类型学视阈下的
英语二语关系从句研究（英文版）

Studies on Relative Clauses of
English as a Second Language from
a Typological Perspective

李金满 著

类型学视阈下的
英语二语关系从句研究（第2版）

Studies on Relative Clauses of
English as a Second Language from
a Typological Perspective

类型学视阈下的
英语二语关系从句研究（英文版）

Studies on Relative Clauses of
English as a Second Language from
a Typological Perspective

李金满 著

内容提要

本书以语言类型学领域中名词短语可及性等级序列为切入点，在类型学视角下探讨英语二语关系从句习得现象，管窥类型学共性概况与学习者语言特征之间的内在联系。通过拓展研究范围，改善研究方法，本书尝试全面系统地描述中国学习者使用英语关系从句时如何受可及性等级序列、关系从句的嵌入性以及名词的生命性等因素的多重制约，并解释学习者关系从句使用行为特征背后的动因和理据。本书研究视角新颖，研究方法多样，可供语言习得和教学、语言类型学、语料库语言学等多个领域的研究者和高校师生参考。

前　言

　　关系从句是体现语言递归性的一种重要表达手段,也是语言类型学和二语习得研究中关注最多的语言结构之一。在对各类关系从句跨语言考察的基础上,语言类型学家提出了著名的可及性等级序列。语言类型学、一语习得、二语习得等领域中许多关于关系从句的研究都显示出这个等级序列的重要性,但也发现一些矛盾之处。本书以此为切入点,从类型学的视角管窥二语习得现象,进一步详细讨论类型学共性与学习者语言特点之间的内在联系。具体而言,本书尝试全面系统地描述中国学习者使用英语关系从句时如何受可及性等级序列、关系从句的嵌入性以及名词的生命性等因素的多重制约,并解释学习者关系从句使用行为特征背后的动因和理据。研究问题主要包括:(1)可及性、嵌入性和生命性是否在中国学习者的英语关系从句使用行为中起作用;(2)可及性是否并且怎样和嵌入性及生命性这两个因素相互影响,共同作用于学习者语言;(3)为什么这些因素会制约学习者的语言使用行为。

　　本书拓展研究范围,改善研究方法,结合语料库数据调查和一系列实验研究来解决上述问题。从两个中国学习者语料库(中国学习者英语语料库和中国学生英语笔语语料库)中,我们抽取了三种不同英语水平的学习者在作文中使用的关系从句数据进行统计分析;在实验中,我们对可及性、嵌入性和生命性三个因素进行了系统控制,通过补全句子测试和合并句子测试考察这些因素对学生产出各类英语关系从句的制约作用。

　　研究结果表明:三个因素都在不同程度上影响着中国学习者对英语关系从句的使用。就可及性而言,不同英语水平的学习者均倾向于优先使用产出可及性高而不是可及性低的关系从句。在语料库中,主语关系从句使用最多,直接宾语关系从句次之,介词宾语关系从句使用很少。在实验中,受试学习者

经常回避使用可及性低的直接宾语和介词宾语从句,并且产出的正确率较低;而可及性高的主语关系从句产出正确率高,并且没有发现受试学习者回避使用。就嵌入性而言,学习者更倾向于将关系从句置于主句宾语之后。语料库中右置关系从句的出现频率比内嵌关系从句高很多;合并句子测试也显示右置关系从句比内嵌关系从句更容易产出。就名词的生命性而言,语料库和补全句子测试数据都显示,有生命先行语倾向于作主语,特别是当从句内名词为无生命时;而无生命先行语倾向于作宾语,特别是当从句内名词为有生命时。在合并句子测试中,虽然结果不够显著,但无生命名词引导的主语关系从句显得比有生命名词引导的主语关系从句更难于处理,而有生命名词引导的宾语关系从句比无生命名词引导的宾语关系从句更难于处理。此外,语料库数据和实验数据一致表明可及性和嵌入性,可及性和生命性等因素彼此之间相互联系,共同作用;前二者体现为一种互补的关系,后二者则呈现出一种竞争的态势。综合考虑这些因素的作用能够更好地解释中国学习者使用各类英语关系从句的分布模式以及使用它们的难度。

