English Rhetorical Options

(Revised Edition)

—A Handbook of English Rhetorical Devices

英语修辞大全

(修订版)

冯翠华 著

外语教学与研究出版社
FOREIGN LANGUAGE TEACHING AND RESEARCH PRESS

English Rhetorical Options

(Revised Edition)

—A Handbook of English Rhetorical Devices

英语修辞大全

（修订版）

冯翠华 著

外语教学与研究出版社
FOREIGN LANGUAGE TEACHING AND RESEARCH PRESS
北京 BEIJING

Preface to the Revised Edition

This edition keeps to the basic layout of the 1995 version, with the following changes and additions:

1. Additional sections have been added to the chapters on **Syntactic** and **Lexical Devices**;
2. The section on **Skewed Quotations** has been expanded into a separate chapter, Chapter 6;
3. Some of the examples in the 1995 edition have become outdated and been replaced by newer ones;
4. Chapter 5 is now on **Allusions** only, and the whole chapter has been made over to include more examples which are set out in a more systematic way;
5. The **Contents** and **Index** sections have been revised in keeping with the above changes.

It is hoped that the new edition will continue to be a useful guide to English rhetorical devices for all students of English.

Feng Cuihua
October, 2004

Preface

In my many years of teaching English as a foreign language (EFL) to Chinese college students, I have often come across this phenomenon: in reading, the students are able to analyse sentences into their grammatical components, but they have difficulty in picking out, or in appreciating a rhetorically effective sentence or passage. In writing compositions, while they are able to make sentences which are grammatically correct, they have great difficulty in composing sentences or paragraphs which are effective rhetorically and stylistically. These two aspects of one phenomenon point to a common gap in their knowledge of the English language—ignorance, or limited knowledge, of the rich store of rhetorical devices that English possesses and of their function in the effective communication of ideas, feelings, and events either in speech or in writing, and especially in writing.

At the same time, I have also found that books available in China on English composition and rhetoric seldom supply adequate and satisfactory information on rhetorical devices. Some textbooks on English rhetoric imported from abroad carry glossaries on some of these devices, especially figures of speech, but the lists are often inadequate too. There is evidently a need for more and fuller information on the subject, and a more systematic introduction to English rhetorical devices.

This book is an attempt to meet that need. Based on a study of past and present theory and practice on the

classification of these devices, I have divided them into five categories: syntactic devices, lexical devices, phonetic devices and prose rhythm, figures of speech, and allusions and skewed quotations. The book does not attempt to supply an exhaustive list of each and every rhetorical device used in English. Only the most important and the most commonly used are chosen, and the choice is entirely mine, and, therefore, subjective. The chapter on figures of speech is largely based on my booklet *Figures of Speech*, published in 1983, but revised and updated.

Many of the examples and illustrations are taken from poetry, for some of the devices, like figures of speech, are found most frequently and most typically in poems.

The grammatical terminology used is largely traditional, modified where necessary according to the new concepts in *A Comprehensive Grammar of the English Language* by Randolph Quirk et al. (1985). For instance, the concept of the Noun Phrase (NP) and the Verb Phrase (VP) as the two basic parts of a sentence is accepted, as well as the idea that a Noun Phrase can contain, through post-modification, an attributive clause or an appositive clause. This means that sentences like the following:

a) The man *who came today* is his uncle.
b) The rumour *that he had won the bet* was confirmed.

traditionally considered as complex sentences would now be treated as simple sentences.

However, the traditional concept of the infinitive phrase and the participle phrase as *phrases*, is retained,

试读结束，需要全本PDF请购买 www.ertongbook.com

as to treat them as non-finite *clauses*, as advocated by Quirk et al., would only cause confusion among Chinese students, who find the old terminology logically more acceptable.

In addition, the elements of English clause and sentence structure retain their familiar names, viz. Subject(S), Verb (V), Adverbial(A), Object(O), and Complement(C). The basic sentence patterns (using the declarative sentence as illustration) are as follows, for easy reference:

SV	The birds sang.
SVA	She drove at full speed.
SVC	He looked (became) angry. He was sad.
SVO	I bought a book.
SVOiO	I bought my sister a book.
SVOA	They sent the parcel by airmail.
SVOC	They elected him captain.

Familiarity with these elements and patterns is important, as many rhetorical devices involve manipulation of them in various grammatically acceptable ways.

