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题　　目 Understanding Metonymy

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Understanding Metonymy

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Abstract

Metonymy, together with metaphor, is claimed to be the most widely used figure of speech. Unlike metaphor, which has been widely studied as an essential way of thinking in the past decades, metonymy has received far less attention, though it also plays an important role in human life and occurs frequently in language use.

The paper begins by giving a brief survey on the traditional and rhetorical views of metonymy, then it points out that the traditional views restrict metonymy to the names of things, mere substitution of names, and real-world contiguity. On the above basis, the paper analyzes some modern cognitive ideas of metonymy, which has broadened our understanding of metonymy by delimiting the weaknesses of the traditional notions.

The paper holds that metonymy should be interpreted not just as a matter of names but as a conceptual phenomenon, not as simply substituting one entity for another entity but as a cognitive process in which one more salient conceptual entity mentally accesses another entity, and not just as a type of language but as reflecting a significant form of human cognition. The notion of "contiguity" is not merely located in the world of reality but at the conceptual level and operating within one idealized cognitive model. Thus metonymy is quite diverse and exhibits itself

in a variety of forms in language. In this paper, many metonymic uses, such as tautologies and the use of present tense, which are excluded from consideration in the traditional views, have been taken into account, thus revealing comprehensively the pervasive and fundamental characters of metonymy and the importance of metonymy in human thinking and reasoning as well as in daily language uses. The paper proposes that the understanding of metonymy relies heavily on our metonymic ways of thinking and reasoning. Since in communication, people tend to use the most salient aspect of an object, idea, or event to refer to the object, idea, or event as a whole, the understanding of metonymy must mainly involve the recognition of the salient part of an object, idea, or event as a whole. This infer-whole-from-part mode of thinking and reasoning speeds our cognition of the whole world, quickens the process of reasoning and makes it possible to promote the efficiency in communication, and moreover, it provides much better explanations as to why people draw conversational implicatures quickly in dialogues. In this sense, the paper concludes that metonymy is not only an economical way of expressing but also a very powerful and efficient tool for resolving difficult problems in communication.

Key words: metonymy salient cognition

idealized cognitive model

metonymic mode of thinking

metonymic mode of reasoning

摘 要

转喻和隐喻一直被认为是使用最广泛的修辞手段。在过去的二十年里，隐喻作为一种重要的思维方式得到了广泛而深入的研究。然而转喻的研究没有引起语言学家们足够的注意，虽然转喻作为一种全人类所共有的普遍的认知模式，在人类生活和交际中也起着重要的作用。

本文首先对传统的转喻观作了简要的介绍，然后指出这些传统观点的局限性。在此基础上，文章提出了一些新的认知转喻观。文章认为转喻是用事物的突显属性来指称其另一相关属性或事物整体，一个概念、一种事态、一个事件都可以用作转喻；喻体和喻标的关系也不局限于客观世界，而是一切可感知的事物之间的联系，这种联系只发生在概念层面上，反映一种认知过程。认知语言学的观点摈弃了传统观点的局限性，大大拓宽了转喻的研究范围。转喻不仅存在于文学和诗歌中，也广泛使用于日常话语和习语。

一个物体、一个概念、一种事态、一件事件有很多属性，在认识世界的过程中，人们往往更多地注意到其最突出、最容易记忆和理解的属性，也就是突显属性。而一个物体、一个概念、一种事态、一件事件的某个突显属性也往往使人联想到其整体。这种人类认识客观世界的普遍规律在转喻语言的使用中起着重要的作用。文章认为，这种认识同样适用于对转喻语言的理解。因为在使用转喻语言时，人们通常用事物的某个突显属性来指称其整体，而在理解转喻语言时，这个突显属性又会激活事物整体。基于以上认识，文章进一步指出，对转喻的理解应建立在这种人类共有的转喻性的思维及推理方式上。这种转喻性的认知、思维及推理方式大大提高了人们使用和理解语言的速度，可以用来很好地解释许多复杂的语言使用和话语理解中的问题。这些观点也进一步证明了认知语言学家们对转喻的研究，即转喻已不只一种语言现象，它更应该是一种高效的认知手段和人类所共有的普遍的思维方式。

关键词：转喻 突显 认知 理想认知模式 转喻式思维模式 转喻式推理模式

Chapter 1 Introduction

Traditionally, metonymy is regarded as a figure of speech, which, along with other figurative modes of thought, is commonly used to produce rhetorical effects as in humor, jargon, persuasion, literature, slang, poetry and the like. In one word, it is basically thought of as a special

linguistic form. Together with metaphor, metonymy is claimed to be the most widely used figures of speech. Ullmann (1979: 223) points out the importance of metonymy in his study of ellipsis by saying "The four cardinal types (metaphor, metonymy, ellipsis and popular etymology) are very different in scope. Metaphor is by far the most important of the four, but metonymy too is an extremely common process". He further states that "A language without ellipsis and popular etymology would be a perfectly adequate medium of communication, whereas a language without metaphor and metonymy is inconceivable: these two forces are inherent in the basic structure of human speech" (Ullmann 1979: 223). But things that happened in the past decades have raised metaphor to a much more important status than metonymy as well as other figures of speech. In 1980, Lakoff and Johnson claimed in their work *Metaphors We Live By* that figurative language involved basic cognitive processes rather than special usage. In this book, they mainly dealt with metaphor research and devoted only a single chapter to metonymy. They seemed to imply that metonymy was a minor process in comparison. Since then, metaphor has been widely studied and has been accepted as an essential part in daily language, an important way of thinking and an efficient cognitive tool. Compared with metaphor, metonymy has received far less concern. Luckily, more and more scholars have realized its importance in daily life, language and thought. We can find such comments in some books and articles. For example, Taylor (2001: 122- 124) remarks that metonymy has received little discussion in comparison to metaphor. He takes a broad view of metonymy which contains not only traditional metonymy (e.g., "pen" is for what is written by the pen; and "head" is for person) but also context-dependent examples ("The pork chop left without paying" in a restaurant background and the like) and common contextual modulations of meaning as in "Open the door" and "He walked through the door" (the first "door" highlights the moving part of the structure while the second refers to the aperture created when the moving part is opened). For Taylor, it is not surprising that metonymy turns out to be one of the most fundamental processes of meaning extension, more basic, perhaps, even than metaphor.

Recent years has seen an increasing interest in the role of metonymy. Experts from various fields have conducted linguistic, psycholinguistic, psychological and literary studies on this realm. Several studies seem to indicate that metonymy is catching up with metaphor as a relevant area of study in such fields as language, cognition, communication and thinking. As the research carries on, a growing number of people have become aware of the fact that metonymy is not only a way of expressing ideas by means of language, but also a way of thinking about things and that metonymy, together with metaphor, is a powerful cognitive tool for our conceptualization of abstract categories. Metonymy plays an important part in human life and occurs frequently in language use. So it must be worthwhile studying metonymy from the cognitive view. In present study of metonymy, some show concern for its theoretical aspects (e.g., Fauconnier & Turner 1999, Warren 1999), others pay much attention to its historical aspects (e.g., Koch 1999, Goosens 1999), and still others show special interest in its case studies (e.g., Panther & Thornburg 1999, Dirven 1999), its applications (e.g., Pankhurst 1999), or the interaction between metonymy and metaphor (e.g., Barcelona 2000, Turner & Fauconnier 2000). But no matter what aspect they choose, a full research on the understanding of metonymy is hardly seen.

This paper will place emphasis on the understanding of metonymy in various language forms and at different language levels. It begins with the understanding of metonymy itself. In chapter two, a brief survey on the traditional and rhetorical views of metonymy as well as their limitations are given. One point must be mentioned that synecdoche, which is sometimes treated as a separate category of figure, is also taken as a subtype of metonymy in this thesis because there is no need to take them apart. In the third chapter, some modern cognitive ideas of metonymy are introduced. These ideas differ from the traditional ones in offering a rather broader understanding of metonymy. Metonymy is not just seen as a type of language but reflects a significant form of human cognition.

