Functional Divergences of Left Dislocation Construction in English and Chinese

WANG Ji-nan

Shanghai International Studies University, Shanghai, China

This paper attempts to explore the functional divergence of LD (Left Dislocation) in English and Chinese. Through detailed analyzing, we find that LD in both languages shares only one function, the function of simplifying, but it is different in other functions and there are eight more functions in Chinese than in English. The interface study of LD in the two languages leads to the implications: The connections between syntactic form and discourse function are language-specific and arbitrary, and LD serves a wide variety of discourse functions and is motivated by a range of discourse circumstances.

Keywords: left dislocation (LD), discourse function, syntactic discouse interface

Introduction

LD is a construction, where a non-vocative NP (Noun Phrase) in initial position is set off from a following sentence that contains one or more pronouns co-referential with the initial NP. Since Ross's 1967 dissertation constraints on variables in syntax, this construction has been universally known as "left dislocation" (pp. 422-451). Ross's (1967) examples include:

(1) The man my father works with in Bos Ross's ton, he's going to tell the police that the traffic expert has set that traffic light on the corner of Murk Street far too low.

(2) My father, he's Armenian, and my mother, she's Greek.

(3) My wife, somebody stole her handbag last night. (pp. 422-451)

When the pronoun is sentence-initial, it may be thought that it is in apposition with the left-dislocated NP. But this generally makes neither semantic nor prosodic sense. If the structure were "His friend, she loves philosophical ideas", the phrasing would be different and quite a bit discomforting. And it is difficult to see why one would want to add the pronoun, which would add none of the parallel information that appositives often do.

And the example "My wife, somebody stole her handbag last night" illustrates the fact that the pronoun needs not be adjacent to the left-dislocated noun at all though examples with the pronoun in subject position are by far the commonest in reality.

Constructions of this general category are common across the languages of the world, and in so-called

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WANG Ji-nan, lecturer, Ph.D., MOE Training Center for Overseas Study, Shanghai International Studies University, Shanghai, China.

topic-prominent languages, they are actually the norm. The LD structure is often said to divide the sentence into topic and comment, or some similar sort of articulation of information. This functions when the initial item is a full NP, referenced in the following sentence by a pronoun or pronouns, but it does not work the other way around. There is quite a lot more to be said about the pragmatics of LD.

Functions of LD in English

In linguistic studies, sometimes grammar and discourse are incompatible with each other in the aspect of source data. In any event, source data conflicts appear to represent a significant problem for accounts of linguistic phenomena on the sentential level. They suggest that the potential might always exist for live discourse to undermine conclusions arrived at solely on the basis of local structures and meanings, and that intuitions gleamed from hypostatized sentences, however we may wish to explain them, are not necessarily relevant to discourse (Hopper, 1997, p. 245).

Despite differences of emphasis and detail, the various studies share a common point: They almost all regard the function of LD as basically introductory; the construction is claimed to either introduce or reintroduce a referent into the discourse that is judged not to be in the foreground of the listener's consciousness.

First of all, it is a necessity for a closer look at the discourse functions investigated by Geluykens (1992), whose work is frequently referred to in LD literature. He claimed that the main function of LD in conversational discourse is the introduction of irrecoverable, topical referents, by way of an interactional, three-stage collaborative process; this function accounts for 76.9% (90 out of 117 LDs) of his conversational database. The other major function of LD in conversation is the expression of contrast; this accounts for a further 13.7% of the database. Other functions of LD in conversations, such as its use to express conditional relationships, are rather idiosyncratic and are ignored in his work (Geluykens, 1992, p. 137). As for the function of referent-introduction, it implies that LD is an interactional strategy used to introduce referents into the conversation. The way referents are introduced in LD is part of a more general, conversation-specific way of establishing reference. It has been claimed that the establishing of reference in conversation—unlike in literary texts—is a collaborative process, whereby participants have to "mutually accept" a referent before it can be established in the discourse and before the discourse can proceed (Clark & Wilkes-Gibbs, 1986). Mention of a referent by one participant is thus not sufficient for establishing reference; the other participants have to cooperate in a collaborative process.

Prince's (1984; 1985) studies of LD are the most detailed and are backed by strong empirical evidence. She argued that LDs are related with three distinct discourse functions and raised the question whether this should be regarded as an instance of a true constructional homonymy.