This book is eminently suitable for college students of English at both undergraduate and graduate level, and is also a useful reference for self-study students of English, and for students of other specialities.

I wish to express here my thanks to two former students of mine, and now professors of English at the PLA Foreign Languages University, Yan Weiming and Xue Hanrong, for going over the initial drafts and offering valuable advice and suggestions. Yan Weiming translated my Preface and

Afterword into Chinese for me, too, for which I am especially grateful.

Feng Cuihua

前　言

长期以来，我一直在大学里教中国学生学习英语这门外语。在此过程中，我常常遇到这样一种现象：在阅读的时候，学生能够分析句子的语法成分，但要领会或欣赏修辞好的句子或段落却有困难。在写作的时候，他们虽然能够造出语法正确的句子，但要写出修辞和文体俱佳的句子或段落却有很大的困难。这是一种现象的两个方面，反映出他们在英语知识方面存在着一个共同的缺陷——英语里有着大量的修辞手段，而且这些修辞手段在口语和书面语中，尤其是在书面语中，起着有效的交流思想、表达感情以及传递信息的作用。对这些，他们不知道或不大知道。

同时，我还发现，国内现有的关于英语作文和修辞方面的书籍在修辞手段方面所提供的知识很少，很难令人满意。从国外引进的一些有关英语修辞的教科书，包含了某些修辞手段，特别是修辞格，但也常常不大充分。很显然，我们有必要在这方面提供更多、更充分的知识，更加系统地介绍英语的修辞手段。

本书就是为了满足这种需要而做的一次尝试。我对英语修辞手段分类方面过去和现在的理论和实践做过研究。以此为基础，我将英语修辞手段分成五种类型：句法手段，词法手段，语音手段和文章节律，修辞格，以及典故和"断章截句"的引语。本书只是选择了修辞手段里面最重要、最常用的部分，并没有把英语里使用的每一种修辞手段全部纳入讲解的范围。这完全是我自己选定的，因此也是比较主观的。关于修辞格的那一章，很大程度上是基于我 1983 年出版的那本小册子《修辞格》，但做了修订和更新。

许多例句选自诗歌，因为有些修辞手段，比如修辞格，在诗歌中十分常见、非常典型。

本书沿用传统的语法术语，但又根据伦道夫·夸克等人所

著的《综合英语语法》(1985 年版)中使用的新概念做了必要的修订。比如,我接受了名词短语和动词短语是句子两个基本成分的概念,也接受了名词短语通过后修饰可以包含定语从句或同位语从句的观点。这意味着,下列一些传统上被认为是复合句的句子,现在却被当作简单句来处理了:

a) The man *who came today* is his uncle.

b) The rumour *that he had won the bet* was confirmed.

不过,我保留了有关动词不定式短语和分词短语是"短语"的传统概念,因为如果像夸克等人所主张的那样把它们看作是非限定性从句,就会使学生产生概念上的混淆。从逻辑角度讲,学生会觉得旧的术语更容易接受。

另外,英语从句和句子结构的成分保留了大家熟悉的叫法,即主语(S)、谓语(V)、状语(A)、宾语(O)和补语(C)。为了便于参阅,用下列陈述句来说明基本句型:

SV	The birds sang.
SVA	She drove at full speed.
SVC	He looked (became) angry. He was sad.
SVO	I bought a book.
SVOiO	I bought my sister a book.
SVOA	They sent the parcel by airmail.
SVOC	They elected him captain.

熟悉这些句子成分和句型是非常重要的,因为在语法可以接受的种种情况下,许多修辞手段需要用到它们。

本书主要适用于大学英语专业的本科学生和研究生,对英语自学者和其他专业的学生也有很大的参考价值。

我的两位学生、现解放军外国语学院教授严维明和薛汉荣通读了本书初稿,并提出了十分宝贵的意见。严维明还帮我翻译了前言和后记。在此,我特向他们表示感谢。

冯翠华

Chapter 1 Syntactic Devices 1
1.1 Introduction 1
1.2 Long and Short Sentences 2
1.3 The Simple Sentence 6
1.3.1 Characteristics of the Simple Sentence 6
1.3.2 The Noun Phrase in Simple Sentences 7
1.3.3 Adverbials in Simple Sentences 11
1.4 The Compound Sentence 15
1.5 The Complex Sentence 16
1.6 Simple, Compound and Complex Sentences Combined 18
1.7 Branching Sentences 21
1.7.1 The Right-branching or Loose Sentence 21
1.7.2 The Left-branching or Periodic Sentence 23
1.7.3 Mid-branching 25
1.7.4 Multi-branching 26
1.8 The Active and the Passive Voiced Sentences 27
1.9 Syntactic Schemes of Balance 30
1.9.1 General Remarks 30
1.9.2 Parallelism 31
1.9.3 Antithesis 35
1.9.4 Chiasmus and Antimetabole 37
1.10 Syntactic Schemes of Inversion 39
1.11 Syntactic Schemes of Omission 42
1.11.1 General Remarks 42

