

■ 孙迎晖 著 ■

中国学生“建立学术研究空间”过程探究

The Creation of Research Space in Chinese MA Theses

——英语专业硕士论文“前言”部分的语类分析

A Genre Analysis of Chinese MA Thesis Introductions



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序

本书作者孙迎晖老师是我在北京师范大学所指导众多博士中的关门弟子,毕业于2007年。作为北京大学的退休教授竟然在北京师范大学外文学院挂牌招生,缘自曾在外语教学指导委员会共事过的已故钱瑗教授的临终嘱咐,也因为原系主任王蔷教授的再三邀请。这四年来,在职学习的孙迎晖老师克服重重困难,顺利完成了学习任务,令人欣慰。她向我交了一份令人满意的答卷,我也向钱瑗教授和王蔷教授交了一份无愧于她们厚望的又一份述职报告。个中甘苦,后人自有评说。

本书托胎于孙迎晖博士论文的修正稿。我认为有几个亮点值得一提。

第一个亮点表现在选题上。作者注意将自己的研究结合实际,具体说,重点分析研究生论文的引言部分,将语篇分析和语类研究落实到学术语篇上。这令人想起系统功能语言学派韩礼德最近几年所强调的适用语言学(appliable linguistics)的研究,语言学研究如不能为实用服务,便将失去其应有的光辉。

第二个亮点是对语料和数据的掌握。你批判原来的理论也好,你修正这些理论也好,你创建自己的理论也好,如果没有具体语料的佐证,只能是空对空的,难以服人,更没有学术价值。因此,作者以北京师范大学外文学院近几年应用语言学方向的100篇硕士研究生论文为语料进行分析,值得称道。

在上述基础上,人们就不难发现,作者旨在从语篇的社会性视角,探讨中国学生用英语写作的学术论文的宏观结构类型以及语言特征。正是在这一点上,作者实现了理论上的升华。她指出:Swales(斯威尔斯)在对学术语篇序言部分的语类研究中所建立的

以语步和步骤为出发点的语类结构分析模式并不能够适用于不同社会文化背景下的论文写作。接着,她提出学术语篇是其本身所具有的社会、文化等多种语境因素共同作用的产物,这些因素使得该语篇在实现其交际目的的过程中呈现自己的语类结构和词汇语法特征。这样,论文的新意脱颖而出。

这些亮点犹如深夜中的流星,光彩夺目。相形之下,我有时读到一些博士论文或学术论文,不免摇头。这些论文照搬国外理论,缺乏分析批判;轻率摆出自己的理论框架,却连自己都解释不清;过分地引用别人的例句,有的或是人造的,或是出处有问题的。

应该说,本书作者对语言学理论,包括系统功能语言学理论的掌握有待继续提高。但本书的出版,为她听取各种声音提供了条件。

胡壮麟

2008年元月

北京大学蓝旗营

前 言

本书通过分析英语专业硕士论文的“前言”部分,旨在探讨中国学生如何通过语类结构选择和语言再现形式实现此部分学术写作应达到的交际目的。学术论文“前言”作为一种语篇类型,不仅是论文写作中必不可少的组成部分,也是一种具有交际目的的社会行为。斯威尔斯(Swales, 1990)提出了著名的“建立学术研究空间”的交际思想(Create A Research Space),并建立了以语步(move)和步骤(step)为出发点的语类结构分析模式(CARS Model),从三个方面解析了学术论文“前言”部分的交际过程,即语步 1“确立研究领域(Establishing a territory)”、语步 2“设置合适的研究地位(Establishing a niche)”、语步 3“占领研究地位(Occupying the niche)”。每个语步由数个步骤(共 11 个步骤)来完成。这些语步和步骤在宏观层面上构成了学术论文“前言”部分的语类结构,又在微观层面上通过词汇—语法选择体现出来。斯威尔斯的这一语篇分析模式不仅对语类理论还是语类分析的实践都产生了较大影响,也为研究各类语篇的交际行为及其交际目的的实现过程提供了有效的分析框架。

但是,斯威尔斯建立的这一语类结构分析模式主要是以英语为本族语,并且具有较高学术影响的写作者正式发表的学术论文为分析语料,并不能够适用不同社会文化背景、不同写作者身份的论文写作。新的语类理论强调语篇的社会目的性,认为语类不仅是一种具有代表性的修辞手段,还是一种社会行为(Miller, 1994)。作者认为,语篇的结构和语言表达必定受其所处社会、文化等因素的影响。由此,作者的假设是,学生的学术论文作为一种具有特定交际目的的语类,是其本身所具有的多种语境因素所共同作用的

产物。这些因素使得该语篇在实现其交际目的的过程中将呈现自己的语类结构和词汇—语法特征。

基于此假设,本研究以北京师范大学外文学院英语专业应用语言学方向 1999 年至 2005 年期间的 100 篇硕士论文作为分析语料,以斯威尔斯的“CARS 模式”为主要分析方法,探讨以下问题:中国学生在其论文“前言”部分的写作过程中如何“建立学术研究空间”?本书具体分析以下问题:

(1) 学术论文“前言”部分的语类结构有何特征。

(2) 其语类结构在词汇—语法层面的语言再现形式有何特点。

根据分析结果,继而讨论本书提出的假设:

(3) 中国学生学术论文是否受它特定的语境影响,若是,是怎样影响的?