结合语言类型学、心理语言学以及一语习得等领域的研究发现和本研究结果,我们可以看出学习者语言和自然语言一样受制于类型学共性原则。这些原则或独立,或与其他因素一起,对语言的使用、处理和习得构成影响。这意味着,加强语言类型学和二语习得两个领域的对话,从类型学视角来研究学习者语言,不仅可以为相关习得现象找到合理可行的解释,还可以验证在跨语言考察中概括出的共性倾向,从而加深并完善我们对自然语言事实和语言习得行为的理解。

语言类型学研究着力考察分布于世界各地、隶属于不同语族的自然语言之间的异同,探索语言共性背后的动因和理据;二语习得研究关注探讨不同母语背景的语言学习者使用不同目标语时表现出的特征和模式以及对其制约的各类因素。这两个领域的研究存在许多共通之处,加强二者的交流探讨有益于更好地推进彼此的发展,更好地了解人类为何能够习得、理解、产出形形色色的语言,为何能够使用不同形式的语言成功地完成相同的交际任务,为何频繁使用某些构式而非其他。然而多年以来,将这两个领域纳入同一视阈下进行的研究还相对匮乏,虽有成果散见于期刊、文集之中,系统的研究专著尚付阙如。本书试图沿着这一方向努力迈出一小步,联通自然语言共性研究和学习者语言行为特征考察,以关系从句为切入点,管窥人类语言行为的奥妙与神奇。

　　本书是在博士论文基础上修改补充写成的。过去几年中，时有语言学研究者、博士和硕士生来信讨论关系从句研究，并索要论文，希望这次出版能为对这一研究感兴趣的学界同仁提供更多方便。近年来我就这一研究课题在研究对象和实验方法上做了些许拓展，但由于版权、框架结构等多种原因，无法融入，深以为憾。犹豫再三，我还是不揣浅陋，基本维持论文原来概貌出此小书。因学识所限，本书中一定存在诸多不成熟的地方。错谬不当之处，恳请大家不吝赐教，多多批评指正。

　　本书撰写期间曾得到国内外许多师友同道的关心、指导和帮助。没有他们的鼓励和各种付出，也就不可能有今日此书的诞生。首先，我要衷心感谢王同顺教授的悉心教诲和热心帮助。他于百忙之中拨冗多次认真通读本书初稿，提出很多建设性的修改意见。其次，我要感谢马修·德赖尔（Matthew Dryer）和辛尼齐·伊祖米（Shinichi Izumi）两位教授从海外寄来相关参考文献和实验材料；斯特凡·格里斯（Stefan Gries）教授多次邮件往复，指点如何更好地对语料库数据进行统计检验分析。研究进行过程中，杨惠中、俞理明、王振华、卫乃兴、金艳、田艳、陆效用、邹为诚、向明友等教授提出了诸多建议和意见；赵宏宇博士在国外访学期间，帮忙搜集参考文献；邓耀臣博士帮忙处理语料数据；与一批既热情又有才华的上海交大同道的交流和讨论也给予我研究的灵感，在此不一一列举，以免挂一漏万，谨一并致谢。同时，我也要感谢上海财经大学学术专著出版经费的资助，上海交通大学出版社史亚仙编辑的辛苦工作！

　　此外，我还要特别感谢我的父母、兄弟、妻女多年以来对我工作上的支持，生活上的爱护和照顾。没有他们的奉献和陪伴，我不可能有充足的时间和精力来做点研究。新的一年来临之际，谨将此书献给他们。