The fourth chapter illustrates the uses of metonymy in language. Chapter 5 is the most important part of this thesis—trying to explain how people interpret metonymies. It begins by an attempt at making a distinction between metonymy and metaphor, the two confusing terms. Next, the focus will be set on the understanding of tautologies, the present tense for a habitual or future event and simple tense for a potential event as metonymy. Then, the paper presents a demonstration of how people understand metonymies at different language levels by metonymic ways of thinking and reasoning. It shows that metonymies are powerful and effective in our comprehension of events, concepts, conversations and texts. Finally, in chapter 6, there is a brief conclusion on all the aspects of metonymy this paper has penetrated into.

Chapter 2 Traditional View of Metonymy

At first, metonymy, as well as synecdoche, was regarded as two of the four classes of "metaphors" by Aristotle in his *Poetics* (at that time, they were not called metonymy and synecdoche). The first real definition of metonymy was found in the *Rhetorica ad Herennium*. In this book, metonymy was seen as a figure of speech which involved change of a word to a closely related or neighbouring one. The key terms in the traditional views of metonymy used to be "change of names" and the terms like "related, neighbouring, associated, close, or near". In other words, metonymy means the use of the name of one thing for that of another related to it. This substituted name may be closely associated with the substitution. In this narrow sense, metonymies are usually limited to sources like names of persons, animals, professions, locations or place names, etc.. The following examples may be familiar to us:

Names of persons

e.g. "Uncle Sam" for the United States of America;

"John Bull" for England or the English people;

"Ivan" for the Russian people;

"John Doe" for ordinary American citizen.

nimals

e.g. "British Lion" for England or the English government;

"the bear" for the former Soviet Union or the Soviet government.

Parts of the body

e.g. "heart" for feelings or emotions;

"head and brain" for wisdom, intelligence, reason;

"gray hair" for old age.

Professions

e.g. “the bar” for the legal profession;

“the bench” for position of judge or magistrate;

“the press” for newspapers or newspaper reporters.

Locations of government, of business or industrial enterprises

e.g. “Downing Street” for the British government or cabinet;

“the Pentagon” for the U.S. military establishment.

Synecdoche is also a figure of speech which consists of using the part for the whole or the whole for the part. In synecdoche, the species may stand for the genus, or the genus for the species (“man” for “husband;” “Tom, Dick and Harry” for “average person”); name of material may substitute the thing made of it (“copper” for “money made of this metal;” “watercolour” for “a picture painted with watercolors”); the container may replace the thing contained in it or vice versa (“The kettle is boiling” for “the water in the kettle is boiling;” “Two beers, please.” for “two glasses of beer”); and the thing worn may stand for the person who wears it (“plain clothes” for “public security personnel in plain clothes”; “red cap” for “porter”).

But people often get confused with these two figures of speech, because both of them involve substitution and in both cases, the substituting word is used in a transferred sense and the relationship between the substitution and the substituted are so near that the mention of one naturally calls the other to mind. On most occasions, it is rather difficult to tell the difference between synecdochic relations and metonymic relations.

In fact, synecdoche itself is a highly problematic type of figure of speech. Take “The kettle is boiling” for example, one may easily question “What is the relation between a kettle and the water in it”? Obviously, the water is not part of the kettle, but is just in contact with it or associated with it. Another example also gives rise to a question. When we say “Your nose is running”, we know “your nose” refers to the mucus running out of the nose. Is the mucus a part of, or just associated with, the nose? The same is true of “the name for the thing made”, “the species for the genus or vice versa” and “the thing worn for the wearer”. As to the subtypes “part for whole, whole for part”, we can see that almost all their examples overlap with those in metonymy. All these uncertainties reveal that the traditional definition of synecdoche is rather vague and fuzzy. Since all its subtypes involve a substitution of names only related to each other just as those in metonymy but not exactly “part for whole or whole for part”, there in fact exists no essential difference between synecdoche and metonymy.

On the basis of the above survey, we believe that it is artificial to separate metonymy and synecdoche and in addition, there is no need to draw a clear-cut distinction between them. Most linguists take synecdoche as a part of metonymy (e.g., Ullmann, Lakoff, Taylor, Gibbs). In Chinese, there is a figure called “Jie dai”, which is similar to English “metonymy” and “synecdoche”. The famous rhetoricians Chen Wangdao in his book 《修辞学发凡》 and Li Guonan in 《辞格与词汇》 also define synecdoche as a part of metonymy.

As for the classification of metonymy, different people have different criteria. For example, Ullmann (1979) classifies metonymy under a general type of contiguity, i.e., spatial, temporal and causal contiguity. However, the most common traditional approach to classify metonymy is to give

more or less complex lists of its types. The best-known cases of metonymy in traditional sense are expressions that are used for the purpose of indirect referring:

(i) Using a part to stand for the whole (part for whole). For example, we use “red breast” for the bird “robin”. We use “hand, face, head, or leg, etc.” to stand for a person such as “count heads” for “count people”, and “a green hand” for “an inexperienced person”. In such situations, the body part that is understood to be most crucially involved in the whole is metonymically highlighted. Sometimes even more abstract things such as “hearing”, “intellect”, or “control” tend to be metonymically expressed by one of their concrete parts. Thus, “ear” may stand for “hearing”, “brain” for “intellect” and “hand” for “control” as in “Things got out of hand.” for “Things got out of control”.

(ii) Some animals, human types and social classes are often called after some characteristic features. “Gray hairs, plain clothes, red cap, redcoat” are such examples. In Chinese, we have “皓首，白大褂，布衣，便衣”.

(iii) Inventions and discoveries are often named after the person who is responsible for them. When a physicist says that one “ampere” is the current that one “volt” can send through one “ohm”, he is commemorating three great pioneers in physics: the Frenchman Andre Ampere, the Italian Cound Alessandro Volta, and the German Georg Simon Ohm. In Chinese, we have “杜康”.

(iv) Some products are often named after their places of origin or the names of brand. Champagne, china, japan, coca-cola, 茅台, 龙井 are such examples.

(v) The contents are called after the containers or vice versa. This type is one of the major spatial metonymy. We often use “to drink a glass” for “to drink a glass of beer, wine or alcohol”, “The milk tipped over” for “The milk bottle tipped over”.

(vi) Producers’ names can be used to call the products. In “That was a truly beautiful Picasso”, “Picasso” is a painting by the famous artist Picasso, while in “I’ve got a Ford”, “Ford” refers to the Ford company.

(vii) Scales are a special class of things and the scalar units are parts of them. Typically, a scale as a whole is used to stand for its upper end and the upper end of a scale is used to stand for the scale as a whole. In “Age had given his face a sort of crumpled look”, “age” means “being old”. “How much does it cost?” means “What is the price?”. Here “age” is defined as the whole scale but we locate it at the upper end of the scale. The mention of the upper end of the scale in “much” activates the whole scale “price”, and it is only for special purpose that the lower end of a scale may be used as in “How short are you?”.

(viii) The name of an institution or a place may stand for an influential person or a group of influential persons who work in the institution or place and this kind of metonymies are reversible. For example, we can use “The whole town showed up” for “The people in the town showed up”. In “The French hosted the World Cup Soccer Games”, “The French” is for “France”.

(ix) Possessor can stand for the thing possessed and the thing possessed can stand for the possessor. For instance, “I’m parked over there” is for “My car is parked over there”. In “He married money”, “money” stands for “person with money”. This type of metonymy is hardly noticeable.

