

钱 军 著

TOWARDS A RELATIONAL-  
PERSPECTIVE APPROACH TO  
SYNTACTIC SEMANTICS

# 句法语义学

——关系与视点



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# 序

本书以钱军的博士论文《句法语义学的关系——视点理论》为框架,经过多年的锤炼,补充修改,如今正式出版。我谨向作者表示衷心的祝贺。

本书研究句法结构中成分之间的相互关系,也研究句法结构和语义结构之间的相互关系。我们知道,语义和句法的关系是语言学的一个十分重要而复杂的问题,其复杂性曾使 Bloomfield 趑趄不前,老虎屁股不敢摸;其复杂性也曾使 Chomsky 把它拒于科学殿堂之外,视而不见。尽管如此,语义句法关系始终是普通语言学关注的焦点之一。因此,本书的选题具有较高的理论价值和应用价值。而作者那种迎着困难上的精神,令人钦佩。

本书的理论基础是布拉格学派。尽管布拉格学派对普通语言学有过不少重要的贡献,如共时与历时的不可分割性、功能理论、音位理论、标记理论、交际动力理论、正负对立理论、区别性特征,以及对标准语、语言修养、修辞学、文艺学、诗学、美学等的观点,由于种种原因,国内对其了解相对来说要少一些,许多信息主要来自俄语材料。作者把它作为研究的主攻方向,表现了他的胆识。通过各种途径,他从英语、德语、法语等资料中收集了该学派的有关材料,掌握材料之丰富,国内无出其右者。

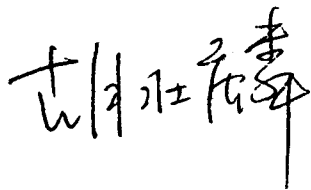


## ii 序

作者对前人的工作进行了细致全面的评述后,在本书中提出了若干新的概念,构筑了一个新的较为完整的理论框架,并据此进行了深入的个案研究,在实际语料中加以检验,故本论文具有开拓性和创新性。虽属理论研究,大量的实例分析对语言教学也有启发性和实用性。论文中的某些章节曾作为《外语学刊》的龙首之作发表,在国内震动很大。

本书初稿以博士论文形式完成后,曾送全国多所高等学校和社会科学院语言所的十几位专家教授审阅,如复旦大学程雨民教授、语言所沈家煊研究员、北京外国语大学语言所刘润清教授等。审阅者和论文答辩委员会成员都对论文给予了充分的肯定和好评。国际著名语言学家,原美国语言学会主席奈达博士也对论文给以高度评价。

作为作者的导师,我是本书孕育和创作过程的见证人。作为功能主义的研究者,我最清楚本书的含金量。金子终究是金子,闪闪发光。



2000年4月  
北京大学畅春园

# Preface

## Functional Syntax: an Overview

*Susumu Kuno*

Harvard University

### 1. Introduction

Since the appearance of Noam Chomsky's *Syntactic Structures* (The Hague: Mouton, 1957), theoretical linguistics has made tremendous progress both in its rigor in theory construction, and in its scope of investigation into linguistic phenomena. For the first time, linguists have undertaken the task of explaining not only why grammatical sentences are grammatical, but also why ungrammatical sentences are ungrammatical. The latter task requires a much more precisely formulated theory of grammar than linguists had been content with, and a much more precisely formulated set of grammatical rules whose observance or violation could readily be determined, given a sentence. Formulation of precise grammatical rules in a given language has led to the attempt to find commonality among them, and to obtain higher generalizations. Contrastive analysis of grammatical rules shared among languages has led to the attempt to find universal rules in syntax, and the attempt to relate some of them to the innate theory of grammar that humans are born with.

The following pairs of sentences illustrate the kind of questions that the syntacticians have been asking:

(1.1) a. Who did you buy a picture of?

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- b. ?? Who did you buy Mary's picture of? [?? : marginal]
- (1.2) a. Who did John believe that Mary had criticized?  
b. ?? Who did John believe the claim that Mary had criticized?
- (1.3) a. Who came when?  
b. ?? Who came why?
- (1.4) a. Which car did you damage the hood of?  
b. \* Which car was the hood of damaged? [\* : totally unacceptable]
- (1.5) a. That John will win the election is most likely?  
b. \* Is that John will win the election most likely?

The question is why the (b) sentence in each pair is marginal or unacceptable. Those scholars who are accustomed to examining only sentences that appear in writing or in recorded speech might wonder why theoretical linguists have to create ridiculous nonsentences such as (1.4b) and (1.5b). The answer to that question is the following. By examining why speakers of English do not use these ungrammatical sentences, we linguists can learn at least as much about how English (and language in general) works as we can by examining why English speakers use the corresponding grammatical sentences given in (a). The situation can be likened to the role that pathology has played in our understanding of how the healthy human body functions.

