

英语社论文体中人际元语篇标记语*

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提 要: 区分语篇的命题意义与非命题意义是元语篇研究的核心。但以往的研究大多在命题与非命题元素之间产生大量的重叠现象, 导致该领域研究的模糊性。模糊限定语和情态是人际元语篇的重要载体, 它们在英语社论中成为人际意义的关键标记语。本文对社论中承载人际元语篇的模糊限定语和情态进行定义和分类, 消解元语篇研究中命题元素与非命题元素之间的模糊性。

关键词: 命题意义; 非命题意义; 模糊限定语; 情态; 人际元语篇

中图分类号: H030

文献标识码: A

文章编号: 1000-0100(2015)01-0090-5

DOI 编码: 10.16263/j.cnki.23-1071/h.2015.01.015

The Interpersonal Metadiscourse Markers in English Editorials

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The distinction between propositional and non-propositional meanings is essential in metadiscourse studies. But there was a great deal of overlap between propositional materials and non-propositional materials in the previous studies of metadiscourse, which gave rise to the blurring in this area. Hedges and modals are the important carriers of interpersonal metadiscourse and main indicators of interpersonal meanings in English editorials. In order to solve the existing ambiguities between propositional materials and non-propositional ones in metadiscourse studies, this article has presented the definitions and classifications of hedges and modals that indicate interpersonal metadiscourse through the study of English editorials.

Key words: propositional meanings; non-propositional meanings; hedges; modals; interpersonal metadiscourse

1 引言

“元语篇”指语篇的“第二层面”, 区别于“基本话语层”(Sinclair 1981)。“基本话语层”包括命题内容或者“语篇的交流内容”(Hyland 2005: 38), 为读者提供信息。第二层面也就是元语篇, 包括语篇的非命题部分, 指引读者阅读语篇, 在作者和读者之间发挥桥梁作用。因此, 区分基本话语层(命题内容)与语篇第二层面(非命题部分)是元话语研究的核心问题。但以往研究并没有明确区分这些模糊概念, 且在命题与非命题之间存在大量术语重叠现象, 这给篇章分析造成困难, 并使该领域的研究缺乏统一性。因而, 为保障篇章分析方法的连贯性, 对承载元语篇的非命题术语的类型加以澄清十分必要。其中, 对模糊限定语(hedges)和情态(modals)的研究及定位是解

决目前问题的关键。本文尝试运用功能和句法相关理论研究“模糊限定语”和“情态”, 突出标记人际元语篇元素。

2 模糊限定语与情态

本文的语料取自美国《纽约时报》、《华盛顿邮报》、《时代周刊》和英国《泰晤士报》、《经济学家》、《旁观者》2014年2月至3月中的社论。社论是新闻评论的一种, 是针对国内外重大新闻事实和时政进行权威评论以及引导舆论的工具。它本身具有大众性、论辩性和说服力。报刊的大众性特点表明其拥有最广泛的受众群体; 说服力特点要求其文本结构必须清晰, 以便在作者与读者之间建立良好联系; 论辩性的写作使作者倾向于使用较多元语言, 尤其是人际元语言(Williams 1981)。

* 本文系教育部人文社科研究项目“语用身份建构中责任情态人际意义研究”(13YJA740046)和中央高校基本科研业务费专项资金项目“人际元语篇表示语——情态和模糊限定语之定位研究”(HEUCF141208)的阶段性成果。

2.1 模糊限定语

模糊限定语由 Lakoff (1973) 提出,指那些使事物变得模糊或不太模糊的词语。Hyland 指出,“模糊限定语指那些表明对命题的真值缺乏充分承诺或不绝对表达承诺的语言方式”(Hyland 2008: 52)。但在元语篇研究中,模糊限定语与人际相关(Crismore 1989, Vande 2002, Milne 2003, Hyland 2005)。