<div align="right">

李金满

2015 年 3 月

</div>

ABSTRACT

Relative clauses represent one of the most distinctive properties of human languages, recursiveness, and have attracted considerable interest in typological studies and SLA research. A large body of literature on relative clauses in typology, first and second language acquisition has shown the importance of the Accessibility Hierarchy (AH) originally generalized on the basis of cross-linguistic observations, as well as some inconsistencies. This book studies the second language learners' behavior on this structure from a typological perspective, attempting to explore further the relationship between typological universals and learner language phenomena relating to the relative clause. Specifically, the present study aims to investigate the effect of the AH on the production of English relative clauses by Chinese EFL learners and the possible interrelation between this markedness hierarchy and the other two linguistic factors, namely embeddedness of the relative clause and animacy of noun phrases. The major research questions addressed are: (1) whether or not accessibility, embeddedness and animacy play a significant role in Chinese EFL learners' behavior on English relative clauses; (2) whether and how accessibility interrelates with embeddedness and animacy to exert their effects on Chinese EFL learners' production of English relative clauses; (3) why Chinese learners behave in such a pattern when using English relative clauses.

These questions were addressed in a corpus-based investigation and a series of controlled experimental studies in which the three factors were systematically manipulated. The relative clauses naturally produced by Chinese learners at three different levels of English proficiency were extracted from two learner corpora: Chinese Learner English Corpus and Written English Corpus of Chinese Learners. Either a sentence combination task or a sentence completion task or both were used in the experiments to examine the effects of accessibility, embeddedness and animacy.

The results have demonstrated that all three factors under investigation play a very important role in Chinese EFL learners' use of English relative clauses. With regard to accessibility, learners at three different levels of English proficiency all exhibited a strong tendency to produce the more accessible type rather than the less accessible type of relative clauses as predicted by the AH. Subject (SU) relatives predominated in the learner corpora, Direct object (DO) relatives ranked second,

and Object of preposition (OP) relatives occurred least. In the experiments, students produced less accurately and avoided more frequently the less accessible DO and OP relatives while the most accessible SU relatives were produced most accurately and no avoidance of them was found. In respect of embeddedness of the relative clause, learners typically preferred to place a relative clause in the matrix object position rather than the matrix subject position. The percentage of right-branching relative clauses occurring in corpus data was greater than that of center-embedded ones. In the sentence combination task, right-branching relative clauses were found easier for learners to produce than those center-embedded equivalents. With respect to the role of animacy of noun phrases, animate antecedents in learner corpora and in the sentence completion test showed a great tendency to function as the transitive subject, especially when the relative-clause-internal noun phrase is inanimate, whereas inanimate antecedents often took the syntactic role of the transitive object, especially when the relative-clause-internal noun phrase is animate. In the sentence combination test, relative clauses with inanimate antecedents as their subjects appeared slightly more difficult for learners to produce than relative clauses with animate antecedents as their subjects, despite a lack of statistical significance. Furthermore, the findings from the corpus-based investigation and experimental studies converge to indicate that there are interrelations between accessibility and embeddedness in a complementary way and between animacy and accessibility in a competitive manner. Taking all these factors into consideration can better account for Chinese learners' behavior on different types of English relative clauses in terms of performance patterns and processing difficulty.

An examination of the present findings together with the relevant literature in first language acquisition, typology, and psycholinguistics suggests that learner languages, like natural languages, are constrained by universal principles which function, in isolation or in combination, to push or hamper language use, language processing and language acquisition. It is argued that enhancing the dialogue between typology and second language acquisition and studying learner languages from a typological perspective can not only provide viable explanations for certain systematic learner language phenomena and confirm typological claims, but also make significant contributions to furthering and refining our understanding of linguistic facts and second language acquisition.

ABBREVIATIONS

AH	Accessibility Hierarchy
ANI	Animate
ANOVA	Analysis of Variance
CLEC	Chinese Learner English Corpus
COLEC	College Learner English Corpus
DO	Direct Object
EFL	English as a Foreign Language
EMH	English Majors of Higher Grades
ERP	Event-Related Potential
ESL	English as a Second Language
FGD	Filler-Gap Domain
GEN	Genitive
INA	Inanimate
IO	Indirect Object
L1	First Language
L2	Second Language
NML	Non-English Majors of Lower Grades
NMH	Non-English Majors of Higher Grades
NPAH	Noun Phrase Accessibility Hierarchy
NRel	Relative Clause Following Noun
OBL	Oblique
OCOMP	Object of Comparison
OO	Object-Object
OOP	Object-Object of Preposition
OP	Object of Preposition
OS	Object-Subject
OSV	Object-Subject-Verb
OV	Object-Verb
PA	Passive
PDH	Perceptual Difficulty Hypothesis

