

THE CAMBRIDGE
HISTORY OF THE
ENGLISH LANGUAGE

VOLUME I *The Beginnings to 1066*

EDITED BY

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出版说明

乔姆斯基的转换生成语法强调人类语言的普遍性,试图从语法原则与参数的高度揭开人类语言的普遍结构,更进一步揭示人类认知的奥秘。人类历史上似乎从未有哪一门学科如此富于创造性和挑战性,也很少有一种科学能够如此深刻地对相关学科产生如此广泛而深远的影响。这一理论在不断拓展的语料视野面前,在不断回应新思想方法的挑战过程中,不断地调整自己的思路和方法,跋涉了半个世纪,其所取得的成就不仅使语言学家激动和自豪,也令当代哲学、心理学、信息学、计算机科学、人工智能等众多领域的学者所瞩目。

乔姆斯基自称其理论远绍十七世纪法国普遍唯理语法。1898年,马建忠在他的《马氏文通》后序中这样说:“盖所见为不同者,惟此已形已声之字,皆人为之也。而亘古今,塞宇宙,其种之或黄或白,或紫或黑之钩是人也,天皆赋之以此心之所以能意,此意之所以能达之理。则常探讨画革旁行诸国语言之源流,若希腊、若拉丁之文词而属比之,见其字别种,而句司字,所以声其心而形其意者,皆有一定不易之律;而因以律吾经籍子史诸书,其大纲盖无不同。于是因所同以同夫所不同者,是则此编之所以成也。”马氏是留法的,普遍唯理语法对他的影响同样是深刻的。

不过,在中国,普遍主义的思想也就此昙花一现,很快就湮没在强调汉语特点的思路中。半个多世纪之后,转换生成语法逐渐为中国学者所知,可是很多人都认为它不适合汉语语法研究,只有在国外的学者在这方面做了些工作,取得了不少成绩。这种研究尽管还存在许许多多的问题,但至少可以说明,汉语研究同样可以走普遍语法的道路。

马氏的模仿是显然的。然而我们今天的研究就能肯定不是模仿了么?朱德熙先生曾经说:“长期以来印欧语语法观念给汉语研究带来的消极影响……主要表现在用印欧语的眼光来看待汉语,把印欧语所有而汉语所无的东西强加给汉语。”“我们现在在这里批评某些传统观念,很可能我们自己也正在不知不觉之中受这些传统观念的摆布。

这当然只能等将来由别人来纠正了,正所谓后之视今,亦犹今之视昔。”其言盖有深意焉。然而问题其实并不在于是否模仿,而在于模仿来的方法、视角是不是可以得出符合汉语事实的结论。反对模仿蕴涵着一个前提:即汉语与印欧语的结构没有相同之处。但是今天的我们对汉语的结构究竟了解了多少呢?

任何语言都有自己的特点,这一点毋庸置疑。但是不了解语言的普遍性,也就谈不上特点,也就无所谓走自己的道路。而且,在某一水平面上成为特点的规律,在更高或更深层的水平上也许就不成其为特点,而仅仅是普遍性的一种特殊表现而已。

当代社会文化领域中多元化是主流,当代语言学理论也趋于多元。在西方,形式语言学不大可能再如以往如此这般地波澜壮阔,而是进入一个相对平静的稳定发展的时期,语言的功能方面的研究已经占据一席之地。在未来的一段时期内,语言学将是一个酝酿期,为下一个重大突破作准备。而在中国,语言学在长期的“借鉴”之后,也在思考如何能够从汉语出发,取得重大突破,反哺世界学林。语言学发展到今天,又重新面临着路怎样走这一根本问题。

不管下一步怎么走,充分了解西方学者的成绩,借鉴他们的思路和方法无疑是必不可少的。特别是对于取得了如此重大成就的当代西方语言学,如果不能有正确的了解,无异于闭门造车,要想出门合辙,不亦难乎?

