COGNITIVE PRAGMATIC ANALYSIS OF ILLOCUTIONARY METONYMIES IN LI BAI'S POEMS

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ABSTRACT: *Metonymy is not only a trope but also a basic way of thinking, and a conceptual tool in which one conceptual entity, the vehicle, offers mental access to another conceptual identity, the target. Panther & Thornburg (1999) hold that, in accordance with the pragmatic functions, metonymies can be classified into propositional metonymies and illocutionary metonymies. In accordance with speech act theory, illocutionary force of an utterance suggests the speaker's intention in delivering the utterance. Although illocutionary metonymy prevails in literary texts, very few papers have contributed to the research of illocutionary metonymies in this area. This paper will focus on figuring out illocutionary metonymies in Li Bai's poetry, the motivations and significance of illocutionary metonymies to offer a new perspective on applying cognitive linguistic theories to the exploration of literary texts.*

KEYWORDS: Cognitive Pragmatic Analysis, Illocutionary Metonymies, Li Bai's Poems

INTRODUCTION

In the traditional view, metonymy is treated as a figure of speech that replaces the name of a thing with the name of something else with which it is closely associated. With the development of cognitive linguistics, the conventional view of metonymy is considered as too narrow. Cognitive linguists advocate that, metonymy, like metaphor, acts as a conceptual tool that works in idealized cognitive models. According to Radden and Kovecses(1999: 21), metonymy is a cognitive process in which one conceptual entity, the vehicle, provides mental access to another conceptual entity, the target, within the same idealized cognitive model.

Metonymy is very important in our life. One of the reasons why we need metonymy is that it is impossible to cover all aspects of our intended meaning in the language that we use. In other words, language always 'underspecifiies' meaning in that it cannot possibly express everything that is relevant to its interpretation (Radden et al, 2007), and in this case inferences are necessary to help figure out what is meant (Frisson, 2009). Related to this is the fact that we think "metonymically" because it is physically impossible to consciously activate all the knowledge that we have of a particular concept at once, so we tend to focus on a salient aspect of that concept, and use this as point of access to the whole concept.

Metonymy is applied to serve a wide variety of functions across a range of discourse types. Besides serving a direct referential function, metonymy is also engaged in highlighting and construal, anaphoric reference and cohesion, illocutionary acts etc. One of the most important

discourse-pragmatic functions of metonymy is to enhance cohesion and coherence of the utterance. It is something that is already at the very heart of metonymy as a conceptual operation where one content stands for another but both are actively activated at least to some degree. In other words, metonymy is an efficient way of saying two things for the price of one, i.e. two concepts are activated while only one is explicitly mentioned (Radden & Kövecses 1999:19). And Gibbs (1999:61) also holds that metonymy is the basis for many symbolic comparisons in art and literature.

Poetry is a form of literary art in which language is adopted for its aesthetic and evocative qualities in addition to its apparent meaning. Poetry is not a dry record of history but a description of how people in their times have conveyed their hopes, dreams and destinies by means of words. Poetry can show us the unique qualities of an individual, an entire culture or an expanse of time. Poems from Tang Dynasty in China enjoy the reputation as gems of classical Chinese literature. Our ability to understand poetry depends critically on the recognition of metonymy. This paper attempts to study illocutionary metonymies in Li Bai's Poetry so as to reach a new understanding of his poetry as well as explore the prospect of applying cognitive metonymy theory to the study of other classical Chinese poetry. This paper will focus on figuring out pragmatic typology of metonymy, illocutionary metonymies in Li Bai's poetry, and the motivations and significance of illocutionary metonymies in Li Bai's poetry.

Pragmatic typology of metonymy and poetry

Panther & Thornburg(1999) claim that for metonymy at a certain level, the vehicle is equivalent to the target although they are not the same at the semantic level. In other words, the replacement of one expression with another gives rise to pragmatic equivalence between the replacing and replaced expressions; on the other hand, both the vehicle and the target are conceptually present with the occurrence of metonymy. Consequently, metonymy is treated both as a conceptual structure and as language use, which indicates that the cognitive view of metonymy is not completely contradictory with the traditional view.