PFH	Parallel Function Hypothesis
POS	Part of Speech
RC	Relative Clause
RelN	Relative Clause Preceding Noun
SLA	Second Language Acquisition
SO	Subject-Object
SOHH	Subject Object Hierarchy Hypothesis
SOP	Subject-Object of Preposition
SOV	Subject-Object-Verb
SPSS	Statistical Package for the Social Sciences
SS	Subject-Subject
SU	Subject
SVO	Subject-Verb-Object
SWECCL	Spoken and Written English Corpus of Chinese Learners
UG	Universal Grammar
VI	Intransitive Clause
VO	Verb-Object
VT	Transitive Clause
WECCL	Written English Corpus of Chinese Learners

CONTENTS

CHAPTER 1
INTRODUCTION

A grammatical structure that has attracted considerable interest in linguistics over the last decades is the relative clause. Interest in this structure is motivated partly by its unique syntactic properties and its pervasive existence in languages of the world, partly by its usefulness and frequency in our daily communication, and partly by the significant insights that research on it may provide into understanding of language processing and language acquisition. For example, the sentences containing relative clauses have been studied by many psycholinguists to assess the role that working memory plays in language processing and to assess the psychological reality of such relevant terms as *gaps* and *traces* (Traxler et al. 2002; Izumi 2003).

As is known, recursiveness is one of the most distinctive properties of human languages and relative clauses represent a type of recursion, which permits the generation of an infinite number of structures (Gibson et al. 2005). That is probably why this recursive structure is found present in a variety of natural languages and plays a prominent role in them. In order to explain the diversity of relative clauses across the world's languages, the Noun Phrase Accessibility Hierarchy (NPAH, also abbreviated as AH), a markedness hierarchy concerning the accessibility of certain noun phrases to relative clause formation, was generalized in the early 1970s on the basis of cross-linguistic observations (Keenan & Comrie 1977, 1979; Comrie & Keenan 1979). Ever since then, this structure has received great attention in both theoretical and empirical studies, and much relevant research has been conducted from various perspectives. Not surprisingly, the NPAH has also spawned intensive research on the relative clause in the field of first language acquisition (FLA) and second language acquisition (SLA). In many studies this hierarchy has been found to be a viable candidate for explaining some learning problems that learners encounter in acquiring relative clauses, especially English relative clauses (Gass 1979, 1982; Tavakolian 1981; Pavesi 1986; Eckman et al. 1988; Doughty 1991; Wolfe-Quintero 1992; Chen 1999; Izumi 2003; Diessel & Tomasello 2000, 2005; Xiao & Lv 2005; Cai & Wu 2006; among others). Important as the NPAH is, frankly it is still premature to ascribe a universal built-in prepotency to the hierarchy and more evidence is needed to give further support. This research will present data collected from Chinese learners of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) to show whether and

how the Accessibility Hierarchy (AH) functions, independently and together with other factors, to affect the learner language. First of all, the motivation, the significance of the present study, and the organization of this book will be introduced in the following sections.

1.1   Motivation

The structure that was targeted for investigation in this book was English relative clauses produced by Chinese EFL learners. Several reasons motivated this decision. First of all, while years of language acquisition research has accumulated evidence indicating that the AH can be used to predict the difficulty order of different relative clause types in children language acquisition and SLA, there are nonetheless some studies which is often found mixed or even no support for this hypothesis (cf. Ellis 1994,2013). Moreover, some researchers argue that other factors instead of the accessibility, such as the position of the relative clause embedded in a sentence considered in Kuno (1974) and parallel functions of the antecedent in Sheldon (1974), actually account for difficulty of acquiring different types of relative clauses (cf. Ellis 1985,1994,1997; Odlin 1989; Cook 2000; Gass & Selinker 2001). Thus it remains inconclusive to determine whether the AH has explanatory power for the acquisitional phenomena concerning relative clauses. In addition, there is also a general lack of research dealing with different factors at the same time. Most of the studies often focus on just one factor at the expense of others. It is not clear how they function together when multiple factors are taken into account. What is needed now is a more precise understanding of how these factors constrain the use of relative clauses in the second language (L2) learners' production. Therefore, it will be of great interest to explore whether and how these factors work, separately or together, to influence learners' behavior on relative clauses by considering the accessibility and other factors simultaneously.

