

上海外国语大学教育发展基金会海富通基金资助出版

理解言语交际中的语用模糊

——综合语用模型研究

UNDERSTANDING PRAGMATIC VAGUENESS:
AN INTEGRATED MODEL

朱青 著



同济大学出版社
TONGJI UNIVERSITY PRESS

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内 容 简 介

模糊性是人类言语交际的重要特点。几个世纪以来,模糊性一直是学术研究的重要课题,以其独特的魅力使众多学者为之着迷。本书对语用模糊与语义模糊进行了区分,并对语用模糊作了重新分类。构建了一个新的语用模型,即 CRAP 模型,并运用这一模型阐释语用模糊的话语是如何产生和被人理解的。本书对于帮助读者更好地理解并策略性地使用语用模糊,从而避免言语冲突、构建和谐的语言使用环境将起到一定的积极作用。

本书可供高校语言文学类专业本科生、研究生及广大语言爱好者参考。

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序

语言中的模糊现象一经被人指出便引发了众多学者的关注和研究,从而积累了大量的文献。尤其是在语用研究的触角进入到这个研究领域后,对模糊语言的研究更是从句法和语义的层面向语用层面深化。本书便是对模糊语言所进行的一个语用研究。

近年所见的对模糊语言的语用研究大都应用几个主要的语用理论对这个现象进行解读。本书的一大创新之处在于作者朱青大胆地提出了一个把语用研究中四个最有影响的理论,即 Grice 的合作原则、Sperber 和 Wilson 的关联理论、Verschueren 的顺应论以及 Brown 和 Levinson 基于“面子”的礼貌理论进行综合,扬长避短,进行合理的整合,充分发挥这四个具有不同来源和取向的理论的解释潜力,构建成一个被他简称为 CRAP 的模式来解读模糊语言。建构这一模式的想法是大胆的,但并非脱离实际,通过运用该模式对模糊语言的解释,我们看到这一模式的确可信有效,是具有解释力的。

作者在建构这个模式的过程中做了一系列具有学术意义的铺垫工作。其中之一便是对模糊语言的界定和整理。对模糊语言的理解似乎本身就有点模糊性,究竟哪些语言现象属于模糊语言这个最基本的问题在以往的不少研究中还缺乏一个十分明晰的答案。作者对这个问题给出了自己的回答,比较明确地划出了模糊语言的范畴界线,并提出了分类的标准。这无疑为今后的模糊语言研究提供了一个颇有价值的可以参照的依据。

我和朱青相识多年,觉得他是一个性格内敛、不善言辞的人。作为学生,他十分用功;作为教师,他十分认真;在做科研

时,他又是十分执著。他秉性中的这种特质,我想在这部专著中也得到了充分的反映,不论是在内容上还是文字上。

在这部专著出版之时,朱青刚过而立之年,不论是教学还是科研,他前面的路还很长,可供他施展才华的空间还很大。我希望,也深信在不久的将来,朱青会有更多的成就向我们展示。

上海外国语大学

何兆熊

2009年12月

Preface

Vagueness is a ubiquitous phenomenon in human verbal communication. It is often used to denote a vast multitude of linguistic phenomena. For centuries vagueness has been a major topic for academic investigation. Its fascination beckons many. Language can be vague in different ways, and scholars have adopted divergent approaches to vagueness.

Although there is a considerable literature on vagueness in the traditional sense of the word, to date, the topic of pragmatic vagueness has not been seriously addressed. The main thrust of the current book is the proposal of a new pragmatic model, the CRAP model, which integrates four theoretical perspectives, namely, Grice's co-operative principle (CP), Sperber and Wilson's relevance theory (RT), Verschueren's adaptation theory (AT) and Brown and Levinson's face-based theory of politeness. Our new model owes its genesis to, and is inspired by, these four theories of verbal communication, which have divergent origins and theoretical orientations. However, our model has refined and modified its precursors and not all their characteristics have been inherited. This new model is applied to explaining the production and interpretation of pragmatically vague utterances. Adopting Sperber's (1996) massively modular approach, we view the interpretation of pragmatic vagueness as a non-linear modular process within a massively modular

mind.