(x) People tend to call the thing controlled after the controller or the controller after the controlled. For example, the most natural paraphrase for the sentence “Nixon bombed Hanoi” appears to be “those who Nixon controlled bombed Hanoi”. In “The buses are on strike”, “the buses” refers to “the bus drivers”.

The above examples are only some important types of metonymy we use in our daily life. However, they are only a small part of it. There exist so many metonymies that they cannot be listed completely in this paper. Other common metonymies are “tools for tool users or related things”, “materials for products”, “cause for effect or effect for cause”, “instrument for product or product for instrument”, etc..

From all the above listed metonymies we can find that there are at least three common features in them. That is, they are all restricted to names of things, involve a process of substituting one noun for another and they arise between words already related to each other (this relationship was put forward by Leonce Roudet as “contiguity” in 1921). Actually, these three features suggest the most important elements in traditional rhetoric definitions of metonymy. In other words, no matter how people define metonymy, their definitions must contain such three elements. What makes these definitions different is people’s intention of emphasizing different elements. Let’s have a brief review on some of these definitions.

According to Ungerer and Schmid (2001:115), as a figure of speech, metonymy involves a relation of “contiguity” (nearness or neighborhood) between what is denoted by the literal meaning of a word and its figurative meaning. It is clear that they intend to lay emphasis on the contiguity relationship between the words. The notion of “contiguity” is also looked upon as an important element to distinguish metonymy from metaphor.

Many standard definitions are in accordance with the one given in *Webster’s New Collegiate Dictionary* (1977: 724) which describes metonymy as “a figure of speech consisting of the use of the name of one thing for that of another of which it is an attribute or with which it is associated”. We can see that what they want to emphasize is the concept “substitution”. In fact, all traditional definitions claim that metonymy operates on names of things, involves the substitution of the name of one thing for that of another thing and assumes that the two things are somehow associated or contiguous.

Chapter 3 The Cognitive Theory of Metonymy

The cognitive comprehension of metonymy is certainly different from the traditional views, which has strongly been influenced by centuries of rhetorical and literary studies. Some modern scholars have made researches on metonymy and stressed the importance of metonymy (Ungerer and Schmid 2001, Feyaerts 1999, Goosens 1999, Taylor 2001, 李国南2001, etc.). They share the assumption that metonymy is a cognitive phenomenon underlying much of our ordinary thinking and the use of metonymy in language is a reflection of its conceptual status. However, there is no definition on which cognitive linguists agree in every detail, they even differ in the conceptual framework within which metonymy is understood. The terms they frequently use are: scripts, scenes, frames, scenarios, domains or domain matrix and idealized cognitive models (ICMs). Within these models or frameworks, a metonymic link may be established between two conceptual entities in the broadest sense. To put it more clearly, in metonymy, concepts like vehicle and target, are quite often considered parts of those greater conceptual networks which are static or dynamic mental representation of typical situations in life and their typical elements. Usually concepts within them are related by conceptual contiguity.

After a careful study on the various cognitive definitions, this paper holds that, apart from the different frameworks, these definitions have something in common. That is, generally, they view metonymy as being conceptual in nature as well as having a cognitive basis. The difference lies in the degrees to which these elements are stressed. For example, Taylor (2001: 123-124) observes that "the essence of metonymy resides in the possibility of establishing connections between entities which co-occur within a given conceptual structure". His view is rather weak concerning the cognitive process in saying "establishing connections between entities". As for "the conceptual nature", he only remarks vaguely "the entities need not be contiguous, in any spatial sense" (Taylor 2001: 124). And no further details can be found in his definition about these two elements.

Blank (1999) defines metonymy as a linguistic device based on salient conceptual relations within a frame-network. In his definition, "salient" is a very important notion in cognitive view of metonymy. But he fails to point out the cognitive process of metonymy. This weakness holds true for most of the definitions. On the basis of the above findings, this paper proposes that Lakoff's view of metonymy can be regarded as the most representative one because his definition best captures the metonymic process. Although Radden & Kovecses (1999) have made a similar definition, their definition is based on Lakoff's. In his framework, Lakoff believes that metonymy is understood as a conceptual process in which one conceptual entity, the target, is made mentally accessible by means of another conceptual entity, the vehicle, within the same ICM. Thus, we can conclude that a good understanding of metonymy should contain at least three crucial elements. Namely, metonymy should a) be conceptual in nature; b) be a cognitive process; c) operate within one idealized cognitive model. These three elements can be considered as arising in the process of delimiting the traditional notions. The following paragraphs will demonstrate the details.

a. Metonymy as being conceptual in nature

By claiming that metonymy is conceptual in nature, we mean that it is not just a matter of names of things or nouns. Lakoff and Johnson (1980) believes that, metonymy, like metaphor, is part of our everyday way of thinking, is grounded in experience, is subject to general and systematic principles and structures our thoughts and actions. Gibbs (1999) thinks that the impulse to speak and think with metonymy is a significant part of our everyday experience. He holds that metonymy shapes the way we think and speak of ordinary events and is the basis for many symbolic comparisons in art and literature. To take "She has just a pretty face" as an example, it illustrates the general conceptual nature of metonymy. Usually we derive the basic information about a person from the person's face. For instance, when we think of a person, we must first think of his or her face. In everyday life, we are often asked to give photos of our faces (but not photos of hands, legs, back, etc.) for certain certificate. For identifying purpose, the police often provide a criminal's photos of his face. The conceptual metonymy "The face for the person" is therefore part of our everyday way of thinking about people.

The conceptual nature of metonymy is even more clearly presented in the structure of categories. Cognitive linguists believe that a typical member of a category may stand for the whole category and thereby account for prototype effects. Other members are accepted into the category on the basis of their perceived resemblance to the prototype and their degrees of membership are based on degrees of similarity (also called family resemblance). These salient members may not even have a name so that the metonymic transfer merely operates at the conceptual level. Thus "salient" and "prototype" are presented as two crucial concepts into the cognitive view of metonymy. Usually, the word "mother" makes us think of housewife mothers. In cognitive view, "housewife mother" is the stereotypical subcategory. Other members like adoptive mother, stepmother, unmarried mother, etc. are much less typical members. They do not occur frequently in our mind unless in certain specific

cases. So, naturally, we tend to think of the category "mother" in terms of the stereotypical member. Since most categories have prototypical structure, we may conclude that basically all categories have metonymic structure.

Cognitive linguists declare that we rely on models of the concrete world to conceptualize abstract phenomena. That is, our conceptualization of abstract phenomena is based on our experience with people, everyday objects, actions and events. Thus we conceptualize not only objects but also events, actions, etc.. For example, when you go to see a doctor and tell him the symptoms like "sneezing," "coughing" and so on, the doctor may say, "You've got a bad cold". You succeed in communicating because you have picked out the typical members of a category (sneezing, coughing) to describe the category as a whole (cold). Another example is when you have a fever, you usually say "I have a temperature". In this expression, "temperature" is a metonymy. Although you do not realize this metonymic way of expressing, at a second thought, you may find a lot of such cases in daily language use. So, it must be reasonable to claim that many metonymies, if not most, do not show up in language. Till now, it must be safe for us to make a conclusion that the use of metonymic expressions in language is primarily a reflection of general conceptual metonymies and is motivated by general cognitive principles. All metonymies are ultimately conceptual in nature. On this view, the traditional claim of metonymy as "names of things" seems too narrow and limited.

b. Metonymy as being a cognitive process

The traditional view defines metonymy as a relationship involving substitution. This view is reflected in the notation generally used for stating metonymic relationship, namely, "X stands for Y." In the above example of "She has just a pretty face", the name "face" is thus taken to be a substitute expression for person, so that the sentence is supposed to mean "She is just a pretty person". Although "She is just a pretty person" suggests that, most importantly, she has a pretty face, this cannot be the whole meaning of "She has just a pretty face" because the latter carries the implicature "she is not pretty all over". The two metonymies, "the face for the person" and "the person for the face" thus complement each other: A person's face evokes the person and a person evokes the person's face. Metonymy does not simply substitute one entity for another entity, but interrelates them to form a new, complex meaning. In this sense, the traditional substitution view of metonymy is not correct and tend to give people a false impression. Here are some good examples. In "The river had overflowed its banks," "the river" does not mean "the water" but "the water in the river". In "I found myself whistling Mozart under my breath", "Mozart" does not stand for music but for "the music composed by Mozart". Metonymic relationships should therefore more adequately be represented by using an additive notation such as "X PLUS Y". However, the metonymic process is not understood to be one of the substitutions.