Thus, theoretical linguists have been asking the right kind of questions. But, unfortunately, they have often been obtaining the wrong kind of answers. As I illustrate later in this Preface, this is due to several factors—first, many theoretical linguists are not familiar with various semantic, pragmatic, and discourse-based factors that interact with syntax, and given unacceptable sentences such as those shown in (b) above, they tend to assume that the unacceptability is due to violation of some syntactic principles. Secondly, many of the theoretical linguists have too much confidence in the theoretical framework that they work in, and

once they can relate the unacceptability of these sentences to some of the principles that already exist in the theory, or to slightly revised versions of such principles, they are satisfied and stop there. They do not expend sufficient effort to prove or disprove their initial hypotheses. Thus in many cases, their analysis is based on impoverished data, which often does not extend beyond a dozen acceptable and unacceptable sentences of the above kind.

I must emphasize that the contributions theoretical linguists have been making towards the progress in our understanding of how language works cannot and should not be belittled. What I want to show in this Preface is that their contributions would have been even greater if they had been aware of what goes on in language beyond syntax. I want to demonstrate below also that work in nonsyntactic areas has gone far beyond the initial stage where there were only vaguely and impressionistically stated generalizations which could neither be proven or disproven.

## 2. Argument-Adjunct Asymmetry

John Robert Ross, one of the pioneers in generative syntax, noted in his paper entitled "Inner Islands" (*Proceedings of the Tenth Meeting of the Berkeley Linguistic Society*, 1983, pp.258—265) that there is an argument-adjunct asymmetry in extraction out of negative clauses. Observe the following sentences:

- (2.1) a. Which house can you photograph *e*?
- b. How can you photograph the house *e*?
- (2.2) a. Which house can't you photograph *e*?
- b. \* How can't you photograph the house *e*?

In (2.1a), *which house*, an argument (N.B. an argument is an obligatory element) of the verb *photograph*, has been moved out of an affirmative clause (i.e., *you can photograph which*

*house*), and the resulting sentence is acceptable. The *e* indicates the original position of the fronted *which house*. In (2.1b), *house*, an adjunct (N.B. An adjunct is a nonobligatory optional element of a verb) has been moved out of an affirmative clause (i. e., *you can photograph the house how*), and the resulting clause is also acceptable. In contrast, (2.2) illustrates the situation that involves negative clauses. In (2.2a), *which house*, an argument, has been moved out of the negative clause, and the resulting sentence is acceptable. On the other hand, in (2.2b), *how*, an adverbial adjunct, has been moved out of the negative clause, and the resulting sentence is unacceptable. Ross characterized the above-illustrated behavior of negative clauses by referring to them as “negative islands.” According to Ross, arguments can, but adjuncts cannot, escape from (i. e., be extracted from) negative islands.

Luigi Rizzi (*Relativized Minimality*, MIT Press, 1990) extended Ross’s observation to nonreferential arguments. Observe the following examples:

(2.3) What do you believe he weighed (last week)?

(i) Answer: Potatoes.

(ii) Answer: 200 pounds.

(2.4) What do you not believe he weighed (last week)?

(i) Answer: Potatoes.

(ii) Answer: \* 200 pounds.

(2.3) is ambiguous between “What kind of object do you believe he weighed?” and “What do you believe was his weight?”. On the first interpretation, *what* is a referential noun phrase, while on the second interpretation, it is a nonreferential noun phrase. The question on the first interpretation can be answered, for example, by (i) “Potatoes”, while the question on the second interpretation can be answered, for example, by (ii) “200 pounds.” In contrast, (2.4), which involves the movement of

*what* out of a negative clause, is not ambiguous. It can mean only "What kind of object do you not believe he weighed?". As the unacceptability of (ii) "200 pounds" shows, it does not have a nonreferential interpretation of *what*. (N. B. The claim that *200 pounds* is not a referential noun phrase when it is used as an object of *weigh* is supported by the fact that it cannot be replaced by a pronoun: Does John *weigh 200 pounds*? \* Yes, he weighs *it /them*.) The contrast between (2.3) and (2.4) appears to support Ross's negative island hypothesis: on Rizzi's terms, a nonreferential expression (that is, an adjunct, or a nonreferential argument) cannot escape from a negative island.

Rizzi attempted to account for the above fact on the basis of his theory of coreference and disjoint reference called Relativized Minimality. I do not have space here to present the basics of his theory, nor do I have space to demonstrate the importance of his theory in the framework of generative theory of grammar. I will simply state here one of the axioms that derives from his theory:

- (2.5) Rizzi: A negative element cannot intervene between a fronted nonreferential element and its original position.