分析结果表明,在语类结构层面,“CARS 模式”中的三个语步(Move)均在中国学生的学术语篇中出现,且分布均匀。大多数语篇的语步结构呈规律性、循环性(cyclicity)发展模式,主要循环模式沿“语步 1—语步 2—语步 3”(1—2—3)的顺序展开。此结果与“CARS 模式”相符合,说明在总体结构安排上,中国学生学术论文与以英语为本族语的写作者基本一致。

“CARS 模式”涉及的 11 个步骤(Step)在中国学生的语篇中都有应用,但使用的频率存在较大差异。其中 6 个步骤出现率在 70%以上,包括“建立中心议题”(Claiming centrality)、“概括议题内容”(Making topic generalization)、“回顾前期研究成果”(Reviewing items of previous research)、“指出研究差距”(Indicating a gap)、“概述研究目的”(Outlining purposes)、“介绍论文结构”(Indicating structure)等,说明在以上诸方面中国学生论文的“前言”部分与本族语的写作者相符;但三个步骤“反面论证”(Counterclaiming)、“继承前期研究传统”(Continuing a tradition)、“通报主要发现”(Announcing principal findings)等在分析的语篇中应用率很低,只占 1% 或 2%。显然,它们在中国学生论文中没有得到广泛应用。

个别步骤(Step)出现的位置和功用在中国学生的语篇中有所变化。例如,“回顾前期研究成果”这一通常通过“转述”前人研究或论点来完成的行为本来是“CARS 模式”第一个语步中的一个步骤,但在所分析的语篇中位置很灵活,除了作为第一个语步的组成成分之一,实现“回顾前期研究成果”这一功能外,还出现在第二、第三语步,实现多个功用,如支持作者论点等。

除了“CARS 模式”中涉及到的 11 个步骤外,中国学生论文“前言”中还发现一些新步骤,包括介绍“研究背景”或“研究现状”、“评述或总结前人研究”、“描述研究过程”、“研究意义”以及“界定相关概念”等。根据纳芜固(Nwogu, 1997)的分类方法,出现率在 50% 以上的步骤才算得上稳定步骤,共有 12 个步骤构成了中国硕士论文“前言”语篇的语类结构模式,具体内容如下表所列。

语步和步骤(Moves and Steps)
<p>语步 1: 确立研究领域 (Establishing a territory)</p> <p>建立中心议题 (Claiming centrality)</p> <p>概括议题内容 (Making topic generalizations/introducing the topic)</p> <p>回顾前期研究成果 (Reviewing previous research)</p> <p>* 评述或总结前人研究 (Presenting summary/comment of the review)</p> <p>语步 2: 设置合适的研究地位 (Establishing a niche)</p> <p>指出研究空白 (Indicating a gap)</p> <p>提出问题 (Question-raising/pointing out problems/unsolved issues)</p> <p>* 指出实际应用中存在的欠缺 (Indicating real world problems)</p> <p>语步 3: 占据研究地位 (Occupying the niche)</p> <p>通报当前研究状况 (Announcing present research)</p> <p>概述研究目的/意图 (Outlining purposes/indicating objective)</p> <p>* 描述研究过程 (Describing the research itself)</p> <p>* 说明研究意义/贡献 (Stating significance/contribution of study)</p> <p>介绍论文结构 (Indicating the structure)</p>
* 指新发现的步骤

如表所列, CARS 模式中的 3 个步骤没有出现, 其中两个属于语步 2 中具有挑战性的步骤; 另有 4 个新增步骤。不难看出, 在步骤的选择上中国学生论文的语类结构与斯威尔斯的研究结果存在一定差异, 呈现出自己的语类特征。

