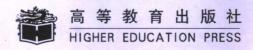
# On English Tense

### 英语时态论

●何 伟 著



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按照系统功能语言学的观点,语言有三个层次:语义(Semantics)、词汇-语法(Lexico-grammar)和音系/字系(Phonology/Graphology)。何伟在攻读博士学位期间的研究课题是英语小句中动词的时态问题。这个题目属于"词汇-语法"层的范畴。从文献上看,国内大多数系统功能语言学学者的研究主要集中在语义层中的文化语境、情景语境、语篇等以及"词汇-语法"层中的纯理功能方面,对功能句法、词汇、音系/字系这些领域探讨的不多。

对于博士生,攻读学位是跟着老师(和同学)走过一个专业上的严格训练的过程,在此期间学会怎样做人、做学者和做学问。在我看来,成功的学者应该是"能上能下",既有能力预测和展望该学科的发展前景,有能力概述学科的现状和指出存在的不足,给后来者指出努力的方向,还要有能力做基础研究,有能力对大多数人看不出的问题进行科学的、系统的、认真的研究。有些研究的应用价值比较明显,可能还带来很好的经济效益,而有些研究则属于基础研究,一般人不感兴趣或看不出它们的潜在价值。我一直认为,攻读博士学位的过程是一个学会做学问的过程,它远比最终获得学位这个结果要重要得多。因此,无论做什么题目、研究什么问题、问题大小,只要理论合适、综述全面、方法正确、自圆其说、表述规范、对学科有贡献,那就应该达到要求了。在指导何伟做学位期间,我是根据这个想法来提出建议的。因此,何伟选择了一个很少人注意的、但很有理论意义的学术课题。

可喜的是,何伟的研究最终硕果累累,她在学习期间就写出了多篇从系统功能语言学角度研究英语时态问题的学术论文,得到了专家的认同,并先后在《外语教学与研究》等核心刊物上发表,受到了同行的关注。从何伟的研究可以看出,对一些公认的"老课题",如果我们能用一种新的理论做指导,换一个角度看问题,就有可能有新的发现,得出新的结论。

何伟的这本著作《英语时态论》主要从系统功能语言学角度研究英语时态问题,是在她的博士论文的基础上完善而成。该书共分8章。第一章提出本书要达到的研究目的,设定相关研究问题,并对有关数据资料的收集进行说明。第二章通过纵览时态逻辑学和语言学界对时态的研究,探讨它们对时态概念的发展所作的贡献,并指出所存在的问题,然后通过对比指出系统功能语法时态基本观的合理性。第三、四章进一步阐释并完善系统功能语法原有时态观。第三章讨论了时态的概念、原则、特征、分类等问题;第四章探讨了时态的小句层次性。第五章探究了限制性主从关系小句复合体中的时态依赖现象,指出关于这种依赖关系的英语时态系统也建立在两个相同的基本原则上;相关时态现象同样要用时间参照点设定规则来解释,不过有的除了设定规则外还需要时间参照点视角

保持规则来解释。第六章考察了限制性主从关系小句复合体中的时态自主现象,指出这种时态自主关系要用时间参照点改变规则来解释。第七章探讨了前两章推出的扩展理论对整个理论框架的蕴意以及它的适用能力。与其他理论相比,本文扩展理论概括性强,适用范围广。最后一章对全书进行总结,并对以后的研究提出设想。

她是那样的执着,那样的甘于寂寞;她为完成博士学位论文而最终获得学位 付出了很多的艰辛,这是许多人都无法想像的。看到何伟在学三年所走过的路, 使我想起自己在英国攻读第一个博士学位时的感受。记得要提交博士论文的时候,我真想在扉页上仿拟《红楼梦》的卷头诗,把它改为:学问苦涩成,行行寂寞 泪。莫云作者痴,谁解其中味?我不知道何伟是否有过和我一样的感受。

