



Lesson1.11

Chinese vs English: Discourse & Text

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Learning Activities

- 1) Review of Lesson 1.10 & Quiz 1.10
- 2) Chinese vs English: Discourse & Text
- 3) Review and Role play
- 4) Homework

Review of Lesson 1.10

- ▶ Review of Lesson 1.10 – **English vs Chinese: Sentence Patterns**
- ▶ Quiz 1.10

Quiz 1.10



Chinese vs English: Discourse & Text

Text and discourse

- ▶ In the field of linguistics research, the meaning of the term “text” varies among different linguists. Some linguists think that “text” is the same as “discourse”, and they both refer to spoken and written languages (Hu, 1994).
- ▶ Other linguists distinguish “text” from “discourse”. The former is called non-interactive monologue, that is, written language, while the latter is called interactive discourse, that is, spoken language (Huang, 1988).
- ▶ Still other linguists think that the Chinese equivalent of “text” is “篇章”, and the Chinese equivalent of “discourse” is “语篇”.

Text and discourse

- ▶ From the definition, we can see that the text consists of at least more than one sentence, and it can be a group of sentences or a poem or a passage or a novel.
- ▶ Whether the text is long or short, it must convey **complete information and clear meaning.**

篇章 Text

- ▶ **篇章**是指由连贯的句子或语段所构成的、或长或短的语义整体，例如一篇散文、一项合同、一页说明书、一首诗歌、一个剧本、一次谈话、一则寓言、一封书信、一部小说或专著，或其中意义比较完整的片段。

篇章 Text

- ▶ 语言形式上，篇章内各句、段之间存在着**粘连性**（cohesion），如连接、替代、省略、照应；
- ▶ 语义逻辑上，全篇通常有首有尾，各句段所反映的概念或命题具有**连续性**（coherence）。每个句子都起着一定的承前启后的作用，句与句、段与段的排列一般都符合逻辑顺序。

Text Pattern

- ▶ Both written and spoken texts have “organization”. The Chinese equivalent of “organization” is “布局谋篇”, and refers to how text is combined and organized according to some principles and orders.
- ▶ It is generally accepted that there are generally four requirements for organization—**order, coherence, cohesion, and unity**. In other words, text pattern refers to well-established text models with some similar and definite organizations.

Text Pattern

- ▶ Text patterns can be classified in terms of meta-text patterns, such as **problem-solution pattern, claim-counterclaim pattern, narrative pattern, question-answer pattern, general-specific pattern.**
- ▶ However, we focus on the differences between English and Chinese text patterns.

Similarities between English and Chinese text patterns

- ▶ First, most texts are made up of words, phrases, sentences, and paragraphs.
- ▶ Second, they must meet the above-mentioned four requirements—order, coherence, cohesion, and unity.
- ▶ In addition, they both convey complete semantic and communicative information.
- ▶ Finally, they must observe some organization rules, to name just a few.

Differences between English and Chinese text patterns

- ▶ Text pattern or way of organization has the special characteristics of culture and languages, and reflects the thinking patterns of human beings.
- ▶ Corresponding to English thinking pattern, **English text** structures are formed in the linear form. In other words, English text pattern begins with a **topic sentence** that directly states the main idea of this passage, and then presents several **sub-topics** that all centers on the topic sentence

English text - example

- ▶ Gold, a precious metal, is prized for two important characteristics. First of all, gold has a lustrous beauty that is resistant to corrosion. Therefore, it is suitable for jewelry, coins and ornamental purposes. Gold never needs to be polished and will remain beautiful forever. For example, a Macedonian coin remains as untarnished today as the day it was minted twenty-three centuries ago. Another important characteristic of gold is its usefulness to industry and science. For many years, it has been used in hundreds of industrial applications. The most recent use of gold is in astronaut's suits. Astronauts wear gold-plated heat shields for protection outside the spaceship. In conclusion, gold is treasured not only for its beauty, but also for its utility.

Differences between English and Chinese text patterns

- ▶ There are two basic Chinese text patterns: one is similar to English deductive text pattern; the other is spiral 螺旋式上升的 Chinese text pattern peculiar to oriental languages.
- ▶ In the spiral text pattern, the theme of text is not stated in a direct manner but in a circuitous manner. It is said that this pattern can date back to *baguwen* (eight-part essay, stereotyped writing) times.
- ▶ In Chinese feudal society, scholars wrote this kind of stereotyped essay for being high-ranking officials, so they must be cautious in accordance with politeness principle in pragmatics, that is, they did not state their viewpoint in a direct way but in a roundabout way.

