

# 转喻

## 在新闻语篇中的组织功能

Functions of Metonymy  
in News Text Organization

◎ 戴理敏 著

山东大学出版社

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## 前 言

近年来,随着认知语言学的发展,转喻已经逐渐被作为一种基本的认知与语言现象而引起关注。人们已经突破传统修辞学对转喻研究的限制,不再仅把转喻看作为词汇间的相互替代。转喻表达被广泛应用于日常交际,越来越多的研究试图揭示转喻在人类的认知与概念化中发挥的作用。目前,关于转喻的研究主要集中在揭示转喻的认知本质上,如转喻的定义、分类、与隐喻的关系以及在语用推理中的作用等,且几乎都是在词汇及句法层面展开的,很少涉及语法层面,而在语篇层面进行的转喻研究则更罕见。总之,转喻的语篇功能及其产生的语境效果等问题亟须深入研究。

本研究选择新闻语篇作为语料是基于以下两种考虑:首先,新闻语篇属于正式书面文体,研究转喻在新闻语篇中的组织功能可以揭示转喻在其他书面文体中的组织功能;其次,新闻语篇读者广泛且众多,是人们获取信息的重要途径,也是英语学习者重要的阅读材料来源。所以,本研究选择新闻语篇作为研究载体来研究转喻的语篇功能。研究语料主要选自英美主要新闻媒体网站,包括《纽约时报》、《华盛顿邮报》、有线电视新闻网(CNN)、《华尔街日报》、《卫报》、《观察家报》、英国广播电视公司(BBC)及《路透社》;新闻报道的内容涉及突发事件、外交、科技、经济、环境、政治、娱乐、体育等各个领域。

本研究综合了认知语言学对转喻研究的理论成果,认为语言的本质是转喻性的。本研究认为尽管转喻存在于语言形式、概念及真实世界的实体三个域,但语篇是概念世界的表征、不涉及真实世界中的实体,并在此之上提出转喻的“语言形式—概念”模式,将转喻涉及的三个域简化为两个,语言形式作为源域对目标概念提供心理通道。基于转喻表征的两个基本原则——邻近原则及因果原则,本研究将转喻分为整体—部分转喻及原因—结果转喻两类,并分别讨

论两种类型的转喻如何影响语篇组织。

研究发现,转喻的“语言形式—概念”模式能够对词汇及语法衔接手段提供认知解释:相同的语言形式激活不同的目标概念、不同的语言形式激活相同的目标概念、不同的语言形式激活的概念存在包含关系或者邻近关系都可以产生衔接力。整体—部分转喻与原因—结果转喻对应两种语篇组织模式:整体—部分模式及原因—结果模式。两种转喻各作用于语篇的不同层面,包括词汇、语法以及语篇;两种模式往往相互结合共同作用于语篇组织。新闻各组成部分之间的关系也存在整体—部分及原因—结果的转喻关系:新闻标题往往选择新闻事件认知模型中最重要的部分作为载体激活整个事件;导语是对标题的详述或补充,与标题激活的概念存在部分—整体或者部分—部分关系;标题与导语组成的摘要部分则与主要事件存在部分—整体关系;背景及后果与主要事件之间存在原因—结果关系。

本研究对真实语料进行分析,将转喻在词汇及句法层面的研究延伸到语篇层面,结合功能语言学与认知语言学的研究方法,扩展了研究领域。本研究从转喻角度建立了一个较为综合全面的分析框架对新闻语篇进行分析,不仅对新闻语篇分析具有重要意义,对书面语篇分析也有重要贡献。本研究之成果不仅可以弥补以往研究的不足,而且可以在对揭露语言奥秘感兴趣的语言研究者及学者中引起讨论。总之,研究转喻在新闻语篇中的组织功能无论在理论层面还是在实际应用层面都具有重要意义。

戴理敏

2016年1月

## List of Abbreviations

BBC	British Broadcasting Corporation
CDA	Critical Discourse Analysis
CG	Cognitive Grammar
CxG	Construction Grammar
CL	Cognitive Linguistics
CNN	Cable News Network
ICM	Idealized Cognitive Model
ISA	Indirect Speech Act
NYT	New York Times
NP	nominal phrase
RST	Rhetorical Structure Theory
SFL	Systemic Functional Linguistics
SAM	Speech Act Metonymy
SoA Scenario	State-of-Affair Scenario
VP	verbal phrase
WP	Washington Post
WSJ	Wall Street Journal

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# **Chapter 1**

## **Introduction**

Metonymy has been recognized as a fundamental cognitive and linguistic phenomenon which is pervasive both in spoken and written language. People have come to realize that metonymy is not just a process of substitution among words, as the majority of classical rhetorical works perceive it to be. However, most of the existing studies on metonymy are restricted to lexical and syntactical levels and little has been done to explore the roles of metonymy at the discourse level. In other words, textual functions of metonymy have been a much neglected area so far. This chapter introduces the research background, rationale for the study, research objectives and significance of the study, as well as organization of the study.

