

An Alternative Systemic
Functional Approach to
the Existential Enhanced
Theme Construction in English

The Cardiff Model

加的夫系统功能语法的英语存在句研究

● 邓仁华 著



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序

过去的二十多年里，我先后对关于语言的不同话题产生了研究的兴趣，也写过不少关于这些话题的研究论文；但是，无论我谈论语言的哪些方面的问题，我的理论指导都是系统功能语言学。我近年来的学术研究多涉及生态语言学，但也一直关注自己喜爱和最擅长的功能句法研究。当仁华告诉我他的著作 *An Alternative Systemic Functional Approach to the Existential Enhanced Theme Construction in English: The Cardiff Model*（《加的夫系统功能语法的英语存在句研究》）即将付梓，想请我做序，我欣然答应。

仁华是2003年9月开始到中山大学读博，但我认识他还要更早一些。2000年初，我应秦秀白教授的邀请，参加华南理工大学外语系的硕士生毕业论文答辩，仁华的论文与系统功能语言学相关，因此对他有了初步的印象。随后不久，秦秀白教授就向我极力推荐他报考我的博士，而且他本人也积极和我联系，表达他对系统功能学的浓厚兴趣，并时常到中山大学外国语学院听相关的讲座。我送给他一本Thompson（1996）的 *Introducing Functional Grammar*，并向他推荐了其他几本参考书。经过一年半的紧张准备，他顺利地通过了2003年的博士生入学考试，成为我的第16位博士生。

因2004年暑假我要到斯坦福大学访学一年，2003年入学的博士生如果等我访学回来后开题就太晚了，因此我想让他们提早半年开题，于是在他们入学之初我就让他们提交各自的博文论文的初步研究计划。仁华读了我的博士论文和“存在过程的主位分析”（1997/1999）一文，还有Halliday教授和Fawcett教授等人有关英语存在句的研究，觉得存在句的研究还可以深入挖掘，因此写了一个简要的研究设想。我觉得他的设想可行，并推荐一些“加的夫（模式的系统功能）语法”的文献给他，鼓励他从“加的夫语法”的视角来研究存在句。之后他在入学第一年结束前提交了较详细的开题报告，再经过两年半的辛苦研究，终于完成了他的博士论文。他在三年半的时间里在职完成博士生学位论文实属不易，2005年他的小孩出生了，在繁重的教学任务之余，他还要兼顾父亲的职责，以致他曾一度因找不到思路而中断论文的写作。不得已，他只好自己一人先搬到新装修的房子里潜心写作，这样才把论文最后两章写了出来。

即将出版的著作凝聚了仁华多年来对英语存在句的思考和探究，细读书稿，不难发现书中的一些特殊之处。如书中指出，英语中至少有“地点型”“属性型”“方向型”和“属有型”四类“存在型强势主位结构”（即“存在（小）句”或“存在结构”）。在主位意义的分析中，这四类结构都有“主位引发语”这一成分，它强化其后的（强势）主位；在经验意义的分析中，这四类结构共有的参与者角色为“载体”，而正是这些结构中的第二个参与者角色——“地点”“属性”“方向”或“被拥有者”——把它们区别开来，因此，它们分别被称为“地点型”“属性型”“方向型”和“属有型”存

在型强势主位结构。

书中还比较了我、Fawcett 教授、Halliday 教授对“存在型强势结构”的主位分析，探明了“主位引发语”是“人际主位”和“语篇主位”的重合，补充了我的“存在型强势结构”的主位分析。该书还扩充了 Fawcett (2003) 教授的“存在型强势主位系统网络”，指出除“简单载体”外，“施事-载体”“地点”“属性”“被拥有者”，甚至“过程及依赖它的参与者角色”（“地点”“方向”或“受事-载体”）都可以充当“存在型强势主位”。此外，书中也拓展了“存在型强势主位结构”的语篇功能，发现其在话语修复、语篇发起、语篇延续和语篇终结方面的 14 种功能。

书中的有些研究成果已刊登在《外国语》《外语教学》《外语学刊》《功能语言学与语篇分析研究》等 CSSCI 或重要学术刊物上。可喜的是，仁华并没有止步于英语存在句的研究，近年来，他将自己的研究领域扩展到了汉语，从“加的夫语法”的视角探索汉语的存在句，并发表了“汉语存在句的系统功能语法研究”（2015）、“‘木牌上写着两个大字’功能句法-语义分析”（2016）、“‘王冕死了父亲’的系统功能语言学阐释”（2018）等高质量的文章，丰富了系统功能语言学的本土化研究。