1.11.2 Ellipsis ····· 42
1.11.3 Fragmentary Elliptical Sentences ····· 44
1.11.4 Asyndeton (Omission of Conjunctions) ····· 45
1.11.5 Aposiopesis (Breaking off Halfway in a Sentence) ····· 48
1.12 Syntactic Schemes of Addition or Insertion ····· 49
1.12.1 General Remarks ····· 49
1.12.2 Polysyndeton (Use of Many Conjunctions) ··· 49
1.12.3 Epanorthosis ····· 55
1.12.4 Exegesis (Clarification) ····· 55
1.12.5 Exergasia (Amplification) ····· 57
1.12.6 Apposition ····· 58
1.12.7 Parenthesis ····· 59
1.13 Syntactic Schemes of Repetition ····· 61
1.13.1 General Remarks ····· 61
1.13.2 Series (Repetition of Sentence Elements) ····· 62
1.13.2.1 Series Defined ····· 62
1.13.2.2 Binomials ····· 62
1.13.2.3 Trinomials ····· 65
1.13.2.4 Catalogues ····· 67
1.13.3 Repetition of Sentences (in Whole or in Part) ····· 70
1.13.3.1 General Remarks ····· 70
1.13.3.2 Repetition of Whole Sentences ····· 71
1.13.3.3 Syntactic Anaphora (Repetition of Beginning Words) ····· 72
1.13.3.4 Syntactic Epiphora (Repetition of Ending Words) ····· 74
1.13.3.5 Syntactic Framing (Repetition of Beginning and Ending Words) ····· 76

试读结束，需要全本PDF请购买 www.ertongbook.com

1.14 Syntactic Schemes of Climax and Anti-climax …… 78
1.14.1 Climax …… 78
1.14.2 Anti-climax or Bathos …… 80
1.15 Rhetorical Question …… 82
1.16 Apodioxis …… 84
1.17 Apostrophe …… 85
1.18 Syntactic Schemes with "it" …… 86
1.18.1 General Remarks …… 86
1.18.2 "It" as Prop Subject …… 86
1.18.3 Anticipatory "it" …… 88
1.18.4 Emphatic "it" in Clefting …… 91
1.19 Existential Sentences …… 92

Chapter 2 Lexical Devices …… 96
2.1 Introduction …… 96
2.2 Lexical Options …… 96
2.2.1 General Remarks …… 96
2.2.2 Short Words or Long Words …… 97
2.2.3 Common Words or Learned Words …… 102
2.2.4 Formal, Informal or Colloquial Words …… 105
2.2.5 General or Specific Words …… 110
2.2.6 Concrete or Abstract Words …… 114
2.2.7 Referential or Emotive Words …… 116
2.2.8 Choice Between Synonymous Words …… 118
2.3 Choice of Abbreviations …… 122
2.3.1 Acronyms …… 122
2.3.2 Clippings …… 127
2.3.3 Blends …… 129
2.4 Lexical Repetition …… 131

2.4.1 General Remarks ····· 131
2.4.2 Immediate Repetition ····· 132
2.4.3 Lexical Anaphora ····· 135
2.4.4 Lexical Epistrophe ····· 136
2.4.5 Symploce ····· 138
2.4.6 Anadiplosis ····· 138
2.4.7 Distant or Intermittent Repetition ····· 140
2.4.8 Root Repetition ····· 141
2.4.9 Ploce ····· 143