Milne 和 Hyland 从交际角度研究模糊限定语“作者对一条信息的态度可以是确定的或不确定的”(Milne 2008: 107),表达不确定的情态标记语是“模糊限定语”,表达确定的标记语叫做“确定标记语”(certainty markers)(Milne 2008: 99)或者“强效辅助词”(boosters)(Hyland 2008: 52-53)。Hyland 认为,有必要使用模糊限定语证明作者话语的合理性,因为作者需要得到读者的认可;作者必须对事实的本质作出假设,预测读者对该假设的接受程度(Hyland 1996: 436-437)。因此,“读者不知道谁将对话语的真实性负责,在这一方面模糊限定语为处理文本提供可能”(Markkanen & Schroder 1997: 5-6)。

2.2 情态

Halliday 和 Matthiessen (2004) 认为“情态”是人际功能的组成部分,并将其定义为“肯定”到“否定”的渐变体。换句话说,情态是命题“是”或“不是”发生的概率程度或者提议“做!”或“不做!”所承载的义务程度(Halliday & Matthiessen 2004: 116),所以归一度(the certainty yends)的肯定一端和否定一端也是情态的一部分。本文中,表示肯定和否定的任何一端都是命题的,无法承载元语篇。Halliday 和 Matthiessen 认为,情态系统的功能是“解释肯定和否定之间不确定的过渡状态”(Halliday & Matthiessen 2004: 147)。他们区分“情态”(modalization)和“意态”(modulation)。此处的情态不仅与概率有关(如 probably, certainly, possibly)还与频率相关(如 sometimes, usually, always)。情态的表达方式可以是情态助动词(如 that will be John, he'll sit there all day)、情态附加语(如 that's probably John)或者是二者结合(如 that'll probably be John)。而意态与义务和意愿有关,其表达方式可以是情态助动词(如 you should know that, I'll help them)或者扩充的谓语(如 you're supposed to know that)(Halliday & Matthiessen 2004: 147)。

除了情态动词和情态附加语, Halliday (2000) 提出“情态隐喻”概念,从一个新的视角阐释语言形式和语义之间的关系,拓宽情态范畴。因此诸如 I think, I'm certain, it's likely, it's certain, it's obvious that... 和 everyone admits that... 等都是情态表达方式。

根据功能语法,人际意义的体现由情态的取向系统决定,并将其划分为具有显性变体、隐性变体的主观性情态(subjective modality)和客观性情态(objective modality)

(Halliday & Matthiessen 2004: 619)。Halliday 曾明确指出,“显性主观情态和显性客观情态都是隐喻式的,与其对应的隐性主观和隐性客观情态都是一致式。隐喻式以投射句形式编码要表达的主客观情态,把命题识解成被投射的内容;而一致式将可能性的表达编码成某一情态成分”(Halliday 2000: 615)。以上 4 种显隐性情态标记语可以不同程度地公开标记话语者对所述信息的态度、评价以及对此承担的责任(Thompson 2008: 71),因此是非命题的,被视为人际元语篇标记。

3 英语社论中的人际元语篇标记

社论文体在结构、风格、内容以及受众等方面存在特殊性,其最根本的交际目的是通过对事件的评论达到影响受众观点的目的。要作到这一点,就需要在语言运用上具有说服力,实现它的“社交功能”(Cheung 2010)。人际元语篇标记语把社论作者对时事评论的重要性及可信性信息传递给读者,以实现人际社交功能。以往对人际元语篇标记的分类很难全面应用于英语社论文体对人际意义的解释,因此本文有必要对其进行重新整合与分类。