The discourse functions of LD, accordingly, are: (1) marking an entity (represented by the initial NP) as already evoked in the discourse or else in a set relation to an evoked entity; (2) simplifying the processing of discourse-new entities by removing them from syntactic positions which are disfavored for discourse-new entities (e.g., subjects and possessives) and creating a separate processing unit for them (i.e., NP); and (3) amnestying an island violation, where this function seems therapeutic in that the resulting structure appears to constitute an instance of a TOP with a resumptive pronoun occurring in structural configurations in which Tops without the pronoun would be ruled out.

The attributes of the first two functions apparently point to the organizational nature of LDs in discourse;

LDs set the continuation of the discourse in a particular direction, making either a new or an already evoked discourse referent which is not currently salient into a potential topic. Discourse studies indeed reveal that in the relevant discourse segments following the LD construction the entity (re)introduced by LD tends to function as either the subject or the topic, thus corroborating the generalizations concerning the discourse function of LD (Ziv, 1994, pp. 633-634).

The current literature generally supports the assumption that LD is typically understood as a conversational syntactic construction that has a particular discourse function (or more often a set of discourse functions). The main function, frequently mentioned as foremost among these, is the introduction of referents that are in some way new to the discourse. Prince's (1997; 1998) account of LD is situated in a wider claim that discourse function cannot simply be "read off" syntactic form. Instead, this account asserts that the relation between the two is entirely arbitrary and language-specific. In support of this view, Prince examined a range of LD data in order to refute the notion that LD in English has a single "contrasting" or "topic-marking" function. Prince clearly identifies three form-function correlations, as described below.

Simplifying

The first type of LD identified by Prince is called "Simplifying LD". It is "Simplifying" LDs that Halliday (1967) had in mind when he said that they serve to mark a new information unit, which Geluykens (1992) was considering when he said that they introduce a new referent, and that Keenan (1977) was discussing when she said they are characteristic of spontaneous, unplanned, oral discourse.

Consider the token in (4).

> (4) We went to Florida last summer, and we went to Disney World. The best ride the whole time was Jurassic Park. It was so scary. My sister Chrissie, her eyes were poppin' out. (Manetta, 2007, p. 1030)

In (4), the bolded material "my sister Chrissie" has not yet been mentioned in the discourse string and is therefore discourse-new. Were the sentence in canonical form, the left dislocated material would have been in subject position: *My sister Chrissie's eyes were poppin' out*. Prince made use of Gundel's (1985) topic tests and determined that this type of LD does not indicate topichood. Prince's (1998) definition of "Simplifying LD" is as follows:

> Simplifying LD
>
> A "Simplifying" LD serves to simplify the discourse processing of discourse-new entities by removing the NPs evoking them from a syntactic position disfavored for NPs evoking discourse-new entities and creating a separate processing unit for them. (Prince, 1998, p. 6)

That is to say, LDs of this type involve entities that are new to the discourse and would otherwise be introduced in a non-favored (i.e., subject) position. Contrast (5a) with (5b-5c).

> (5) a. Two of my sisters were living together on 18th Street. They had gone to bed, and this man, their girlfriend's husband, came in. He started fussing with my sister and she started to scream. The landlady, she went up and he laid her out. (*Welcomat*, 2 December, 1981)
>
> b. She had an idea for a project. She's going to use three groups of mice. One she'll feed them mouse chow. Just the regular stuff they make for mice. Another she'll feed them veggies. And the third she'll feed junk food. [SH in conversation, 11/7/81 (Prince, 1997, ex. 9e)]

c. That woman you were just talking to, I don't know where she went.

In (5a), "the landlady" is new to the discourse (and presumably to the hearer as well); however, the speaker is introducing her via an NP in subject position—a position disfavored for introducing new information. The dislocated NP creates a new information unit and thus, according to Prince, eases processing. The other two types of LD—triggering a poset inference (5b) and amnestying an island violation (5c)—typically do, according to Prince, involve discourse-old information. This stands in contrast to true preposing constructions, in which the preposed constituent must represent a discourse-old link to the prior discourse (Ward & Birner, 2005, pp. 162-163).

One of the benefits of LD is that it makes it easier for a listener to process a sentence. Sentences are easier to understand if they present old information first and new information later. To see how LD lets sentences do this, let us take another example in daily conversation:

> (6) The people who are less price-sensitive, who are willing to pay more, well, they just don't spend that time and they pay full price.

