

A Comparative Study on Projecting Verbs in News and Novels from Interpersonal View

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Abstract: Projection is a type of language phenomenon that does not function as a direct representation of non-linguistic experience but as representation of a linguistic representation. Projection consists of projecting source, projecting words, and the projected clause and the projecting words include projecting verbs, projecting nouns, projecting prepositions and projecting adjuncts, among which projecting verbs are used the most frequently. According to Chinese scholar Zenglei, we can not only judge whether the projection is about mental process or is about verbal process but also know author's attitude or interpersonal meaning conveyed by the author from projecting verbs. Therefore, this study investigates on projecting verbs from interpersonal perspective of systematic-functional grammar and makes a comparative study of them between news discourse and short novels in order to find out whether different genre will influence the application of projection verbs and to offer reasons for it.

Key Words: projecting verb, interpersonal meaning, genre

I. INTRODUCTION

Based on the concept of projection in geometry, Halliday defines projection as logical semantic relations between clause and the clause complex, in which a clause comes to function not as a direct representation of (non-linguistic) experience but as a representation of a (linguistic) representation. Projection involves two processes, one is verbal process or mental process, the other is verbalized process or mentalized process. Halliday has made a deep discussion on the following seven phenomena of projection such as quoting, reporting speech and quoting thought, projecting offers and commands, free indirect speech, embedded locution and ideas, facts. Furthermore, based on the logical semantic relation between projecting clause and projected clause, Halliday divides it into three types: hypotaxis, parataxis, and embedding. At present, domestic researches on projection have three kinds: one is from SFG perspective such as study on evaluative meaning of projection (Zhou Hui, 2014), one is based on corpus to investigate on projecting verbs (Chen Jianlin, 2011), the last is from cognitive perspective such as Zhao xiufeng.

In the lack of researches on interpersonal meaning of projecting verbs, this thesis conducts a comparative study on projecting verbs between news discourse and novels from interpersonal view and tries to figure out the influence of different genre on projecting verbs and offers explanation for it.

II. INTERPERSONAL MEANING OF PROJECTING VERBS

According to Halliday's interpersonal function, language can not only express speakers' experience and internal activities, but also can reflect their status, attitudes, and judgments. Just like what Zeng Lei has said, speakers or sensors' attitudes and interpersonal meaning conveyed by them are reflected in projecting verbs. Therefore, by investigating on projecting verbs, we can tell speakers' point of views. Based on SFG, speakers have two tasks when they communicate with others: giving and demanding and in this communicating process, they exchange two types of commodities: goods-services, information. If they exchange goods with others, then the language form they use is proposal. On the other side, if they exchange information, then the language form they use is proposition. Proposition can be negated, partially accepted, adjusted, modified, supported and proposals include suggestions, orders and offers. Based on projected verbs, we can divide projections into proposition projection and proposal projection. The paper has collected 12 news discourses (about 6000 words) and 5 short novels (about 6000 words) and respectively analyzes the distribution of projected verbs in these two corpora through a quantitative and qualitative method.

The following table is about the distribution of projecting verbs in news and novels.

TABLE I. Distribution of Projecting Verbs

Types	Frequency		Standardized Frequency(500 words)	
	News	Novels	News	Novels
Proposal	21	14	1.75	1.16
Proposition	87	103	7.25	8.58

The above table shows that proposition projections are more frequently applied in both news and novels than proposals, for example, 87 is higher than 21 and 103 higher than 14 because the fundamental function of news and novels is to convey information. Besides, the standardized frequency of proposition projection in news is little lower than that in novels, which count 7.25 and 8.58 respectively.

According to the above table, it might show that different genre employs different types of projection. That's to say, the distribution of proposition projection and proposal clause is influenced by text's genre. According to the first table, the standardized frequency of proposal projection in news is higher than that in novels. The reason for this might be because most of news collected by this research are political and military news and these type of news prefer using projecting verbs like "promise", "urge", and etc. For example,

(1) American Secretary of State Hillary Clinton promised more than seventeen million dollars to fight sexual violence in the D.R.C.
(VOA news, 202)

However, the standardized frequency of proposition projection in news is lower than that in novels might be because novels often use many words to describe the background and the development of the plot if the novels and this need can be achieved by proposition as in Halliday's view proposition is to offer information.

Besides the above conclusions, there are some other findings during the research. For example, in news discourse, the top five frequently used proposal verbs are call on, promise, urge, ask and tell, while the top five frequently used verbs in novels are wish, expect, want, tell and ask. Meanwhile, the first five frequently deployed proposition verbs in news include say, report, state, show and tell. On the contrast, the first five proposition verbs in novels include say, think, cried out, tell and explain. By comparing those words, we can know that no matter proposition verbs or proposal verbs, news discourses prefer adopting verbs reflecting verbal process like promise, state, while novels prefer verbs reflecting mental process such as think, wish, expect.

News discourse requires its content to be objective and reliable, so news reporters should avoid their subjective views when doing news reporting. However, it is impossible for reporters not to express their opinions which are usually hidden in projecting verbs(Ou yangxia). Compared with mental verbs, verbal verbs are more objective. That's why news discourse frequently use verbal words. On the other hand, novels usually do not have a high demand on objectivity. Instead, in the portrait of characters, application of mental verbs is a good way to reflect their internal world and their personalities. The following are the actual examples of projecting verbs used in news discourse. By looking at them, we can tell how these projecting verbs realize interpersonal function.

(2) It(Ukraine) **promised** to give up all of its highly enriched uranium by two thousands twelve.

(VOA news, 118)

(3) On Friday, Facebook **announced** it is making its Web Site available in the Farsi language.

(VOA news, 26)

(4) Indian officials **said** nine gunmen were killed and one was captured.

(VOA news, 190)

Example 2 is a proposal projection, while Example 3,4 are proposition projections. From “announced” and “said”, we know that events described in propositions in the projected clauses happened or it is happening. However, we cannot infer that whether Ukraine has give up its uranium or not through “promised” in Example 2. Besides, projecting verbs appearing in above sentences are all verbal verbs. Information which appears before them is source information and which follows them is the projected clause. Reporters give out the source information is to indicate that the projected clause is the opinion of others not the individual view of reporters’. Thus, they can decrease their personal responsibilities and avoid tension with other people who have different views. It is also possible for reporters to express the original speaker’s ideas in an acceptable way and indirectly leave enough space for the news readers.

As discussed above, projecting verbs can function as a signal to demonstrate reporters’ voice. For example:

(5) President Obama on Friday praised the millions of Afghans who took part in their country’s presidential and provincial elections. (VOA news, 23)

It seems that the projected clause only stands for Obama’ opinion rather than reporter’s individual view. However, by using the projecting verb “praised”, the reporter does not keep neutral any longer because the proposition is intensified by the word “praised”, which indicates the reporter believes that Obama is in favor of the Afghans’ behaviors.

III. CONCLUSION

The paper analyzes projecting verbs from interpersonal grammar in novels and news, which can enrich the study projections and give readers some insights on understanding of projection. By comparing projecting verbs in news and novels, we know that different genre will use different types of projecting verbs. News prefer using more proposal projections than novels and this might relate to the theme of news. Besides, because of the requirement of objectivity, news discourse prefers verbal verbs rather than mental verbs so as to enlarge the dialogue space between news reporters and news readers, especially those who have opposite view with reporters. This thesis provides some pedagogical implication on news reading and writing. It helps us master how to use projecting verbs in news and novels to express our attitudes more appropriately.

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