我希望何伟能继续在功能句法研究方面努力钻研,在很多人认为不是那么丰富多彩的领域中找到乐趣,这样,生活和研究都会更加有趣。

黄国文 2005年5月于美国斯坦福大学 本书作者何伟是北京科技大学英语副教授,英语博士。在出版本书之前,作者已有多篇论文发表,其中一篇"系统功能语法时态系统概观"2003 年发表在《外语教学与研究》杂志,表现出一定的研究潜力和敢于攀高的志向。她硕士毕业后,考入中山大学攻读博士学位,师从黄国文教授,主要从事系统功能语言学的研究。2004 年 7 月来到北京师范大学外国语言文学博士后流动站做专题研究。作为她博士后研究的合作教师,我有幸看到她能及早将自己的研究成果作为专著出版,感到衷心的高兴和喜悦。

本书是在作者博士论文基础上完成的,其中有不少值得关注的地方。也是 在读博士、硕士研究生应该学习的。概括起来,体现在以下几个方面:

- (1)选题适当,有新意。作者在钻研系统功能语言学的过程中,善于从现有理论中,挖掘探索尚未完善之处,并作为自己的主攻方向。何伟同志从功能语言学的创始人韩礼德(Halliday)的英语时态系统理论中得到启发,又在与功能语言学家马提森(Matthiessen)的学术交往中对题目做了进一步地深化和思考。做到了融自己的课题于以往的研究成果和理论之中,体现继承。不囿于已有理论,有所突破,体现创新。这是值得学习的。研究生论文选题体现一种能力,体现一种精神。切忌匆忙行事,切记要有理论依据,要有新意,要有创新。
- (2) 相关文献检索详尽,综述脉络客观清楚。作者在确定选题后,对相关研究做了较为全面和充分的检索和阅读。这是很重要的。学术研究很少从零开始,做学术研究就是学术对话,与已往的研究者对话,与大师对话。相关的书读得多,加上自己的思考,并善于与他人交流,善于向大师级专家请教,自然就会有想法,有思路。另外作者在阅读的基础上,将以往有关时态的研究做了语言学研究和逻辑学研究的划分。又对语言学研究中,不同时期和不同学者对英语时态的理解做了"缩减派"、"遵循派"、"微扩展派"和"宏扩展派"的分析。并在此基础上,提出了自己研究的切入点。这是值得学习的。文献综述体现学术研究的能力,体现学术研究的水平。做学术研究要做到综述有分析,分析要客观,内容要相关,详略要得当。切忌简单罗列,切忌求大求全。
- (3) 论文有创新,有独到见解。作者在本书中,首先论述了逻辑学界和语言学界对独立小句(independent clause)内时态的研究,分析了它们对时态概念的发展和贡献,并通过对比,指出系统功能语法时态观的合理性。作者在此基础上,提出了本书的主要任务,也就是完善系统功能语法中原有的时态基础理论框架,推出不仅能解释小句内时态现象,而且还能解释小句之间时态关系的理论框架。从完善小句内时态分析,到能够对小句间时态进行分析正是作者的发展与创新。这是值得学习的。

(4)语言通顺,格式规范。除了上面讲到的三条,学术研究和研究生论文写作还要关注语言流畅,表述清楚的问题,格式符合规范的问题,研究方法得当的问题。我认为各位读者可以从本书中得到启发。也希望借此机会发表一点议论,以引起大家对学术研究以及学位论文中研究方法、语言表达和格式规范的关注。

在我接触到的年轻学者中,何伟同志发展较为全面。她博士毕业后,不计较生活条件,潜心钻研,有不断进取的精神,并有新的研究成果发表。她教学认真,工作负责,取得很好的教学效果。除此之外,她在教学、科研、家务等不很轻松的情况下,还承担了教学管理方面的行政工作,显示出她勇于拼搏和甘于奉献的精神。何伟同志现在年富力强,风华正茂,深信她将一如既往,做出更为优秀的业绩,以自己的行动和成果,展示她的智慧和才华。

田贵森 2005 年 6 月 20 日 北京师范大学励耘 9 楼

#### Acknowledgements

This work originated from a curiosity about the English tense system presented by Halliday, the founder of Systemic Functional Grammar, a curiosity which grew out of attempts to elaborate on this complex system. My decision to offer an alternative account and to expand it was inspired by discussing some relevant issues with the systemicist Matthiessen through a few emails in the spring of 2001, whose illuminating criticisms are greatly valued, and by presenting a related paper in the Seventh Chinese National Conference on Systemic Functional Grammar held in Changchun, China, in July, 2001, during which I was greatly encouraged by Professor Hu Zhuanglin, whose comments on the paper are highly appreciated.