### **1.1 Research Background**

Like metaphor, metonymy has been traditionally treated as a figure of speech realized through “the transfer of the name of a thing to something else that is closely associated with it” (Bredin, 1984: 46). With cognitive linguistics gaining increasing attention in recent years, people have come to realize that metonymy is not just a process of substitution among words as most of the classical rhetorical works perceive it to be, but is a fundamental cognitive and linguistic phenomenon pervasive both in spoken and written language. Recent studies in cognitive

linguistics not only differentiate metonymy from metaphor and treat them as two distinct phenomena, but also elevate its status to one of the cognitive processes, a property of conceptual structure, a relation among concepts and not merely among words (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980), a way people conceptualize the world (Panther & Radden, 1999) and a mode of thinking “used automatically, effortlessly, and without conscious awareness” (Lakoff & Turner, 1989: 104).

Influenced by the rhetoric tradition which treated metonymy as a process of substitution, research on metonymy has been largely focused on its referential functions. Besides, metonymic expressions have been analyzed mainly at the lexical level, focusing on such issues as the role of metonymy in word formation and metonymy-motivated non-prototypical lexical meaning.

As metonymic expressions are so widely used in daily communication, more and more emphases have been put on the roles of metonymy as a conceptualizing capacity of human beings. In particular, most of the cognitive researches on metonymy have been focused on revealing the cognitive nature of metonymy, setting up definitional and typological criteria, studying the relationship between metonymy and metaphor and the roles of metonymy in semantic extension and pragmatic inferencing. Most of the researches on metonymy have been confined to analysis at the conceptual level, whereas the study of the potential impact of metonymy on linguistic structure has been largely neglected.

Jakobson (2003: 42) claims that “the development of a discourse may take place along two different semantic lines: one topic may lead to another either through their similarity or through their contiguity”. The former is the metaphoric way and the latter is the metonymic way. Both metaphor and metonymy are fundamental cognitive processes, and metonymy may be more fundamental than metaphor (Radden, 2000). Yet compared to the detailed investigations that metaphor undergoes, the functions of metonymy in organizing discourse are a much neglected area waiting to be explored.

## 1.2 Rationales for the Study

Based on actual language data, this study combines both the cognitive and

functional approaches to study the textual functions of metonymy with the ultimate goal to show that metonymy is far more than just a figure of speech applied only in the literary world but is an omnipresent everyday phenomenon in texts of any kind.

Traditional approach treats metonymy as a rhetorical trope while cognitive approach treats it as a conceptual and pragmatic phenomenon which is deeply rooted in human cognition (Panther & Radden, 2005). Both approaches focus on how metonymy affects the senses of words but cognitive linguists put more emphasis on the role of metonymy in affecting grammatical constructions. Recent studies have also paid increasing attention on the role of metonymy in pragmatic inferencing. Lots of outstanding works have come out concerning the roles of metonymy in indirect speech acts and functions of metonymy in utterance interpretation. It can be noticed that the focus of metonymy research has been shifted from the lexical level to the grammatical level. The textual roles of metonymy have already caught attention of some researchers, but a systematic study of metonymy at the textual level has not been shaped yet.

One of the most important textual functions of metonymy is to enhance cohesion and coherence, because two topical concepts are referred to by means of one linguistic form (Brdar & Brdar-Szabó, 2009). Revealing the functions of metonymy in achieving text coherence in terms of cohesion and organizational patterns is of great importance to reveal how metonymy organizes our language and makes a piece of news text a “meaningful whole”.

The text of the news media embraces two key components: the news story and the process involved in producing the texts (Cotter, 2001). The first dimension has been one of the major concerns of a range of academic areas, such as media research, cultural studies, CDA, semiotics, and rhetoric studies. Most of them focus on one of the following aspects: linguistic function or the impact of news media on shaping ideology. However, the second dimension, about the process involved in producing the texts or aspects of the production of news texts, has been drawing increasing interests but few significant works have come out. Focuses of these studies are confined to the syntactic structures or the semantic structures of news text and few of them have attempted to reveal the deep

structures of media language or the cognitive mechanisms behind the production of news texts. Therefore, this study provides a theoretical framework both for news text production and for interpretation.

