# Bridging the Gap between Extensive Reading and Linguistics: Are the Five Sentence Types Enough?

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This paper was one of the four presentations that made up a colloquium held at the ERF World Congress entitled Bridging the Gap between Extensive Reading and Intensive Reading. The aim of the colloquium was to try to consider how to answer the two fundamental questions: "Why intensive reading?" and "Why extensive reading?" All the presenters are currently teaching at Kinki University and sharing some experience of teaching, which makes it easier to uniformly assess the different approaches to college students, though, of course, it is not easy to get clear answers to the questions mentioned above. This paper argues that knowledge of a limited range of sentence structures is not sufficient for students to improve using Extensive Reading, and presents some additional sentence structures that can help students make better progress in ER.

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While students are more exposed to English in Extensive Reading (ER) classes, not much attention is paid to aspects of grammar. On the other hand, nowadays, studies of linguistics based on theoretical approaches such as generative grammar and cognitive grammar have been developing rapidly. Focusing on phenomena of Heavy Noun Phrase Shift (HNPS) and Locative Inversion (LI) seen in ER texts, I claim that making use of these findings will help students understand English more deeply, and as a consequence, lead them to deeper understanding of ER texts.

## Are five types of sentences enough for extensive reading?

At most high schools or junior high schools in Japan, students learn five types of sentences as in (1) and are told that most English sentences can be read with recourse to these five types.

(1)  Type 1    Noun Phrase (NP) - V(erb):

John smiled.

Type 2    NP - V - C(omplement):

John is a doctor.

Type 3    NP - V- O(bject):

John ate apples.

Type 4    NP - V - O - O:

John gave Mary a book.

Type 5    NP - V - O - C:

John painted the wall blue.

However, students can easily find that things are different when they look at some ER texts. One of the examples is shown below.

(2)  Crashing noises came from below. Judy ran out of the room, and Peter took the dice and followed her. They ran downstairs to the kitchen. They could hear breaking plates and strange screams. *Judy pushed open the kitchen door* [italics added]. Inside were twelve brown monkeys. (Strasser, 1997, p. 10)

As the italicized sentence shows, the object NP in the resultative construction is moved to the end position. This fact doesn't necessarily match Type 5 in the five types in (1). One question arises immediately here: Why is the object NP moved to another position?

In the framework of generative grammar, it has been argued that there is semantic duality in natural languages. Specifically, Chomsky (2000, 2001, 2007) claims that there are two relations in semantics. One of them is a generalized argument structure like a semantic relation of AGENT and THEME, which is yielded in regular word order such as (1). However, it is well-known that discourse related semantics such as focalization or topicalization also exist.

(3)  Semantic Duality in Language (Chomsky, 2000, 2001, 2007)

Relation 1: Generalized Argument Structure <may be only from the 5 types>

Relation 2: Discourse-Related (and Scopal properties) < by NP shift>

Relation 2 is assumed to be obtained by shifting NPs. Consider these examples.

(4) a. John bought [a painting that he liked] for his mother.

b. John bought $t_i$ for his mother [a painting that he liked]$_i$.

In (4), the object NP is given a thematic role of THEME in the object position, but it is shifted to the end position because it is "heavy" in a sense (HNPS). Note that an object like a pronoun can't be moved because it doesn't count as heavy.

(5) a. * You should read $t_i$ with the greatest attention [this/them]$_i$.

b. You should read [this/them] with the greatest attention. (Hageman & Guéron, 1999, p. 222)

These examples raise two questions: (1) What NPs count as a heavy element and undergo movement? (2) Why is HNPS necessary in context? To answer these questions, it is important to see previous analyses in linguistics because they are expected to show us some interesting ideas of the faculty of human language. In the next section, we will examine three different studies which deal with HNPS in terms of generative grammar.

## What NPs can be shifted/moved?

### Ross (1986)—Embedded Sentences

Ross (1986) claims that an object NP with an embedded clause should be moved to the end position because it counts as heavy.

(6) a. I called up Mary.

b. I called Mary up.

(7) a. I called [almost all of the men from Boston] up.

b.* I called [the man you met] up. (Ross, 1986, p. 32)

c. I called up [the man you met].

The phrasal verb call up can take its object either before or after the particle as in (6). However, if an object NP includes a relative clause in the object position as in (7b), it is ungrammatical. It must be moved to the end position. This fact shows that NPs which induce NP-shift are ones with embedded clauses.

### Rochemont (1978) – Strong Stress: Focalization (Focus NP Shift)

However, Rochemont claims that NPs are moved to the end position when they are semantically emphasized. This means that they are shifted even if they are short and don't include embedded sentences.