北大出版社多年来坚持学术为本的出版方针,我们愿意为语言学在新世纪的发展尽一分绵薄之力。为了推动我国语言学事业的发展,在总编张文定先生的主持下,我们将原版引进一批高质量的语言学专著和教材,命之曰“西方语言学丛书”,以飨学林。引进的作品将包括语音学、韵律学、句法学、语义学、语言史、词源学、方言学等各个领域;既包括宏观的理论研究,也包括重要问题的个案研究;既包括形式语言学的方法,也包括认知、功能等视角。但不管是哪一种,都是经过精挑细选,庶几开卷有益。

我们期待着中国语言学的新突破!

北京大学出版社

序

由北京大学出版社引进的《剑桥英语史》(The Cambridge History of the English Language)问世了,这在出版界和英语界具有非常重要的意义。

改革开放以来,我国外语专业出版界在外语图书引进上经历了一个不断与国际接轨的过程。最初的引进偏重于初中级英语教材和辞书,近两年发展到引进供英语专业本科生和研究生使用的语言学 and 文学教材。本书的出版特色表现在它的同步性,即国际上著名的剑桥大学出版社于 2001 年 7 月出版本书的最新版本以前,已将该书的大陆发行权授于北京大学出版社,保证了两个版本在同一年出版。这一举措开创了国内出版界的先例。

《剑桥英语史》首版发行于 1992 年 8 月 13 日。它是以多卷本形式出现的英语史教材。其篇幅和权威性超过了 John Pyles (1990——1982)的传统教材,从语言学一般关注的中心内容扩展至包括人名和地名等专门性课题。第一卷从形成期延续到诺曼的入侵。第二卷的内容为中世纪英语,时间从 1066 至印刷术引进的 1476 年。第三卷覆盖了从 1476 年至美国发表独立宣言的 1776 年。第四卷论述了 1776 至 1997 年的现代英语。在此期间以英语的分化为明显特征。第五卷集中讨论英国英语和海外英语的起源和发展。第六卷是北美英语的专论。可见,本书各卷对早期英语的处理以历时为主,而较近代的时期则以地理分布为主,从而反映了英语近 300 年在世界各地的扩展,这反映了人们对英语认识的变化。过去学者只承认英国英语,现在终于让美国英语、加拿大英语、澳大利亚英语、新西兰英语、南非英语等在英语大家庭中都占有一席之地。为此,当本书第 1 和第 2 册出版后,英国著名语言学家 Randolph Quirk 曾在《伦敦书评》上评论道:这是“至今出版过的最巨型的、规模最大的英语史,从已经出版的两卷的质量判断,其成就将为所有关注的人士感到无比骄傲。”

最后,我认为本书的出版回答了困扰外语界多年的一个问题。早

在八十年代中,外语界兴起一种论点:说什么外语(包括英语)不是一个专业,只是一个工具。我在多种场合阐述我自己的观点:外语对非外语专业的学生来说是工具,我毫无异议,但是外语对外语专业的学生来说,我始终坚持它既是工具,又是专业。因为国务院专业目录上既设各种外语专业,在实践中又要否定它是专业,这是不合逻辑的。从我们实际教学情况看,为外语专业学生所开设的专业课程,远远超过听说读写技能的训练,而外语专业毕业的学生在绝大多数情况下,能承担大学外语的学习者所难以完成的任务。我本人甚至与英国某文化组织有过争论。我曾经要求对方为北京大学英语系的研究生开设一部分诸如语言学、语音学、句法学、语用学等语言学课程和英国文学史、美国文学史、文学批评等文学课程,对方认为中国英语专业的学生只要学会听说读写技能即可。我指出,中国大学在文革中曾派遣一些学生去英国进修,在语音实验室学了两年,回校后只能开开听说课,无法提高教学质量;我还指出,八十年代的中国留学生在英国的一些大学学习时实际上学了一些专业课程,该如何解释?中国学生如果不学习专业课程,又如何达到剑桥和牛津的水平?这个文化组织的官员竟然说,这些课程完全可以从英国请专家来中国开设。如果把教育看做一个产业的话,这岂不是中方只要买它的产品,而工作母机则控制在对方手中吗?话不投机半句多。多年来,我们与这个文化组织接触较少,也许我们丢失了一些让师生去英国进修的机会,但北京大学在教学质量和学术研究上始终保留自己的特色,并不因此逊色。如今,《剑桥英语史》的出版,更加深了我的认识。我们培养的学生,不能仅仅满足于四个技能训练的层次,还应培养通晓本专业知识,在一些专业问题上具有科研能力和创新性思维的人才。只有这样,我们的一些大学才能跻身于世界名校之列。同理,我们的出版机构应引进高中低不同档次的书籍,不仅是满足不同水平读者的需要,更要着眼于使中国的文化和教育水平进入国际先进行列。

