



现代英文小说 人物对话研究

Research on

何 君 / 著

Conversations

in Modern English Novels

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前 言

口语交际可以解释为“用语言表达意思”，即说话，它在日常生活中具有举足轻重的作用。一个人具备较强的口语交际能力有利于促进其思维发展，为个人的终身学习、生活和工作奠定基础。人们在社会生活中用于口语交流的口头语言和书面语言是有区别的。

小说中的人物对话是作家用来与读者沟通的一种手段，是小说语言最常用的表达方式之一，同样具有交际功能，是作家笔下描述的世界中人与人之间的口语交流，与现实生活中的口语在词汇、语篇、文体方面有相似之处。

笔者一直致力于英语语言学及应用语言学的学习与研究，深知对语言习得者来说，英美文学是极佳的语言给养，阅读大量的英文小说是提高英语阅读能力和欣赏能力的最有效方法。对于英文小说中的人物对话加以研究，显然具有一定的实际意义。

幸而近年来语料库语言学的蓬勃发展使本书得到了研究的科学依据。

本书第一章为引言部分，主要介绍了现代英文小说

的组织构成，指出了研究的目的、意义、研究方法及设计层次，并就资料收集整理和数据采集加以阐述。第二章重点对英语口语进行研究，分别从口语的功能、分类、交际互动等方面加以分析，剖析英语口语的特点，并对英语书面语及口语进行了全方位、多角度的比较分析。第三章主要对现代英语小说人物对话文体进行量化分析，通过 FOXPRO 等计算机软件，对 CMEN、RLC 两个语料库进行对比分析，重点研究现代英文小说口语的词汇、语篇、文体特点。第四章则是介绍了通过对数据的科学整理分析而得出的结论。

在编著本书的过程中，得到了大连海事大学范凤祥导师的指导和帮助。范凤祥老师知识渊博，治学严谨，在英语语言学研究方面及语料库语言学应用方面均有建树。本书的出版也得到了中国商务出版社的大力支持，出版社编辑人员为书稿的编辑、校对工作付出了辛勤的劳动。在编著本书的过程中，参阅了相关文献和资料，在此一并表示衷心地感谢。尽管做了许多努力，但书中肯定还有诸多不足，欢迎批评指正。

作者

2015年10月

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Chapter 1

Introduction

1. 1 Composition of Modern English Novels

Fiction is the kind of imaginative literature many people are most familiar with; it is the form that sells best, is publicized most widely, and is usually the most straightforward to read. Fiction is a generic term and includes short stories, novellas and novels. This book will be focusing mainly on novels written in late 80s of the 20th century.

From the point of view of linguistics, the language in novels is also a discourse. According to MacCabe, novel contains a “hierarchy” of levels of discourse: the discourse of the narrator, and the discourse of the charac-

ters(1979). The narrative discourse provides a “window on reality”. It presents the world of the text to the reader as if it were part of exterior reality, situating the events and the characters of the novel as if they were in the real world. So the narrator can present the character.

Generally speaking, “the narrator” in a novel can take the first person or third person. Second person narration is very seldom used as it means that the author can only address one person. The first person: I saw... I felt... I did... The “I” in the story is not the author but a character that the author has created to tell the story. This character is known as the narrator or storyteller.

Unlike first person narrator, third person narrator does not take part in the story. The narrator is outside the story and refers to the characters either by name or in the third person, e. g. he felt... she thought... they did... Third person narrators are very powerful and can order the action as they please. Third person narrator can be divided into the omniscient narrator, the limited narrator and the impersonal narrator.

The following is an extract from a novel written by means of the first person:

I knew as I watched Harry mindlessly burrowing into the sports section of the News that the moment had come to make a break for freedom. I had to say it. I had to say “Good-bye” ... Suddenly I pushed back my chair, choked out a rather faint “So long, Harry” through a last mouthful of toast, stumbled to my suitcase and out the door...

“I” herein is a character in the novel named Alice, who, due to in harmony with her husband, Harry, was unable to maintain their marital life and, after a breakfast, announced to live apart on her own.