This work has been done under the supervision of Professor Huang Guowen, who is my supervisor both in learning and in life and to whom I would like to express my heartfelt thanks. In the year of 2000, he warmly introduced me to Systemic Functional Grammar. From then on, he has been urging me to follow academic routines, encouraging me to achieve academic creativity and teaching me how to conduct myself. Moreover, from his own publications on linguistic subjects I have gained many valuable insights that have helped to clarify my own thinking at several points. Without his patient guidance, unfailing encouragement and enlightening criticisms, this work would have been impossible. My great indebtedness to him will be evident to even the most casual reader of this book.

During its various stages, this work has benefited greatly from the sympathetic advice and valuable suggestions that I have received from Professor Wu Zengsheng, Professor Xiao Jiewen, Professor Lin Lianshu and Professor Zhang Meifang. To all of these scholars I owe a great debt of gratitude, as I do also to Professor Lin Yuyin, who not only gave the advice on the work during its initial stage but also made comments on it after reading the first draft. Her suggestions have contributed greatly to the eventual completion of the work.

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My parents have given me great understanding and encouragement that sustained me throughout the whole period of the work composing. I would like to thank them for their long-standing support.

I am indebted above all to my husband, Gao Shengwen, for his deep love, constant encouragement, untiring assistance and his bringing up our daughter, without which my life would not be so pleasant and without which the work could never have been completed.

This book is intended as an investigation of the tense relationships in finite hypotactic clause complexes mainly from the perspective of Systemic Functional Grammar. It attempts to offer an alternative account of the original point of view of tense within the framework of Systemic Functional Grammar and to expand it to the description of the tense relationships in finite hypotactic clause complexes. The overall aim is to develop a coherent theoretical framework, which is meant to deal with the tense phenomena not only in independent clauses but also in finite hypotactic clause complexes.

The opening chapter situates the work as a contribution to the study of tense. formulates a set of aims and raises relevant questions for the research. Chapter 2 offers an overview of previous studies on tense from two lines, i.e. logic and linguistics. The first part of this chapter sketches theories on tense logic and presents a brief survey of tense models in linguistics that have been particularly influential to the development of the notion of tense. The second part outlines different hypotheses that concern the tense phenomena in finite hypotactic clause complexes — especially in clause complexes in projection. Chapters 3 and 4 are an attempt to provide a more coherent notion of tense. In these two chapters we elaborate further on the original view of tense within the framework of Systemic Functional Grammar and bring some significant modifications to it. The purpose of Chapter 3 is to clarify the definition of tense. In this book tense is defined as a grammatical resource for construing chains of the temporal relationships between pairs of times indicated in the clause. The purpose of Chapter 4 is to uplift tense from the group rank to the clause rank. Our central argument with reference to the grammatical rank issue of tense is that any specific tense — primary or secondary — is an operator and that it is located at the clause rank. Conditioned on this account, the remainder of the book goes further into the tense system which concerns the relationships between tenses in finite hypotactic clause complexes. Chapter 5 explores temporal dependence in finite hypotactic clause complexes. It is found that this phenomenon also involves two basic principles and that it can be explained by the reference time modifying rule as well and in some cases by the reference time perspective preserving rule in addition but that the realization of the (first) secondary tense is different from that within a tense series. In Chapter 6 we investigate temporal independence in finite hypotactic clause complexes and propose that it can be accounted for by the reference time shifting rule. The scrutinization of such finite hypotactic clause complexes shows that temporal independence may be restricted by the present time as the reference point, that it may be triggered by temporal circumstantial elements or by temporal conjunctions, that it may result from cultural context and that it may be restricted by the types of finite hypotactic clause complexes. Chapter 7 discusses some implications of the account of the tense phenomena in finite