This major objective is achieved on the basis of, and subsequent to, the fulfillment of other preliminary tasks, among which is the differentiation between pragmatic vagueness and semantic vagueness. This distinction roughly dovetails with the opposition between ordinary language philosophy and ideal language philosophy. Naturally-occurring examples attest to the fact that pragmatic vagueness is a strategy we can adopt to our advantage. An investigation of natural language, including vague language, ought to take account of the pragmatic aspect, i. e. the user's intention and the circumstances in which it occurs.

When it comes to the taxonomy of pragmatic vagueness, what we discover so far is often an unsystematic assortment of linguistic phenomena, such as approximation, fuzziness, generality, ambiguity, metaphor, meiosis, irony, hyperbole, etc. In the current book, an attempt is made to come to grips with the vexed problem of categorizing pragmatic vagueness in a principled way by adopting a systematic and consistent standard. We classify pragmatic vagueness along two dimensions: (1) the locus of vagueness; (2) the way of generation. In this classificatory scheme, we argue that pragmatic vagueness occurs on three levels of language use, namely, quality, quantity and relation, categories attributed to the German philosopher Kant. On each level, pragmatic vagueness can be generated by either observing or flouting the maxims of Grice's CP.

前言

模糊性是人类言语交际中的普遍现象。它经常被用来表征诸多不同的语言现象。几个世纪以来,模糊性一直是学术研究的重要课题,其独特的魅力使众多学者为之着迷。语言的模糊性可以从不同的方面展现出来,而学者们也从不同的视角对这一特性进行了研究。

尽管已经有数量相当可观的文献对传统意义上的模糊性进行了讨论,但是迄今为止,对语用模糊的研究仍然不成气候。本书的一项主要任务就是要构建一个新的语用模型,即 CRAP 模型。此模型综合了四个理论视角,即格莱斯(Grice)的合作原则、斯珀伯(Sperber)和威尔逊(Wilson)的关联理论、维索尔伦(Verschuieren)的顺应论以及布朗(Brown)和莱文森(Levinson)基于“面子”的礼貌理论。我们的新模型在受到这四个有着不同来源和取向的关于言语交际的理论启发的同时,对它们进行了修正和完善,而并未全盘保留其各自的所有特点。这一新模型被用于阐释语用模糊的话语的产生和理解过程。尤其是在理解这一方面,我们采纳了斯珀伯(Sperber, 1996)的多重模块化的观点,将语用模糊的理解看作是多重模块化的心智结构中的一个非线性模块化的过程,并进行了相应的分析。

为了达到以上主要目标,我们先完成了一些任务作为铺垫,例如,对语用模糊与语义模糊的区分。这两者之间的分野大致同日常语言哲学与理想语言哲学的区别相吻合。取自自然语言的例子证明,语用模糊是我们加以利用的一种策略。对于自然语言(包括模糊语言)的探索也应该考虑语用层面,即语言使用者的意图以及该语言出现的场合。

在语用模糊的分类问题上,我们迄今所能见到的只是五花八门的语言现象的杂乱、不系统的堆砌,例如,约略、含糊、笼统、歧义、比喻、弱陈、讽刺及夸张等。本书采用统一的标准,对语用模糊进行统一、合理的分类。我们在两个维度上对语用模糊进行分类:(1)模糊的发生层面;(2)模糊的产生方式。在此分类体系中,语用模糊发生在三个层面上,即质、量和关系。这三个层面源自德国哲学家康德的三个范畴。在每一个层面上,通过遵守或违反格莱斯合作原则的准则都可以产生语用模糊。

著者

2010年7月

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Chapter One

Introduction

1.1 Object of the research

Ours is a species distinguished by its superior linguistic ability. Language is our legacy. It is the main evolutionary contribution of humans, and perhaps the most fascinating trait that has emerged in the past 500 million years. Language is a crucial part of human behaviour and a cultural object defining our social identity.