When you say, "The people who are less price-sensitive, who are willing to pay more", you are introducing a new piece of information. When you repeat it as the pronoun "they", it is now old information and is easier to process with the new information about how they end up paying the full price.

Poset

A second function of LD, according to Prince, is entirely distinct from the simplifying role. Let us consider the token in (7).

> (7) So I see my youngest brother a lot too. Actually, all my brothers are pretty close by. My oldest brother is a chef, like, downtown and my middle brother lives in Jersey. My youngest brother, he's a freshman at Newman. (Manetta, 2007, p. 1030)

Immediately, the contrast between (4) and (7) is clear: "My youngest brother" is not discourse-new. In fact, it is mentioned by the speaker in several sentences before the LD. In (4), the referent of the left dislocated constituent "my youngest brother" is actually a member of a set of entities mentioned in the sentence, including "my oldest brother" and "my middle brother". According to Prince, the LD of "my youngest brother" has the function of indicating the relationship of this entity to other entities in the discourse. This is stated more formally in the following statement.

> Poset LDs
>
> A Poset LD triggers an inference on the part of the hearer that the left dislocated NP represents an entity standing in a salient partially-ordered set relation to entities already evoked in the discourse. (Prince, 1998, p. 6)

Resumptive Pronoun

The third role of LD as identified by Prince is actually TOP in another guise, or Island Amnesty (Resumptive Pronoun Topicalization). According to Prince, these types of LDs occur when TOP would have been appropriate, except that the extraction site is ungrammatical. A resumptive pronoun thus salvages these instances of TOP and makes them appear as LD. Prince cited the following example from Studs Terkel (1974).

(8) My first book, I paid half of each trick to the person who gave it to me. After that, it was my book. (Terkel, 1974, p. 95)

In (8), the site of extraction would have been inside a relative clause, and so TOP would have been impossible. Since this function of LD is less relevant to this paper, I will simply restate Prince's (1998) characterization that this particular type of LD occurs when: "TOP is warranted on discourse grounds but is difficult or impossible on grammatical grounds and where a resumptive pronoun occurs in the extraction site, giving the illusion of a LD" (p. 15).

Other Functions

Bridging topic function—an interesting function of LD. This part is a discussion of a representative sample of movement rules in English. Sentences derived with these rules are appropriate in the extrasentential contexts; a conclusion can be drawn that discourse factors are probably the major force responsible for the existence and shape of the movement rules.

TOP. TOP (Ross, 1967), also called Y-Movement, is exemplified in (9b):

(9) a. I can eat English muffins every morning.

   b. English muffins I can eat every morning.

That the fronted constituent is not being asserted in (9b) is clear from the inappropriateness of (9b) as an answer to the question in (10) and the perfect appropriateness of (9a).

(10) What kind of breakfast food can you eat every morning?

That English muffins is a topic in (9b) is also clear. Note that if (9b) follows (11), further talk is NOT possible about waffles but IS about English muffins, whereas if (9b) does not follow (11), further talk IS possible about waffles, as in (12).

(11) I don't like to have waffles very often in the morning.

(12) They are too filling.

LD is illustrated in (13).

(13) a. I hope to meet Griselda's husband someday.

   b. Griselda, I hope to meet her husband someday.

That "Griselda" is not being asserted in (13b) is shown by the inappropriateness of (13b) as an answer to the question in (14) and by the appropriateness of (13a).

(14) a. A: Whose husband do you hope to meet?

   b. B: #Griselda, I hope to meet her husband someday.

   c. B: I hope to meet Griselda's husband someday.

That "Griselda" is the topic in (13b) is shown in (15), where (13b) = (15b) is appropriate as an answer to the question, but (13a) = (15c) as well as (15d) are terrible.

(15) a. A: What do you find exciting about Griselda?

  b. B: Griselda, I hope to meet her husband someday.

  c. B: #I hope to meet Griselda's husband someday.

  d. B: #Griselda's husband, I hope to meet him someday.

Note that LD differs in an interesting way from TOP: A constituent topicalized by TOP can serve as the topic of a succeeding utterance as well, as is shown in (16).

(16) English muffins I can eat every morning. They're just the right thing.

It is often not possible for a constituent thematized by LD to serve as a topic in this way.

(17) a. Griselda, I hope to meet her husband someday.

  b. #She's a very interesting person.

  c. He's a very interesting person.

As the appropriateness of (17c) suggests, the function of the topicalized constituent in (13b) is to serve as a "bridging topic". This is not the core function of LD, but it is one of the more interesting ones.