On the basis of highlighting different aspects of metonymy, cognitive linguists put forward different types of classification of metonymy. In this paper we adopt the pragmatic typology of metonymic functions proposed by Panther & Thornburg (1999).They hold that, in accordance with the pragmatic functions, metonymy can be classified into propositional metonymies and illocutionary metonymies and propositional metonymies can be further classified into referential and predicational metonymies. Illocutionary metonymies indicate that one speech act substitutes another speech act, the first being the vehicle and the second being the target. In accordance with speech act theory, illocutionary force of an utterance suggests the speaker's intention in delivering the utterance. Searle (1975) reckons that indirect speech acts suggest the performance of two illocutionary acts among which the secondary illocutionary act is dependent on the literal force of the utterance while the primary illocutionary act is consistent with its intended force, that is, illocutionary force. Searle's statement that two illocutionary acts are involved in an indirect speech act implies that a

metonymic relationship occurs here, that is, the metonymic vehicle (the secondary illocutionary act) stands for the metonymic target (the primary illocutionary act) and both of them are conceptually present in the speaker's mind.

The poetic language has the very strong fuzziness and possesses the artistic charm that is implicit and refined and simple in language but profound in meaning. Poets usually mediate and ponder on the diction and choose the most proper, vivid and representative words to convey their thoughts and emotions. The refined diction in poetry plays a significant role in highlighting the theme, impressing and striking a chord with the readers. Poems are embracing or reflecting the background or the eras of the poets themselves. In poetry, metonymy is one of the main ways to categorize abstract concepts. As a result, the grasp of metonymy in poetry can facilitate the readers' understanding of social reality, historical background, cultural connotations and spirit of the eras of the poets. Unlike metaphor, metonymy does not create new paths; but metonymy is quite effective in shortening the distances in order to facilitate the prompt intuition of things already known by taking too familiar paths in its stride. The following part will focus on the analysis of illocutionary metonymies in Li Bai's poems.

A case study: Li Bai's poems

Li Bai, an eminent poet, had great ambitions through his whole life and he never tried to conceal his yearning for fame and honor in his poems. As a prolific writer, he created more than 900 poems that covered topics ranging from the account of his life, social reality and the spirit of the high Tang Dynasty. Li Bai was quite zealous about the chivalrous spirit when he was young. But his short stay in Chang'an, the capital of Tang Dynasty, exerted a great influence on his literary creation. To his disappointment, he realized that his own political ambitions ran counter to the degraded and dark sides of social reality, which stimulated him to express his discontent, depression and frustration through poetry. Yet like other poets, he usually did not convey his feelings straight out. Instead, he was very adept at bringing into full play the role of imagery, exaggeration, and metonymy based on the notion that indirect expression results in depth, greatness, beauty and attraction for it leaves readers a lot of space to think.

Metonymy is usually deemed as something that belongs to poetry and literature. In poetry, poets are able to convey their aspirations and emotions in an associable and artistic way with the help of metonymy, because metonymy, as a mode of thinking, can help activate reader's imagination about the whole event or help people associate one aspect with another aspect of the event. Therefore the reader's good understanding and appreciation also depend on their ability to think metonymically

The illocutionary metonymies that are adopted in Li Bai's poems can be divided into the following types: HISTORICAL ALLUSIONS FOR CURRENT EVENTS METONYMIES, IMMORTAL WORLD FOR MORTAL WORLD METONYMIES and NATURAL SCENERY FOR FEELINGS ABOUT SOCIAL REALITY METONYMIES.

Historical Allusions for Current Events Metonymies

Poets in ancient China are apt to express their outlook through historical events partly because the prevailing social conditions confine their freedom to speak their minds. Historical events, thus, offer a way out of the dilemma. Discussions and comments on historical events can cast much light upon their perceptions of current affairs. Besides, through historical events, they can feel free to criticize the present based on the past. In Hard is the Way of the World (II), Li Bai resorts to a lot of historical allusions to achieve his writing purposes.

弹剑作歌奏苦声，曳裾王门不称情。（李白《行路难 其二》）

Feng would go homeward way, having no fish to eat;

Zhou did not think to bow to noblemen was meet. (Xu Yuanchong, 2014: 55)

Feng Xuan, later a follower of Lord Meng Chang in Qin State, to start with, showed that he did not have any hobby or talent. In spite of that, Lord Meng Chang agreed to accept Feng Xuan as his follower. Followers of different ranks were entitled to different treatments. Followers of the highest rank could have fish for their meal and travel by coach while followers of second rank could have fish for meal, yet no coach for their travel. Feng Xuan, as a follower of the lowest rank, did not get any preferential treatment: his meal was unsavory and he had to travel on foot. One day Feng Xuan leaned against a pillar, played his sword, and complained that he was thinking about going back home because he had not been treated well.

Li Bai, an idealist, wished to associate with the nobles on an equal footing. Yet to his disappointment, the nobles did not value his presence, let alone on an equal footing. So in the poem, the story of Feng Xuan, which can be dated back to Warring States in ancient China, serves as a vehicle to express the poet's true feelings. The story of Feng Xuan activates both the readers' thought about the story itself, and the experience of Li Bai himself. That is to say, both the metonymic vehicle and the metonymic target are conceptually present in the readers' mind. The intended force of this verse is to convey the poet's discontentment with the nobles' unfair treatment. The poet's desire for exploits is implied between the lines.