By conceiving metonymy as a conceptual process in which one conceptual entity, the target, is made mentally accessible by means of another conceptual entity, the vehicle, Lakoff offers a cognitive explanation for it. By talking of "mentally accessible", stress is placed on the cognitive role of metonymy. A cognitive basis is necessary for a better understanding of the metonymic process. In the example of "She has a pretty face," the "pretty face" serves as the vehicle for accessing the "person" as the target; in the reverse utterance, "She is a pretty person," the "person" serves as the vehicle for accessing the person's "pretty face" as the target. In either case, both the vehicle and the target are conceptually present. However, one of them is seen as being more salient than the other and is therefore selected as the vehicle.

c. Metonymy as operating within an idealized cognitive model

The notion of “contiguity” is the most important part in most definitions of metonymy. In describing metonymy in terms of “contiguity”, they focus on the nature of the relationship between the concepts involved and “contiguity” is seen as applying to relationships in the world of reality. In this view, the notion of contiguity appears to be limited to an observable, real world relationship between two referents. The cognitive approaches, however, locate contiguity at the conceptual level. That is, “contiguity” cannot be based on any form of objective or natural contiguity but must be taken to mean “conceptual contiguity” and we can have contiguity when we just “see” contiguity between the concepts involved. Lakoff (1987) accounts for metonymic contiguity within the framework of idealized cognitive models (ICMs). Koch (1999) observes metonymy as a conceptual effect of domain highlighting within one domain matrix. Blank (1999) and Panther and Thornburg (1999) describe the network of conceptual contiguity by using the notion of frame and scenario respectively.

As we have talked above, all these models claim a cognitive basis, but Lakoff’s framework of “idealized cognitive models” (ICMs) succeeds in describing metonymic processes. His framework suggests that both the vehicle and the target are conceptually present when a metonymy is used and this metonymic substitution of one entity for another creates a relation of pragmatic equivalence between the substituting and the substituted entity. In principle, either of the two conceptual entities related may stand for the other. It implies that metonymy is basically a reversible process. Lakoff’s ICM concept includes not only people’s encyclopedic knowledge of a particular domain but also the cultural models they are part of. Two typically related ICMs (breakfast ICM and lunch ICM) can help us make better sense of this point. Usually concepts within an ICM can build a complex network of contiguity (e.g., toast, butter, bread, egg, milk and so on in an English breakfast ICM), but they are also related to the ICM itself (breakfast) and to other contiguous ICM (e.g., lunch). There are even intersections (e.g., drink, salt, etc.). When a specific ICM is opened or accessed, all concepts that belong to this ICM by convention are simultaneously activated. We can easily infer that ICMs and their concepts within them are entirely culture-independent, because for example, a typical English breakfast (includes toast, butter, etc.) is totally different from a typical Chinese one. We have ICMs of everything that is conceptualized, which includes the conceptualization of things and events, word forms and their meanings, and things and events in the real world. For example, we have Restaurant ICM, Travel ICM, Possession ICM, Production ICM, Control ICM, etc. ICMs and the network of conceptual relationships give rise to associations which may be used in metonymic transfer.

Sometimes, this kind of transfer occurs in the extension of the meaning of a word. For example, in a Theater ICM, the most important part is “stage”, so metonymically we can use “stage” for “theater”. Thus, the word “stage” acquires a new meaning.

The ICMs have also great influence on the metonymic (and sometimes metaphorical) transfer in the change of words’ meanings. Usually the name of an action or event can be transferred to something immediately preceding or following it. One simple example is that the word “collation” obtains the meaning “light repast.” In history, passages from Cassian’s “collationes Patrum” used to be read before compline in Benedictine monasteries, and these readings were followed by a light meal. In the Reading ICM, the most salient part must be the book, thus part of the name of the book “collation” was used metonymically to call the light meal because of its chance connection with the book (Ullmann 1962:98). Thus the sense developed from part of the name of a book to “light repast”. This metonymic change operates within cultural ICM.

In some cases, the metonymic stages in the sense development of a word involve not only things, but also events. This is to be expected in view of the many possible relationships which may hold in an

ICM.

In view of these findings in chapter 2 and chapter 3, it is obvious that the traditional definitions of metonymy can no longer be maintained. However, one point must be made very clear before the analysis goes on: no matter what a broad sense we take on metonymy, the classical types of it are to be seen as prototypical members.

Chapter 4 The Uses of Metonymy in Language

4.1. Metonymy in literature and poetry

As we have talked above, metonymy has been regarded as a special linguistic phenomenon. But it is quite diverse and exhibits itself in a variety of forms in language. It is best known for its place in literature since most fiction writers or poets (e.g., Lu Xun, Balzac, Shakespeare) like using examples of metonymic descriptions in which the concrete depiction of an object or a person stands for or represents a larger object or domains of experience. Metonymy is particularly up to the taste of journalists and reporters who must often turn out articles quickly because a metonymy can express briefly and effectively by compressing much into a single word or a short noun phrase. We can say that metonymy is pervasive in both everyday discourse and literature.

The brevity and expressiveness of metonymy make it popular among poets and our ability to understand poetry depends critically on the interpretation of metonymy. Take Shakespeare's Sonnet 2 for example:

(1) When forty winters shall besiege thy brow,

And dig deep trenches in thy beauty's field,

Thy youth's proud livery, so gaz'd on now,

Will be a tatter'd weed of small worth hold.

(何功杰1998: 53)

Here in understanding this poem, "forty winters" should be interpreted as "forty years" because winter is the last season of a year and as winter approaches, there comes the end of the year. In Chinese, we tend to use "春" or "秋" to stand for years while "冬" is used in much fewer cases. "Deep trenches" here stands for "deep wrinkles", "field" means "face," "livery" is for "outward appearance of the young man addressed", and "tatter'd weed" represents "tattered garment". Many novelists, biographers or poets (like Shakespeare) rely heavily on metonymic details to evoke scene, characters, and cultural experience. To take the poet J.Shirley for another example:

(2) The glories of our blood and state

Are shadows, not substantial things;

There is no armour against fate;

Death lays his icy hand on kings;

Scepter and Crown

Must tumble down

And in the dust be equal made

With the poor crooked Scythe and Spade.

(冯翠华2002：183)

A good understanding and appreciation of this poem depends on our ability to think metonymically, to recognize, for example, at first the metonymic relations between “scepter and crown” and “kings and queens” in addition to those between “scythe and spade” and “ordinary peasants and workers”. Only on this basis can we appreciate the aesthetical and vivid effects brought by the sharp contrasting association. As we know, kings and queens wear crowns and carry scepters as symbols of their power and authority; scythes and spades are tools used by peasants, workers of the land. What the poet whishes to convey is the fact that death treats everyone equally, the noblest as well as the humblest. If the same idea is expressed in plain language, it must sound unimpressive. Some people often experience difficulty in understanding poetry precisely because they cannot figure out the referents of metonymic terms.