News texts are one of the most familiar genres of language with distinct characteristics. There are lots of metonymic expressions in news texts, which makes the language of news text concise and economic. Exploring the functions of metonymy in news text organization is not merely an important contribution to the analysis of news texts but also help us understand the organization of written text in general. In modern times, news reporting has become an inseparable part in people's life and an important way of acquiring information about the world around. It is possible for people not to read novels or essays, but impossible for people not to read, hear or watch news reports of any kind, such as newspapers, online news reporting, or television and radio news broadcast. It can be said that news texts have a larger audience than texts of any other genre. Besides, lots of English learners use news texts as a source of reading materials. Therefore, an integrated analytical framework for news text analysis will also facilitate news text comprehension.

### 1.3 Research Objectives

Given the fact that text organization is multifaceted, and it is beyond the possibility to research into all the related aspects in one study, so the focus of the study falls upon the roles of metonymy in organizing clauses into larger units of language, such as passages or even the whole text, to show that metonymy is far more than just a figure of speech applied only in the literary world but is an omnipresent everyday phenomenon in texts of any kind. Therefore, the study is devoted to answering the following two questions:

(1) How does metonymy function to organize news texts in terms of text cohesion?

Much of the current research has agreed that text cohesion refers to the connections which have their manifestation in the text while coherence is a characteristic of the mental representation of the text rather than of the text itself.

To put it simply, coherence occurs in the readers or listeners' mind based on knowledge outside the text. If metonymy is a conceptual operation where one entity stands for another but both are activated or at least partially activated across the ontological realms of form and concept, then metonymy would be an efficient way to enhance text cohesion in the realm of form and coherence in the realm of concept. Halliday and Hasan (1976) distinguish two categories of cohesion: lexical cohesion and grammatical cohesion. Thus, the first objective of the study is to show how metonymy functions or what roles metonymy plays in lexical and grammatical cohesion in news texts.

(2) What patterns does metonymy demonstrate in organizing news text?

As a basic cognitive tool, metonymy functions at all levels of language use. The functions of metonymy in organizing news texts through cohesion may be regarded as functions of metonymy at the local level, and therefore, another question this research attempts to solve is how metonymy functions at the global level, i. e. what patterns metonymy demonstrates in news text organization. Cognitive linguistics argues that cognition determines our language which in turn is a reflection of our cognition. If metonymic relations are organized by contiguity and causality, then texts should be organized in Whole-Part patterns and Cause-Effect patterns, given the fact that contiguity is the guiding principle behind Whole-Part metonymy and causality is the guiding principle behind Cause-Effect metonymy.

## 1.4 Significance of the Study

The cognitive perspective holds that language is part of the human cognitive system which comprises perception, categorization, abstraction processes, and reasoning. All these cognitive abilities interact with language and are influenced by language. Thus, the perspective on language offered by Cognitive Linguistics emphasizes the effect of human experience of the world, the unique way humans perceive and conceptualize that experience, and how these are in turn reflected in the structure of language itself. As a cognitive process which is firmly rooted in our experience (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980), to reveal the functions of metonymy



in news text organization is of great significance both theoretically and practically.

In the first place, this study aims to expand the study on metonymy from the lexical and syntactical levels to the textual level. Although the past few decades have witnessed an increasing interest in the roles of metonymy as a conceptualizing capacity of human beings, the textual functions of metonymy are still an area waiting to be explored.

In the second place, this study is expected to open up a new prospect for discourse analysis. Although it is not new to apply cognitive methods in discourse studies, to study text organization from the perspective of metonymy is quite a new area. Based on actual language use, this research is another attempt to show how functional and cognitive linguistic approaches can complement each other in discourse studies.

In the third place, this study attempts to offer a relatively comprehensive and integrated framework for news texts production and interpretation from the perspective of metonymy.

## 1.5 Organization of the Study

This study consists of 9 chapters. Chapter 1 introduces the research background, rationales, objectives and significance of the study as well as the organization of this study.

Chapter 2 reviews the related studies accomplished by both foreign and domestic linguists, starting with an overview of the cognitive-functional approach to discourse studies, then a review of studies on news text organization and discourse studies from the perspective of metonymy, with the aim to highlight the potential academic contributions of the present study.

Chapter 3 starts with an elaboration of the theoretical foundations on which this research is based and then proposes a Form-Concept model of metonymy for analyzing the textual functions of metonymy. This chapter also elaborates on the theoretical framework for the study.

Chapter 4 elaborates on the methodology of the study, including the data sources, data collection and procedure of analysis.