英语社论中人际元语篇标记分为以下类型:(1)模糊限定语语气副词标记语:其性质为弱语气的副词,如 She does a good job communicating a complicated (and appropriate) mix of policy decisions at her first FOMC meeting today, including a slightly larger and quicker than expected interest rate hike... (Time, 20 March 2014); (2)模糊限定语动词标记语:表达不确定性和迟疑态度的动词,如 It seems that strikes and multiyear pressure campaigns by low-wage workers have some impact on their employers (The Washington Post, 20 March 2014); (3)模糊限定语频率和态度标记语:表频率和态度的形容词或副词(形式上与主句分离),如 Sure enough, Mr Najib had momentous news, that the authorities now blame “deliberate” action for whatever happened to Malaysia Airlines Flight MH370, now missing for more than a week (Economist, 16 March 2014); (4)认知情态标记语:表(不)确定性情态动词、情态副词和关系小句,如 Tinkering with taxes every few months may play to the crowd but it's a disaster for business and prosperity (The Times, 19 March 2014); (5)责任情态标记语:表义务或允许的情态词或动词被动式,如 The EU foreign ministers declared the ballot to be illegal and added, lest anyone be tempted to accept the Russian *fait accompli* “The EU does not recognize the illegal ‘referendum’ and its outcome” (Economist, 17 March 2014); (6)显性情态标记语:小句式或嵌入式名词词组,如 It is especially welcome that Florida State Attorney Jeffrey L. Ashton is conducting a parallel inquiry that may serve to balance that of the FBI (The Washington Post, 10 March

2014); (7) 隐性情态标记语: 限定性情态动词、情态副词或动词被动式, 如 Promoting regional integration is likewise something policy makers often talk about and **undoubtedly** support (*New York Times* 6 February 2014) 。

3.1 模糊限定语标记语

在元语篇研究中, 模糊限定语往往被“不确定标记语”(uncertainty markers) 取代。这些标记语往往表示低等级(low grading) (Martin & Rose 2003) 。比如, somewhat, kind of, sort of, just, merely, rather, slightly, relatively. 这些词的作用都是“将音量调低”并“软化”语气(Martin & Rose 2003) 。它们在社论文体中扮演人际元语篇指示语的角色。例如:

① a. ... some indicated that Mr. Todashev had a knife or a sword, others that he **merely** knocked over a table — have been more than enough to fuel reasonable suspicions, let alone the multiple conspiracy theories reverberating globally via the Internet. (*The Washington Post*, 20 March 2014)

模糊限定语包含大量表达式, 如 predict, credibly, reason, probable, possible, likely 等。但本文研究的焦点是表达不确定性的非命题指示语, 即人际元语篇标记语, 因此有必要区分模糊限定语动词的命题意义和非命题意义。有些动词如 hypothesize, judge, imagine, infer, wish, 即使表明作者不确定的态度, 也增加信息内容, 它们是命题的。例如:

② Instead of condemning him for this outrageous act, however, some **think** it is more important to blame President Obama for this tragedy. (*Time*, 20 March 2014)

上例中 think 不是元语篇的载体, 因为该词表达命题内容, 并没有暗示或传达作者的声音。然而, 模糊限定语动词却能暗示作者不确定和迟疑的态度, 表达非命题内容, 因此成为人际元语篇的载体。例如:

③ While Mr. Putin **appears** to hold all the aces, this is his Achilles heel — Russia is now part of the global economy and will pay if market volatility and rouble weakness persist indefinitely. (*New York Times*, 5 March 2014)

例③中, 作者使用 appears 暗示事件的当事者俄罗斯总统普京在解决乌克兰问题中所处的地位以及面临的严峻形势。同时, 此类模糊限定语人际意义标记语能够表明社论作者对信息内容的不确定态度。

通常, 表频率或态度类的形容词及副词(模糊限定语表达方式的一种) 不纳入我们研究的范围, 因为像 occasionally, seldom, usually, frequently, scarcely, obviously, apparently, crucially, undoubtedly, sure 一类形容词及副词由于其本质上是命题的, 因此不能算元语篇标记语。但是, 如果这些词脱离主句而独立出现在句首, 其后紧跟逗号或者出现在句中但位于两逗号之间, 它们就是非命题的,