If the above description about Alice and Harry was given by means of “the omniscient narrator”, the words would be completely different:

Sometimes an apparently insignificant moment brings to a head all of those unresolved problems we face in our daily lives. Such was the case with Harry and Alice that morning as they sat at breakfast over

their coffee and toast. They seemed perfectly matched, but in reality, they merely maintained marital harmony by avoiding bringing up anything unpleasant... She arose and, with a half-whispered "So long, Harry", she walked to the suitcase, picked it up, and went out, leaving the door open...

“The omniscient narrator” herein started the description with a philosophic comment and introduced the characters Harry and Alice. The narrator is the “spokesman” of the writer, instead of a character in the novel. He takes the status of “knowing everything”, not being limited by the time and location of the scenario in the novel.

The narration is totally different by means of the limited omniscient narrator:

Harry glanced quickly at the Cubs score in the News only to be disappointed by another loss. They were already writing, “Wait till next year.” It was just another bit of depression to add to his worries about the McVeigh contract... “Now where is that woman,” he

thought, as he trudged over, annoyed, to open the door. But the emptiness had already entered, drifting by him unnoticed, into the furthest reaches of the house.

As the point of view in such a description or depiction was based on one character, it has a certain limitation.

The following is by means of the impersonal narrator:

A man and a woman sat at opposite sides of a chrome and vinyl dinette table... The man was half hidden by the sports section of the morning paper The News. The woman was sitting tensely, staring at what she could see of her husband... Suddenly, she pushed back her chair, saying almost inaudibly, "so long, Harry." She walked quickly to the suitcase, picked it up, and went out the door, leaving it open...

It can be seen from the above analysis that persons and the point of view in description or depiction have direct influence on the selection of elements of the lan-

guage. Therefore, we should not ignore it in analysis of the language characteristics in novels.

Novels typically contain conversations between characters, and they look like real life conversation. Conversations in novels can be further divided into monologue and conversation. Seeking for personalization of speeches for characters is the notable characteristics of the language in novels. The so-called personalization of speeches for characters means to let a character say as he/she is, expressing his/her thought, status, culture, experience and personality through his/her own speeches. The language is the window to the heart. It is through the conversations between characters that readers know better about different characters in a novel. Therefore, conversations are one of the most parts of the language in a novel. The following is an extract of Guy de Maupassant's novel—*The Necklace*.

She removed the wraps, which covered her shoulders, before the glass, so as once more to see herself in all her glory. But suddenly she uttered a cry. She had no longer the necklace around her neck! Her husband, already

half-undressed, demanded:

“What is the matter with you?”

She turned madly towards him:

“ I have—I have—I’ve lost Mme. Forestier’s necklace.”

He stood up, distracted.

“What! —How? —Impossible!”

And they looked in the folds of the dress, in the folds of her cloak, in her pockets, everywhere. They did not find it.

He asked: “You’re sure you had it on when you left the ball?”

“Yes. I felt it in the vestibule of the palace.”

“But if you had lost it in the street we should have heard it fall. It must be in the cab.”

“Yes. Probably. Did you take his number?”

“No. And you, didn’t you notice it?”

“No.”

...

Here, the author embedded the dialogues to narrate the story. Description by means of the conversational language can shorten the gap between the writer and the readers, being easy to get sympathetic response. So the proper insertion of the dialogue can make the language vivid, vigorous, more full of dramatics.

Conversations in a novel are never the ornament to the chapters and sections in the novel. They must be helpful to the scenario of the story. In other words, the part of conversation and the part of description in a novel must be linked up naturally and closely. Moreover, the dialogue in the novel must reflect the person's character, and work up "the speech such as its person". The style of the personal language should keep consistence with his social status, culture, occupation, personality, etc. Hence, the choosing of words and phrase constructions in fictional conversation is different with the narrative part in language style. The following extract is a good example from Zora Neal Hurston's novel *Their Eyes Were Watching God*:

Long before the year was up, Janie noticed that her husband had stopped talking in