hypotactic clause complexes for the tense framework developed in this book more generally and examines whether or not the framework is better suited to deal with tense than other tense models. The discussion of both temporal dependence and independence from the position of tense logic points to the conclusion that tenses are operators on the one hand and deictic on the other. In comparison with other tense models, the description of the tense phenomena in finite hypotactic clause complexes from the perspective of Systemic Functional Grammar seems to achieve a large generalization and a wide applicability. The last chapter presents a summary of the book as well as some suggestions for future research.

Throughout the book we have tried to demonstrate that the attempt to offer an alternative account of the original view of tense within Systemic Functional Grammar is necessary and that a study of the tense relationships between clauses in finite hypotactic clause complexes from meaning to form is feasible. The present study shows that the framework proposed in the book is coherent and powerful in explaining various natural tenses.

人们对时态的研究历来是从两个角度进行的:一是逻辑学,二是语言学。二者有时互不干涉,平行进展;有时互相影响,交叉进行,尤其是前者影响后者。该著作主要从语言学角度,具体地讲,在系统功能语法理论框架下探究英语时态系统。但是,由于时态逻辑学研究的是时态的本质,而系统功能语法又是以意义为出发点对语言进行描述,因此,本研究也吸收一些从逻辑学角度对时态的研究成果,为书中所阐述的理论提供一些佐证。

从语言学文献上看,人们对英语时态比较系统的研究可追溯到 16 世纪英语语法学家 Lily (参见 Matthiessen 1996: 433) 效仿古典语法学家而提出的一个描述性模式。这一早期传统语法时态模式发展到今天,大致分为 4 个派别:缩减派、遵循派、微扩展派和宏扩展派。它们对时态的理解和分析各不相同。当然,每个派别内部各代表之间对时态的本质看法也不完全一致。基于对时态的不同认识,人们对限制性主从关系小句复合体中时态现象的解释也就有多种,其中有代表性的是:"时态一致论","绝对指示论","相对时间论"和"绝对一相对时间论"。它们有着不同的侧重点,其适用能力均有不同程度的局限性。本著作认为宏扩展派代表之一 Halliday (1976, 1985, 1994/2000) 提出的系统功能语法时态基本观比较合理:时态建构小句中"事件发生时间"与话语发出时间"现在"之间的序列时间关系(至少一个),由动词词组来体现,其系统建立在两个基本原则上一一三分制和递归性。然而,令人遗憾的是,这种观点问世以来,并没有人对其进行完善并用来描述小句复合体中的时态关系。

该著作在阐释系统功能语法原有时态观的基础上,将它加以改进,并以此为前提对限制性主从关系小句复合体中的时态现象进行深入研究,试图推出一个不仅能解释小句内时态现象而且还能解释小句之间时态关系的理论框架。全书共分8章。第一、二章是介绍和文献综述;第三至第七章是该著作的主体部分,其中,第三、四章旨在完善系统功能语法中原有的时态基础理论框架,第五、六、七章在第三、四章的研究基础上,着重探讨理论的扩展性;第八章是对全书的总结。

第一章指出研究限制性主从关系小句复合体中时态现象的重要意义,提出本著作要达到的研究目的,设定相关研究问题,并对有关数据资料的收集进行说明。第二章首先纵览时态逻辑学和语言学界对独立小句(independent clause)内时态的研究,探讨它们对时态概念的发展所作的贡献,并通过对比指出语言学界内系统功能语法时态基本观的合理性。然后,概述人们针对限制性主从关系(尤其是投射类型)小句复合体中的时态现象而提出的种种假设,并指出它们所存在的问题。