尽管我近年的研究兴趣主要在生态语言学，但看到我多位过去的博士生关于功能句法的研究，我也很欣慰自己的学术研究得到很好传承，自己十多年前播撒的功能句法和“加的夫语法”研究的种子已茁壮成长，深深扎根于外语界的学术土壤。希望仁华能一如既往、甘于寂寞，在自己选择的学术道路上走得更好、更远。

是为序。

黄国文

教育部“长江学者”特聘教授
华南农业大学教授、博士生导师

2018年10月18日

Preface

This book studies the existential enhanced theme (EET) construction (a. k. a. the existential clause, the existential sentence, or the existential construction) from the Cardiff model of systemic functional grammar (the Cardiff Grammar). The main aim of this research is to examine the construction from the perspective of the Cardiff Grammar and to propose an alternative systemic functional analysis of this construction in terms of its syntactic and semantic configuration.

The present study captures the structural characteristics of the construction by arresting the peculiarities of the elements that comprise the construction. And it shows that the “definite restriction” on the postverbal nominal group in the construction is a misnomer and the “Property Predication Restriction” (PPR) on the element following the nominal group is equally untenable.

It is proposed that there are at least four types of EET constructions in English. What is common in the four types of constructions in the thematic strand of meaning is that there is the “thematic build-up” in the clause-initial position, followed by the (existential enhanced) theme enhanced by it. In the representation of the experiential strand of meaning, the participant role (PR) common in the four constructions is Carrier, and it is the second PR in each, Location, Attribute, Direction or Possessed, that distinguishes one from another. Hence, they are termed as the locational, attributive, directional, and possessive EET construction, respectively. And the syntactic and semantic configuration of the four types of EET constructions has been analyzed in line with the Cardiff Grammar.

The present research also explores the thematic options in the construction. It is revealed that besides Simple Carrier, other participant roles such as Agent-Carrier, Affected-Carrier, Location, Attribute, Possessed, even the Process together with its dependent roles (Location, Direction or Affected-Carrier) can also serve as EET. Therefore, Fawcett’s network of EET has been expanded considerably to accommodate these options.

The study also probes into the semantics of the verbs in the EET construction. In the light of Halliday’s seminal idea of treating lexis as “most delicate grammar” and on the basis of previous classifications of those verbs, it is proposed that the verbs in the construction basically realize the meanings of “existence”, “occurrence”, “locomotion”, and “possession”. Finer distinctions of meanings can be identified in each of these meanings, and still finer shades of meanings may also be recognized in the further differentiated meanings. When no more delicate

meanings can be identified, the most delicate meaning will be realized by a verb. And eventually, the verbs that realize the meanings of “existence”, “occurrence”, “locomotion” and “possession” are organized into a large system network that models these meanings.

The EET construction has also been approached from the discursal perspective and its contribution to discourse development has been examined. It is illustrated that besides the repair function of correction, the EET construction basically serves three broad functions: the initiation function, the continuation function and the concluding function. The EET construction can contribute to the initiation of the discourse by introducing a topic, setting the scene for the upcoming event, and marking the genre of the discourse as well as introducing a topic at the same time. Within the continuation function, nine sub-components have been identified. They are the topic-developing function, the topic-shift signaling function, the instance-highlighting function, the emphatic confirmation function, the listing function, the reminding function, the suggesting function, the countervailing function, and the evaluative function. No sub-components are recognized in the concluding function. These discourse functions are succinctly captured in a taxonomy.

The present research examines the EET construction in a comprehensive and multi-dimensional way, and a much fuller understanding of the construction will be achieved. Thus, it is, to some extent, contributory to the existing literature on the construction and to the construction of the systemic functional grammar at large.

Acknowledgements

This book arises directly from my Ph. D. research, during which a great many of scholars, colleagues and friends kindly offered me their help and support, and I am very pleased to take this opportunity to extend my heartfelt thanks to them.