在词汇—语法层面, 本书主要从三个方面分析了语言再现形式: 论题具有研究价值, 以往研究存在的空白之处或尚待解决的问题, 以及转述语的语言使用特征。结果表明, 中国学生能够从不同的视角并使用多种形式的语言表达手段完成以上三个方面的描述。他们分别从 7 个视角阐释了自己论题具有研究价值, 分别是: 论题的地位、特性、时间范畴、空间范围、研究量、研究程度以及发展前景。在论及研究课题尚待解决的问题时, 选用了“具有否定意义”(negative) 和“非否定意义”(non-negative) 两方面的语言表达形式, 前者分为 5 种类型: 否定连接词、否定意义的量词、自身否定意义的词汇、否定结构及其他类型。其中 7 种语言表达形式最为常用, 出现的频率从多到少依次是 however, be/do/does/did / have/has/can/could/might/should not, few, little, but, only 和 problem。这些词汇及语法结构选择具有很好的表达效果, 达到了相应的交际目的。

转述前人研究及论点是学生论文中常见的手法。斯威尔斯(1990)提出的 4 种转述形式——作者嵌入/转述动词(integral/reporting)、作者嵌入/非转述动词(integral/non-reporting)、非作者嵌入/转述动词(non-integral/reporting)以及非作者嵌入/非转述动词(non-integral/non-reporting)都在中国学生的语篇中得到应用。但在转述作者置放的方式及转述动词及时态的选择上, 中国学生表现出明显的“尊重权威”的态度倾向。在“作者嵌入式”这一转述方式中, 绝大多数的转述作者都是作为“主语—动作者”位于句首, 表明中国学生有意突显转述作者权威性的倾向。中国学生常用的转述动词按其功能可分为两组, 一组针对研究课题本身, 另一组表明对转引作者或信息所持的态度。统计发现绝大多数转述动词属于第二组, 且对转引的内容皆持肯定或赞同的态度。在

转述动词的时态选择上,中国学生常用一般现在时、一般过去时和现在完成时三种形式,其中又以一般现在时最多,占统领地位,表明中国学生对所转述内容的正确性不可置疑。这一结论与斯威尔斯(1990)的研究结果有很大的不同。

综合以上分析,中国学生的语篇在总体上遵从学术写作的规范,但也呈现出自己的特点。无论在语类结构还是词汇语法层面,与斯威尔斯以及其他学者的研究结果仍存在一定程度的差异。究其原因,中国学生语篇的特点与其自身的语境有很大关系,除受语篇学术规范的制约外,还受到诸如写作者所处的文化和教育背景、自身在学术领域的地位、专业领域、写作任务等诸多方面因素的影响。因此,本项研究证明了本文提出的理论假设。分析同时表明,中国学生在建立学术空间的过程中,无论是在“确立研究领域”还是在“占据研究地位”方面能够以研究者的身份积极建立自己合适的研究课题,确立科学的分析视角,构建合理的结构框架。但由于受“学习者”身份的影响,中国学生在“设置合适的研究地位”时缺乏竞争意识和挑战性。本研究还结合现有的写作模式对学生语篇呈现的语类结构进行了评价,提出了较为完善的语类结构模式,以利于更好地指导中国学生的论文写作,使之更快地与国际英语学术论文写作接轨。

虽然本书就中国学生的学术语篇做了较为细致的分析,但由于时间和篇幅有限,所选择的语篇范围还比较有限,分析的视角和深度也有一定的局限,敬请专家、同行多多指教。

孙迎晖
2008年元月
北京师范大学

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This book is a revised version of my Ph. D. dissertation, which was completed during my work and study at the School of Foreign Languages and Literatures, Beijing Normal University from 2003 to 2007. During the process of writing the dissertation, I have been under the care and support of so many people.

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Abstract

This book aims to explore how Chinese MA students achieve their communicative purpose when writing their thesis introductions by examining generic structures as well as language choices. The data include 100 texts drawn from students in the School of Foreign Languages and Literatures, Beijing Normal University, in the field of Applied Linguistics, from the years 1999 to 2005. It is acknowledged that the introduction to a research paper, as a genre, not only is a necessary part of such a paper, but also performs certain social functions. According to Swales, the communicative purpose of a research article introduction is to 'create a research space'. He developed his famous 'Create a Research Space' (CARS) model (1990) as a way of revealing the communicative process of research article introductions, with "moves" being used to refer to the elements required for achieving the overall communicative purpose. Three moves are included in the model: *Establishing a Territory*, *Establishing a Niche* and *Occupying the Niche*, with each containing a number of steps signaled by specific linguistic features. Swales' CARS model is of great significance for both the theory of genre and the practice of genre analysis, and it has been proved an effective tool for analyzing various types of text.

However, the CARS model raised by Swales was set up through the analysis of only research article (RA) introductions written by expert English writers. The moves and steps listed in

the CARS model are not totally applicable to texts from different social, cultural and educational background. According to theories of genre, a genre is a typified rhetorical and social action aimed at achieving a certain communicative purpose (Miller, 1994), and the formation of a genre influenced by its social and situational contexts. Our assumption is that the introduction to an MA thesis written by students who are brought up and educated in a non-English environment should carry its own features, and it could be a joint product under the influence of its contextual factors, which will in turn be reflected through its generic structures as well as its language choices.