Besides the bridging function, there is some other usefulness for people to employ LD in oral discourse. One of them is that LD can help to avoid awkwardness. LD is useful if you have an NP that would sound awkward if it stays in its expected position. With our example, "That woman I see in the gym every day, it turns out her daughter is a Girl Scout", it would be pretty awkward to say, "That woman I see in the gym every day's daughter is a Girl Scout". What is more, a friendly tone can be set by the use of LD properly because sentences with LD are sometimes considered informal in oral English. They can help to set a friendly tone in presentations which are trying to make things simple and fun, such as some radio pragrammes. It sounds as if the hosts are having an unscripted conversation, even though each episode is carefully researched and planned.

Traugott (2007) gave examples like this from Old English:

Se awyrigeda deofol syððan he ðone frumsceapenan man beswac.

syððan he hæfde anweald ofer ungelyfedum mannum.

that cursed devil after he that first-created man deceived

afterwards he had control over unbelieving men. (pp. 405-441)

In the corpus search, she found a total of 280 left-dislocated main clauses out of 39,654 main clauses (0.7%), and a total of 53 left-dislocated subordinate clauses out of a total of 34,866 subordinate clauses (0.15%).

This rate appears to decrease through the history of written English. Pérez-Guerra and Tizón-Couto (2004) gave counts of LDs per 1,000 words in a corpus study of late Middle English, early Modern English (16th-17th century), late Modern English (18th century), and Present-Day English (20th century) (see Table 1).

Table 1

Corpus Study Through the History of Written English

lME	eModE	lModE	PDE
1.19	0.39	0.14	0.10

Unfortunately, Traugott did not give word-count information for the material she searched, but she did list the works, and by reference to the original corpus documentation I tentatively estimate the total as about 458,000 words, which would yield a LD rate of about 0.72 per 1,000 words. Whether or not this is accurate, it seems likely that the LD rate in Old English is higher than the historical estimates for texts since 1500.

During the past century or so, LD has clearly remained a lively part of spoken English. Gregory and Michaelis (2001), searching part of the Switchboard corpus, found 187 instances of LD in 32,805 statements and questions, for a rate of 0.6%, which is not very different from the rate of 0.7% that Traugott found for LD in main clauses in Old English. They gave examples like (18).

(18) The Saturns, you can get air bags in them.

And heavy metal, it's noisy.

Well, my car, it's an eighty six.

Re-initiation of story. According to Kim (1995), LD also serves to re-initiate a story when it is interrupted by someone during the conversation, as illustrated in the following example.

(19) B: Well I, when I was at the Laundromat last Sunday, the most attractive looking girl, in fact she works for doctor uhm-

A: No, this one doesn't work, and oon't be working.

B: Uh huh,

B: Well this gal, she's red headed'n, and freckled, and brown eyes, and uh she had the cutest little boy, and she was telling me he'd be three, in November.

One function Kim (1995) has mentioned is affect display, which he illustrated with Example (19), in which the speaker expresses certain attitudes, here (20) a despising one, towards my father.

(20) -an' I've just- I was sitting over here, an' I got up an' just walked out an' my father, he w' "Huh? Huh? Huh?" He was (//) He turned green an' I think my father said something before he left, because they were here for another twenty minutes.

(21) So God created man in His won image; in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them. (*Holy Bible*, Genesis, p. 27)

Compared with TOP, in which a syntactic movement is more obviously present and is thus more probably planned, LD might be an instance of unplanned speech, because the main clause can exist without the head noun. Therefore, for some instances of LD at least, it is also possible that LD is a result of hesitation.

Functions of LD in Chinese

Chafe (1976) observed that Chinese seems to express the information in the cases, such as Example (22), in

a way that does not coincide with anything available in English. Topic "Chinese-style" was defined by Chafe (1976) as the sentence element that "sets a spatial, temporal, or individual framework within which the main predication holds".

(22) Nei-xie shumu shu-shen da

Those trees tree-trunk big

Those trees, the trunks are big. (LI & Thompson, 1976, p. 462)

In this section, the functions of LD in Chinese will be studied from the vantage point of the syntax-discourse interface by exploring relevant functions.