Chapter 3 Phonetic Devices and Prose Rhythm
····· 144

3.1 Introduction ····· 144
3.2 Phonetic Devices ····· 145
3.2.1 General Remarks ····· 145
3.2.2 Alliteration ····· 148
3.2.3 Assonance ····· 152
3.2.4 Homeoteleuton ····· 154
3.2.5 Onomatopoeia ····· 155
3.2.6 Combined Use of Phonetic Devices ····· 156
3.3 Prose Rhythm ····· 159
3.3.1 General Remarks ····· 159
3.3.2 Stress ····· 160
3.3.2.1 Word Stress ····· 160
3.3.2.2 Sentence Stress ····· 161
3.3.3 Pitch ····· 164
3.3.4 Pause and Tempo ····· 165
3.3.5 Summary ····· 167

Chapter 4 Figures of Speech ····· 168
4.1 Introduction ····· 168
4.2 Figures of Speech ····· 170
4.2.1 Simile ····· 170
4.2.2. Metaphor ····· 178
4.2.3 Analogy ····· 187
4.2.4 Personification ····· 190
4.2.5 Metonymy ····· 195
4.2.6 Synecdoche ····· 199
4.2.7 Antonomasia ····· 202
4.2.8 Syllepsis ····· 203
4.2.9 Zeugma ····· 205
4.2.10 Paradox ····· 207
4.2.11 Oxymoron ····· 209
4.2.12 Hyperbole ····· 212
4.2.13 Understatement (Litotes and Meiosis) ····· 219
4.2.14 Euphemism ····· 221
4.2.15 Irony ····· 227
4.2.16 Innuendo ····· 231
4.2.17 Sarcasm ····· 232
4.2.18 Transferred Epithet ····· 234
4.2.19 Punning ····· 235
4.2.19.1 General Remarks ····· 235
4.2.19.2 Antanaclasis ····· 236
4.2.19.3 Paronomasia ····· 238

Chapter 5 Allusions ····· 239
5.1 Introduction to Allusions ····· 239
5.2 Sources of Allusions ····· 241

5.2.1 Nursery Rhymes ····· 241
5.2.2 Fairy Tales, Myths, Legends and Fables ····· 245
5.2.3 The Bible ····· 254
5.2.4 English and American Fiction ····· 258
5.2.5 Modern and Contemporary Sources ····· 266

Chapter 6 Skewed Quotations ····· 275

Afterword ····· 285
Bibliography ····· 287
Index ····· 289

Chapter 1
Syntactic Devices

1.1 Introduction

Syntactic devices here refer to variation in the use of sentence structures for stylistic or rhetorical effect, and are different from the processes of transformation of basic sentence patterns according to grammar rules. Thus the ordinary declarative, interrogative, negative, and exclamative structures, and the construction of simple, compound, and complex sentences as such do not come in for *technical* discussion. It is the way sentence structures are used in a stylistic way that concerns us, as, for example, when an interrogative sentence is used as a rhetorical question, or when declarative sentences are made loose or periodic, and so on.

The discussion of syntactic variation in this sense brings up, therefore, the question of non-grammatical properties of sentences like length, complexity, looseness, for instance, and of artistic features like balance or climax. In classical rhetoric, the manipulation of the normal arrangement of words in a sentence for artistic effect could take many forms, and such deviations were finely distinguished. Such deviations in construction were termed *schemes* of construction and included under *Figures of Speech*, a practice seldom adhered to, today. In this chapter, many of the most common schemes are included.

All this means that writers have a large repertoire of

syntactic devices to choose from. They could, for example, make frequent use of simple sentences, or alternate long and short sentences. They could write either loose or periodic sentences, or combine looseness with balance, etc. And they could only choose correctly if they knew what effect each device is meant to achieve.

The syntactic devices discussed below constitute the major options available, and the effects they are meant to achieve.

1.2 Long and Short Sentences

The rhetorical effect of long or short sentences depends on purpose and context. Without an appropriate purpose or context, short sentences used abundantly in a passage only make for choppiness and monotony. Likewise, too many long sentences can make a passage heavy and laborious.

Skillful writers, however, can exploit variation in sentence length to great effect to express different moods or attitudes, to describe action or events or to emphasize a point. Let us see some examples.

(1) Dick Boulton looked at the doctor. Dick was a big man. He knew how big a man he was. He liked to get into fights. He was happy. Eddie and Billy Tabeshaw leaned on their cant-hooks and looked at the doctor. The doctor chewed the beard on his lower lip and looked at Dick Boulton. Then he turned away and walked up the hill to the cottage. They could see from his back how angry he was. They all watched him walk up the hill and go inside the cottage.

试读结束，需要全本PDF请购买 www.ertongbook.com