



Discussion on the problems of Continuation Writing in High School English Writing Teaching in the Context of the New College Entrance Examination

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Abstract

This article aims to explore the existing problems in the current teaching of continuation writing in high school English from the examination requirements of reading continuation writing in the new college entrance examination, and propose corresponding teaching strategies in response to the problems, to help students master the skills of continuation writing more deeply, thereby comprehensively promoting the improvement of students' comprehensive English literacy. It points out three core issues: monotonous teaching methods, a single evaluation subject and the lack of students' thinking ability. The solutions include adopting situational teaching methods, conducting diverse evaluations, and cultivating students' continuation thinking ability.

Keywords

Continuation Writing; High School English Teaching; the New College Entrance Examination

1. Introduction

With the continuous deepening of China's education reform, the new college entrance examination has become an important part of the reform of ordinary high school education in China. The new college entrance examination emphasizes the cultivation of students' comprehensive qualities and the improvement of their abilities, and puts forward higher requirements for English teaching. The English continuation writing under the new college entrance examination undoubtedly brings many challenges and opportunities to both teachers and students. For teachers, evaluation standards of the new college entrance examination require them to adjust their teaching strategies and teaching contents to enhance students' reading and continuation writing abilities. For students, they need to adapt to the new ex-

amination requirements and cultivate more comprehensive and critical continuation writing abilities. At the same time, the reform of the English continuation writing under the new college entrance examination prompts teachers to pay more attention to cultivating students' deep reading and comprehensive language application abilities, and also provides teachers with space for teaching innovation, such as introducing more discussions, cooperations and creative writing activities to stimulate students' learning interests and abilities.

The General Senior High School English Curriculum Standards (2017 Edition, 2020 Revision) (hereinafter referred to as the 2017 Edition Curriculum Standards) points out that language ability is a basic element of core literacies, mainly referring to the ability to understand and express meanings through listening, speaking, reading, viewing and writing. Listening, reading and viewing belong to receptive skills, while speaking and writing belong to productive skills. In language skills teaching, it is necessary to combine specialized training with comprehensive training to avoid isolated training of a single skill. Continuation writing, as a writing teaching method, is in line with the "language ability" proposed by the 2017 Edition Curriculum Standards. In continuation writing teaching, teachers integrate reading and writing, achieving the fusion of language input and output. Reading enables students to understand the theme of the article and grasp its logical relationship, while continuation writing allows students to have a dialogue with the story and the author, combining logic with emotion, and using creativity and imagination to imitate the language just learned. This conforms to the requirements of the New Curriculum Standards (2017) for language skills training, making continuation writing an effective method for cultivating students' core literacy. The continuation writing in the college entrance examination for English requires students to fully understand the general idea of an incomplete passage after reading it, and to continue writing in accordance with the logic of the text and the background of the event while closely adhering to the original information, based on the prompt sentences. It mainly tests the following three core abilities, namely reading comprehension and logical analysis ability, innovative thinking and imagination, as well as language application and expression ability.

2. Literature Review

This chapter is about the definition of the concept of continuation writing and the research conducted by scholars at home and abroad on continuation.

2.1. Continuation Writing

In the 1990s, Wang Chuming proposed to apply the "length approach" to foreign language teaching for pedagogical reform. 2012, on the basis of the length approach, Wang Chuming further researched the related contents of the interactive synergy theory and put forward a new type of writing ----- Continuation writing. Liu Qingsi

and Chen Kang (2016) also pointed out that continuation writing is an examination form that closely combines reading and writing, aiming to examine students' comprehensive language application ability. As a method, continuation writing is a very effective type of question for testing English proficiency. As an English writing training method, continuation writing can improve students' comprehensive ability to apply English. For the current new college entrance examination, continuation writing is not only an English writing training method combined with English reading comprehension, but also a new question type in the new college entrance examination. Continuation writing require students to read an English article of no more than 350 words and then continue writing a narrative essay with reasonable logic and complete structure based on the original text. The word count should be about 150 words. The short essay consists of two paragraphs, and the beginning of each paragraph has been given. This is a new type of writing question based on reading comprehension, mainly testing the candidates' ability to extract information (characters, time, place, events), language application ability (vocabulary, grammar, sentences), organizational structure ability (paragraph organization, connection, transition) and creative thinking ability (rich content, vivid description, reasonable plot).

2.2. Research on Continuation Writing at Home and Abroad

Wickramaarachchi (2014) explored the interaction between reading and writing in his study, specifically investigating the impact of pre-reading tasks (Pre tasks) on the development of inferential reading comprehension. He selected 70 first-year ESL students from a university as the experimental subjects, setting up an experimental group and a control group. The experimental group performed Pre tasks, while the control group did not. The experiment lasted for six classes, and data was collected and analyzed. The results showed that the performance of the experimental group was better than that of the control group, indicating the effectiveness of Pre tasks in improving reading comprehension. The research enthusiasm for the English continuation writing of high school continues to rise under the background of the new college entrance examination in China. Wu Jihua (2019), from the perspective of high school English teaching, pointed out that teachers should start from the overall understanding of the article and carry out appropriate teaching design in the teaching process. Through methods such as guiding and motivating students, they should promote the transformation of students' learning achievements, thereby improving students' academic performance. Hou Jiahui (2020) analyzed from the perspective of the synergy effect theory the phenomena such as the inconsistency between the continuation content and the original train of thought in the current continuation English composition teaching and the language errors that are prone to occur in the continuation articles, and pointed out the importance of teachers in improving students' reading ability and innovating teaching strategies. Wu Lei (2020) conducted a 16-week teaching research in Harbin's High School. By applying the method of genre

