

## *The Two Principles of Representation: Paradigm and Syntagm*

表象の原理：範列と連辞

LEE Haruki  
李 春 喜

表現されたものを構成する二つの原理は選択と結合である。選択とは等価な要素の集合から一つの要素を選択することであり、結合とは選ばれた要素が結合されるその結合のされ方である。表象の二大原理であるメタファーとメトニミーはそれぞれ選択と結合を原理として成り立っている。類似性にもとづくメタファーは選択によって形成され、隣接性にもとづくメトニミーは結合によって形成される。ある表現において、表現媒体そのものが前景化されているとき、その表現では「詩的機能」が支配的である。ヤコブソンはそのことを「詩的機能は等価の原理を選択の軸から結合の軸へと投影する」と定式化した。

以下の拙論では、選択と結合の原理が言語表現においてどのように具体化されているか考察する。

### キーワード

Paradigm (範列)    Syntagm (連辞)    Poetic Function (詩的機能)  
Metaphor (メタファー)    Metonymy (メトニミー)

### 1

The two systems that produce meaning in language are paradigmatic and syntagmatic. Jonathan Culler writes in *Ferdinand de Saussure* that “Paradigmatic relations are the oppositions between elements that can replace one another...Syntagmatic relations define combinatory possibilities; the relations between elements that might combine in a sequence” (60). According to the *Oxford Concise Dictionary of Literary Terms*, a paradigm is:

a set of linguistic or other units that can be substituted for each other in the same position within a sequence or structure. A paradigm in this sense may be constituted by all words sharing the same grammatical function, since the substitution of one for another does not disturb the syntax of a sentence. Linguistics often refers to the

paradigmatic dimension of language as the 'vertical axis' of selection. (182-183)

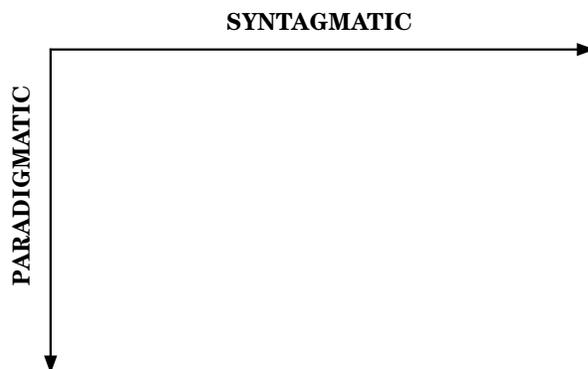
The following definition is given for a syntagm:

a linguistic term designating any combination of units...which are arranged in a significant sequence. A sentence is a syntagm of words. Language is said to have two distinct dimensions: the syntagmatic or 'horizontal' axis of combination in which sequences of words are formed by combining them in a recognized order...The syntagmatic dimension is therefore the 'linear' aspect of language. (255)

For example, in a sentence "The cat was sitting on the rug," "the" is chosen from among a number of words such as "a," "their," "his," and "my" that could have filled the same slot based on the paradigmatic system, that is, "the 'vertical axis' of selection." Also, "cat" is chosen instead of "dog," "boy," or "baby," and "was" instead of "is," and so on.

Also, both the sentences "I write what I know" and "I know what I write" consist of the same units, "I," "write," "what," and "know." However, the meanings of these two sentences are different because the units that compose the sentences are arranged differently based on the syntagmatic system, that is, "the 'horizontal' axis of combination."

As we have seen, any expression that conveys a message is structured along these two systems, the paradigmatic and syntagmatic. These two systems are commonly illustrated diagrammatically as follows:



These two systems are summarized in *The Linguistics Encyclopedia* as follows:

On the syntagmatic axis, words are linked, or chained, together according to grammatical rules, but we make choices about which words to link together on the paradigmatic axis, the axis of choice. (437)

2

In his “Closing Statement: Linguistics and Poetics” Roman Jakobson identifies six constituent elements of verbal communication: addresser, addressee, context, message, contact, and code. Below is Jakobson’s explication of the elements:

The ADDRESSER sends a MESSAGE to the ADDRESSEE. To be operative the message requires a CONTEXT referred to (“referent” in another, somewhat ambiguous, nomenclature), seizable by the addressee, and either verbal or capable of being verbalized; a CODE fully, or at least partially, common to the addresser and addressee (or in other words, to the encoder and decoder of the message); and, finally, a CONTACT, a physical channel, enabling both of them to enter and stay in communication. (353)