第三、四章进一步阐释并改进系统功能语法原有时态观。在第三章,作者讨论了与时态有关的"事件"、时态系统得以运作的两个基本原则以及时态的一个

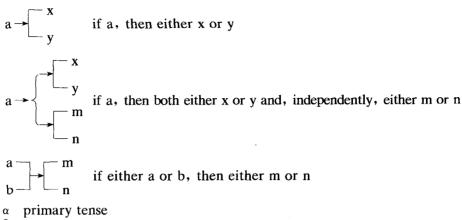
特征,指出"事件"是一个语义范畴,它代表小句所描述的正在发生的事情;递归原则中的阻止规则不是绝对的;任何时态,即不论是首要时态还是次要时态,都具备指示功能。据此,作者对时态进行了详尽的分类描述:除了首要时态和首要一次要时态,英语时态系统中还有次要时态和次要一次要时态。时间环境成分与时态的具体关系显示:虽同样表达时间,前者是词汇手段而后者是语法手段。通过上述讨论,作者尝试对时态进行了定义。第四章在探讨了强、弱级阶假设、原时态观对时态语法层次的处理以及时态的另一个基本特征的前提下,提出时态属于小句层次,在句法分析中无论首要时态还是次要时态都充当功能操作词。至此,本研究得出:时态是一种用来建构小句中所示序列时间关系的语法手段;从一个角度讲,它起指示作用,从另外一个角度讲,它充当操作词;它属于小句层次,由助动词词组来体现;其系统建立在两个基本原则上。在此前提下,本书对限制性主从关系小句复合体中的时态现象进行深入研究。

第五章探究了限制性主从关系小句复合体中的时态依赖现象,发现关于这 种依赖关系的英语时态系统也建立在两个相同的基本原则上:相关时态现象,同 样要用时间参照点设定规则来解释,不过有的除了设定规则外还需要时间参照 点视角保持规则来解释;另外,体现第一个次要时态的助动词是限制性的。由 此,控制句和依赖句中"事件"发生的前后关系可由两句之间的时态关系来判定: 然而,有时要通过语境中的相关因素来确定。第六章考察了限制性主从关系小 句复合体中的时态自主现象,发现这种时态自主关系要用时间参照点改变规则 来解释,这种现象是由"现在"时间参照点的制约,由时间环境成分或时间连接词 的提示或由文化语境的暗示造成的,抑或由小句复合体的类型使然。这意味着, 虽然时态之间存在依赖关系是限制性主从关系小句复合体的一个普遍现象,但 是并非所有的限制性主从关系小句复合体中都存在这种关系;究竟是时间参照 点设定规则还是改变规则起作用,主要看小句复合体中小句之间的逻辑一语义 关系。该章研究结果还显示,控制句和依赖句中"事件"发生的前后关系只能靠 语境因素来判定。第七章探讨了前两章推出的扩展理论对整个理论框架的蕴意 以及它的适用能力。对限制性主从关系小句复合体中时态之间存在的依赖或自 主关系的逻辑分析进一步表明,时态既是一种操作词,又是一种指示词,二者并 不矛盾。与其它理论相比,本书扩展理论概括性强,适用范围广。

最后一章对全书进行总结,并对以后的研究提出设想。

总之,在改进系统功能语法原有时态观的前提下,对限制性主从关系小句复合体中的时态现象从意义到形式的研究是可行的,由此推出的扩展理论解释潜力大;并且,它与改进过的基础理论一起形成一个前后一致、概括能力强的时态理论框架。在这个框架内,任何具体时态,即无论首要时态还是次要时态,都具备相同的特征,都属于小句层次;任何时态的选择使用都是由其意义决定的。

#### **Notational Conventions**



- secondary tense
- γ tertiary tense
- δ quaternary tense
- ε quinary tense
- past tense
- 0 present tense
- future tense

#### **Abbreviations**

BNC the British National Corpus

CCGPV Collins Cobuild Grammar Patterns 1: Verbs

CGEL A Comprehensive Grammar of the English Language

Ct circumstantial time

Et event time

Fhcc finite hypotactic clause complex(es)

IFG An Introduction to Functional Grammar

LGSWE Longman Grammar of Spoken and Written English

PEG A Practical English Grammar

Rt reference time

SFG Systemic Functional Grammar

T time

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