4.2. Metonymy in everyday speech

Although metonymy is primarily studied as a mode of discourse in literature and poetry, it is a universe feature of everyday speech. Look at the following sentences:

(3) a. Wall Street is in a panic.

b. The White House isn’t saying anything.

c. Paris has dropped hemlines this year.

d. Hollywood is putting out terrible movies.

e. Washington has started negotiating with Moscow.

These examples do not occur one by one, but reflect the general cognitive principle of metonymy where people take one well-understood or easily perceived aspect of something to represent the thing as a whole or for some other aspect of it. All of the sentences relate to the general by which a place may stand for an institution located at that place. Thus, a place like Wall Street represents the particularly salient institutions located at that place, that is, the stock exchange and major banks. Various metonymic models in our conceptual system underlie the use of many kinds of figurative and conventional expressions (e.g., the object for the user, the controller for the controlled, the place for the event, and the place for an institution located at that place, the instrument for the product, the whole scale for the upper end of the scale, and so on). Thus, it seems proper to infer from the above analysis that metonymy in everyday speech reveals systematic character.

4.3. Metonymy in idioms

According to Gibbs (李福印 and Kuiper 2000: 89), metonymy is a figurative scheme of thought which

gives rise to different idioms and helps motivate idiom meaning for speakers. So, idioms can reflect our metonymic modes of thought. Each of these expressions reflects some salient aspect of an object, idea, or event and then stands for the object, idea, or event as a whole. This opinion conforms to the cognitive view that the most salient aspect usually comes first to our mind in the interaction between people and the world. All the following are such instances. “ups and downs” means “rise and fall”, “earn one’s bread” means “make a living”, “have a word in someone’s ear” originates from the fact that speaking with someone may involve whispering into his or her ear, but as an idiom, it can be used to conceptualize situations where it may not actually happen. All these idioms refer to salient acts in series of events. A salient act has a “stand-for” relationship to an entire idea or event. Understanding of an idiom involves the recognition of the salient part of an object, idea, or event as a whole.

Chapter 5 Understanding Metonymy

5.1. Distinguishing metonymy from metaphor

In a rhetorical perspective, metonymy and metaphor are usually considered to be close relatives of each other. In fact, they are often confused by ordinary people, even by scholars when they apply these two theoretical notions. This is possibly because at first glance, metaphor and metonymy seem to be similar to each other, and they have many elements in common. The most obvious one is that each describes a connection between two things where one term is substituted for another. Scholars disagree as to whether metonymy is a type or subclass of metaphor or whether metonymy and metaphor are opposed because they are generated according to opposite principles. Yet metonymy and metaphor can best be distinguished by examining how each makes different connections between things.

Ullmann (1979:212) differentiates metonymy from metaphor as involving contiguity as opposed to similarity, where contiguity “includes any associative relations other than those based on similarity”.

On this point, the connections between the things on metonymies are associative ones or contiguous while the connections between things on metaphors are based on something similar or resembling.

In cognitive treatments, metonymy and metaphor are viewed as conceptual processes in which the notion of domains plays a crucial role. Lakoff (1987), for example, offers the following definitions:

“…metaphoric mapping involves a source domain and a target domain,… The mapping is typically partial. It maps the structure in the source domain onto a corresponding structure in the target domain… a metonymic mapping occurs within a single conceptual domain is structured by an ICM (Idealized Cognitive Model).”

In other words, in cognitive theories, the crucial difference between metonymy and metaphor is that in a metaphoric mapping two discrete domains are involved, whereas in a metonymy the mapping occurs within a single domain.

Thus, from the above, we can conclude that, on the one hand, metonymy involves a relation of contiguity and only one conceptual domain, in that the mapping or connection between two things is

within one and the same domain. That is, one part within a domain is regarded as a substitution of another part within the same domain. The main function of a metonymic expression is to activate one cognitive subdomain by referring to another subdomain within the same domain. Thus, in “We need a couple of strong bodies for our team”, the term “strong bodies” refers to “persons who are strong”. Here in the sports context, “strength of a human being” is the most salient subdomain. This is a mapping from part (body) to whole (person) within one conceptual domain. The mention of “body” makes us think of “person” because there is nearness between them.

On the other hand, metaphor is based on “similarity” or “resemblance” between the literal and figurative meanings of an expression. There exist two conceptual domains. It involves a mapping across two separate cognitive domains. For example, in Shakespeare’s sonnet:

(4) Sometimes too hot the eye of heaven shines

And often is his gold complexion dimmed. (18,5-6)

(The New Penguin, ed.J.Kerrigan, 1986)

It would not take much time for us to realize that “the eye of heaven” here refers to “the sun”, although “eye” and “sun” belong to different cognitive domains. It is quite natural for us to draw such inferences because they have many similarities: both of them are round, are perceived as “standing out” from the face or sky, cover the world with glances or rays, are “open” during the day and “closed” at night, and their appearance can show us something about their background,” i.e. the mood of their owner or the weather. It is based on these similarities that Shakespeare used “the eye of heaven” to take the place of the word “the sun”.

One general, but not perfect, way for distinguishing metonymy from metaphor is to employ the test of “is like” or “X is like Y”. If an expression makes sense in the form of “X is like Y”, then it has metaphorical meaning. For instance, the sentence “ the sun is like the eye of heaven” makes sense, and thus is metaphorical, while “Football players are like strong bodies” does not, and thus is metonymic.

In some cases, we can use both metonymy and metaphor at the same time. A proper example also comes from Shakespeare’s sonnet:

(5) Mine eye and heart are at a mortal war

How to divide the conquest of thy sight. (46,1-2)

(The New Penguin, ed.J.Kerrigan, 1986)

It is not difficult for us to recognize the real meanings of the words “eye” and “heart” because they are frequently used in poems. Here the word “eye” is used to refer to the whole visual conception of a person and, in addition, the whole visual domain is treated as a party or a person. “Heart” here represents the world of affections of a person and also, the affective domain is looked upon as a person or a party. Both domains are used here to contrast with each other. Because both domains are interpreted as persons or parties engaged in a war, it is metaphor (in fact, it is personification, a frequent and conventional type of metaphor).

But sometimes, examples do not appear like this. In some cases, it is not always easy for us to draw a clear line between them. It is difficult to tell whether a given linguistic instance is metonymic

or metaphoric. For example, cognitive linguists hold different opinions on the following sentences:

(6) Cheer up.

(7) She is in low spirits

(8) The manager’s attitude has really got me down..

(9) He walked with drooping shoulders. He had lost his wife (drooping bodily posture for sadness) (effect for cause).

All these expressions are considered as metonymic but not metaphorical by some linguists because this is the effect for cause metonymy in which a typical behavioral effect of sadness, namely, a droopy bodily posture, stands for this emotion. What is more, this downward bodily orientation for sadness can affect not only the shoulders, but also the head or even some facial muscles. Look at the following sentences:

(10) a. Jane’s head drooped (sadly).

b. The young man’s face fell on hearing the bad news.

However, most cognitive linguists would say that the sentences are linguistic manifestations of the “Sadness is down/ Happiness is up” metaphor. They hold that physical expressions of “Happy is up” and “Sadness is down” are grounded in our life experience. Almost everyone has such experience, when a person is happy, he or she must be active or even jump with joy; when a person is sad, he or she would act inactively and keep silent. Thus the metaphorical mapping occurs between the domain of verticality and the domain of happiness or sadness.

Others maintain that the above sentences are metonymic basis of metaphor. They argue that at least on a conscious conventional level, no speakers of English categorize verticality as a part of sadness or happiness, although on an unconscious level verticality seems to enter the construction of both notions via metonymy and metaphor. So when we say that metaphor is a mapping across two separate domains, we mean that they must be consciously regarded as separate, otherwise, we can say, in the metaphorical reading, the above sentences have metonymic interpretation as a possible basis.