Chinese text - example

- ▶ 自1840年鸦片战争使中国蒙受历史性屈辱以来，从林则徐、魏源、龚自珍到孙中山，历代志士仁人曾为中国的救亡和发展，前仆后继，英勇奋斗，但由于缺少科学理论的指导而饮恨九泉。实践告诉我们，在一个半殖民地半封建的中国，改良封建专制制度，不是出路；实行资本主义，亦非良策。在历史的比较中我们认识到，唯有马克思列宁主义，才能救中国。马克思列宁主义一经传入中国，中国人民就在精神上由被动转入主动，中国共产党才在马克思列宁主义和中国工人运动的结合中诞生并成为中国革命的领导力量，中国人民的民族解放和民族振兴才找到了正确的方向。从此，开始了马克思列宁主义在中国的实践和发展历程。

Chinese vs English: Discourse - example

Here is a dialogue between a **Chinese policeman** and **his British superior**.
Some differences can be found.

- ▶ *A: Sir?*
- ▶ *B: Yes, what is it?*
- ▶ *A: My mother is not very well, sir.*
- ▶ *B: So?*
- ▶ *A: She has to go into hospital, sir.*
- ▶ *B: Well, go on with it. What do you want?*
- ▶ *A: On Thursday, sir.*
- ▶ *B: Bloody hell, man, what do you want?*
- ▶ *A: Nothing, sir.*

English Text Stressing Hypotaxis 从属关系/形合

- ▶ Because of its explicit grammar, language elements (words, phrases, sentences, and paragraphs) are connected by various cohesive devices. **Conjunctions** as connective devices are widely used in English like:
- ▶ and, but, if , as, therefore, when, however, moreover, or in addition, what's more important

Examples (1)

- ▶ A second aspect of technology transfer concentrate on US high technology exports. China has correctly complained in the past that the US was unnecessarily restrictive in limiting technology sales to China. Recently some liberalization has taken place **and**¹ major increases in technology transfers have taken place as the result. **However**², some items continue to be subject to restrictions and unnecessary delay, in part **because**³ the US Government submits many items to COCOM (巴黎统筹委员会) for approval. There is significant room for improvement with the US bureaucracy and COCOM.

Examples (1) 参考译文

- ▶ 技术转让的第二个方面集中在美国的高技术出口方面。过去中国曾经抱怨说，美国不必要限制对中国出售技术，这种抱怨是情有可原的。由于¹近来限制有所放宽，技术转让大大增加，但是²，还有些项目继续限制出口或受到不必要的延误，其中部分原因是³；美国政府要把许多项目提交巴黎统筹委员会批准。美国的官僚主义和巴黎统筹委员会的做法都大有改进的余地。

Chinese Text Stressing Parataxis 无连词并列/意合

- ▶ Compared with English grammar, Chinese grammar is implicit, and language elements are connected mainly by some logical devices or reflected indirectly by orders. We can not ignore the fact that there exist conjunctions in Chinese, but it seems that people seldom use them.

Examples (1)

- ▶¹到了铁公祠前，²朝南一望，只见对面千佛山上，梵宇僧楼，与那苍松翠柏，³高⁴下相间，红的火红，白的雪白，青的靛青，绿的碧绿，更有那一株半株的丹枫夹在里面，⁵仿佛宋人赵千里的一幅大画，作了一架数十里长的屏风。

-- (刘鹗: 《老残游记》, 齐鲁书社, 1985, 14页)

Examples (1) 参考译文

- ▶ When he¹ reached the temple, he² looked southwards and saw on the other side of the lake the Mount of a Thousand Buddha. There were temples and monasteries, some³ high and some⁴ low, scattered among the greyed pines and green cypresses: the red were as red as fire, the white as white as snow, the blue as blue as indigo and the green as green as emerald, while here and there were a few red maples. It⁵ looked like a big painting by Zhao Qianli, the Song-dynasty painter, only made into a screen a dozen miles long.
- ▶ ——(from *The Travels of Lao Can*, tr. By Yang Hsienyi and Gladys Yang, Panda Books, 1983, p24-25)

Review & Role play

- ▶ Review
- ▶ Role play

Homework

▶ **1. Review and Prepare for Quiz 1.11 Text and Discourse (6-8 questions)**

– Blank-filling / True or False / Multiple choice/ short-answer questions...

▶ **2. Translation exercise (See the next slide)**

▶ **3. Essay:**

▶ **Topic: What are the most impressive differences (1-3) between Chinese and English in your opinion?**

(Minimum 2 pages, 12 point font, double line space, word/pdf document, Due by May 26 at 11:59pm)

Translation exercise – To read in front of the class

- ▶ 1. 秋天，无论在什么地方的秋天，总是好的；可是啊，北国的秋，却特别地来得清，来得静，来得悲凉。
- ▶ 2. 有人如游客，不急不慌，走走停停，看花开花落，看云卷云舒，有时正在风里走，雨里行，心却像张开的网，放过了焦躁苦恼。
- ▶ 3. 于是，暮色匆匆的人群里，总有我赶路的身影，雨里、雾里、风里、雪里，只盼着早些回家……