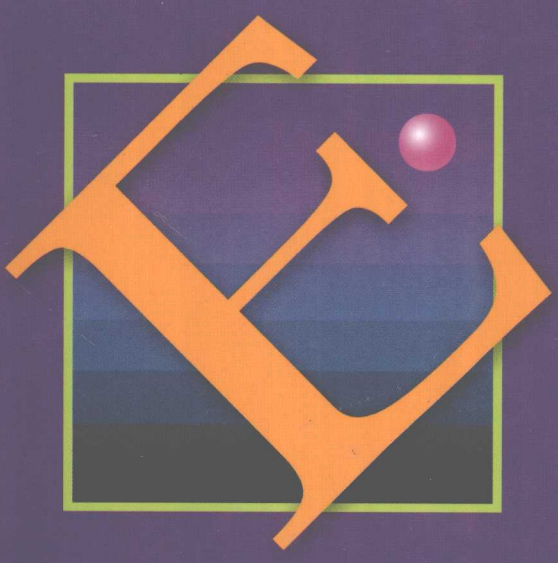
Enhanced Theme in English:

Its Structures and Functions

英语语法结构的功能分析

——强势主位篇

黄国文 著 HUANG Guowen



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前　言

本书讨论的是英语语法方面的问题。我曾在一篇学术论文中谈到：系统功能语言学的创始人 Halliday 在 1985 年出版的《功能语法导论》(Halliday, M.A.K. 1985. *An Introduction to Functional Grammar*. London: Arnold, pp. xvi-xvii)中说了一段与语法分析有关的话，大意如下：

二十年前，当语言学研究的主流是句法研究时，有必要反对语法分析，语法分析既不是语言研究的开始，也不是结束，因为人们不借助语法分析也完全可以很好地了解语言的性质和功能。但是，今天却有必要持相反的观点，语法分析在语言学研究中起着很重要的作用。我现在之所以持这样的观点，不是因为我对这个问题改变了看法，而是因为问题本身已经改变了。目前人们关注的是语篇分析，有人认为语篇分析不需要语法分析，还有人甚至认为语篇分析可以代替语法分析。这是一种错误的看法。没有语法分析的语篇分析谈不上是分析。

如果我们简单回顾近 50 年语言学发展的历史，便可看出为什么韩礼德会说出上面这段话。1957 年，美国年轻的语言学家 Chomsky 出版了划时代性的《句法结构》(Chomsky, N. 1957. *Syntactic Structures*. The Hague: Mouton)一书。该书虽然篇幅不大，但却震动了整个语言学界，并带来了一场革命；它的问世标志着一门新的语言理论的诞生。很快，不少从事语言研究的人便跟着乔姆斯基走，同时乔姆斯基的语言学思想便开始在其他领域(包括心理学、哲学)引起关注和重视。1965 年，乔姆斯基又出版了另一本十分重要的著作：《句法理论要略》(Chomsky, N. 1965. *Aspects of the Theory of Syntax*. Cambridge, Mass.: The MIT Press)。这一著作在世界(尤其是美国)语言学界又引起一次大震动，它后来被看做是乔姆斯基“标准理论”的代表作。《句法理论要略》出版后，越来越多的人对乔姆斯基的句法理论感兴趣，越来越多的人跟着乔姆斯基的句法理论走。

正因为如此，韩礼德 (Halliday, M.A.K. 1985. *An Introduction to Functional Grammar*. London: Arnold, p. xvi) 把这一时期称为“句法时代”(syntactic age)。作为系统功能语法的创始人，韩礼德这一期间在《语言学杂志》

上发表了划时代意义的《英语及物性和主位的注释》(Halliday 1967-8. Notes on transitivity and theme in English. Parts 1-3. *Journal of Linguistics*. 3/1, 3/2, 4/2),他通过功能思想理论来呼吁人们重视语言使用和语篇分析研究。在同一时期,Fillmore (1968)发表了著名的《格辩》(Fillmore, C.J. 1968. The case for case. In Bach, E. and Harms, R.T. (eds.) *Universals in Linguistic Theory*. New York: Holt, Rinehart, and Winston),他认为语言分析应该考虑语义因素。差不多同时,Hymes (Hymes, D. 1967. Models of the interaction of language and social setting. *Journal of Social Issues*. 23/2) 提出了"交际能力"这一学说。这几篇文章为交际语言教学提供了理论基础,所以很快就出现了全球性的狂热的"交际语言教学"(Communicative Language Teaching)运动。从20世纪70年代初期开始,越来越多的人开始相信"功能"、"意念"、"交际"这些新概念、新说法,"语篇分析"这个新兴学科就是在这种形势下形成和发展起来的。