The nonreferential interpretation of *what* in (2.3) is acceptable because there is no negative element between *what* and its original postverbal position. On the other hand, the nonreferential interpretation of *what* is blocked in (2.4) because there is a negative element (i. e., *not*) between the nonreferential *what* and its original post-verbal position.

I want to emphasize yet again the importance of asking questions such as those that Ross and Rizzi have raised. These were the kind of questions which had never been asked before the introduction of rigidly formulated theory of grammar. If we couldn't explain why (2.2b) and (2.4ii) are unacceptable, we would be left with no explanation why the other sentences (i. e., 2.1a,b, 2.2a, and 2.4i) are acceptable. At the same time, we

should always be on guard for the possibility that some other factors, perhaps nonsyntactic, are responsible for the unacceptability of (2.2b) and (2.4ii). We need to gather many more examples of the same pattern to see if they consistently display the same or comparable degrees of unacceptability. Even more importantly, if it is true that an argument can, but an adjunct cannot, escape from a negative island, we need to look for a “natural explanation” that might lie behind that fact.

I will briefly describe below a functional solution to the puzzle given above, presented in Susumu Kuno and Ken-ichi Takami (“Negative Islands,” *Linguistic Inquiry* 28, 1997, pp. 553–576). We start with the observation that Ross’s and Rizzi’s generalizations are based on the mistaken view that (referential) arguments can be freely moved out of negative clauses. We have long known that a quantifier that is negated by a negative element cannot be extracted crossing over the negative element. Observe the following sentences:

(2.6) He doesn’t like all three of his roommates.

Interpretation A:    Negation of *like*, meaning ‘He dislikes all three of his roommates.’

Interpretation B:    Negation of *all three of his roommates*, meaning ‘He likes one or two, but not all, of his three roommates.’

(2.7) All three of his roommates, he doesn’t like.

Interpretation A:    Negation of *like*, meaning ‘He dislikes all three of his roommates.’

Sentence (2.6) is ambiguous between Interpretation A, in which the verb is being negated, and Interpretation B, in which the object noun phrase is being negated. Observe that (2.7), in which the object noun phrase *all three of his roommates* has been fronted, is unambiguous. It lacks the interpretation in which the ob-

ject noun phrase is being negated.

The ambiguity of (2.6) and the unambiguity of (2.7) suggests that there is a general ban of the following sort:

**(2.8) Ban on Extraction of the Focus of Negation:**

An element that is the focus of negation cannot be extracted out of the negative clause.

It is important to note that the above constraint is crucially different from Ross's and Rizzi's constraints in that it freely allows extraction of adjuncts and arguments out of negative clauses as long as they are not the foci of negation. If the above generalization is correct, it must be that those cases of referential argument extraction out of negative clauses that Ross and Rizzi observed as normal cases must be the cases of the extraction of referential arguments that are not the foci of negation. For example, observe the following sentences:

- (2.9) a. I didn't see John.  
b. Who didn't you see?

(2.9b) is a perfectly acceptable sentence, and its acceptability follows from Ross's and Rizzi's generalizations. However, it is clear that the interpretation of (2.9b) parallels Interpretation (2.10a), and not Interpretation (2.10b), of "I didn't see John."

- (2.10) I didn't see John.  
a. With respect to John, I didn't see him.  
b. It wasn't John that I saw.

That is, the interpretation on which *John* is the target of negation (that is, (2.10b)) does not allow the movement of *who* out of the negative clause, while the interpretation on which *did see*,



and not *John*, is the target of negation, allows it.

If the above logic is correct, we should be able to find sentences of the pattern of (2.9b) that are unacceptable in spite of the fact that referential noun phrases have been extracted. We find sentences of this kind in examples such as the following:

- (2.11) a. He doesn't come from Ireland.  
 (= It isn't Ireland that he comes from.)  
 b. \* Which country doesn't he come from?

Ross's generalization predicts that (2.11b) should be acceptable because *which country* is an argument of *come from*, and should be able to escape from the negative island. Likewise, Rizzi's generalization predicts that the sentence should be acceptable because *which country* is a referential noun phrase in his framework, and should be freely extractable out of the negative clause. But the sentence is unacceptable out of context. But our ban on extracting the focus of negation out of the negative clause can automatically account for the unacceptability of (2.11b). The sentence is unacceptable because *which country*, which is the target of negation, has been moved out of the negative clause *he doesn't come from which country*.

We can now see why it appears that adjuncts cannot escape from negative islands. Given a negative sentence with an adjunct at the end, it is usually the case that the adjunct is the target of negation:

- (2.12) a. I didn't do it for money. = It wasn't for money that I did it.  
 b. I didn't stay there for long. = It wasn't for long that I stayed there.

Sentence-final adjuncts, because they are in focus position, tend to represent the most important information, and for that reason, they