Second, although the development of English relative clauses has been investigated in several second language contexts, the previous studies usually involve learners of English as a Second Language (ESL) in the strict sense. As to those EFL learners with limited exposure to the target language but much exposure to their native language, few detailed studies have been undertaken to investigate whether the acquisition process in a different learning environment is also sensitive to the constraint of the AH. As is known, the development of learner language may demonstrate very different features depending on the target language being learned in a formal, instructed setting or in an informal, naturalistic setting (Spolsky 1990; Ellis 1994). Consequently, such research involving EFL learners may offer new evidence for confirmation or rejection of the influence of linguistic universals on language acquisition.

Third, despite the fact that previous investigations into the development of relative clauses have involved learners with different native languages, the case of Chinese EFL learners' behavior on English relative clauses is of particular interest

for two reasons. For one thing, including learners with a broader range of the first language (L1) background can better test the universality of theoretical assumptions. Unlike many European languages, the relative clauses in Chinese are typologically different from those in English: the antecedent comes at the end of the relative clause and the relative marker is the invariant *de* which is not unique to relative clauses but occurs in various structures of prenominal modification. For another, Chinese is a unique language in regard to the structure of relative clauses from a typological perspective. In the languages of the world, there is an overall strong skewing in favor of the relative clause following noun (NRel) rather than the relative clause preceding noun (RelN). Dryer (1992) has found that 98% of VO (Verb-Object) languages and 59% of OV (Object-Verb) languages in his sample have NRel. In consequence, the prenominal relative clause, RelN, appears to represent a typologically marked option. It is especially rare in VO languages, with Chinese languages (or Chinese dialects) the only extensively documented cases instantiating this combination, based on many language samples (Hawkins 1990; Matthews & Yip 2003; Dryer 2005). It is generally assumed that learners tend to transfer typologically unmarked forms when the corresponding target language form is marked and resist transferring marked forms especially when the corresponding target language form is unmarked (Eckman 1977; Zobl 1983; Hyltenstam 1984; Ellis 1985, 1994, 1997; Gass & Selinker 1993, 2001; see White 1987, 1989 for an alternative view). As a result, knowledge of the marked Chinese relative clause structure cannot readily be transferred in constructing an English relative clause in the learner language. In this situation, we can expect universality of interlanguage structure to be manifested in the production of English relative clauses by Chinese EFL learners. If systematic patterns attested in their performance are still constrained by the cross-linguistic generalization, then it will undoubtedly provide strong support for the extension of natural language universals to the field of interlanguage.

Moreover, even if the cross-linguistic variation does cause language transfer somehow, the case of Chinese learners of English will remain interesting. According to Hsiao and Gibson (2003), object relative clauses in Chinese with the anomalous combination of SVO (Subject-Verb-Object) basic word order and RelN order were found easier than subject relative clauses in processing, contrary to the AH, which would predict that object relative clauses are psychologically more difficult than subject relative clauses in any language. Therefore, no matter whether they are under the influence of prenominal relative clauses in their unique native language, Chinese EFL learners might behave differently from other learners as they progress along the interlanguage continuum, hence an appropriate case to evaluate the universality of the AH. Obviously, a direct and systematic study of Chinese EFL learners' relative clauses in their production of English seems quite promising, with the potential to provide revealing information and convincing evidence.

Methodologically, most of the previous studies have relied solely on the data collected through elicitation measures, such as picture description task and sentence combination task. Important devices as they are in language acquisition