On the Indicating Words of Idiom Annotation in CCD (6th ed.)

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Abstract. Seven years after the publication of the fifth edition, the sixth edition of Contemporary Chinese Dictionary (CCD) comes out. It is a systematic revision based on the former editions and allows the CCD to keep pace with time and advance to a new level. With the method of quantitative analysis, the paper examines the types and the amount of changes in the IWs of idioms in the 6th edition, aiming to analyze the possible causes, demonstrate its accomplishment and points out some remaining problems.

Keywords: IWs, changes, problems.

1 Introduction

In order to clarify the definition, when defining words, dictionary use certain expressions and symbol marks with special meaning [1] (p.51). Those words are known as IWs [2-4]. In the guide to Contemporary Chinese Dictionary (CCD) (sixth edition), it is clearly stated that one main aspect of the revision is to “make a unified revision on the indicating words (IW) in idiom annotation, such as 比喻 biyu ‘metaphorize’, 形容 xingrong ‘describe’, 借代 jie dai ‘metonymize’.” The change of IWs, is both due to the compilers’ objective perception and ordinary people’s view on the semantic development. The sixth edition of CCD is a systematically revised version on the basis of the fifth edition. The definition of idioms in the sixth edition inherits the main contents of the fifth edition and revises the IWs systematically. Through comparison, this paper pays close attention to the types and the amount of the revised IWs, analyzes the value of the revision, and ventures to put forward some understandings, with the hope for further discussion with the compilers of CCD and specialists in this area.

2 Changes of the Indicating Words

2.1 Types of IW Changes in Idiom Annotation

a. “比喻” biyu ‘metaphorize’ to “形容” xingrong ‘describe’ (100 entries in total). Examples are shown as follows:
壁垒森严 *bi lei sen yan* (fig) closely-guarded; strongly fortified or sharply divided

To **metaphorize** close guard, strong fortification or sharp division.

形容防守很严密或界限划得很分明。 (6th ed.)

‘To **describe** close guard, strong fortification or sharp division.’

如火如荼 *ru huo ru tu* ‘...to describe the mightiness of an army. Now used figuratively to indicate something prosperous, vigorous, or intense.’

原比喻军容之盛（语本《国语·吴语》），现用来形容旺盛、热烈或激烈。（5th ed.)

‘...used to **metaphorize** the mightiness of an army. Now used figuratively to indicate something prosperous, vigorous, or intense.’

原形容军容之盛（语本《国语·吴语》），现用来形容旺盛、热烈或激烈。（6th ed.)

‘...used to **describe** the mightiness of an army. Now used figuratively to indicate something prosperous, vigorous, or intense.’

举重若轻 *ju zhong ruo qing* ‘Lifting something heavy is as easy as lifting something light. (fig) it seems easy to do something even though the assignment is actually complicated and hard to handle’

……比喻做繁难的事或处理棘手的问题轻松而不费力。（5th ed.)

‘To **metaphorize** the easiness to do something even though the assignment is actually complicated and hard to handle.’

……形容做繁难的事或处理棘手的问题轻松而不费力。（6th ed.)

‘To **describe** the easiness to do something even though the assignment is actually complicated and hard to handle.’

b. 比喻 *biyu* ‘metaphorize’ to 指 *zhi* ‘refer to’ (46 entries in total).

表里如一 *biao li ru yi* *(fig)* think and act in one and the same way

比喻思想和言行完全一致。（5th ed.)

‘To **metaphorize** the state to think and act in one and the same way’

指思想和言行完全一致。（6th ed.)

‘To **refer to** the state to think and act in one and the same way’

c. 比喻 *biyu* ‘metaphorize’ to 泛指 *fanzhi* ‘generally refer to’ (24 entries in total).

闭关自守 *bi guan zi shou* ‘Close the country to the outside world by closing the pass; (fig) seclude oneself from the outside world’

闭塞关口，不跟别国往来。也比喻不跟外界交往。（5th ed.)

‘Close the country to the outside world by closing the pass; **metaphorize** the seclusion of oneself from the outside world’

闭塞关口，不跟别国往来。也泛指不跟外界交往。（6th ed.)

‘Close the country to the outside world by closing the pass; **generally describe** the seclusion of oneself from the outside world’

d. 比喻 *biyu* ‘metaphorize’ to 借指 *jiezhi* ‘be used refer to’ (17 entries in total).

黔驴技穷 *qian lü ji qiong* ‘The Guizhou donkey has exhausted its tricks; (fig) be at one’s wit’s end; be at the end of one’s resources.’