To each of these elements Jakobson allots six functions: emotive, conative, referential, poetic, phatic, and metalingual. The first function we will explain is the referential function. When a communication depends heavily on the context in which it is occurring, the function allotted to this type of communication is referential. Next is the emotive function. The role of the emotive function is to express the speaker’s feelings, wishes, attitudes, and will. The third function, conative, is allotted to the addressee. In this type of communication the emphasis is placed on the person to whom a message is addressed. The fourth function discussed is the phatic function. When the emphasis is placed on the contact within a communication, the phatic function is dominant. The fifth function is the metalingual function. When a speaker talks about a code based on the speaker’s language, it is the metalingual function that dominates in this kind of communication. Lastly, when emphasis is placed on the message itself, the poetic function dominates. In other words, if any utterance foregrounds the textual features of the language, this utterance focuses on the poetic function.

At the beginning of the article cited above, Jakobson touches upon the subject of poetics. He says:

Poetics deals primarily with the question, *What makes a verbal message a work of art?* Because the main subject of poetics is the *differentia specifica* of verbal art in relation to other arts and in relation to other kinds of verbal behavior, poetics is entitled to the leading place in literary studies.

Poetics deals with problems of verbal structure, just as the analysis of painting is concerned with pictorial structure. Since linguistics is the global science of verbal structure, poetics may be regarded as an integral part of linguistics. (350)

To answer the question “*What makes a verbal message a work of art?*” he gives a following formula: “*The poetic function projects the principle of equivalence from the axis of selection into the axis of combination.* Equivalence is promoted to the constitutive device of the sequence” (“Statement” 358).

Let us elaborate on this formula. If the sentence “The cat sat on the mat” is favored over “The cat was sitting on the rug” in a given context, the speaker of this sentence pays more attention to the verbal aspect of the expression than the proposition of the message itself because the propositions of the messages of the two sentences are almost the same. Units such as “was sitting” and “sat” or “rug” and “mat” fill the same slots in the sentence. In other words, the terms of each pair, “was sitting” and “sat,” and “rug” and “mat” are equivalent. Certain units combined in the actual sentence “the cat sat on the mat” are selected from among the units that have potentially equivalent value. In this way, when certain units selected from the paradigmatic axis are combined and built into a message based on the principle of equivalence, the message is more likely to become poetic. I would like to cite one example from Daniel Chandler. If the statement, “It droppeth as the gentle rain from heaven” (178), is made instead of “It’s raining” (178), the system of selection is operated on the syntagmatic axis, and the textual features of the language are foregrounded.

### 3

In “Two Aspects of Language and Two Types of Aphasic Disturbances,” Jakobson says that “Speech implies a selection of certain linguistic entities and their combination into linguistic units of a higher degree of complexity” (72). Here, two types of language systems are also operated: selection and combination.

Following H. Head, Jakobson distinguishes two kinds of aphasia according to which type of operation is impaired. The first case is the one in which “deficiency lies in selection and substitution, with relative stability of combination and contexture” (“Aspects” 77). By contrast, the second case is the one in which deficiency lies “in combination and contexture, with relative retention of normal selection and substitution” (“Aspects” 77).

Jakobson describes the first type of aphasia, called “similarity disorder,” as follows:

the context is the indispensable and decisive factor. When presented with scraps of words or sentences, such a patient readily completes them. His speech is merely reactive: he easily carries on conversation, but has difficulties in starting a dialogue...

The more his utterances are dependent on the context, the better he copes with this

verbal task. (“Aspects” 77-78)

For example, an aphasic patient with a similarity disorder cannot substitute unmarried men for bachelors in a sentence “There are also big apartments, only in the rear live bachelors” (“Aspects” 79). “When repeatedly asked what a bachelor was, the patient did not answer and was ‘apparently in distress’” (“Aspects” 79). A bachelor is an unmarried man. In other words, a “bachelor” and an “unmarried man” have equivalent value and are stored along the same paradigmatic axis. When a context is given which requires either a “bachelor” or an “unmarried man,” the speaker can use “bachelor” because the context helps him. But since this speaker has a similarity disorder with a deficiency in selection and substitution, he cannot substitute “unmarried man” for “bachelor.”

The other type of aphasia is called “contiguity disorder” in which “The syntactical rules organizing words into higher units are lost....Word order becomes chaotic; the ties of grammatical coordination and subordination, whether concord or government, are dissolved” (“Aspects” 85-86). Below is Jakobson’s illustration of this type of disorder:

As might be expected, words endowed with purely grammatical functions, like conjunctions, prepositions, pronouns, and articles, disappear first, giving rise to the so-called “telegraphic style....Only a few longer, stereotyped, “ready made” sentences manage to survive. In advanced cases of this disease, each utterance is reduced to a single one-word sentence. (“Aspects” 86)

Because a patient with this type of disorder has lost the syntactical rules, he cannot combine elements into a sentence, and his utterances are likely to become telegraphic. However, since his ability to select and substitute is retained, he can use “Spyglass for microscope, or fire for gaslight”(“Aspects” 86).

