并与《现代汉语规范词典》（2004）进行了对比，对其对比结果进行讨论，同时对一些特别标注的方位词做了个案研究。

研究表明，方位词的词类是动态的，不断发展转化的。方位

词的词类转化在范畴化、去范畴化、再范畴化的动态过程中得到实现。方位词的词类转化背后有着深层的认知理据，其中语法隐喻扮演了重要角色。语法隐喻既是人类思维的方式之一，也是词类转化的一种重要机制。《现代汉语词典》（第5版）中方位词的标注有失偏颇。从理论上来讲，方位词是根据语义划分的词类，与词类是词在语法上的分类不相符；在实践上亦不符合词典根据语法范畴标注词类的标准，从而导致《现代汉语词典》（第5版）中方位词的词类标注情况与汉语社团语言使用事实不符的问题。因此应在利用大型平衡语料库调查其使用模式的基础上，根据其语法功能将方位词重新划归其所属的语法范畴并在词典中正确标注。

本研究不仅有助于深化汉语语法本体研究，同时也有助于改善现代汉语词典编撰工作，尤其是词类标注工作。

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Chapter One Introduction

With the spreading and researches of cognitive grammar, the studies of localizers in modern Chinese have turned to be a topic of general interest in recent years because of its close relationship with human cognition. As a special word class, modern Chinese localizers have been studied by many scholars from different aspects. Nevertheless, the word class status of modern Chinese localizers is still unsettled. As the most authoritative and influential modern Chinese dictionary, The Contemporary Chinese Dictionary (5th edition) (2005) (hereinafter CCD5 for short) treats modern Chinese localizers as a subcategory of noun. Whether the part of speech (hereinafter POS for short) labeling of modern Chinese localizers in CCD5 is reasonable or not still needs further investigation. Moreover, the word class status of modern Chinese localizers in modern Chinese grammar system needs further discussion. Thus, this research aims to make an empirical study of modern Chinese localizers to discuss whether modern Chinese localizers should be treated as a subcategory of noun or an independent word class or something else and further confirm

the word class status of modern Chinese localizers in modern Chinese grammar system. This chapter briefly introduces the motivations, ob jectives, methodology and layout of the thesis.

1.1 Motivations of the Research

Parts of speech (or word classes) constitute the cornerstone of grammar. The importance of words cannot be overstated since streams of words are the everyday channel for people's communication. Words are symbols which human beings take to refer to the diverse environment around them, as Bybee and Moder (1983, p. 267) claim that "speakers of natural language form categorizations of linguistic objects in the same way that they form categorizations of natural and cultural objects". If they want to handle effectively with this diversity, that is, to make finite word classes out of infinite words, the capacity of categorizing is a must. Word classes are generalized from syntactic structures and the aim of POS classification is to uncover the essence of word per se. (Guo Rui, 2002, p. 62) All in all, word classes in a way reflect the categorizing process of human mind and are vital to the construction of grammar as well as syntactic study.

The clarity of the POS system is beneficial for teaching Chinese as a foreign language. Pan Wenguo (1997, p. 96) pointed out that the birth of grammar always has something to do with teaching and learning a foreign language. According to records, the oldest works of grammar in Europe were written for pedagogical purpose. And also in

China, the earliest research on Chinese grammar was initiated by western missionaries. For example, the extant oldest book of Chinese grammar by Spanish missionary Francisco Varo already touched upon the problem of Chinese word classes. (Wang Renqiang, 2006, pp.4–5) No matter it is in western languages or Chinese, study of grammar is for the purpose of foreign language teaching and learning. Now with the ever increasing power of China and the popularity of Chinese culture throughout the world, more and more foreigners are learning Chinese as a second language. Therefore, a sound Chinese POS system will do good to these learners.

The urgency of POS labeling in Chinese monolingual dictionaries and Chinese–foreign dictionaries will stimulate Chinese word class study. POS labeling is the most direct representation of word class study. Since the publication of the first influential Chinese grammar book Ma Shi Wen Tong (the Chinese Grammar by Ma Jianzhong in 1898), systematic studies on Chinese word classes have lasted for over a hundred years. The 1950s has witnessed a large-scale discussion on Chinese POS issue, in which the existence of word classes in Chinese language was ascertained but divergence still remain as in aspects like: criteria of classification, numbers of word classes, subclasses of a certain word class, and the overlapping of word classes, etc. Due to theoretical defects, Chinese monolingual dictionaries have waited a long time before they are dealt with an overall POS labeling. For instance, the Chinese Contemporary

Dictionary (hereinafter referred to as CCD) did not make a comprehensive POS labeling until the publication of its 5th edition. However, the practice of an all-round POS labeling in Chinese dictionaries does not mean that theoretical and practical problems concerning Chinese word class are completely solved. Especially when it comes to dictionaries themselves, illogical phenomena often arise. So the users of dictionaries are left with nothing but confusion. The practice and exploration of POS labeling in dictionary compilation will definitely shed light on Chinese POS study.

Correct POS labeling is advantageous in helping dictionary users get a better understanding on lexical meanings and grammatical functions of words. Word class indication is an essential part of grammatical information provided by dictionaries. Jackson (1985, p. 55) asserted that "if a dictionary gives no other information of a grammatical nature, it is expected to indicate which part-of-speech or word-class a lexical item belongs to, …". When a comparison is made between a Chinese dictionary and an English dictionary of equal scale, the Chinese one is often found lacking in grammatical information, which of course is not beneficial for users to correctly manipulate the usage of words. So POS labeling, as the first step of grammatical marking, could be misleading if it is not done accurately.

POS labeling can be contributed to the systematization of the overall look of a dictionary. In terms of microstructure of dictionaries,

namely, the entries, POS labeling will stimulate the uniformity with explanation and exemplification of a dictionary entry. It lays some restrictions on the explanation since different POS assumes different structure of explaining, language structure and choices of examples. (Yong Heming, 2003, p.164) In terms of the macrostructure of a dictionary, only an overall POS labeling can manifest the completion of a dictionary. From the 1st to 4th edition, CCD only label some function headwords by means of giving directions, which always seems like a blemish in beauty.

The Chinese heat is spreading all over the world and Chinese is considered one of the most difficult languages to learn. Only by having a command of words which are used for making sentences, can they be said to begin the learning of Chinese. Therefore, word class is an indispensible problem confronted before them. The fact that a word can be categorized to a certain class implies that it has similar grammatical characteristics with other members of the class, which can lead to an analogical learning in the part of the language learner. For teachers who teach Chinese to foreign students, they don't even know how to define the POS of a word sometimes. All the above calls for an authoritative POS labeled Chinese dictionary to provide guideline for these issues.

Thus, motivations of this research can be presented from the following aspects.

Firstly, the word class status of localizers has been a point at issue

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