Since, sometimes, the distinction is not absolute, it seems very hard to make a clear conclusion as to how to distinguish metonymy from metaphor. So, it still remains a significant challenge for scholars to discover more about metonymy and metaphor.

5.2. Tautologies as metonymy

The cognitive theory enlarges the scope of metonymy to be wide enough to include tautologies. Usually, speakers use tautological statements to refer to aspect of people, objects, and events. These expressions can be regarded as metonymies because the speaker uses a general category to refer to specific salient parts or attributes of that category. These specific salient parts or attributes are evoked in our interpretation of tautologies. The following is a dialogue between husband and wife:

(11) Mother: “Did the children ever clean up their rooms?”

Father (shakes his head): “Well, boys will be boys.”

At first sight, the father's response to his wife's question is literally uninformative. It can only be meaningfully interpreted in the sense of the salient attributes associated with the category. Here, depend on the context, the colloquial tautology "Boys will be boys" is intended to convey a particular meaning, something like "boys will be unruly and it is often difficult to get them to do what you want".

Surprisingly, nominal tautologies are found with frequency in everyday speech and literature. In the above example, the father uses boys as a general category to refer to a specific salient attribute of the category, that is, unruly behavior. Interpreting colloquial tautologies requires metonymic reasoning. This ability to infer parts from whole also underlies the interpretation of expressions like:

(12) a. Boys don't cry.

b. The cobra is a very poisonous snake.

c. A cobra is a very poisonous snake.

Sentence (a) is a general comment on boys, but it might be used in a specific situation. For example, if a boy were crying, his mother or father would say "Boys don't cry," and the specific boy would stop crying. In our daily life we can easily find such situations in which a general rule is invoked in describing a specific situation as in "He is always complaining about his wife".

In sentence (b) and (c), the definite article "the" and the indefinite article "a" are used respectively to refer to cobras in general. Our preference of using specific and definite instances to express general and unspecific ones reflects people's tendency to generalize. More generally, we can use this metonymic mode of thinking to interpret some proverbs and idioms. For example,

(13) a. To kill the goose that lays the golden eggs

b. One drop of poison infects the whole tun of wine.

c. A man is known by his friends.

All these idioms describe a particular situation but convey a general understanding, which again is applied to a particular situation at hand. In language, the clearest cases of this kind of metonymy are found in the use of proper names as common expressions as in Gibbs' example (Gibbs 1999) "He's going to OJ his way out of the marriage." In this sentence, the new verb OJ is for the famous American football player and murder suspect O.J.Simpson, so the sentence can be interpreted as "one is going to murder one's wife to get out of the marriage". It can not be difficult for us to draw a conclusion from the above examples that they are interpretable because both the specific and the general belong to the same ICM.

5.3. The use of present tense as metonymy

Another version of metonymy operates in the Auxiliary and the tense system. It is written in grammar books that habitual events occur in past, present and future time, but are described by the use of the Present Tense. "Speaks" in "Mary speaks Spanish" is to use the present tense for habitual action. But cognitive theories consider it in a new perspective. The Present Tense is assumed to be ideally located in present time, thus its use for habitual events is metonymic. It can be regarded

as “part for whole” time metonymies. Another time metonymy is found in the use of the present tense for future events as in “I am off” for “I will be off, or in the robber’s threat “The money or you’re a dead man”.

Metonymies may also affect an event’s grounding in reality or potentiality. Thus, we use simple tenses in describing both a real event such as “My mother is angry with me” and a potential event as in “My mother is an angry person.” In the latter situation the adjective “angry” does not describe a person’s fit of anger at the present moment but her temperament to get angry potentially. This metonymic relationship also occurs in its reverse form in which a potential event is described as real (Thornburg and Panther 1999). Certain conditions of a speech act may be highlighted to stand for the intended speech act as a whole. For example, in using “can” in “Can you pass the salt?”, the speaker highlights the precondition of ability for a directive speech act. Since such speech acts with “can” convey the notion of potentiality, Panther and Thornburg call it “predicational metonymy” and describe this metonymy as “potentiality for actuality”. So “My mother is an angry person” represents “she can be angry”. “I can see your point” actually means “I see your point.”

5.4. Understanding metonymy at lexical level

Traditional study on metonymy normally excludes the understanding of it. Although as early as 1925, the French linguist M. Esnault made some remarks on it, his remarks remained unnoticed for a long time. He points out: “metonymy does not open new paths like metaphorical intuition; but, taking too familiar paths in its stride, it shortens distances so as to facilitate the swift intuition of things already know” (Ullmann 1979: 218). What is important in his words is that metonymy enables us to say things more quickly and to shorten conceptual distances. Thus, in communication, people can understand utterances instantly, yet they require a lot of linguistic and contextual background.

But Esnault’s comments are too general and we cannot infer from him how people understand metonymy exactly.

This paper has described some of the forms that metonymy takes in language and mentioned that people understand many kinds of language because of their ability to think metonymically about people, objects, and events. Although metonymy is regarded as a special linguistic form or trope, metonymic models of thought are not rarely seen in our daily life. Metonymies are now recognized as a conceptual phenomenon, a model of thinking and above all, a mental access within one cognitive domain, whereby we conceive of a person, an object or an event by perceiving a salient part of the person, the object or the event. In this view, people think in metonymy. The use and understanding of metonymic language involve all kinds of cognitive tasks. In the process of cognition, people generally prefer the concepts that are more closely related to their knowledge, more salient or more concrete to those that are less related, less important or more abstract concepts. Let us consider in details how it is that people understand metonymic language. We consider it first at lexical level.

As we have mentioned above, people in our culture consider housewife-mothers as better examples of mothers than non-housewife-mothers. This effect is due to metonymic reasoning where a salient subcategory (e.g., housewife-mother) has the recognized status of standing for the whole category. Other subcategories of mother like stepmother, birth mother, adoptive mother and foster mother all change from the central case of the prototypical housewife-mother. Lakoff’s theory can shed light on the reason why it is so. According to him, a full understanding of the word “mother” involves at least five domains (besides those which characterize “mother” as a human female). They are:

(a) the genetic domain. A mother is a female who contributes genetic material to a child;

(b) the birth domain. A mother is a female who gives birth to the child;

(c) the nurturance domain. A mother is a female adult who nurtures and raises a child;

(d) the genealogical domain. A mother is the closest female ancestor;

(e) the marital domain. The mother is the wife of the father.

(Taylor 2001:86)

Not all the uses of "mother" activate each of the domain in the same degree. Only the use of "housewife-mother" activates all the five domains. The uses of other subcategories involve only parts of them. Consequently, the comprehension of each of the subcategory involves different domains. To take "birth mother" and "stepmother" as examples, the understanding of "birth mother" contains only two domains, the genetic domain and the birth domain, while the understanding of "stepmother" must exclude at least these two points.

So clearly, it is the housewife-mother, not the other subcategories of mother that can metonymically stand for the entire category of mothers in judging how people reason about mothers and motherly behavior.

Some of the best pieces of evidence from prototype categories in cognitive psychology also support metonymic models of thinking. Experiments can be carried out to test that certain members of categories are more representative of those categories than other members. The author once conducted a casual survey in an English class for college students. The survey contains only two questions on the blackboard:

(14) a. Given the category "bird", which do you think is more typical among "chickens, penguins, sparrows and ostriches"?

b. Which comes first to your mind in reading the word "girl", a fifteen-year-old girl or a twenty-eight-year-old girl?

For question 14(a), all the students (54 people) chose "sparrows". This answer has a general implication, that is, "sparrows" are considered to be more typical of the category "bird" than are chickens, penguins and ostriches in our culture. For question 14(b), all the students agreed that it was more likely for them to think of a fifteen-year-old girl than a twenty-eight-year-old girl in mentioning the word "girl". This result indicates that a fifteen-year-old girl is a highly central member of the category, while a twenty-eight-year-old girl is simply a marginal member, though a twenty-eight-year-old girl prefers to be called a "girl" rather than a "woman". Since cognitive linguists term the most representative members of any category as prototypical members and they often "stand for" or represent the entire category metonymically. Accordingly, we can interpret other subcategories according to their degrees of similarity (or family resemblance) to the prototypical members.