First and foremost, I am extremely grateful to my supervisor, Professor Huang Guowen, who has ushered me into the wonderful and profound realm of Systemic Functional Linguistics. I have benefited immeasurably from his guidance and instructions. It is his monograph, *Explorations in English Language and Linguistics* (1999), that aroused my interest in the Cardiff model of systemic functional grammar (the Cardiff Grammar). And it is from his articles on functional syntax that I have eventually derived the theme of the present research. I have also profited tremendously from his encouragement to come up with well-grounded alternative views and from the frank and sincere discussions between us, which sparked off some of the ideas in the book. In addition, I am deeply appreciative of his critical comments, valuable suggestions and his thoughtful understanding.

I am equally indebted to Professor Qin Xiubai (South China University of Technology) who has been my academic mentor ever since 1997 and who has been offering me invaluable guidance and staunch and unswerving support ever since. I am particularly thankful for his encouraging comments on my research and his constructive suggestions for the revision of this book.

The debt is also owed to Professor M. A. K. Halliday for the enlightening discussion between us, which has eliminated some misunderstandings about his views on the existential enhanced theme (EET) construction. My deep gratitude is also attributed to Professor Robin Fawcett, who patiently answered my queries on the EET construction and generously provided me with the draft of his forthcoming book on many types of theme in English and other references on the latest developments in the Cardiff Grammar.

I am very grateful to Professor Hu Zhuanglin for answering my questions on the EET construction during his visit to Sun Yat-sen University and to Professor Wen Binli (Guangdong University of Foreign Studies) for admitting me to his course on Universal Grammar, which has made the reading of the references in the generative grammar much easier for me. I would also like to thank Professor Lin Yuyin and Dr. Ding Jianxin for pointing out some errors and inadequacies in the earlier version of this book. And I also value the constructive comments and suggestions from my colleagues, Dr. Wu Gang, Dr. Wu Jianguo, Dr. Li Yingyuan and Dr. Han

Jinlong.

This book owes a great deal to many people who have helped me with the collection of the data and references. In particular, I would like to express my indebtedness to the following. To Dr. Qi Xi for her kind help in data collection. To Dr. Wang Jin for her strongest support in collecting some indispensable books and articles on the Cardiff Grammar and the EET construction. To Dr. Lü Dairong, Dr. Wang Hui, and Dr. Yang Rufu for gathering some references which are conducive to the literature review. And to Dr. Chang Chenguang, Dr. Zeng Lei, Dr. He Hengxing, Dr. Wang Yong, Dr. Zhang Peiwen, and my former colleagues, Dr. Li Xiuming and Dr. Meng Pei, for their valuable help in this regard.

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I also appreciate the kindness and friendship from Dr. Si Xianzhu, Dr. Wang Yong, Dr. Lü Dairong, Dr. Liao Haiqing, Dr. Qi Xi, Dr. Wu Kerong and all the other members of the systemic functional group at Sun Yat-sen University.

I should also thank my wife, Hong Mei, for her “all-out” support, and my parents-in-law for their thoughtfulness and great help and support, which has relieved me considerably from childcare and family chores during my Ph. D. research. Last but not least, my thanks go to my son, Lele, for the profound joy and happiness that he has brought to me ever since his birth.

List of Abbreviations

A: Adjunct	Loc: Location
Af: Affected	M: Main Verb
Ag: Agent	MEx: Main Verb extension
AGR: agreement	ngp: nominal group
AP: adjective phrase	NP: nominal phrase
At: Attribute	O: Operator
BNC: British National Corpus	<u>O</u> : object
c: completive	OP: open proposition
C: Complement	p: preposition
Ca: Carrier	P: predicator
CG: Cardiff Grammar	pgp: prepositional group
Cl: clause	Pos: Possessed
CP: Complementizer Phrase	PP: prepositional phrase
dd: deictic determiner	Pr: process
Dir: Direction	PR: participant role
EET: existential enhanced theme	qlgp: the quality group
ETH: enhanced theme	qtgp: the quantity group
'FG': (Dik's) 'Functional Grammar'	S: Subject
GF: grammatical function	S & C: Scale and Category
GG: generative grammar	SFG: systemic functional grammar
h: head	SG: Sydney Grammar
I: Infinitive Element	TG: transformational generative grammar
LF: logic form	V: verb
ILL: illocutionary operator	VP: verb phrase
INFL: inflection	X: Auxiliary Verb
IP: Inflectional Phrase	XEx: Auxiliary Extension

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