Contrastive Analysis of Discourse Connective Devices between English and Chinese

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Abstract

This paper makes a contrastive analysis of English and Chinese connective devices from the perspective of discourse in order to reveal the differences and explore the causes. The contrastive analysis shows that the main difference between English and Chinese discourse connection is that English has more explicit connection, while Chinese has more implicit connection. This difference reflects the different cognitive styles of Chinese and Western nations, that is, English emphasizes hypotaxis while Chinese emphasizes parataxis; The differences in cognition reflect the characteristics of Chinese and western national thinking, which is rational or perceptual; The differences in thinking are ultimately due to the differences between Chinese and Western cultures and the breeding environment.

Keywords

Connection means; Comparison between English and Chinese; Hypotaxis and parataxis.

1. Introduction

Connection is an important means of cohesion in a text, which not only serves as a semantic marker, but also imposes pragmatic constraints on the construction and understanding of a text. In nature, join means have the symbol of statement relation. Functionally, connective devices not only serve as semantic markers, but also exert pragmatic constraints on discourse construction and comprehension. In the form of structure, conjunctions include conjunctions, phrases and clauses.

Contrastive analysis is also an important means of language research. Zhao Yuanren[1], a famous linguist, said, "The so-called linguistic theory is actually a scientific conclusion drawn from the comprehensive comparative analysis and research of languages of all nationalities in the world." The purpose of language contrastive study is to reveal similarities and differences (especially differences) and give reasonable explanations.

Therefore, from the perspective of discourse, this paper makes a comparative analysis of English and Chinese connective devices to reveal the differences in their use, and explains the differences from multiple aspects of cognition, thinking and culture, focusing on the relationship between hypotaxis and parataxis[2],and exploring the cultural origins of hypotaxis and parataxis.

Previously, many scholars have made more in-depth research on the linking method.

Halliday and Hason pointed out that cohesive devices in English mainly fall into five categories[3],, namely reference, substitution, ellipsis, conjunction and lexical cohesion. The connection is not a means of extending the supreme context, but expresses some meaning in the discourse and presupposes the existence of other elements. Wang Li defined what is a "connective word" : "Some function words live in the middle of words or sentences to serve as a connective task -- that is, a connective word." Zhao Yuanren (1979: 351) also mentions the cross-sentence use of certain connective words   points out that "speakers can use a conjunction 'but' in the head before ending a sentence or making a comment on what someone

else is saying . Such a word depends on something other than the sentence itself." Xing Fu (2002) focused his research on complex sentences. Liao Qiuzhong (1986) made a comprehensive analysis of the means of intersentence and interparagraph connection in modern Chinese written discourse according to the two standards of function and position[4],.

1.1. Comparative Analysis of English and Chinese Linking Devices

1.1.1. Similarity

Linking devices play the same role in discourse, that is, linking clauses and main clauses or words with words, reflecting all kinds of logical relations between clauses and main clauses or words, so that they become a unified whole and become a discourse.In both English and Chinese, connectedness is an indispensable component of cohesion[5],.Such as:

Before my graduation from Columbia, the family met with severe financial reverses and I felt it my duty to leave college and take a job. Thus was I launched Upon a business career-- which I always think of as the Wasted years. (Qiao Ping, 2003)

The connective devices in English and Chinese belong to similar categories, namely, supplementary relation, transitional relation, causality relation and temporal relation[6],.Such as:

When he comes, I will go.

As he has come, I must go now.

1.1.2. Difference

The main difference between English and Chinese textual connections is that English has many explicit connections, while Chinese has many implicit connections, and most of them are zero-type connections, which are mainly reflected in constricted sentences and four-character idioms.

The connective devices and forms in English sentences are not only numerous and varied, but also used very frequently.

(1) Relation and conjunction.