Thus Jakobson identifies two types of aphasia: similarity disorder and contiguity disorder. The former type is the one in which “deficiency lies in selection and substitution” but retains the “relative stability of combination and contexture,” whereas the latter type is the one in which deficiency lies “in combination and contexture” but maintains “normal selection and substitution.” Therefore, a speaker with a similarity disorder can easily carry on conversation “when presented with scraps of words or sentences” but “has difficulties in starting a dialogue...the more his utterances are dependent on the context, the better he copes with his verbal task” (“Aspects” 77-78). On the contrary, a speaker with a contiguity disorder cannot build constituent elements into meaningful units, but since his selective operation is retained, when provided with a word clue, he can say “what it is like” (86) or substitute another word for it.

#### 4

Based on observations of these two aspects of aphasia, Jakobson proposes using this observation for the analysis of artistic imagination. Jakobson relates these two types of aphasia to two types of rhetorical figuration—metaphor and metonymy—commenting that:

Every form of aphasic disturbance consists in some impairment, more or less severe, either of the faculty for selection and substitution or for combination and contexture. The former affliction involves a deterioration of metalinguistic operations, while the latter damages the capacity for maintaining the hierarchy of linguistic units. The relation of similarity is suppressed in the former, the relation of contiguity in the latter type of aphasia. Metaphor is alien to the similarity disorder, and metonymy to the contiguity disorder. (“Aspects” 90)

The primacy of the metaphoric process in the literary schools of romanticism and symbolism has been repeatedly acknowledged, but it is still insufficiently realized that it is the predominance of metonymy which underlies and actually predetermines the so-called ‘realistic’ trend, which belongs to an intermediary stage between the decline of romanticism and the rise of symbolism and is opposed to both. Following the path of contiguous relationships, the realist author metonymically digresses from the plot to the atmosphere and from the characters to the setting in space and time. He is fond of synecdochic details. (“Aspects” 91-92)

According to the *Oxford Concise English Dictionary*, metonym or metonymy is defined as “a word or expression used as a substitute for something with which it is closely associated, e.g. Washington for the US government,” whereas synecdoche is “a figure of speech in which a part is made to represent the whole or vice versa, as in England lost by six wickets (meaning ‘the English cricket team’).” Strictly speaking, although metonymy and synecdoche are different kinds of figure of speech, in everyday language, the two tropes are classified under one category, metonymy. Thus, Jakobson puts metonymy and synecdoche together and opposes them to metaphor. The principles that define two types of aphasia are related to the two kinds of figure of speech. In the following section, quoting a short story and a poem, two types of artistic imagination are described by relating them to Jakobson’s observation of aphasia

#### 5

Ernest Hemingway’s “In Another Country” is a story about an American officer who visits a

hospital in Italy everyday to receive treatment for a war-wound. There is an Italian major who also comes to the hospital for rehabilitation. He is wounded in his hand. As the story develops, the Italian major's wife dies an unexpected death. As is often the case with Hemingway's short stories, not many events happen, and the death of the Italian's wife is the only major event in the story. After a three day absence from hospital, the Italian major appears at hospital again and resumes his rehabilitation, and this is the end of the story.

Hemingway is not a symbolist writer. He is not a writer in line with metaphorical illusion, and he is not a writer who plays with abstract ideas like glory and honor. Below is a frequently quoted extract from *Farewell to Arms*:

There were many words that you could not stand to hear and finally only the names of places had dignity. Certain numbers were the same way and certain dates and these with the names of the places were all you could say and have them mean anything. Abstract words such as glory, honour, courage or hallow were obscene beside the concrete names of villages, the numbers of roads, the names of rivers, the numbers of regiments and the dates. (185)

As David Lodge points out, Hemingway purges "his style of metaphor," and "Overt metaphor, in earlier (and better) Hemingway is invariably a sign of falsity and illusion"(156). As is usual with many of Hemingway's stories, or many modernist writers', the themes of "In Another Country," are death, destruction, suffering without meaning, the world as a wasteland, and so forth. But Hemingway believed that, as other modernist writers, he could "translate raw experience into immortal form by renewing the means of expression" (157). The direction Hemingway took was not in that of the metaphorical axis but in that of the metonymic one. Thus, he is famous for his peculiar style "scrupulously restricted to denotation" (156). The beginning of "In Another Country" reads as follows:

In the fall the war was always there, but we did not go to it any more. It was cold in the fall in Milan and the dark came very early. Then the electric lights came on, and it was pleasant along the streets looking in the windows. There was much game hanging outside the shops, and the snow powdered in the fur of the foxes and the wind blew their tails. The deer hung stiff and heavy and empty, and small birds blew in the wind and the wind turned their feathers. It was a cold fall and the wind came down from the mountains. (206)

As Lodge points out, this extract clearly supports Jakobson's argument that realistic writers have more affinity with metonymy than with metaphor. Let us cite Jakobson again:

Following the path of contiguous relationships, the realist author metonymically

digresses from the plot to the atmosphere and from the characters to the setting in space and time. He is fond of synecdochic details. (92)

Lodge comments:

Hemingway's narrator digresses from the 'plot'...to the atmosphere (the cold autumn evenings) and the setting, Milan, which is presented synecdochically (the city represented by its shops, the shops by the game shops, the game by certain animals, and the animals by certain parts of their bodies—fur, tails, feathers). In this way the paragraph moves along a straight line of contiguity. (159)

As Lodge succinctly points out, Hemingway's "In Another Country" is a story heavily laden with metonymies. But the seemingly denotative descriptions of this story are indices of a certain thematic atmosphere, that is, "the emotions of the wounded soldiers" (Lodge 159). Phrases and sentences such as "game hanging outside the shops," "the snow powdered in the fur of the foxes," "the wind blew their tails," and "[t]he deer hung stiff and heavy and empty" are the real objects that exist in the story world but symbolically indicate "death and destruction," as Lodge says:

In the context of these reverberating repetitions, the synecdochic details of the game hanging outside the shops inevitably function as symbols of death and destruction, though there is nothing figurative about the manner of their description. (159)

Thus, although Hemingway's "In Another Country" is a story which is denotative and mainly consists of metonymic expressions, it succeeds in producing symbolic implications.

## 6

The American poet Ezra Pound wrote a very short poem entitled "In a Station of the Metro." Below is the poem in whole:

The apparition of these faces in the crowd;  
Petals on a wet, black bough. (287)

Words such as "apparition," "petals," "bough" are not the words usually associated with a metro station. If we translate this poem into a more prosaic expression, it may read that "The faces of the people in a metro station look like petals on a wet, black bough." Obviously the poet is not describing petals or a bough that he actually saw in the metro station; he likens the faces of the people in the metro station to petals on a wet, black bough. "Petals" and "a wet, black bough" are used as vehicles that convey an alternative meaning.

Discussing this poem, Hugh Kenner mentions "a crowd seen underground, as Odysseus and

Orpheus and Koré saw crowds in Hades” (184). Since the crowd that Odysseus, Orpheus, and Koré saw in Hades was the ghosts of the dead, this poem describes the people in the metro station as if they were dead people.

Pound’s “In a Station of the Metro” is a metaphoric poem. To use Jakobson’s dichotomy, in the process of creating this poem, the selection on the paradigmatic axis operates more dominantly than the combination on the syntagmatic axis, and since the principle of selection is projected on that of combination, the poetic function is more dominant in this verbal expression than other functions such as referential and conative ones.

## 7

Regardless of the medium used, the two major operations that produce meaning in any representation are selection and combination. The dichotomy of selection and combination is valid not only in linguistic representation but also in other forms of artistic representation. Jakobson writes in the article above that:

The alternative predominance of one or the other of these two processes is by no means confined to verbal art. The same oscillation occurs in sign systems other than language. A salient example from the history of painting is the manifestly metonymical orientation of cubism, where the object is transformed into a set of synecdoches; the surrealist painters responded with a patently metaphorical attitude. (“Aspects” 92)

In the case of linguistic representation, certain words are selected from among many possibilities, and the selected words are combined into a sentence in a certain way depending on the purpose of communication. Selection is operated on the paradigmatic axis whereas combination is on the syntagmatic axis.

Describing the two aspects of aphasia, Jakobson expounds the nature of representation. When emphasis is placed on the axis of selection, the expression tends to be metaphoric, and when emphasis is placed on the axis of combination, the expression tends to be metonymic. Depending on which operation is more dominant, these two factors decide the nature of communication. Also, when the selection is projected on the axis of combination, the expression of the given communication becomes more poetic.

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