80年代中期,不少人只热衷于谈"意念"、"功能"、"交际",认为没有必要进行语法教学和研究。韩礼德(1985)高瞻远瞩,看到了语言学研究中的问题所在,所以明确指出,语篇分析不能代替语法分析,没有语法分析的语篇分析根本算不上是分析。我们认为,韩礼德的这个观点十分正确,提出的也十分及时。无论是进行乔姆斯基的语言学研究,还是从事韩礼德的功能语言学研究,语法分析都是必不可少的。在这个问题上与韩礼德持相似观点的有著名的应用语言学家 H.G. Widdowson;他多次强调语法学习的重要性。在交际语言教学运动高潮时他说过这么一段令人深思的话:The assumption seems to have taken root in some people's minds over recent years that there is an opposition between communication and grammar, and that a communicative approach to the teaching of language bypasses grammar and makes it unnecessary. This is a false and damaging assumption. Nobody can learn a language without learning its grammar, for it is the grammar which represents the essential resource for making meaning in language use. Any attempt to teach a language without creating conditions for grammar learning is doomed to failure. (Widdowson, H.G. 1984. "Foreword", in Brumfit, A. and Windeatt, S. 1984. *Communicative Grammar: Teacher's Guide*. Beirut: Oxford University Press SARL, pp. 2-3) 作为交际语言教学运动的一个领头人,威多森能如此强调语法学习,足以说明语法教学与研究的重要性。

在过去的二十年里,我的研究一直在语篇分析与语法研究这两个方面,在国内外发表了一些文章,也出版了一些专著:语篇分析方面的有《语篇分析概要》(湖南教育出版社,1988)和《语篇分析的理论与实践——广告语篇研究》(上海外语教育出版社,2001);语法方面的则有《英语复合句——从句子

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到语篇》(厦门大学出版社,1996,与肖俊洪合著)和《英语语言问题研究》(中山大学出版社,1999)。

就本书的研究内容而言,说得简单些,是英语学习者熟悉的"分裂句"(cleft sentence)。我对这一结构感兴趣,应从20多年前的一件事说起:70年代末,华东师范大学办了一本名为《上海外语教学》的杂志,该杂志1979年第4期刊登了王友明先生一篇谈"It is ... that/who..."强调句型的文章。该文发表后不少读者给编辑部去信,有人对王先生文章中的一些观点提了不同的看法,有人对该文提出了补充意见,还有人提了一些有关这一句型的具体用法问题(见该刊1980年第3期第30页的说明)。我当时大学毕业不久,对英语语法问题特别感兴趣,读了王文后也写了一篇稿子寄给编辑部,希望文章能被采纳。等了大半年后,发现该杂志在1980年第3期刊登了一篇题为"'It is ... that/who ...'强调句型问题讨论综述"文章(由金木执笔),对王年德、陆锦林、黄国文、劳允栋和王友明的来稿作了综述。不久,我发表了一篇讨论这一问题的小文章(约3000字,见黄国文:"也谈 it is/was... that/who...结构",《中小学外语教学》1980年12期)。说了这么长的一段话,无非是想表明我20多年前就对"分裂句"的研究感兴趣。

1992年,我在英国的爱丁堡大学(University of Edinburgh)获得"应用语言学"哲学博士学位,然后到纽卡斯尔大学(University of Newcastle upon Tyne)做社会语言学方面的研究。1994年初,我离开纽卡斯尔到威尔士大学加的夫学院(University of Wales, College of Cardiff)做功能语言学方面的研究,导师是该学院"计算语言学中心"的主任 Robin P. Fawcett 博士;他希望我用系统功能语言学的理论来研究英语的"分裂句"、"存在句"等结构。这个提议又勾起我对"分裂句"的研究兴趣,我当场表示同意,后来还说服了他让我只研究"分裂句"。本书是这一时期(1994—1995)的研究成果。

当然,虽然本书探讨的是"分裂句"问题,但研究的理论根据、视角、方法等都与我国学者熟悉的做法不同。本书的语法分析并不是我国学者所熟悉的传统语法分析或乔姆斯基派的语法分析,而是我们(见黄国文:《英语语言问题研究》,1999)所说的功能句法(functional syntax)分析。正因为如此,为了"名正言顺",书中把大家熟悉的"分裂句"称为"强势主位结构"(Enhanced Theme Construction)。

本研究是在 Robin P. Fawcett 博士的指导下完成的,我想在这里对他表示深深的谢意。我还想感谢我的家人和其他老师、朋友,因为有了他们的理解、支持、关心和帮助,我在加的夫的生活过得比较愉快。本书的定稿和出版得到了我太太和我的博士生何伟(已于2003年6月获得中山大学文学博士学位——黄国文注)的帮助;何伟博士不但通读了本书的校样,而且改正

了原稿中的错误。另外山西教育出版社的高生文先生在审读书稿时提出了宝贵的修改意见,谨此一并致谢。

在这里我要特别提到本书初稿上所写的一段话:

DEDICATION

For my son Huáng Càn

to whom I owe more than I can express in words.

