庞人骐

英语转换修辞句法

北京师范大学出版社

英 语 转 换 修 辞 句 法

庞人骐　编著

北 京 师 范 大 学 出 版 社

编 者 的 话

本书是笔者在多年教授英语实践课的基础上 编 写 而 成的。它以转换语法的原理为出发点归纳了同义句修辞转换的十种途径。每种转换过程从简要的阐述开始，必要时进行一些分析和综合，主要是通过大量的例句来揭示。

书中每组转换例句的排列顺序一律采用原句在上，转成句在下的形式。例句包括一部分成语、谚语，个别章节为诗的散化转换，例句多选自文学作品。

本书编排体例虽系英汉对照，但其重点仍在揭示英语句子本身的转换过程。汉语译文多属意译， 可 与 原文互为补充，相得而益彰。

书中旁征转采之处甚多，特列主要参考书目于书后，以致谢意。

由于编者水平所限，书中不妥之处在所难免，还望读者予以指正。

此书可供大专院校师生，以及具有中等水平以上的社会自学者参考使用。

Foreword

Generative——transformation theory, a wonder of the century, as it were, in Linguistic field, has become a problem child and has yet to combine itself on a large scale with the language acquisition practice. To further this combination, the present book suggests ten rhetorical transformations, all based on the assumption that synonymous sentences, though some of them are composed of different words or expressions, can be said to have the same deep structure and are, therefore, capable of inter-transformation. This book gets every transformation across to the reader mainly through examples without any indulgence in tree diagrams or elaborate terminology. Any intermediate learner can benefit from the book in improving his repertoire of syntactic options and rhetorical choices. The book owes its present form to various sources, the most important ones being gratefully printed as a bibliography on the last page of the book. More thanks will go to whoever kindly give their valuable suggestions or corrections.

<div align="right">

The Compilor

</div>

Contents

2

Chapter IX Interpretation of Figures

As the book title indicates, rhetorical transforma-
tions are based on English syntactic synonymy and
used for rhetorical choices. The word transformation
has become one of those catch-all terms that can easily
cause confusion when our backs are turned. In addi-
tion to various uses in daily life and other scientific
fields, its meanings in the study of linguistics seem to
range all the way from the heart of Chomskyan theory
through D. Bolinger's structural operations in which
one synonymous sentence is changed into another, on
down to our definition of the term that transformation
is rather a rhetorical process in which one form of
expression is changed into another without affecting its
basic meaning so as to achieve an anticipated rhetori-
cal effect. Chomsky was all right to generate an infin-
ity of grammatically correct sentences through trans-
formations from deep structure to surface structure, but
as we know, his transformations, as a general treatment
of the language structure, were not intended to deal
with the visible transformational relations between
synonymous sentences (esp. those containing different
lexical items). R. Quirk also used this term but in a
modified sense. According to him, transformations

1

may involve not only a change in word order but also the substitution of one synonymous expression for another. Now let's quote 19 words from him. He wrote, "One way of distinguishing the varied clause types is by means of transformational relations or relations of grammatical paraphrase." (see Section 7.5 in A Grammar of Contemporary English). Here transformation definitely means grammatical paraphrase. This definition is much closer to ours, though it remains inadequate to be used in the treatment of syntactic synonymy for rhetorical purposes. These three different transformations, however, are not contradictory to one another. Generative transformation is in fact a guiding linguistic theory, and its deep structure analysis helps us with a philosophical insight into the operations of the latter two transformations. More than once, a friend warned me not to get involved in the discussion of the deep-and-surface structure concepts, for the theory seems to have rendered little or worse than no help to our Chinese students. Indeed I tried, but I couldn't do completely without it. Deep structure, though a very elusive jargon, proves to be a great aid to our study of English syntactic synonymy as well as sentence ambiguities. Theoretically, it is easy to agree that any group of synonymous sentences must have a deep structure in common. As to what the deep

structure is, we can hardly give a clear-cut definition, but one thing is certain that deep structure is not the sentence meaning itself, as was described by some grammarians. It is something like a mental framework which determines not only the logical (or thematic) relations of the sentence parts, but also the sense value of each sentence part. Deep structure, therefore, determines the sentence meaning as a whole. Look at the following sentences:

The sun gives us energy.

We are given energy by the sun.

We get energy from the sun.