The present study, following the analytical method of Swales' CARS model, endeavors to answer the main research question: How do Chinese MA students create their research space in the process of entering into the research field? The specific questions to be analyzed are:

(1) What is the generic pattern of Chinese MA thesis introductions?

(2) How are the generic moves and steps realized through their language choices?

A further question is to be discussed based on the results of the above analysis:

(3) Is the text much influenced by its particular context? If yes, how do the contextual factors influence the formation of the text?

Findings of this study show that the three moves in Swales' CARS model are found in all the introductions of the Chinese MA theses studied, and the occurrence of each move is evenly distributed. Most texts show regular move patterns. The study revealed that cyclicity is a prominent feature of Chinese MA thesis intro-

ductions, and the order of moves 1-2-3 is the predominant cycle pattern. Both the combination of moves and the pattern of move cycles conform to Swales' CARS model and his other research findings quite well.

All the steps presented in the CARS model could be found in the Chinese MA thesis introductions, but with varying frequency of occurrence. Six steps occurred with a high degree of frequency (over 70% of the texts), including *Indicating the structure*, *Claiming centrality*, *Reviewing items of previous research*, *Making topic generalizations*, *Outlining purposes*, and *Indicating a gap*, while three other steps—*Counter-claiming*, *Continuing a tradition* and *Announcing principal findings* were used in very few texts (1% or 2%), which means that not all the steps in Swales' CARS model are applicable to Chinese MA theses in the field of applied linguistics. In the corpus under review, one step, *Reviewing previous research* (which was usually done by citing others' work) was not just a step in Move 1, but was used very flexibly and for other purposes, such as backing up the writer's own argument.

Fourteen new steps were identified in the corpus, including introduction of the general *background information or the present situation of the research*, *summary of or comment on the review*, *description of the research*, *definition of terms*, and so on. Following Nwogu (1997), steps that occurred with about 50% regularity were taken as stable steps, and these twelve steps form the generic pattern of Chinese MA thesis introductions, as is shown in the table below.

From the table we can see that three steps in the CARS model which have a very low frequency of appearance are totally lacking in this pattern, and four new steps are included in the gener-

ic pattern, indicating that differences exist in the choice of steps made in introductions written by native English speakers and Chinese MA students.

At the lexical-grammatical level, analysis shows that a variety of language forms were used to achieve the communicative purpose by Chinese MA students. Seven dimensions were involved at the lexical level to show that the research carried out was worthwhile— *the status of the topic, the nature of the topic, the scope of the topic in time and in space, the quantity or amount involved in the relevant research, the degree of intensity of the topic, and the degree of rigour for development*. Both negative and non-negative lexical forms and structures were used for arguing about the problematic aspects of the topics. Five categories of negative lexical forms were identified: *sentence connectors, negative quantifiers, lexical negation, negative verb structures, and other forms*, among which seven lexical forms and grammatical patterns were most frequently used, including *however, be/do/does/did /have/has/can/could/might/should not, few, little, but, only* and *problem*. These forms proved to be effective in achieving their corresponding purposes.

Moves and Steps

Move 1: Establishing a Territory

Claiming centrality

Making topic generalizations/introducing the topic

Reviewing previous research

* Presenting summary/comment of the review

Move 2: Establishing a Niche

Indicating a gap

Question-raising/pointing out problems/unsolved issues

* Indicating real world problems/limitation in present situation/practice

Moves and Steps
Move 3: Occupying the Niche Announcing present research Outlining purposes/indicating intention/aim/objective/goals * Describing the research itself * Stating significance/positive justification of the topic/contribution of study Indicating the structure
* indicates a newly identified step

The employment of citations was a common practice in the corpus studied. Analyses were carried out regarding citation patterns, the ways researchers' names were expressed, and the choice of the tenses in the reporting verbs. It is shown that most Chinese students use various patterns to cite. However, some strong tendencies towards certain forms were displayed in their choices, of which the most obvious feature is a tendency to present the quoted message as true or view a researcher in a positive light, with very few students signaling disagreement or asserting information to be false, indicating that Chinese students depend to a large degree on authorities for their own arguments, thus lacking a spirit of skepticism in their claims.

In conclusion, Chinese MA theses capture the characteristic features of academic writing in a general way, but not fully. There are obvious variations from the findings of Swales (1990) and other scholars about mature writing. The differences in text organization as well as the choice of language are attributable to the contextual factors of the genre itself, including the social and professional routines of academic writing as well as cultural, dis-