此时被视为承载元话语标记语。例如:

④ a. It is with this latter group of good-faith critics in mind that the Obama administration must approach the troubling matter of Ibragim Todashev's violent death at the hands, **apparently**, of an FBI special agent on May 22. (*The Washington Post*, 10 March 2014)

3.2 认知与责任情态标记语

至于情态类型, 大体上可分为认知(epistemic) 情态和责任(deontic) 情态。当“说话者公开承担责任, 证明自身话语属实”(Lyons 1977: 797) 时, 为认知情态。目前, 相关研究都将“认知情态”或 Halliday & Matthiessen(2004) 所谓的“情态”视为表达“确定或不确定”的重要因素, 这种(不) 确定性”表明所说话语的可能性及概率, 承担部分或避免承担全部话语真实性的责任, 可以通过情态操作词(modal operators) (如 will, should, would, could, can, must) 或情态状语(如 probably, usually, possibly, certainly, supposedly, presumably, sometimes, always) 以及关系小句实现。例如:

⑤ a. (8) Tinkering with taxes every few months **may** play to the crowd but it's a disaster for business and prosperity. (*The Times*, 19 March 2014)

b. (9) It is **probably** safe to say that journalists, outside a small but dedicated cadre of labor reporters, have talked to more minimum-wage workers in the past year than in the previous 10. (*The Washington Post*, 20 March 2014)

例⑤a 的作者使用认知情态动词 may 表明其对最近英国税收法案不断修补这事实的态度, 并非增强命题的信息本身, 因此属于元话语标记。例⑤b 包含可能性情态状语的关系小句 it is **probably** safe to say, 属认知型情态表达。它除表明作者态度的不确定外, 还考虑到语用上的得体 and 距离等礼貌因素。

责任情态或 Halliday & Matthiessen 的“意态”常常从“读者话语表达式”和“义务表达式”两个角度着眼, 表达义务和允许意义。作者试图利用“读者话语表达式”让读者参与到话题讨论中, 而“义务表达式”表明作者对所讨论话题的态度。其人际意义的实现形式包括情态操作词(如 must, should, may) 以及谓词的扩展(如 be allowed to, be supposed to, be expected to, be acceptable) , 因为它们可以在人际元语篇中可以表明提议被要求、提供、建议或决定, 暗示作者是否期待某行为或事件发生的态度, 因此成为人际元语篇标记。例如:

⑥ The EU foreign ministers declared the ballot to be illegal and added, lest anyone **be tempted to** accept the Russian *fait accompli* “The EU does not recognize the illegal ‘referendum’ and its outcome.” (*Economist*, 17 March 2014)

须要指出 根据文本中的不同功能 情态可以成为表达“确定”、“不确定”或“义务”的手段。如情态词 *must* 在某些实例中用来表达确定,而在另一些例子中表达义务;*should* 可以表达认知上的不确定,也可以表明义务含义。例如:

⑦ a. Instead, we have an ill-defined feeling that we **should** do something for those worse off than ourselves, something that often turns into a pity-charity complex. (*The Washington Post*, 20 March 2014)

b. Ensuring the competition authorities are independent, competent and energetic **should** help to ensure more competition. (*New York Times*, 6 February 2014)

c. But this is just another way that the poor **must** prove themselves “deserving” and for the better-off to feel righteous for helping them. (*The Washington Post*, 20 March 2014)

d. He stopped short of calling this a hijacking, but experts now agree that this is what **must** have happened. (*Economist*, 16 March 2014)

在例⑦d中,负责调查 MH370 失联客机的专家称此次事件为劫机事件。作者在传达这一信息时用情态词 *must* 表达认知上的确定态度。b 中的 *should* 表达概率或可能性,属于认知情态标记语。a 和 c 中的情态词 *should* 和 *must* 都表达必要性,是义务意义表达式,属于责任情态标记语。