Resumptive Pronoun

A resumptive pronoun refers to a pronoun in a relative clause which refers to the antecedent of the main (or matrix) clause. Resumptive pronoun relative clauses are used in English when the head is sufficient for the hearer to evoke the discourse entity and where the relative clause serves merely to add new information about that already evoked entity. In Chinese, we have the similar examples.

(23) a. GC: "You bought Anttila?"

EP: "No, this is Alice Freed's copy."

GC: "My copy of Anttilai I don't know who has iti."

b. *?My copy of Antilai I don't know who has [ei]. (Prince, 1997, p. 134)

(24) a. Johni, the voice with which hei sings is good.

b. Johni, hisi father was very rich.

c. Phillisi, that Tom will marry heri is obvious.

(25) a. *Johni, the voice with which [ei] sings is good.

b. *Johni, [ei] father was very rich.

a. 那个学生I，我正在找教过他i的老师。

b. 张三I，我知道他i去美国读书这件事。

(26) a. *那个学生I，我正在找教过[ei]的老师。

b. *张三I，我知道[ei]去美国读书这件事。

(27) a. 这本书I，我没见过一个能读懂[ei]的人。

b. *这本书I，我没见过一个能读懂它i的人。

(27a) is considered a left dislocated sentence because in Chinese, the demonstrative pronouns usually do not have phonological form (GAO, 2011, p. 8).

Simplifying

The first function of LD in Prince's classification is "Simplifying" LD. The purpose of these LDs is to

simplify discourse processing by removing fronted NPs that refer to discourse-new entities from a syntactic position (subject) that disfavors them. We can find many examples in the Chinese corpus of LD.

(28) "大陆同胞, 台湾、香港、澳门的同胞, 还有海外华侨, 大家都是中华民族子孙。" (《邓小平文选》第三卷, 1993, p. 362)[1]

(29) "一名扫红, 一名锄药, 一名墨雨, 这三个岂有不淘气的, 一齐乱嚷。" (曹雪芹、高鹗, 《红楼梦》, 第九回, 1991, p. 67)[2]

(30) "如前之许由、陶潜、阮籍、嵇康、刘伶、王谢二族、顾虎头、陈后主、唐明皇、宋徽宗、刘庭芝、温飞卿、米南宫、石曼卿、柳耆卿、秦少游、近日倪云林、唐伯虎、祝枝山，再如李龟年、黄幡绰、敬新磨、卓文君、红拂、薛涛、崔莺、朝云之流, 此皆易地则同之人也。" (曹雪芹、高鹗,《红楼梦》, 第二回, 1991, p. 13)

(31) "洛、恩、博、泽, 指洛甫(张闻天)、周恩来、博古(秦邦宪)、毛泽东, 他们当时都是中共中央政治局常委。" (《毛泽东选集》第一卷, 1991, p. 67)[3]

Cohesion Device

Cohesive devices are typically single words or phrases that basically make the text hang together. By analogy, they are much like the seams in our clothing which keep items like jackets and trousers together. Three elementary examples of cohesive devices are word repetition, synonyms, and pronouns. See the following examples.

(32) "'一国两制'的方式, 你不吃掉我, 我不吃掉你, 这不是很好吗？" (《邓小平文选》第三卷, 1993, p. 86)

(33) "解放思想, 我们老同志有这个任务。" (《邓小平文选》第三卷, 1993, p. 91)

(34) "一个公有制占主体, 一个共同富裕, 这是我们所必须坚持的社会主义的根本原则。" (《邓小平文选》第三卷, 1993, p. 111)

(35) "刚才那个和你说话的, 他可是叫小红？" (曹雪芹、高鹗, 《红楼梦》, 第二十六回, 1991, p. 182)

Contrast

In semantics, contrast is a relationship between two discourse segments. In discourse theory and computational discourse, contrast is a major discourse relation, on par with relationship like explanation or narration, and work has concentrated on trying to identify contrast in naturally produced texts, especially in cases where the contrast is not explicitly marked. See the following examples.

(36) "臭虫！金八！这两个东西都是一样的, 不过臭虫的可厌, 外面看得见, 而金八的可怕外面是看不见的, 所以他更凶、更狠。" (曹禺,《日出》, 1985, p. 195)

(37) "一名痴梦仙姑, 一名钟情大士, 一名引愁金女, 一名度恨菩萨, 各各道号不一。" (曹雪芹、高鹗, 《红楼梦》, 第五回, 1991, p. 35)

(38) "欧洲部分, 亚洲部分, 美洲部分, 这三个是主要的部分。" (《毛泽东外交选集》第一卷, 1991, p. 106)

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[1]   ,   :   1993   (*The Selected Works of DENG Xiaoping*, Vol. 3. Beijing: People's Press, 1993).