We can tell intuitively that the above three are synonymous sentences. Why so? The answer is, they have the same deep structure. In all of them, the sun is the source of energy (agent), we or us, though different in case, is the receiver of energy (goal), and the passive verb are given means the same as the verb get in this context, that is to say, they are equal in sense value. Another example:

John killed Bill.

John caused Bill to die.

Here Bill is not only the logical object of the verb kill, but also the logical subject of the verb die, which is implied in kill. Sometimes, the logical relations of sentence parts cannot be clearly seen until

3

some semantic analysis is done. On the other hand, a surface structure (i. e. a sentence spoken or written) may convey two different meanings. Look at the sentence below:

I found her a good partner.

Again intuitively we can tell, ambiguity occurs here. The reason is, the sentence can be interpreted as having two deep structures (they may be represented respectively by SVOO and SVOC). Now let's transform them into their corresponding surface structures. They are:

I found a good partner for her.

I found her to be a good partner.

Another example:

The man is good to leave.

Easy to see, ambiguity also occurs here. According to one interpretation in terms of deep structure concept, the man is the logical subject of the verb leave, and its corresponding surface structure is,

It was good of the man to leave.

According to the other interpretation, the man is the logical object of the verb leave, and its corresponding surface structure is,

It was good to leave the man.

In most cases, the deep-structure analysis is done unconsciously and in a few moment, and it seems as if we could do without such a deep analysis. However,

4

its existence is undeniable. For all its importance, followed my friend's advice and managed to leave deep structure as alone as possible. Our transformations are made to operate throughout as if completely between surface structures or sentence forms, Maybe, here lies the true sense of the term transformation (to trans the form). We often say, "Let's put it in other words." This expression helps bring home to us what is meant by transformation.

Rhetorical transformations are based on syntactic synonymy, as indicated in the title of the book. Synonymy, a big term small dictionaries hesitate to include, has now gained popularity in linguistic field. Syntactic synonymy, when used in transformations, refers to the interchangeable relations between synonymous sentences. This interchangeability is supposed to occur if a group of sentences are close enough in meaning to allow a rhetorical choice to be made between them in some contexts without affecting the sentence meaning as a whole. For historical and geographical reasons, English is particularly rich in synonymous expressions, and there exist a thousand and one interchangeable relations among them. This undoubtedly provides us ample grounds for rhetorical transformations. A sentence can be reproduced in a number of ways. Each transformation modifies the original sen-

tence in a specific way. Some transformations are obligatory. others remain optional; all of them substitute for, shift the rank of, combine with, embed in, break up, condense, expand, reorder, report, or interpret some parts or the whole sequence of the original sentence or sentence group. Transformations, when performed on a single sentence, are known as single-base transformations, whereas transformations which operate on a group of sentences (usu. two), are referred to as double- or multiple-base transformations. Look at the diagram below:

Single-based		Double-or multiple-based
Substitution	Transposition	Combination
Rank-shift	Reporting	Embedment
Condensation	Interpretation	
Expansion	Decomposition	

Transformations, among other things, can help us a great deal enlarge our repertoire of lexical and syntactic options, improve our ability to make rhetorical choices, and develop our linguistic flexibility in the editing of our own work. When we transform sentences in as many ways as we know how, and with a

rhetorical **purpose** in mind, read them aloud, and discuss which versions we like best, we are not only sharpening our linguistic sense but also elevating our aesthetic taste. And we are developing an eye and an ear for prose rhythms. "In addition to playing with transformations and making their choices," writes William Strong, "professional writers also seem to spend considerable time hearing the way sentences fit together to make up the 'melody' of their writing. They listen for the dips and swaying curves of some phrases, the hard, rhythmic, regular punch of others. They sensitize themselves to avoid sentences where meaning is almost obscured within the lengthy confines of the sentence itself; they study these sentences where pause, and momentary reflection, have their impact." Though sentence transformation differs from paragraph writing, yet the former is the necessary preparation for, or rather an effective aid to the latter. As an approach to language teaching in general, transformations help teachers in various ways, such as the simplification of difficult sentences, the explanation of puzzling passages, and the paraphrase of poetic lines. Besides, the teacher often use it to improve the students' papers. In a word, transformation has proved not a little help to both the teacher and the learner, and especially to us Chinese, for we are, after all, nonnative speakers of English.