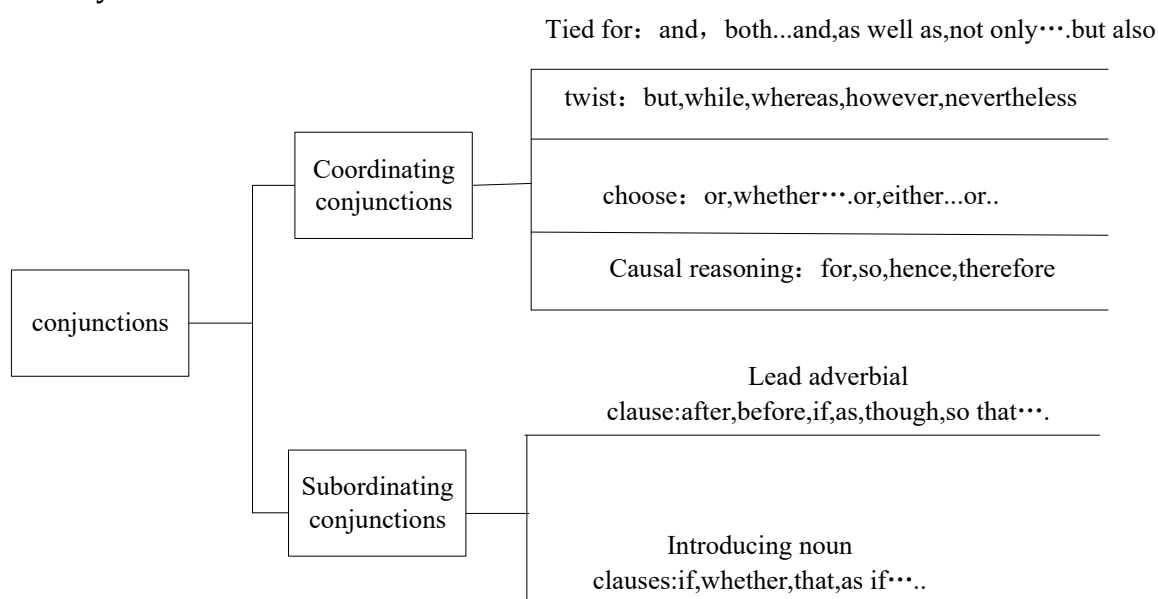Tree graphs of relation words and conjunction words are shown in Figure 1 and Figure 2 respectively.

Figure 1. Connectives

Relative pronouns:That,which,who,whom,whose

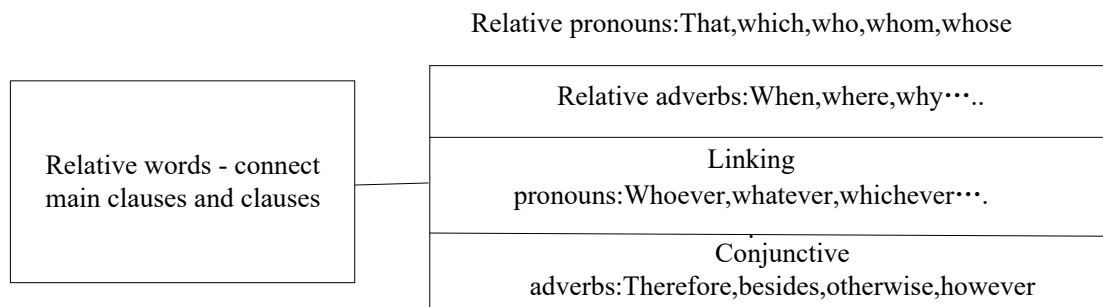|	Relative adverbs:When,where,why⋯..
Relative words - connect main clauses and clauses	Linking pronouns:Whoever,whatever,whichever⋯.
	Conjunctive adverbs:Therefore,besides,otherwise,however

Figure 2. Relative words - connecting the main clause and clause

There are many kinds and quantities of relations and connectives in English.English sentences are almost inseparable from them, while Chinese sentences rarely use or even do not use them, such as:

In Africa I met a boy, who was crying as if his heart would break and said, When I spoke to him, that he was hungry because he had no food for two days.(Chen Anding, 1998).
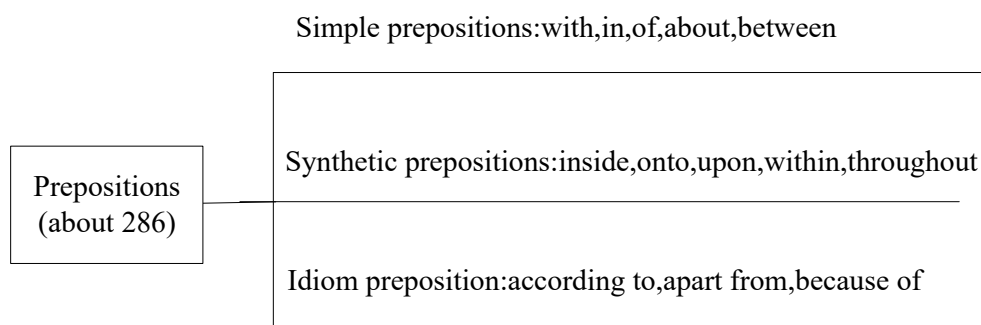
(2) Prepositions