[2] [   ]   :   ,   :   1991   (CAO Xueqin and GAO E, *A Dream of Red Mansions*. Shanghai: Shanghai Ancient Books Press, 1991).

[3]   ,   :   1991   (*The Selected Works of MAO Zedong*, Vol. 1. Beijing: People's Press, 1991).

Hyperbole

Hyperbole is the use of exaggeration as a rhetorical device or figure of speech. It may be used to evoke strong feelings or to create a strong impression, but is not meant to be taken literally. Hyperboles are exaggerations to create emphasis or effect. As a literary device, hyperbole is often used in poetry and is frequently encountered in casual speech. Here are some of the examples.

(39) "这个混蛋，他装不知道，简直一点交情也不讲。" (曹禺，《日出》，1985, p. 113)[4]

(40) "那一群懒贼，你不说他们乐得不动，白冻坏了你。" (曹雪芹、高鹗，《红楼梦》，第九回，1991, p. 63)

(41) "这个没有良心的东西，他情愿跟一条狗溜，就不想着我。" (曹禺，《日出》，1985, p. 88)

(42) "这个狗食，吃花酒喝醉了，到了这么晚，他才把这件事告诉我。" (曹禺，《日出》，1985, p. 225)

Emphasis

The most common methods in western typography fall under the general technique of emphasis through a change or modification of font: italics, boldface, and small caps. Other methods include the alteration of letter case and spacing as well as color and additional graphic marks. In the corpus of LD in Chinese, the function of emphasis is encountered more often than not. Here are some of the examples.

(43) "特别是大学生，他们家里总是不那么很穷的，甚至他们也都反对本国的反动派。" (《毛泽东外交文选》，1994, p. 574)

(44) "有理想，有纪律，这两件事我们务必时刻牢记在心。" (《邓小平文选》第三卷，1993, p. 112)

(45) "经济体制，科技体制，这两方面的改革都是为了解放生产力。" (《邓小平文选》第三卷，1993, p. 108)

(46) "个人领导与党的领导，这是四军党的主要问题。" (《毛泽东选集》第一卷，1991, p. 20)

Inference

The process by which a conclusion is inferred from multiple observations is called inductive reasoning. The conclusion may be correct or incorrect, or correct to within a certain degree of accuracy, or correct in certain situations. Conclusions inferred from multiple observations may be tested by additional observations. Here are some of the examples.

(47) "所谓'三民主义统一中国'，这不现实。" (《邓小平文选》第三卷，1993, p. 31)

(48) "《日出》，不好，不好，这个名字就不好。" (曹禺，《日出》，1985, p. 55)

(49) "这妈妈，他又该来拿我们来醒脾了！" (曹雪芹、高鹗，《红楼梦》，第八回，1991, p. 59)

(50) "小时候干的营生，还提他做什么。" (曹雪芹、高鹗，《红楼梦》，第三十七回，1991, p. 266)

Topic Promoting

Topic promoting is a device to promote a new topic. The function of LDs in Chinese is very common. Here are some of the examples.

(51) "胡四？前两天，我在俱乐部又看见他，很亲热的跟一个——" (曹禺，《日出》，1985, p. 88)

(52) "龟大何首乌，千年松根茯苓胆，诸如此类的药不算为奇，只在群药里算。" (曹雪芹、高鹗，《红楼梦》，第二十八回，1991, p. 196)

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4   :   ,   :   1985   (CAO Yu, *Sunrise*. Chengdu: Sichuan literature and Art Publishing House, 1985).

(53) "有一个叫琪官儿的, 他如今名驰天下, 可惜我独无缘一见。" (曹雪芹、高鹗,《红楼梦》, 第二十八回, 1991, p. 201)

(54) 买鱼的季开祥, 打鱼的刀, 他们口中以千元预算的就是长江刀鱼, 两条四千。(《天价刀鱼: 刀下留鱼！》,《新闻1+1》节目, 02 April, 2012)

Other Functions

This session explores some other functions of the left-dislocated theme. Since the left-dislocated themes are regarded as all person deixis, they have anaphora in the previous text and the co-referent pronouns or nouns in the following text consequently. They can affect the cohesive function of maintaining the previous topic and initiating the further development of the text. But through the observation, it can be found that the cohesive function of keeping the same topic to the previous text is more essential for the left-dislocated theme than initiating the further development of the text, as some other scholars have pointed out. Normally in the context, the hearer will anticipate the immediate topic to develop further or change to another, while the speaker would like to carry on the former one, which will be out of the hearers' expect, so he or she might use something (the left-dislocated theme) to mark his contravention of the hearers' anticipation or the normal flowing of the utterance. Then the hearer knows he or she will proceed with the previous topic instead of the immediate one (LIU, 2006, p. 32).