In the same poem, the author also talks about Han Xin, and Jia Yi as shown in the following lines.

淮阴市井笑韩信，汉朝公卿忌贾生。（李白《行路难 其二》）

General Han was mocked in the marketplace;

The brilliant scholar Jia was banished in disgrace. (Xu Yuanchong, 2014: 55)

Han Xin, a well-known strategist and general in Han Dynasty, was ever mocked and insulted by some scoundrels in the marketplace before he achieved his prosperity and glory. Jia Yi, a talented young scholar and publicist, worked as a counselor for Emperor Wen of Han, who intended to put Jia Yi in an important position. But some ministers like Guan Ying and Feng Jing, were jealous of him and attempted to marginalize him on purpose, which resulted in his

demotion.

Li Bai, with the help of the story of Han Xin, shows that he himself shared the same unpleasant experience, being mocked and despised by the worldly men in Chang'an and through the life experience of Jia Yi, indicates that he was also subjected to the nobles' jealousy and exclusion. These two lines, by using the historical allusions as metonymic vehicles, are devoted to the expression of the poet's frustration with the current seamy sides of social circumstances.

Then the following lines in the same poem show the ideal monarch in the poet's mind.

君不见昔时燕家重郭隗，拥篲折节无嫌猜。
剧辛乐毅感恩分，输肝剖胆效英才。
昭王白骨萦蔓草，谁人更扫黄金台？（李白《行路难 其二》）
Have you not heard of King of Yan in days gone by,

Who venerated talents and built Terrace high

On which he offered gold to gifted men

And stooped low and swept the floor to welcome them?

Grateful, Ju Xin and Yue Yi came then

And served him heart and soul, both full of strategem.

The King's bones were now buried, who would sweep the floor

Of the Gold Terrace any more?   (Xu Yuanchong, 2014: 55)

King Yan Zhao in Warring States in ancient China is the perfect model for a monarch that Li Bai was willing to follow and work for. In order to make his state wealthy and powerful, King Yan Zhao was courteous to the wise and condescending to scholars and respected his ministers and followers for their advice. Yet Li Bai was not born in that era. King Yan Zhao had been dead for many years. In sharp contradiction with Li Bai's political ideal, Emperor Xuanzong of Tang was fatuous and corrupt, let alone being truly courteous and humble to the talented and learned. Emperor Xuan Zong of Tang sent out imperial decree to summon Li Bai to Chang'an not because he was a wise sovereign, but because he was a hypocritical monarch and wanted to appear to value talents.

All these metonymies about historical allusions in this poem weave together to strengthen the force of the implied feelings between the lines, the poet's hopelessness and helplessness in the face of the dark side of the society. His philosophy of communicating with the nobles on an equal footing ran into a blank wall and his idealist political aspirations were difficult to fulfill. Combined together, the illocutionary metonymies serve to highlight the theme of the poem, the way of the world is hard.

Immortal World for Mortal World Metonymies

Li Bai has been influenced by both Northern culture represented by Confucian philosophy and the *Book of Poetry*, and Southern culture represented by Taoist philosophy and the *Elegies of the South*. His Confucian ideal was to go into secularity and serve the country while his Taoist philosophy instructed him to go out of secularity and seek the way to heaven. Taoist philosophy of Lao Zi and Zhang Zi has exerted profound influence on Li Bai, including his life and his poetry. The nature of Li Bai's lifetime pursuit was life, which, in this situation, had two levels of implications: life and the living of life (Li Changzhi, 2015). His expectations for the living of life were to achieve fame and fortune and his wish for life was immortality. Li Bai, also well-known as an immortal banished from heaven, has incorporated many descriptions of immortal world in his poetry. In other words, there are strong elements of Taoism in his poetry, both in the sentiments they express and in their spontaneous tone, and "many of his poems deal with mountains, often descriptions of ascents that midway modulate into journeys of the imagination, passing from actual mountain scenery to visions of nature deities, immortals, and 'jade maidens' of Taoist lore"(Watson 1971: 142). Mount Skyland Ascended in a Dream: A Song of Farewell, on surface, is a poem about immortal beings in the immortal world.