Simple prepositions:with,in,of,about,between

	Synthetic prepositions:inside,onto,upon,within,throughout
Prepositions (about 286)	
	Idiom preposition:according to,apart from,because of

Figure 3. Prepositions

The tree of prepositions is shown in Figure 3.Preposition is one of the most active parts of speech in English, and is an important means of linking words, phrases or clauses.R. Ander (1978:51-52) points out that "Prepositions appear constantly in English speech and writing."

Going downstairs, I bought some big oranges and put them in the handbag, then I arrived at the gate of the little house along the uneven slabstone road.

(3) Other means of connection

Other connection methods are listed in Table 1.

Table 1. Other connection methods

	These changes	
Morphologic form	Morphological changes of verbs, nouns, pronouns, adjectives and adverbs	Such as gender, number, case, tense, aspect, voice, mood, comparative, person and so on
	And maintain a consistent relationship	
Widespread use of pronouns	In order to maintain a responsive relationship	
Use it and there as substitutes	Act as a link	
, etc.		

English often makes comprehensive use of the above relative words, conjunctions, prepositions and other connecting means to connect various components, construct long sentences and express certain grammatical relations and logical connections.Such as:

The schoolmaster held a meeting, Demanding that all the teachers should guide their students to follow the school's disciplines.

2. Reasons for differences in the use of English and Chinese Connective Means

2.1. Cognitive Factors in English and Chinese

English is a form-based language, emphasizing on form and harmony, paying attention to complete structure, standard form and showing meaning by form.In addition, modern English is a comprehensive -- analysis language, which uses abundant morphological changes, function words and relatively fixed word order to express grammatical relations, so that English sentences show the characteristics of closed at the beginning of the sentence and open at the end of the sentence. Sentences can be continuously extended to the end of the sentence, forming the end weight of the sentence.Therefore, in order to ensure that the sentences with alternating characters and short and long length will not be scattered, English needs a lot of means to gather sentences, that is, various connective means, such as morphological signs and connective words to make the relationship between various components clear, it, there and other fillers to make the sentence structure complete.

Chinese is a semantic language, focusing on parataxis, logical order, functional meaning, and the unity of form with god. It emphasizes artistic conception, parataxis and meaning, and is light on the construction and analysis of sentence structure. As long as the meaning can be expressed, smooth and fluent, words can be simplified.Chinese is a typical analysis language. Due to the lack of morphological changes, the expression of grammatical relations has to rely on word order and function words, or even context or language sense.Therefore, Chinese often does not use connective means or less, and rarely uses connective words that represent logic-grammatical relations.

2.2. Thinking Factors in English and Chinese

Lian suk-neng pointed out, "Thinking is the deep mechanism of language generation and development...Differences in thinking patterns are also an important reason for language differences." "Although the traditional Chinese way of thinking contains rationalist elements, it pays more attention to intuition, experience and comprehension, so it is comprehensivism in nature...The way of thinking in western philosophy is rationalist in nature."

Western nations are deeply influenced by rationalism, forming the expression mode of "abstract logic" rational thinking.It is mainly manifested in highlighting the essence and laws of things when we understand the world, forming a linear thinking mode of exploring the origin of things, that is, the thinking paradigm of "logic first".The development of western logical thinking leads to axiomatization, formalization and symbolization of thinking.In order to make language expression appear logical and rational, westerners pay special attention to the rigor of sentence form, so English sentences often use various linking means to ensure the integrity of sentence structure.

The thinking of The Han nationality is a kind of understanding thinking, one of its characteristics is the emphasis on intuition, that is, through the perception of the overall fuzzy and direct grasp of the inner nature and law of the object of cognition.Language expression and analysis pay more attention to meaning than to form, which is manifested in Chinese as "paying more attention to psychology and slightly to form" (Li Jinxi), "unique structure, flexible and changeable, much hidden, focusing on ideas" (Gong Qianyan).Therefore, Chinese words or

clauses are not connected or less by language form means, sentences are not confined to formal structure, grammar is implicit, pay attention to psychological meaning, directly express reality and thinking, grammatical meaning and logical connection are often hidden between the lines.