(8) a. The preacher sent off to war his only son.

b. Hitler persuaded to join forces with him, Mussolini. (Rochemont, 1978, p. 33)

c. * John wants to give to Mary it.

Note that a pronoun can be regarded as a heavy element if it is phonetically stressed.

(9) a. John called her up.

b. *John called up her.

c. John called up HER.

The facts in (8) show that a normal NP can be moved to the end position when it is emphasized. This analysis also explains the facts in (6).

### Stowell (1981) – Indefinite Noun

Another analysis, proposed in Stowell (1978), argues that indefinite nouns are moved to the end position even when they are not heavy because they function as new information to the hearer.

(10) Brian brought back to America a priceless treasure. (Stowell, 1981, p. 107)

To sum up these three analyses, we can conclude that NPs are moved to another position for a speaker to focus or draw a hearer's attention. Since the 5 types are not enough at all to read ER texts, introducing some linguistic analyses is very important to explain structures of English and help students read and understand ER texts better. Based on this conclusion, let us examine another phenomenon.

## Locative Inversion

In the same ER text, Jumanji, we can find examples outside the five types. See (11) and (12) from Apollo 13.

(11) Crashing noises came from below. Judy ran out of the room, and Peter took the dice and followed her. They ran downstairs to the kitchen. They could hear breaking plates and strange screams. Judy pushed open the kitchen door. *Inside were twelve brown monkeys* [italics added]. (Strasser, 1997, p. 10)

(12) After the months in the simulator, they knew

the command module well. Jim's chair was on the left. Jack's chair was in the middle and Fred's was on the right. *In front of them were the controls* [italics added]--- more than five hundred of them. (Anastasio and Fumas, 2001, p.7)

As seen in both cases, locative phrases are in the surface subject position. This doesn't match type 2 in (1) repeated as (14).

(13)  a. *Inside* were twelve brown monkeys.

b. *In front of them* were the controls --- more than five hundred of them.

(14)  Type 2    NP - V - C(omplement):

John is a doctor.

As is well-known, there are two types of prepositional phrase subjects in English.

(15)  a. Under the bridge is a good place for my cat to hide, isn't it? (subject = PP)

b. Under the bridge were the two men you were searching for, weren't they? (subject = DP)

The case in discussion is (15b), or locative inversion. An analysis within the framework of generative grammar is as follows.

(16)  a. [$_{TP}$ [$_{DP}$ the two vagrants you are tracking]

[$_{VP}$ were [$_{PP}$ under the bridge]]]]

b. [$_{FP}$ [$_{PP}$ Under the bridge]$_j$ [were]$_i$ [$_{TP}$ [DP the two vagrants you are tracking] [$_{VP}$ t$_i$ t$_j$ ]]]

A new phrase, Focus Phrase (FP), is yielded above the Tense Phrase (TP) and then both the prepositional phrase (PP) and the tense element were are moved to the upper position to be focused. As a result, the thematic subject is now in the end position. The subject NP in this position is not focused, but this structure matches the structure of new/old information. As the examples in (17) and (18) show, elements with new information are likely to be positioned in a latter position.

(17)  a. Mary gave John a kiss.

b. *Mary gave a kiss to John. (Green, 1974, p. 83)

(18)  a. Mary gave John a piece of her mind.

b. *Mary gave a piece of her mind to John. (Green, 1974, p. 84)

As seen in double object constructions, an indefinite NP which functions as new information tends to

occur in a latter position in a sentence. If so, the informational structure in (13) matches general informational structures. The structures of (13) are shown in (19).

(19)  a. *Inside* were *twelve brown monkeys.*

   OI(focus)            NI

b. *In front of them* were the *controls --- more than five hundred of them.*

   OI(focus)            NI

(OI=old information, NI=new information)

The locative phrases are moved to the foremost position and act to introduce new elements. These examples suggest that it is essential to introduce linguistic findings to ER classrooms and explain to students why some word orders differ from the basic five types.

## Conclusion

As we have seen above, the five basic types of English sentences are insufficient to understand the full range of English sentences. Word orders that depart from the five basic types are needed, depending on context, and are easily found even in low level ER texts. As for NP movement such as HNPS and LI, a range of linguistic studies, some controversial, have been proposed by linguists. Nevertheless, it is important to introduce these findings to ER classrooms and give students some explanation. This will help students more deeply understand structures of English and ER texts, enjoying them much better. As a consequence, we expect that they will be able to learn English and realize what languages are like. It is true that just giving students opportunities to read English without paying attention to grammar is good to expose students to more English, but it is also essential to get them to understand why particular word orders exist.

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