Verbal communication, effected through the medium of language, is an activity specific to human beings. We partake in it every day, with friends and with strangers, at work and at play, in public and in private. We communicate our happiness, our sadness, our desires, our doubts and our beliefs. We make requests, pay compliments, offer advice, lodge complaints, deliver warnings, extend invitations, issue orders and place bets.

When a proficient language user is engaged in the complexities of these speech events, his linguistic repertoire is fascinating and constitutes compelling topics of investigation for linguists. An uncanny ability within this repertoire is the use of vague expressions. Sometimes a speaker makes use of

language straightforwardly or unequivocally, calling a spade a spade. Often, however, the speaker beats about the bush by opting for vague or imprecise language, with a specific purpose in mind.

Vagueness is a ubiquitous phenomenon in human verbal communication. It is often used to denote a vast multitude of linguistic phenomena; in other words, language can be vague in different ways. For example, philosophers, such as Plato, Descartes, Hume and Russell, conceived of all linguistic expressions as more or less vague. Their common concern was the removal of vagueness, which, in their view, was detrimental to understanding. In particular, Russell viewed all colour terms, such as “red”, as vague. He (1918/1985) remarked that “[e]verything is vague to a degree you do not realize till you have tried to make it precise”. On Russell’s account, the same kind of vagueness even exists in quantitative words such as “metre” and “temperature”. Although one of the major characteristics of science is precision, he considers scientific concepts such as “temperature” and “metre” vague on grounds that “temperature cannot be measured with more than a certain degree of accuracy” and that “all observations have a margin of error” (Russell, 1923)⁸⁶.

Outside the sphere of philosophy, real-life examples of vague language are also legion. For example, when the chairman of a teachers’ organization is inviting a person to

join, this prospective member inquires, "What does this organization do?" To this inquiry, the chairman replies, "We try to further the interests of teachers". The inquirer may still feel at a loss and consider the answer vague, in the "folk" sense. To dispel the vagueness, the chairman may make an effort to be more specific: "We try to improve conditions at school and to raise the salaries of teachers". While this explication serves to clarify the objectives of the organization, it is still too general, say, to the inquirer. "I know, vaguely," he might say, "what your organization does, but could you be more specific?" The chairman may then provide more details, for example, the activities the organization engages in. Obviously, conventional wisdom seems to equate vagueness with generality.

Peirce illustrated the use of vague language with the sentence "a man whom I could mention seems to be a little conceited". He viewed it as vague on grounds that

- (1.1) ... it reserves further determination to be made in some other conceivable sign ... The suggestion here is that the man in view is the person addressed; but the utterer does not authorize such an interpretation or any other application of what she says. She can still say, if she likes, that she does not mean the person addressed.

(Peirce, 1934)⁴⁴⁷

Her expression "a man whom I could mention" was considered

vague because it referred to the person addressed, by virtue of her tone.

Vagueness is also a perennial topic in poetry. Sometimes the language has to be simplified, which leads to vagueness. Take the following poem submitted by I. A. Richards to a number of people for comment:

(1.2) What's this of death, from you who never will die?

Think you the wrist that fashioned you in clay,
The thumb that set the hollow just that way
In your full throat and lidded the long eye
So roundly from the forehead, will let die
Broken, forgotten, under foot some day
Your impeachable body, and so slay
The work he most had been remembered by?

I tell you this; whatever of dust to dust
Goes down, whatever of ashes may return
To its essential self in its own season
Loveliness such as yours will not be lost,
But cast in bronze upon his very urn,
Make known him Master, and for what good reason.

This vague poem elicited different responses from the people who were asked to read and comment on it:

(1.3) The mere sense of this poem baffled an unusually large number of readers. Of 62 who returned protocols, 17 declare themselves bewildered; 14 appear to have fathomed it — that is to say they