2.3. Cultural Factors in English and Chinese

The different thinking modes of Chinese and Western nations can be explained in culture.

From the historical point of view: the good Marine environment and natural conditions of ancient Greece provided space for the breeding and development of western rationalism.The cradle of western culture and openness in the coastal area near the Greek peninsula, Marine geographic environment and the development of handicraft industry, business, shipping, cause of astronomy, meteorology, the philosopher of ancient Greece geometry, mathematics, physics and so on knowledge of interest, gradually formed the traditional pay attention to explore the mysteries of the natural science, namely, pay attention to scientific, rational, value analysis, empirical, Therefore, they tend to use logical reasoning to understand the essence and law of things in argumentation and deduction.China is a semi-closed continental geographical environment.China's small-scale peasant economy made the ancestors realize that harvest cannot be separated from good weather and survival from the gift of nature, and they realized the sense of Yin and Yang from the phenomena of the interaction of heaven and earth and the alternation of the sun and the moon, and the consciousness of "all things are one" and "heaven and man are one".In the Spring and Autumn period, Confucianism and Taoism developed the thinking mode of organic whole from different angles.Confucianism humanizes nature, Taoism naturalizes human nature, and both regard human and nature as a whole connected by one spirit and one principle.Through the cosmology of the Han and The Han dynasties, the metaphysics of the Wei and Jin Dynasties, the ontology of Buddhism, and the Neo-confucianism system of the Song and Ming dynasties, the organic integrity has become a major feature of the traditional Chinese way of thinking.

From the perspective of the origin of characters: Chinese and Western languages are closely related to the way of thinking, which is reflected in language and affects the way of thinking.Chinese characters originated from pictographs and developed directly from primitive pictures. Their meanings are similar to objects and are intuitive.Many Chinese characters simulate natural phenomena and objective things (such as mountains, concave and convex), and are named by "observing objects and taking images", "setting images to achieve meaning", "setting images and metaphors", and "taking images and comparing types". Concrete images are used to make concepts vivid and easy to associate.This reflects the image thinking of Han nationality, that is, attaching importance to image, association and analogy.The English alphabet developed from the alphabetic alphabet.The letter font and the pronunciation of the word consistent, but there is no similar to the relationship between and referring to things, but artificial regulation of signal, signal by rational rules establish symbol, depends on the person's subjective analysis, summary and abstract ability, thus result in speech signal and the logical, easy to rise to the abstract thinking.(Lian Shu-neng, 2009)

It can be seen that Chinese is more suitable for image thinking, that is, parataxis is the main and parataxis is the auxiliary, while English is more suitable for abstract thinking, that is, parataxis is the main and parataxis is the auxiliary.

3. Conclusion

The main difference between English and Chinese is that English has many explicit connections while Chinese has many implicit connections.It is found that the reason lies in the differences in cognitive styles between China and the West, that is, English emphasizes hypotaxis while Chinese emphasizes parataxis. The difference in cognition reflects the difference in the way of

thinking between Chinese and Western nations. The difference in thinking is ultimately attributed to the difference between Chinese and Western culture and breeding environment.In other words, under the influence of rationalism from Marine culture, western nations have formed rational thinking that attaches importance to essence, analysis and logic, thus creating the cognitive way that English attaches importance to form to show meaning, and finally bringing about the characteristics of various connective means commonly used in English sentences, namely explicit connection. On the contrary, influenced by the thought of the unity of man and nature in the farming culture, the Han people have formed the understanding thinking that attaches importance to intuition, wholeness and concretion, thus creating the cognitive way of ideality and service, which finally brings about the feature of invisible connection in Chinese sentences with few or no correlative words.

Of course, There are differences and commonalities between English and Chinese, but the difference lies in that they are the products of two completely different ways of thinking under the historical development of the East and the West. Each has its own characteristics and wisdom, and there is no difference between superior and inferior on the whole. Through the comparative analysis of English and Chinese languages, we should have a comprehensive and profound understanding of our own language and culture, and accurately understand our mother tongue to enhance cultural confidence.

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