列缺霹雳，丘峦崩摧。洞天石扉，訇然中开。
青冥浩荡不见底，日月照耀金银台。
霓为衣兮风为马，云之君兮纷纷而来下。
虎鼓瑟兮鸾回车，仙之人兮列如麻。

忽魂悸以魄动，恍惊起而长嗟。

惟觉时之枕席，失向来之烟霞。（李白《梦游天姥吟留别》）

The stone gate of a fairy cavern under

Suddenly breaks asunder.

So blue, so deep, so vast appears an endless sky,

Where sun and moon shine on gold and silver terraces high.

Clad in the rainbow, riding on the wind,

The Lords of Clouds descended in a procession long.

Their chariots drawn by phoenix disciplined,

And tigers playing for them a zither song,

Row upon row, like fields of hemp, immortal throng.

Suddenly my heart and soul stirred, I

Awake with a long, long sigh.

I find my head on a pillow lie

And fair visions gone by.　　　　(Xu Yuanchong, 2014: 143-145)

In this poem, in the poet's dreams, he reaches Mount Skyland, which, as a matter of fact, symbolizes the imperial court. Therefore, entering the dream, then, is entering the imperial court. In the Mount Skyland, to his great dismay, he runs into a fairyland, in which the sun and the moon shine on gold and silver terraces and the Lords of Clouds descend in a procession. Since the mountain stands for the imperial court, the fairyland correspondingly signifies the royal palace. In the dream, the immortals, like fields of hemp, swarm to welcome the poet. The super sight of the immortal world serves as a vehicle to reflect the poet's life experience as the member of the imperial academy, the target. This kind of immortal world is the idealistic place for the poet, which makes the poet, an underdog in the political circle, forget his disappointment and frustration with the cruel social reality temporarily. The selection of Immortal World for Mortal World metonymies demonstrates Li Bai's Taoist philosophy: his desire for leaving secular society and seeking the way to heaven, especially when his pursuit for fame and fortune was hindered by harsh social reality. The imagination of immortal world can offer the poet temporary consolation. Yet anyway he will finally awake from his dream.

Natural scenery for feelings about social reality metonymies

Lyric expression through scenery is another prominent characteristic of Chinese ancient poems. The poets try to find emotional sustenance through the description of natural scenery. Actually here natural scenery serves as the vehicle, while lyric expression works as the target. The literal force is accomplished by the description of natural scenery while lyric expression is aimed as the intended force. That is to say, the account of natural scenery is secondary while the expression of emotions is primary. Natural scenery is a medium used to highlight and strengthen the poet's genuine and pent-up emotions. When the readers read this kind of poem, both natural scenery and lyric expression will be activated in their mind if they are aware of the poet's life experiences and the social context. Lyric expression through scenery is more contagious than very direct and explicit expression.

For example, the first two lines in Li Bai's poem, On Phoenix Terrace at Jinling, seem to be an account of a place called Phoenix Terrace.

凤凰台上凤凰游，凤去台空江自流。（李白《登金陵凤凰台》）

On Phoenix Terrace once phoenixes came to sing,

The birds are gone but still roll on the river's waves. (Xu Yuanchong, 2014: 146)

Phoenixes, also known as Feng Huang in Chinese mythology, are the mightiest of birds. Feng is male and Huang female, but when paired with dragon they are blurred into a single feminine entity. As an immortal bird, Feng Huang has rare appearance, with colorful plumage and

signifies peace and prosperity. It is believed that the bird, an auspicious omen, only appears in areas or places that are blessed with utmost peace and prosperity or happiness.

An Lushan Rebellion, a devastating rebellion against Tang Dynasty of China, put the whole country in chaos and uproar. The emperor, Emperor Xuanzong who sought refuge, was forced to move to Shu for the sake of security. His son, Li Heng, ascended to the throne in a remote place, Lingwu. The age of peace and prosperity had faded away.

As for the poet, when he was young, he was very ambitious and aimed high, and was determined to make great contributions to the country. He never concealed his desire to be offered a post at court. Yet to his disappointment, Emperor Xuanzong did not put him in an important position, and he was only accepted into a group of distinguished court poets. And later Li Bai was even exiled to a place called Ye Lang as a result of his involvement in Yongling Incident. The country was disintegrated and devastated by An Lushan Rebellion, which upset him and made him yearn for the past prosperity. The current regime was in imminent danger of collapsing. Yet Li Bai did not express his despair and depression in an explicit way; instead he used the disappearance of Feng Huang as the vehicle to signify the fading of prosperity: phoenixes are gone, but the Yangtze River's waves still roll on.

And the last two lines of the same poem begin with the account of floating clouds and the sun, and the capital city, Chang'an, as seen in the following part.