(I hope he will later on understand and appreciate the reasons for my absence from home for more than seven years.)

HUANG Guowen

Cardiff, December 12, 1995

我希望有一天我儿子能明白我为什么要写上面这些话(我去英国时他只有三岁,我回来探亲时他已经九岁,回国与他一起生活时他已经十岁半),我坚信他将来会真正理解这段话的含义的。

黄国文

2003 年 6 月 28 日

于广州河南康乐园

Acknowledgements

It was the Fawcettian approach to language that attracted me to come to Cardiff to undertake a second PhD. Therefore, my biggest thanks go to **Dr Robin P. Fawcett**, who guided me through thick and thin to finish this research in two years. I am extremely grateful to him, not only for his scholarly guidance and friendly encouragement, but also for his generosity in sharing with me his library, his knowledge of linguistics, and the insights into linguistics that he has gained, especially from modelling language in the computer in the COMMUNAL Project.

I should like to thank **the School of English, Communication and Philosophy** for providing the financial support that enabled me to undertake this research. I also wish to thank **Professor Nikolas Coupland**, who lightened my teaching tasks during the later stage of my research, and the **Director** of **the COMMUNAL project**, **Dr Robin P. Fawcett** for supporting me in giving presentations at six international conferences (Albuquerque (America), Antwerp (Belgium), Beijing (China), Brighton (England), Hong Kong, Gent (Belgium)), where I was able to report the progress of my research and exchange ideas with leading scholars and colleagues.

The following are among those others who have warmly encouraged me, generously shared their ideas with me, and kindly supported me during the past two years. I want to express my heartfelt thanks to them all: **Dr Gordon H. Tucker**, **Dr Yuen Q. Lin**, **Margaret Berry**, **Margaret Fawcett**, **George and Yin Young**, **Keri Carlson**, **Professor Chris Butler**, **Dr Paul Tench**, **David Young** (all in Britain), **Professor Xu Shenghuan**, **Xiao Junhong**, and **Professor Tao Yang** (all in China), **Zhou Xiaokang**, **Professor David Birch** (both in Australia). Both **Dr Gordon H. Tucker** and **Miss Keri Carlson** deserve a special 'thank-you' in two different ways: Tucker for making my last-term of teaching much easier, and Carlson for making useful comments on the final draft of this thesis.

I am very grateful to COBUILD at the University of Birmingham, for making available their 20-million-word corpus.

The Computational Linguistics Unit at Cardiff is an excellent place to undertake research, not only because it has up-to-date research facilities but also because the members of the Unit and those who are associated with it are so friendly and

supportive. I shall certainly miss the coffee and tea breaks, during which lively conversations took place. The Director of the Unit (**Robin**, again) deserves a big 'thank-you' for providing me with such a wonderful research environment.

Last, but not least, I am deeply indebted to my family, especially to my wife for her understanding of the reasons for my research, to my parents-in-law for looking after my son for us for the past six years or so, and lastly to my son, to whom I owe more than can be expressed in words. It is to him that I dedicate this thesis.

Abstract

This thesis studies the enhanced theme construction (i.e. 'cleft sentence' or '*it*-cleft' in formal grammars) in English from a systemic functional perspective. It uses the Cardiff Grammar as the theoretical basis, and draws on a corpus of naturally occurring written data. The six major aspects of the work are as follows:

(1) Previous studies that seek to identify the basic elements of the construction are critically evaluated, and four basic elements of the structure are then proposed.

(2) On this basis, a comprehensive syntactico-functional analysis of the construction is proposed, based on the full recognition of the functional roles of the elements of the matrix clause. Two types of the construction are recognized, the 'contrastive' type and the 'non-contrastive' type, the latter being as important as the former.

(3) This study draws on, and contributes to, two traditions in linguistics: the text-descriptive and the generative. Thus the generation of the enhanced theme construction is discussed, as it is being implemented in the framework of the computer system in the Cardiff Grammar, and examples of 'multi-strand' analyses in textual description are provided.

(4) It is widely assumed that the enhanced theme construction is the result of 'clefting' a corresponding simple clause. Following Fawcett (in preparation c), this study argues that the 'incongruent' enhanced theme construction and the 'congruent' simple clause are related at the 'pre-linguistic' level of logical form, rather than within language.

(5) There is a widely-accepted assumption that *Henry* in *It was Henry that kissed Helen* means 'Henry and only Henry', and I call this the 'uniqueness' hypothesis. The present study repudiates this view for a number of reasons, including the existence of cases where the Enhanced Theme is filled by two or more independent units (as in *It was in Edinburgh in 1988 that I first met Tom*).

(6) The study concludes with the first reasonably full proposal for a taxonomy of the discourse functions served by this construction, and correlates the two types recognized here with these functions.

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