There are thousands of ordinary verbs that are based on metonymy. Consider the main verbs in the following phrases. All these phrases are carefully selected for a group of children aged from 8 to 13 who are flyers of Cambridge Young Learners English.

(15) to *spoon* coffee into a pot

(16) to *land* a plane

(17) to *hammer* a nail into the wall

(18) to *ground* a plane

(19) to *head* a football into a net

These verbs can be interpreted as metonymic because any of the participants in an action ICM can become the bearer of the saliency feature and then serve as the input for the conversion process. The salient participant is thus particularly chosen to describe the action itself. For example, "spoon," which is an instrument as a noun, means here as a verb, a process (to put coffee into the pot) in which the instrument is involved. In (16), it is only when we reach the land, as opposed to the sea or air, that we have "landed". In this instance, the area of land which constitutes the goal stands for the motion as a whole. Likewise, "to ground" in (18) takes the earth seen in opposition to the air as its goal. Sentence (17) brings to mind the salient action of using a hammer to hit a goal. In reading (19), we can easily imagine the exact ball-to-head contact and the exact force and direction given to the ball by the head. The "head" is so salient that it can stand for the action itself.

It must be mentioned that the children have learned only the noun forms of all the italicized verbs. When they were asked to read the phrases on the blackboard, the children experience little problem in interpreting these expressions. In fact, these phrases are understandable to anyone who has the relevant knowledge about "spoon and coffee, plane and land, so on and so forth". From the above analysis, we can see that it is our deep background knowledge of the typical relationship that spoons have with coffee, hammers have with nails, etc. that allows us to figure out exactly the salient features when spooning coffee, hammering nails, landing planes, and so on.

5.5. Understanding metonymy at discourse level

Understanding metonymy at discourse level is often context dependent. In the following example, we can see that Sperber and Wilson's principle of relevance, according to which "every act of ostensive communication communicates a presumption of its own optimal relevance," (1995:158) can be applied to the use and interpretation of metonymy. This communication principle ensures maximal ease of accessing the intended target via a metonymic vehicle.

As an illustration of the principle of minimal processing effort, consider a restaurant situation in which the waitress speaks about one of the customers in metonymical terms. In such context, the customer's name is unknown and his other information such as height, weight, level of education, may not be salient. Usually there are two ways to call them: by table number or by the food they take. It should be pointed out that outside the restaurant context, such metonymic reference appears neither economical nor appropriate.

Sometimes, customers are identified through the table numbers. Even then the waitress would prefer (20a) to (20b):

(20) a. Table 8 is complaining.

b. The customer at table 8 is complaining about his beefsteak.

If no numbers are available, the waitress would use (21a) rather than (21b):

(21) a. The beefsteak is complaining.

b. The person who ordered beefsteak is complaining about his food.

In (21a), the referencing use of metonymy, the beefsteak ordered or eaten by the customer serves at the identifying description. The only identifying link that the waitress has with the customer is by means of the food he or she ordered. By using the metonymical terms, the communication between them become simple and efficient. The metonymical interpretation, which is "associatively activated" by the shared context, becomes the most accessible one (although given only the description "beefsteak", the most accessible comprehension may be the literal one). In other words, the use of metonymy is economical on the part of the speaker and in a specific context, it functions to keep processing effort to a minimum.

In this case, metonymy functions to make reference quick and efficient because actually, the beefsteak is the most salient property in the restaurant situation and characterizes the customer in question most effectively to a waitress. The use of metonymy is justified by the contextual effects produced by metonymy itself.

In both cases, it is impossible for people to speak (20b) and (21b) because they are unnecessarily complex to express in the given situation, and in addition, the meanings can directly be derived from the more economical expressions.

The very same process of metonymical inference occurs in other situational contexts, too. For instance, hospital nurses frequently refer to their patients in terms of the illness they suffer from or their room or bed numbers because the metonymical expressions provide the easiest access to the target referred to (patients). In sports games, sportsmen are often called after their numbers or salient properties. In concerts, musicians are identified by the instruments they play, etc..

In fact, many contextual expressions, but not all, will be readily understood when interpreted in light of conventional metonymic thinking or mappings such as "objects used for their users", "people for their possessions", "the place for an institution located at that place", or "producer for the product" etc.. These "stand-for" relationships reflect pre-existing patterns of metonymic thought that substantially constrain, in many cases, the kinds of inferences listeners are likely to draw to make sense of what speakers say. Some psycholinguistic researches have shown that people can determine without great difficulty the appropriate referents for metonymic expressions in discourse. The interpretation of metonymy is highly context-dependent and must be carried out actively by the hearer.

Events may be metaphorically viewed as things that have parts. The term "event" is meant to be broad enough to include processes, activities, and states of affairs (situations). As with things, an event as a whole may stand for one of its sub-events and a sub-event may stand for the whole event. The notions of the whole event and the part event(s) are a metaphorical extension of the spatial meanings of whole and part. Our ability to access an entire state, object, idea or event from the mention of some part is the metonymic way of thinking. In communication, we tend to speak a salient part of an event instead of the whole event. But in this type of metonymy, the transfer from the whole to the part seems rare, with most examples restricted to the "part for whole" kind. This is probably because the sub-event is more often perceptually and conceptually salient while the

whole event, being abstract and complex, lacks the perceptual salience that the spatial counterpart has. This infer-whole-from-part mode of thinking speeds our cognition of the whole world. In this way, the listeners usually understand us quickly. Perhaps, this is the most convenient way of our communicating with each other.

Everyday dialogues provide additional evidence for the conceptual basis and cognitive process of metonymy and they also demonstrate the pervasiveness of metonymy in daily communication. Look at the following example:

(22) A: How did you get to the airport?

B: I waved down a taxi.

Speaker B means to inform the listener A that "I got to the airport by hailing a taxi, having it stop and pick me up, and then having it take me to the airport." Obviously, the whole process is so complex that it is hard to be expressed in just a few words. However, the actual answer is too simple and common for us. Everyone can understand it at the first sight. How does a listener infer from such a simple answer that B actually found a taxi to take him to the airport? What makes the pragmatic inference so rapid that we do not even realize it? Here, the cognitive theory of metonymy can contribute a satisfying explanation. Although people need to think twice to take the answer as a metonymic one, this way of expressing will turn out to be extremely important in our everyday communication as illustrated. On the basis of the above analysis, it must be understandable to say that traveling from one place to another can be regarded as a whole event or more accurately, a Travel ICM. This Travel ICM contains a series of actions where people find some vehicle to take them to the desired location, get into the vehicle, ride in it to the destination, arrive and get out. An idealized cognitive model (ICM) of this series of event includes the following:

Precondition: You have access to the vehicle.

Embarkation: You get into the vehicle and start it up.

Center: You drive (row, fly, etc.) to your destination.

Finish: You park and get out.

End point: You are at your destination.

