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**Anaphora in English: a Genre Analysis**

英语中回指的语类分析

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## **Abstract**

Anaphora, as a central topic of research in linguistics, has been studied within different approaches, namely, the syntactic approach, the pragmatic approach, the functional approach and the cognitive approach. However, attempts made in these approaches to provide an account of syntactic relations have in general been unsatisfactory. These approaches fail to deal with any anaphoric reference involving discourse relations. A large number of real-language occurrences of anaphora is thus left unaccounted for.

This thesis is the study of anaphora within the text-linguistic approach. With the framework of genre and genre analysis as the basis, the thesis analyzes the relationship between anaphoric choices and genres. In order to fulfill the goal, a corpus is built for analysis. There are three kinds of texts chosen: fairy tales, novels and English for Science and Technology (EST). These three kinds of texts are always discussed distinctively and categorized as different genres respectively. To obtain the data, 100 texts have been chosen, including 50 EST texts, 50 fairy tales. We also read 50 novels. The fairy tales are chosen from Grimm's fairy tales and world's fairy tales. The EST texts involve chemistry, physics, medicine, information science etc. The novels in our corpus are chosen from the novels in English. Because the novel is long, we only choose 2 chapters from each novel as our data.

This thesis analyzes the types of anaphora deriving from these three

text types both qualitatively and quantitatively. SPSS11.0 is applied to obtain the results. The result of our analysis shows that the distribution of types of anaphora varies a great deal in these three texts. Fairy tales have a much higher rate of distribution of repetition of noun anaphors (60%), which is much higher than that of novels (7%) and EST texts (8.4%). EST texts have a much higher rate of distribution of zero anaphors (47.6%), which is much higher than that of fairy tales (7.2%) and novels (7.5%). Novels have a much higher rate of distribution of pronominal anaphors (45.9%), which is much higher than that of fairy tales (28.9%) and EST texts (4.4%). The different distributions of types of anaphora reflect the internal characteristics of different genres.

The result of our analysis proves that anaphora is categorized as 'genre-specific'. Anaphoric functions are directly related to different genres. Different genres resort to some special anaphora to attain connectivity and have special features in applying the connecting devices. The relationship between genres and anaphoric choices is that of mutual predictability. Genre analysis of anaphora also provides guidelines for teaching English writing. With the knowledge of the distribution of anaphora in different genres, students can intentionally structure coherence texts by choosing types of anaphora and anaphoric variations to realize the genre.

**Key words:** Anaphora; Genre; Novels; EST; Fairy Tales.

## 摘 要

回指作为语言学研究中的一个中心话题已经被语言学家们从不同的角度进行了研究，比如：句法角度，语用角度，功能角度和认知角度。然而，总的来说这些只在句法关系中对回指进行解释的研究却不那么令人满意。它们没有涉及语篇关系中的回指，因此没有解释真实语言中出现的大量回指现象。

本文运用语篇语言学对回指进行研究，并以语类和语类分析为理论基础，分析了回指与语类的关系。为了实现本文的目的，本文建立了语料库，选择了三种截然不同的语类：小说，童话和科技英语。为了获得数据，我们挑选了 50 篇童话，50 篇科技英语和 50 篇小说。童话故事选自于格林童话和世界童话。科技英语语篇涉及化学，物理，医学和信息科学等等。小说选自于英语小说。因为小说较长，我们在分析中从每篇小说中选择两章作为数据来源。

本文对三种语篇中的回指类型进行了定性和定量分析，通过运用 SPSS11.0 软件来获得分析的结果。分析的结果显示这三种语类中回指类型的分布并不是完全相同的。童话故事中重复的名词回指所占比例较高（60%），远远高于小说（7%）和科技英语（8.4%）中的名词回指。科技英语中零回指的分布频率比较高（47.6%），远远高于童话（7.2%）和小说（7.5%）中的零回指。小说中代词回指的分布频率比较高（45.9%），远远高于童话（28.9%）和科技英语（4.4%）中的代词回指。回指类型分布的不同反映了三种不同语类的内在特征。

本文分析的结果证明回指是受语类限制的，回指的功能与不同的语类有直接的关系。不同的语类选择不同的回指类型来体现内容的连贯性。同时，不同的语类在运用各种连接方式中都有其特点。回指与

语类是相互预测的。本文还指出回指的语类分析为英语写作教学提供了指导。学生掌握了有关不同语类中回指类型分布的知识后，可以有意地通过选择不同的回指类型来组织连贯的语篇并体现语类的特点。

**关键词：**回指；语类；小说；科技英语；童话

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## **Introduction**

The term ‘anaphora’ is commonly used to refer to a relation between two linguistic elements, in which the interpretation of one is determined by the interpretation of the other in the preceding linguistic context. Halliday & Hasan (2001) describe anaphora as ‘cohesion which points back to some previous item’. The ‘pointing back’ word is called an anaphor and the entity to which it refers to is its antecedent.