(55) 世钧道: "我要知道你要我抢的话,我怎么着也要把你抢过来的。" 曼桢不由得扑哧一笑, 道: "有谁跟你抢呢?" 世钧道: "反正谁也不要想。" 曼桢笑道: "你这个人—我永远不知道你是真傻还是装傻。"

In such a circumstance, "Shijun" does not expect "Manzhen" is uttering the comment on him. If without the LD (你这个人), the speech of "Manzhen" seems a little abrupt and a bit weird, which is about the former topic and appears somehow non-naturally.

(56) 一鹏笑道: "都是一鸣跟爱咪—其实我真不想结婚! 一个人结婚就失掉了自由了, 你说是不是?" 世钧笑道: "算了吧, *你*也是该有人管管 *你*了。"

After the speech of "Yipeng", "Shijun" is expected to answer his question; while "Shijun" reestablishes the former topic about "Yipeng", therefore he uses a word (LD) (你) to inform the hearer his intention (LIU, 2006).

(57) 一鹏见了, 不由得咦了一声, 笑道: "跟顾小姐那件一样! 我正在那儿想着呢, 她穿得真素, 像个小寡妇似的。原来是你送她的! " 世钧有点窘, 笑道: "别胡扯了!" 一鹏笑道: "到哪有那么巧的事!" 世钧道: "那有什么奇怪呢, *我*因为嫂嫂叫 *我*买料子, 我又不懂这些, 所以那天找顾小姐跟我一块儿去的, 她同时也买了一件。"

Obviously, without the left-dislocate (我) the sentence is basically acceptable, but the speaker's stress seems to have altered. Without the LD, the focus of the speech is the explanation to the coincidence in "Yipeng's" immediate topic; with the LD the speaker underscores the point related to himself which is also the earlier topic of "Yipeng". It has revealed time and again that the cohesion to the previous text and the following text reestablishes an earlier discourse topic.

On the basis of the above analysis, an assumption can be made that the information statuses of the proposed theme and left-dislocated theme are both falling to the category of the given information, which is in accordance with De-xi ZHU's viewpoint but different from that in English. In English, the left most-moved theme can express the given information and the new information. Moreover, here only the left-dislocated person deixis or

pronoun is found, compared with that in English where the left-dislocated themes are all full of NPs instead of the person deixis. In terms of the semantic content, pronoun and full NPs are actually quite the opposite. Although in Chinese and English the constituents left-dislocated are distinct, they reveal quite similar functions. Other studies may be done to investigate the LD of other Chinese writers to see whether it is the characteristic of Chinese or the unique feature and style of Ai-ling ZHANG. The textual function of the proposed theme is to achieve cohesion to the previous text and initiate the further textual development to achieve cohesion to the previous text. Compared with English, in Chinese there is a lack of a function of solely providing a new topic to initiate the further development of the text which may be related to their different information statuses of the left most-moved themes. Furthermore, in Chinese, cohesion to the previous text is more essential for the left most-moved theme than the other functions, such as to initiate the further textual development or to provide a new topic in the discourse, as LIU Qun (2006) has elaborated.

A Syntax and Discouse Interface Study of LD in English and Chinese

First of all, let us have a look at the very restricted notion of syntax, whereby syntax neither follows from discourse function (as the "iconicity" proponents would have us believe) nor encodes discourse function (as many mainstream syntacticians and semanticists currently presume). That is, to argue contra Lancelot and Arnauld (1660), as cited in Chomsky's (1965) classic passage.

A...reason for the failure of traditional grammars...to attempt a precise statement of regular processes of sentence formation and sentence interpretation lay in the widely held belief that there is a "natural order of thoughts" that is mirrored by the order of words. Hence, the rules of sentence formation do not really belong to grammar but to some other subject in which the "order of thoughts" is studied. Thus in the *Grammaire Générale et Raisonnée* (Lancelot & Arnauld, 1660), it is asserted that, aside from figurative speech, the sequence of words follows an "ordre naturel", which conforms "à l'expression naturelle de nos pensées" (p. 7).