总为浮云能蔽日，长安不见使人愁。（李白《登金陵凤凰台》）

As floating clouds can veil the bright sun from the eye,

Chang'an now out of sight saddens my heart. (Xu Yuanchong, 2014: 146)

The first line seems to present a vivid account of natural scenery, floating clouds and the sun. In ancient Chinese poems, floating clouds are usually employed to stand for crafty and evil persons and the sun, the monarch. Floating clouds blot out the sun, which reflects the social condition: the foxy and wicked villains surround the emperor and their slanderous talk makes the emperor estrange from his loyal ministers. In the second line, Chang'an is a typical metonymy to represent the imperial court and the emperor since the imperial court was situated in Chang'an in Tang Dynasty. Therefore, Chang'an out of sight is also a vehicle to mirror the social reality that the imperial court and the emperor are out of sight, which indicates the declining and disintegration of the regime. The poet, is sad about the harsh truth. Yet he does not talk about this explicitly. By rendering the natural scenery the demonstration of his emotions, the poet accomplishes his goal and leaves a deep impression on his readers. Readers can connect the natural scenery with the poet's life stories so as to understand this poem better. This is what metonymy does: it doesn't create new paths, but shortens distance between two things in order to inspire the readers to feel what the poet feels.

Significance of illocutionary metonymies in poetry

Metonymy itself is a context. If the poet does not express the theme directly, readers can figure

out the implications with the help of metonymies and other devices like metaphor. This is similar to Ernest Hemingway's "Iceberg Theory", which indicates that the connotations of poetry are like a floating iceberg, with only one-eighth part above the water and seven-eighths part under the water. The deeper meaning of the poem is not evident on the surface, but shines through implicitly. The significance of illocutionary metonymies in poetry is manifest in the following two aspects.

Firstly, illocutionary metonymies can help embody the poet's thoughts and feelings. In ancient Chinese poetry, the poets have a preference for metonymies in their creation. And the selection of metonymy is closely connected with the profound Chinese culture and mirrors the ancient Chinese people's perception of the world. For example, the production of metonymy is the combination of the poet's own life experiences, his memory, and his real and deep feelings. Therefore illocutionary metonymies are very subjective and help transmit deep and hidden feelings. For example, in Li Bai's poem Mount Skyland Ascended in a Dream: A Song of Farewell, the poet presents a vivid picture of immortal world, like gold and silver terraces where immortals stay, which implies the Taoist influence on Li Bai. As is known, the Tang Dynasty period was one of religious ferment and Taoism was the state religion in that age. The popularity of Taoism in Tang Dynasty had its root in political world. In the course of seizing political power, Li Yuan, the first emperor of Tang Dynasty, made use of Taoism for his own personal legitimation. After proclaiming himself emperor, he proclaimed that the founder of Taoism, the Supreme Venerable Sovereign, was his forefather. The following monarchs also worshipped Taoism, among whom Emperor Xuanzong was the strongest believer. Under his support, Taoism reached its peak. Li Bai had an indissoluble bond with Taoism for his whole life: he believed in Taoism, converted to Taoism and the Taoist doctrines were pervasive in his poetry. His poems can reflect his perception of the world, even his generation's outlook on the world.

Secondly, illocutionary metonymies can help strike a chord with readers. Metonymies can arouse readers' presupposition in their mind. For example, in On Phoenix Terrace at Jinling, the sun can stimulate readers' association with the emperor and the floating clouds can remind them of the evil snobs. Lyric expression through scenery is a writing technique widely used in Chinese literature. The writers bestow very strong subjective feelings on natural scenery so as to convey their emotion. So on the surface, they seem to give an account of natural scenery. Yet this is not the real purpose. Besides the ancient Chinese poems usually don't put everything in the limited space of verses. Instead the ancient poems tend to leave a lot of space for readers and stimulate their association and imagination by virtue of metonymies. The shared knowledge about metonymy, along with the shared perception of the world, helps the very short poems express the very deep and profound thoughts and feelings of the poet so as to strike a chord with the readers.

CONCLUSION

Metonymy is a ubiquitous feature of poetic language, and also a way of thinking in poetry creation and appreciation. The soul of metonymy in poetry lies in its creativity that enhances

the vividness and prominence of language. The poet, through metonymic way of thinking, reflects over things and learns about the world while the readers, through metonymic way of thinking, understand and interpret poetry. Li Bai, a well-known romantic poet in the High Tang Dynasty, is gifted in refining unconventional metonymies in his poetry. The grasp of illocutionary metonymies in Li Bai's poems is critical for the readers to have a better understanding of his poems. The cognitive pragmatic analysis of illocutionary metonymies proposed in this paper offers a new perspective on applying cognitive linguistic theories to the study of classical Chinese poems.

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