Anaphoric relations have attracted the attention of many researchers within different approaches in recent years. As a result, much literature related to the subject has been produced. However, attempts made in such approaches as the syntactic approach, the pragmatic approach, the functional approach and the cognitive approach to provide an account of syntactic relations have in general been unsatisfactory. These approaches concentrate on sentence grammar and fail to deal with any anaphoric reference involving discourse relations. A large number of real-language occurrences of anaphora is thus left unaccounted for.

This thesis is the study of anaphora within the text-linguistic approach. With the framework of genre and genre analysis as the basis, the thesis sets its aim to analyze the relationship between anaphoric choices and genres. It is assumed that anaphora might be categorized as “genre-specific”, that is, anaphoric functions are directly related to different genres. Different genres resort to some special anaphora to attain connectivity and have special features in applying the connecting devices.

In order to fulfill the goal, a corpus is built for analysis. There are three kinds of texts chosen: fairy tales, novels and English for Science and Technology (EST). These three kinds of texts are always discussed distinctively and categorized as different genres respectively.

The fairy tales in this thesis are chosen from Grimm's fairy tales and world's fairy tales. Fairy tales, which are targeted at the children, require their language simple and easy to understand. The words used in fairy tales are highly related to our daily life and thus bring with them the characteristics of conversations. After all, fairy tales are always written in informal and spoken texts.

The EST texts in this thesis involve chemistry, physics, medicine, information science etc. The great majority of EST programs are designed to help their readers to succeed in an academic environment. It belongs to the quite formal style of English. Its field of discourse requires its writing to be highly objective, concise, economical and impersonal. Meanwhile, because its language is used by scientists and technicians in a special situation, there are some typical sentence patterns and a large number of technical terms which make EST different to a very wide extent from ordinary English.

The novels in our corpus are chosen from novels in English. A novel is in prose of certain extent with characters, incidents and plots. Thomas (1995) points out that the novel is regarded as a type of genre text because the novel as a product of a specific interaction not only reproduces

conventionalized forms of discourse between writer and readers but also reflects the wider relations and conventions of the social context to its functional and defining characteristics as a genre. As we move from the society to the text, context to co-text, we need to consider how these “specific conventions” and “reutilized events” are realized in “generic frameworks” or lexicalgrammatical characteristics which correspond to the expectations of the participants of these “communicative events”.

This thesis will analyze the types of anaphora deriving from these three text types both qualitatively and quantitatively. It is assumed that the distribution of types of anaphora varies a great deal among the three genres. The results of our analysis will conform to the following points. First, genre is closely associated with culture, possibly being a plane at the stratum of the context of culture. Second, the realization of certain genre may be related to its contextual configuration or its register configuration, which predicts the generic structure potential of that genre. Third, any genre would have an ultimate purpose or goal. Specifically, the results of our analysis will prove that the relationship between genres and anaphoric choices is that of mutual predictability. The realization of certain genre is related to its contextual configuration or its register configuration, which predicts the lexicalgrammatical characteristics of texture. Genre and text structure are complementary. Each presupposes the other. On the one hand, genre constrains the text structure. On the other hand, text structure constructs genre. The distribution of types of anaphora varies as generically constrained or there are obvious generic variations in the distribution of types of anaphora. The different

distributions of anaphora will reflect the internal characteristics of different genres. Our analysis will reject the conclusion that there is no relationship between the distributions of types of anaphora and genres (Tool 1996 , Gao Yuan 高原 2003).

This study investigates types of anaphora both quantitatively and qualitatively in three kinds of genres. To obtain the data for the present research, the following steps are included:

1. 100 texts have been chosen, including 50 EST texts, 50 fairy tales. These EST texts involve chemistry, physics, medicine, information science etc. They are randomly selected from different courses of modern English for latest technologies. The fairy tales are randomly selected from Grimm's fairy tales and world's fairy tales. We also read 50 novels. Because the novel is long, we only choose 2 chapters from each novel as our data during our analysis.

2. Based on the categorization of types of anaphora for the present research, the thesis is to identify the types of anaphora in each text;

3. Based on step 2, the distribution of types of anaphor in each genre will be calculated with the aid of computer. Meanwhile, the distributions of types of anaphor in three kinds of genres will be shown in a table. Based on this table, a bar chart will be used to illustrate types of anaphor in three genres. For these purposes, SPSS11.0 is applied to obtain the results.

Based on the above data, the conclusion can be drawn safely that



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