In fact, a careful study of the correlations between syntactic form and discourse function would lead us to conclude that syntax is indeed autonomous and that the relation between syntactic form and discourse function is no less arbitrary than the relation between phonological form and lexical meaning. More specifically, it is believed, firstly, that a description of the syntax of a language should aim for specifying only the possible strings, regardless of the likelihood that such strings will sound felicitous in a particular discourse context, and, secondly, that it should be the job of that part of semantics/pragmatics that Vallduví (1992) called the "Informatics Component" to specify what discourse function is associated with what syntactic form and therefore, in what sorts of contexts a given string will be felicitous and what sorts of inferences it will trigger.

An explanation for the functional divergence seen above can be found in how LD contributes to creating topic coherence interactively in two different ways. According to Grice (1975), speakers engaged in conversation are guided by the *Relevance Maxim*, whereby they will relate their contributions to what the other participants in conversation are saying. But, as noted by Tracy (1984), the relevance maxim can be understood in two ways.

> The first definition, the local approach, suggests that a relevant remark is one that chains to something in the last sentence or two of a speaker's message. The second definition, the global approach, proposes that a relevant remark is one that responds to the main idea in a speaker's message. (Tracy, 1984, p. 447)

The function of LD as a topic introduction device responds to a strategy of contributing to the topic of conversation in the global sense of the relevance maxim. That point is felt by one of the speakers as appropriate to introduce a new topic; interestingly, she signals that the new topic meets the "relevance maxim", in the global sense, by starting with "One was lost", setting the new referent as connected to what has been talked about before. The first part of the utterance serves the purpose of *framing* the new topic. However, in terms of its informational status or degree of familiarity (Prince, 1981), the dislocated NP has not been mentioned in previous segments of discourse or is predictable for the hearer. One could say that its function is, rather, prospective, because it gives the conversation a new direction, orienting it to the now presented topic, which is accepted by the hearer and can be established in conversations.

The function by which LD incorporates a referent mentioned in the previous segment, on the contrary, seems to respond to the local approach of the relevance maxim. LDs which occur in this context incorporate the last part of the previous utterance, therefore promoting such information as topic of the next speaker's utterance. For instance, which are reproduced here again for the reader's convenience, the speaker makes his contribution according to what the previous speaker has said, incorporating the last part of his utterance into his own and taking it as his own launch or starting point.

By incorporating the discourse segment of the previous utterance, the speaker tries to collaborate or contribute to coherence through a maximally cohesive utterance. Whereas in the topic introduction strategy, the speaker uses dislocation to shift the direction of conversation; the speakers make a *collaborative move*, which serves the purpose of sticking to the topic in the sense of construing the general topic at the local level.

The two approaches given by Tracy (1984) to the *Relevance Maxim* also help to explain why certain topics never make it very far in conversation. This is the case where one of the speakers introduces a new topic which is soon abandoned. Interestingly, the new topic is very far off the topic under discussion, and the speaker, who is at least partly aware of it, starts her intervention with the discourse marker LD, which in this context seems to signal precisely that the utterance that follows is not at all connected to anything that has been talked about before. In the end, despite the speaker's warning and efforts to signal the introduction of a new topic, it never establishes as topic of the conversation, perhaps because it does not meet any of the senses of the *Relevance Maxim*.

Conclusion

This paper touches down upon the functional divergences of LD in English and Chinese. The research findings are as follows: Firstly, the LD in English features the functions of simplifying, poset, resumptive pronoun, and some other functions such as bridging topics. Secondly, the LD in Chinese generally features the functions of simplifying, cohesion device, contrast, hyperbole, emphasis, inference, and topic promoting. Therefore, LD in both languages shares the same function of simplifying, but it is divergent in other functions.

Through the interface study of LD in the two languages, we can summarize that the implications of it are largely concerned with Prince's (1998) core claim: The connection between syntactic form and discourse function is language-specific and arbitrary. Through her original classification of LD constructions into three types, Prince attempted to show that the syntactic construction LD plays no single discourse-related role. The addition of eight other types of LD in Chinese serves to lend further credence to this claim—LD seems to serve a wide variety of discourse functions and is motivated by a range of discourse circumstances.

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