胡壮麟

2001年8月

Facsimile page from the Exeter Book of Anglo-Saxon poetry
(Exeter D. & C. MS 3501, s. x): *The Wanderer*, 76v, lines 1–33.
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Map of Anglo-Saxon England. Drawn by Dr David Hill of the Department of Extra-Mural Studies at Manchester University
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GENERAL EDITOR'S PREFACE

Although it is a topic of continuing debate, there can be little doubt that English is the most widely-spoken language in the world, with significant numbers of native speakers in almost every major region – only South America falling largely outside the net. In such a situation an understanding of the nature of English can be claimed unambiguously to be of world-wide importance.

Growing consciousness of such a role for English is one of the motivations behind this History. There are other motivations too. Specialist students have many major and detailed works of scholarship to which they can refer, for example Bruce Mitchell's *Old English Syntax*, or, from an earlier age, Karl Luick's *Historische Grammatik der englischen Sprache*. Similarly, those who come new to the subject have both one-volume histories such as Barbara Strang's *History of English* and introductory textbooks to a single period, for example Bruce Mitchell and Fred Robinson's *A Guide to Old English*. But what is lacking is the intermediate work which can provide a solid discussion of the full range of the history of English both to the anglicist who does not specialise in the particular area to hand and to the general linguist who has no specialised knowledge of the history of English. This work attempts to remedy that lack. We hope that it will be of use to others too, whether they are interested in the history of English for its own sake, or for some specific purpose such as local history or the effects of colonisation.

Under the influence of the Swiss linguist, Ferdinand de Saussure, there has been, during this century, a persistent tendency to view the study of language as having two discrete parts: (i) synchronic, where a language is studied from the point of view of one moment in time; (ii) diachronic, where a language is studied from a historical perspective. It might therefore be supposed that this present work is purely diachronic.

But this is not so. One crucial principle which guides The Cambridge History of the English Language is that synchrony and diachrony are intertwined, and that a satisfactory understanding of English (or any other language) cannot be achieved on the basis of one of these alone.

Consider, for example, the (synchronic) fact that English, when compared with other languages, has some rather infrequent or unusual characteristics. Thus, in the area of vocabulary, English has an exceptionally high number of words borrowed from other languages (French, the Scandinavian languages, American Indian languages, Italian, the languages of northern India and so on); in syntax a common construction is the use of *do* in forming questions (e.g. *Do you like cheese?*), a type of construction not often found in other languages; in morphology English has relatively few inflexions, at least compared with the majority of other European languages; in phonology the number of diphthongs as against the number of vowels in English is notably high. In other words, synchronically, English can be seen to be in some respects rather unusual. But in order to understand such facts we need to look at the history of the language; it is often only there that an explanation can be found. And that is what this work attempts to do.

This raises another issue. A quasi-Darwinian approach to English might attempt to account for its widespread use by claiming that somehow English is more suited, better adapted, to use as an international language than others. But that is nonsense. English is no more fit than, say, Spanish or Chinese. The reasons for the spread of English are political, cultural and economic rather than linguistic. So too are the reasons for such linguistic elements within English as the high number of borrowed words. This History, therefore, is based as much upon political, cultural and economic factors as linguistic ones, and it will be noted that the major historical divisions between volumes are based upon the former type of events (the Norman Conquest, the spread of printing, the declaration of independence by the U.S.A., rather than the latter type.