3.3 显性与隐性情态标记语

显性情态标记主要由小句和嵌入式名词词组体现,隐性情态标记主要由限定性情态动词、情态副词或动词被动式体现。

由于显性情态标记及隐性情态标记是作者劝说读者接受其观点的重要工具,在英语社论文体中常常使用这两种标记语来撰写具有说服力的文章。它们有助于更为精确地区分语篇的人际特征。例如:

⑧ a. **It is especially welcome that** Florida State Attorney Jeffrey L. Ashton is conducting a parallel inquiry that may serve to balance that of the FBI. (*The Washington Post*, 10 March 2014)

b. Then, **there's** the supposedly “hawkish” rate increase (the median interest rate forecast increased 0.25% to 1%) which investors now believe could happen by mid 2015 based on a statement by the chair. . . (*Time*, 20 March 2014)

c. **Senior U. S. officials** said they were holding off on sanctions that might genuinely cause the Kremlin pain, such as asset freezes, and keeping them in reserve in the event of a Russian invasion of eastern Ukraine. (*The Washington Post*, 20 March 2014)

例⑧a中,以 *it* 开头的关系小句反应社论作者对于佛罗里达州 Jeffrey 律师介入事件调查的积极态度,采用非命题的客观表达式,属于显性人际情态标记。同时,b 中 *there be* 形式小句以及 c 中以泛指第三方 Senior U. S. officials 开头的小句同样具备显性情态特征。以上 3 种显性客观标记语能清楚反映出命题的人际情态地位、等级以及反应类型。社论作者往往利用这种客观性较强的人际元话语手段淡化自己的观点,为某一个看法增添客观确定性。

⑨ We **expected** something technical focusing on the new powers the Scottish Parliament would be gifted by a Labour government at Westminster. (*The Spectator*, 18 March 2014)

区别于客观性较强的显性情态标记,⑨中的人际情态标记语 *we expected* 具有主观情态取向,突出话语者对苏格兰议会真正解决贫富差距问题的期待。

⑩ **The fact that** it was issued, he said, was a sign of that Germany was “waking up”. (*Economist* 17 March 2014)

例⑩中,*The fact that* 与其后的 *it was issued* 构成嵌入式名词词组,具备显性情态特征,成为词组型人际元话语标记语。该新闻评论者利用此结构将命题信息的有效性归属于他人或他物,使自己与之保持一定距离,从而在一定程度上开辟与潜在听众的人际交流空间。

⑪ a. The full 11-group aircraft carrier fleet **will** be kept but maintenance on one, the George Washington, is being deferred; if the \$6 billion cost cannot be found in the next year the ship **could** be retired. (*The Washington Post*, 9 March 2014)

b. **Still**, even EU hawks recognised that the EU has come up with a sterner response than many expected, even though it has declined for now to target members of the Russian executive. (*Economist*, 17 March 2014)

c. Promoting regional integration is likewise something policy makers often talk about and **undoubtedly** support. (*New York Times* 6 February 2014)

在例⑪a 和 b 中,社论作者分别选用限定性情态操作词 *will*, *could* 和情态状语 *still* 承载元话语,针对相关命题进行评价和议论。在 c 中,情态副词 *undoubtedly* 强调政策制定者对提高地区性融合的支持态度。这些人际情态标记语具备隐性特征,它们在人际元语篇中将元话语的归属意义与命题人际意义结合起来,表明话语者对所传达信息的个人态度。

4 结束语

模糊限定语中表弱化语气的副词、表达不确定性和迟疑态度的动词以及形式上与主句分离的表频率和态度的形容词和副词都是非命题的,承载元语篇并传达命题

的人际意义。认知与责任情态以及显隐性情态能成为人际元语篇标记语的关键在于它们以情态词或关系小句的方式将元话语的归属意义与命题的人际意义结合起来,传达社论作者或其所属政治集团对新闻事件的看法、态度和立场。

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收稿日期: 2013-07-03

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