(Lakoff 1987)

In communication, it is conventional for people to speak only one part of this idealized cognitive model to evoke the entire model. That is to say, people can merely mention either the Precondition and Embarkation or Center to stand for the entire series of events that make up the travel ICM. This is more clearly seen in successive sub-events which metonymically highlight one of these temporal phases. In the above brief conversation, speaker B uses a Precondition (i.e., getting access to a taxi by hailing one) to refer to the entire travel ICM. Thus, this way of thinking and speaking metonymically can to a great extent quicken the process of pragmatic reasoning in information exchanging and therefore promotes its efficiency. Compared with other pragmatic theories such as speech act theory, Grice's conversational implicature and relevance theory, it offers a far more reasonable explanation about why listeners can quickly grasp the intentions of the speaker without any noticeable effort in actual situations. There are other possible responses to the above

question that might function equally well by activating other parts of the idealized cognitive model. They are:

(23) a. My friend drove me there. (Center)

b. I have a car. (Precondition)

c. I jumped into a bus. (Embarkation)

d. I waved my hand. (Precondition)

By metonymically mentioning a subpart of the travel ICM to refer to the whole ICM, speakers get listeners to draw the right inference about what is meant. In fact, many sub-events serve as conventionalized expressions for an Event ICM as a whole. Look at the following conversation:

(24) A: What does your son do?

B: He is reading for the first degree.

Reading is part of studying, which is supposed to be part of being a university student. Reading is a sub-event of the whole event of "being an under-graduate student". This way of expressing is similar to the Chinese phrase "读大学". In human communication, an initial or final sub-event is frequently used to refer to a whole event. In such cases, the initial or final phase is seen as being more important than the central phase. For instance,

(25) A: Has he retired?

B: Yes, he took off his uniform last month.

(26) A: Did your teacher go to the theatre yesterday evening?

B: Our teacher had 100 essays to grade".

In (25), "taking off the uniform" could metonymically mean "retiring from an organization" because it describes an event preceding that of retiring (initial for whole). In (26), "Our teacher had 100 essays to grade", the final sub-event is stressed and stands for a larger event ICM including reading, correcting and eventually grading students' papers " (final for whole). But in Chinese, we say "批改", which focuses on the center phase.

In some communicative situations, the speakers try to avoid using a clear and direct expression for the sake of reserving the hearer's face. This metonymic model of thinking is best reflected in some euphemistic expressions. In such cases, the speaker usually takes the less relevant part of the whole ICM but not the most salient activity. This is because the mention of the most salient phase may activate the whole event to a larger degree and thus makes the listener embarrassed. The less relevant phase is safe in that it is too vague to activate the whole event. Our interpretation of such euphemistic expressions depends on our conventional metonymic thinking. Perhaps that is why many euphemistic expressions are conventionalized. For example, the following conversation is quite common in daily communication:

(27) A: Where is the manager?

B_1: He has gone to the restroom.

B_2: He has gone to wash his hands.

Answers B_1 and B_2 focus on the initial and final phases of a complex event respectively, although going to the restroom and washing one's hands are much less salient phases of the whole ICM and only indirectly concerned with the central and relevant activity.

If we go a step further, we will find that, interestingly, many cases of conversational implicature can be understood via metonymic reasoning as well. Consider the following example:

(28) A: Smith doesn't seem to have a girlfriend these days.

B: He has been paying a lot of visits to New York lately.

In this instance, our ability to draw implicatures requires us to see how a speaker's utterance metonymically refers to a whole series of activities. Thus, suggesting one part of a likely ICM (e.g., men often go to other places to be with their girlfriends) activates a whole ICM and implies other unstated parts (e.g., that Smith actually has a girlfriend these days).

According to Grice's conversational implicature theory, another explanation can be given: what B has said only expresses part of what he has meant by his utterance. The successful interpretation of B's remark demands that the listener makes this inference about what the speaker meant. This kind of inference is what he calls conversational implicature. Thus, although B simply states a fact about Smith's recent visits to New York, B likely intends for A to understand that Smith has, or may have, a girlfriend in New York. His explanation fails to account for the efficiency of inferencing and to reveal the conceptual basis of pragmatic inferencing.

Finally, our ability to conceptualize people, places, events and objects in metonymic terms provides the basis for much of the way we reason and make inferences while reading texts. Many studies show that people metonymically infer entire sequences of actions, having only read some salient subpart in a story. Consider the following simple examples:

(29) John was hungry and went into a restaurant

He ordered lobster from the waiter.

It took a long time to prepare.

Because of this he only put down a small tip when he left.

This story is quite understandable because when people read it, the information given in it presumably activates their knowledge of the activities or things generally associated with eating in a restaurant (entering, ordering, eating, exiting) and he (or she) would unconsciously fill in the gaps with a large amount of information taken from his experience to make the story coherent. Without supplying this information, the reader would certainly not be able to understand this story. This type of knowledge and experience, called scripts by Schank and Abelson, consists of knowledge structures that are particularly designed for frequently recurring event sequences (e.g., a

Restaurant Script contains four event sequences, namely, entering, ordering, eating, exiting). A number of experiments show that people automatically infer appropriate script-related actions when these are not explicitly stated. This script-based text processing illustrates the importance of metonymic models of thought in understanding texts. Usually, people's knowledge in long-term memory for coherence makes it possible to refer to a series of events metonymically by the mere mention of one salient subpart of these events. The mention of a salient subpart usually enables the hearer to think of more details or information on what has been said and the hearer will take these details or information to be part of the conveyed message. This inference of a whole script or a series of events from the mere mention of a part facilitates our understanding of the unstated propositions about what writers mean, making sense of seemingly disconnected statements in texts.

This paper has listed only a small part of the linguistic evidence demonstrating how people conceptualize many people, objects, and events via metonymy. Metonymy allows us to reason appropriately about what speakers intend to communicate, although many of the linguistic examples listed here would not be normally regarded as instances of metonymy by many people. Nonetheless, people use metonymic models of thought to reason properly about what is meant.

Chapter 6 Conclusion

The study of metonymy in this paper not only sketches the traditional view of it but also investigates its modern cognitive background. The paper extends beyond considering metonymy as a literary or figurative language by pointing out that the traditional view is too narrow and weak and the phenomenon of metonymy should not be restricted to its well-known notions of a matter of names of things, merely substitution of names, real-world contiguity. The new theory of metonymy, which arises in the process of delimiting the traditional notions, has broadened our understanding of it. With the help of the new theory, we reinterpret metonymy as not only having a conceptual basis but also functioning as a cognitive process and operating within one idealized cognitive model. This new view of metonymy takes into consideration many forms of language and we can find metonymies at almost all language levels.

A variety of metonymies given in the paper show that we can metonymize not only objects, but also ideas, events, situations. These metonymies in a broader sense reveal the pervasive and fundamental characters of metonymy and promote the importance of metonymy as in daily language use, thinking, speaking and reasoning. Each of these examples reflects some aspect of an object, idea, event or situations and then stands for the object, idea, event or situation as a whole, yet, none of the aspects is randomly selected. According to the cognitive view, in the interaction between people and the world, it is the most salient aspect that usually comes first to our mind. The salient aspect thus has a "stand-for" relationship to an entire object, idea, event, situation. Understanding of an entire object, idea, event, situation mainly involves the recognition of the salient part of an object, idea, event or situation as a whole, although sometimes, it depends in part on context. This cognitive view underlies much of our ordinary way of thinking, speaking, and reasoning. The use of metonymy in language is a reflection of its conceptual status. In communication, the only thing the speakers and the listeners have to share are the same conceptual relations, common world knowledge about how life is typically organized and how the "things of life" are interrelated.

This cognitive background enables us to produce and understand metonymies easily and makes metonymies very efficient tools for resolving different tasks in communication. As illustrated in the paper, sometimes, cognitive theory of metonymy has more advantages than other pragmatic theories in explaining why people reason quickly in daily communication. This ability of metonymic reasoning

plays an important role in our interpretation of conversations, events, texts, poetry, etc..

We can conclude from all the above analyses that the use of metonymic expressions in language is motivated by general cognitive principles and grounded in experience. Metonymies are subject to general and systematic principles and structure our thoughts and actions.

It is suggested in the paper that in a very general way, metonymy can be used in any kind of communication for specific purposes. In this sense, it is a fundamental cognitive tool and universal cognitive process.

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