As a rough generalisation, one can say that up to about the seventeenth century the development of English tended to be centripetal, whereas since then the development has tended to be centrifugal. The settlement by the Anglo-Saxons resulted in a spread of dialect variation over the country, but by the tenth century a variety of forces were combining to promote the emergence of a standard form of the language. Such an evolution was disrupted by the Norman

Conquest, but with the development of printing together with other more centralising tendencies, the emergence of a standard form became once more, from the fifteenth century on, a major characteristic of the language. But processes of emigration and colonisation then gave rise to new regional varieties overseas, many of which have now achieved a high degree of linguistic independence, and some of which, especially American English, may even have a dominating influence on British English. The structure of this work is designed to reflect these different types of development. Whilst the first four volumes offer a reasonably straightforward chronological account, the later volumes are geographically based. This arrangement, we hope, allows scope for the proper treatment of diverse types of evolution and development. Even within the chronologically oriented volumes there are variations of structure, which are designed to reflect the changing relative importance of various linguistic features. Although all the chronological volumes have substantial chapters devoted to the central topics of semantics and vocabulary, syntax, and phonology and morphology, for other topics the space allotted in a particular volume is one which is appropriate to the importance of that topic during the relevant period, rather than some pre-defined calculation of relative importance. And within the geographically based volumes all these topics are potentially included within each geographical section, even if sometimes in a less formal way. Such a flexible and changing structure seems essential for any full treatment of the history of English.

One question that came up as this project began was the extent to which it might be possible or desirable to work within a single theoretical linguistic framework. It could well be argued that only a consensus within the linguistic community about preferred linguistic theories would enable a work such as this to be written. Certainly, it was immediately obvious when work for this History began, that it would be impossible to lay down a 'party line' on linguistic theory, and indeed, that such an approach would be undesirably restrictive. The solution reached was, I believe, more fruitful. Contributors have been chosen purely on the grounds of expertise and knowledge, and have been encouraged to write their contributions in the way they see most fitting, whilst at the same time taking full account of developments in linguistic theory. This has, of course, led to problems, notably with contrasting views of the same topic (and also because of the need to distinguish the ephemeral flight of theoretical fancy from genuine new insights into linguistic theory), but even in a work which is concerned to provide a

unified approach (so that, for example, in most cases every contributor to a volume has read all the other contributions to that volume), such contrasts, and even contradictions, are stimulating and fruitful. Whilst this work aims to be authoritative, it is not prescriptive, and the final goal must be to stimulate interest in a subject in which much work remains to be done, both theoretically and empirically.

The task of editing this History has been, and still remains, a long and complex one. As General Editor I owe a great debt to many friends and colleagues who have devoted much time and thought to how best this work might be approached and completed. Firstly, I should thank my fellow-editors: John Algeo, Norman Blake, Bob Burchfield, Roger Lass and Suzanne Romaine. They have been concerned as much with the History as a whole as with their individual volumes. Secondly, there are those fellow linguists, some contributors, some not, who have so generously given of their time and made many valuable suggestions: John Anderson, Cecily Clark, Frans van Coetsem, Fran Colman, David Denison, Ed Finegan, Olga Fischer, Jacek Fisiak, Malcolm Godden, Angus McIntosh, Lesley Milroy, Donka Minkova, Matti Rissanen, Michael Samuels, Bob Stockwell, Tom Toon, Elizabeth Traugott, Peter Trudgill, Nigel Vincent, Anthony Warner, Simone Wyss. One occasion stands out especially: the organisers of the Fourth International Conference on English Historical Linguistics, held at Amsterdam in 1985, kindly allowed us to hold a seminar on the project as it was just beginning. For their generosity, which allowed us to hear a great many views and exchange opinions with colleagues one rarely meets face-to-face, I must thank Roger Eaton, Olga Fischer, Willem Koopman and Frederike van der Leek.

With a work so complex as this, an editor is faced with a wide variety of problems and difficulties. It has been, therefore, a continual comfort and solace to know that Penny Carter of Cambridge University Press has always been there to provide advice and solutions on every occasion. Without her knowledge and experience, encouragement and good humour, this work would have been both poorer and later. After the work for Volume I was virtually complete, Marion Smith took over as publishing editor, and I am grateful to her too, not merely for ensuring such a smooth change-over, but for her bravery when faced with the mountain of paper from which this series has emerged.

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