analysis and conducting targeted continuation writing teaching for reading materials of different genres, students' English writing ability has been improved to a certain extent. During the writing process, students will write based on the characteristics of different genres, making the content of their writing more rich and substantial, and the structure more reasonable and logical. Meanwhile, students also pay more attention to the use of wording and grammar. The teaching of continuation writing from the perspective of genre has, to a certain extent, changed students' attitudes towards English writing and enhanced their interest and sense of achievement in writing. Lin Lingling (2021) pointed out that there are problems in the current teaching of continuation writing of high school English in terms of the coherence of article plots and the themes of continuation content, and proposed some practical strategies for the teaching mode of continuation writing of high school English, including reasonable material selection to stimulate students' interest in reading, and narrowing the distance between students and the reading content through pre-reading introduction; Strategies such as clarifying the structure and defining the outline for continuation writing by studying the article, imitating language and expression methods through continuation writing, and improving students' ability to apply continuation writing through post-writing evaluation. Nguyen (2022) investigated the views of 103 11th-grade students on the impact of integrating reading and writing on their writing abilities. The research results indicated that students were highly aware of the positive effects of incorporating reading and writing into writing classes on language, organization, content, communication, evaluation, and effectiveness.

In general, foreign scholars have focused more on the close connection between reading and writing, exploring their mutual promotion and effective integration, and have achieved significant results. Since its proposal, read-and-write-follow-up has attracted the attention of many scholars and front-line teachers in China and has become a research hotspot. However, most of the research is theoretical, and there is a lack of studies on how to effectively implement read-and-write-follow-up in high school English classes and improve students' read-and-write-follow-up abilities. There is also a lack of research on applying other theories to read-and-write-follow-up instruction, which requires further investigation.

3. Problems in the Teaching of English Continuation Writing

3.1. Single Teaching Method

In current teaching, some teachers usually choose high-scoring model essays or excellent continuation compositions as demonstrations in English classes, allowing students to learn the language expression, logical structure and plot development in the model essays. Yang Ning once pointed out in his research that when most front-line English teachers first come into contact with this type of question, they do not study it deeply enough. In their daily teaching, they still follow the traditional

writing teaching mode, with the aim of taking exams, requiring students to memorize by rote and imitate model essays.

Although learning through model essays can help students quickly master some high-frequency sentence patterns and common writing rules, it has certain limitations. On the one hand, the model essay only provides a continuation example in a specific situation and cannot cover all possible continuation scenarios and contents. When students are confronted with the ever-changing continuation questions of the new college entrance examination, it is difficult for them to apply the learned content flexibly. On the other hand, students are accustomed to relying on fixed writing frameworks and lack independent thinking about the development of content and plot. Relying solely on the “standard answers” provided by teachers leads to their language expression tending to be monotonous and lacking in variation. This makes it impossible to cultivate their diverse expression methods and makes it difficult for them to adapt to the requirements of the new college entrance examination for flexible use of language and content innovation.

3.2. Single Subject and Form of Teaching Evaluation

Evaluation is an important part of the English continuation writing task. The evaluation methods advocated by the new curriculum standards, which involve multiple subjects and diverse forms, can have a positive feedback effect on English teaching and achieve the effect of promoting learning and teaching through evaluation. In the current English continuation writing task, many teachers only adopt the “teacher-dominated” evaluation model, and the evaluation subjects and forms are relatively single. Under this mode, students are in a passive position for a long time and have no opportunity to truly participate in the evaluation activities. This not only affects their enthusiasm and initiative in writing, but also is not conducive to the improvement of continuation writing skills.

3.3. Deficiency in Cognitive Abilities

The English continuation writing is a semi-open composition. Students should fully exert their imagination and follow the original author’s train of thought to advance the story based on the plot of the previous text. However, for most high school students, it is quite challenging to ensure that the produced content is innovative. It can be seen that this requires students to possess abilities such as analysis, judgment, generalization, reasoning and innovation, and has a relatively high demand for students’ thinking ability, which is precisely what most high school students lack. In writing, students often feel at a loss for words and don’t know how to express themselves using the words they have learned. When conceiving the development of the story plot, they have difficulty diverging their thinking and usually follow the rules. The plots of the articles they write are all the same and lack innovation. Therefore, many students feel overwhelmed when continuing to write, and it is dif-

difficult for them to produce an article that is logically reasonable, has diverse sentence patterns and vivid plots.

4. Teaching Strategies for the English Continuation Writing Task

4.1. Adopting the Situational Teaching Method

Situational teaching method refers to a method that utilizes the external environment to achieve resonance with students' moods. Teachers should create proper situations in the classroom. First of all, teachers should design a complete story situation based on the text or reading materials in the teaching materials. This situation should cover the core content and theme of the original text, such as the background and main events of the story, ensuring the richness and authenticity of the details, so that students can immerse themselves in it and feel the development of the story plot. Secondly, teachers need to assign roles, allowing students to play different roles in the story, such as the protagonist, supporting roles or onlookers, to ensure that students can observe and experience the development of the story plot from different perspectives during the simulation. By using role immersion, students can play the characters in the story to experience the emotional and decision-making processes. Finally, teachers can arrange scenario simulations to transform the classroom into a story scene. Teachers need to set up corresponding props and dialogues according to different situations to ensure the authenticity and interactivity of the situations, help students immerse themselves more deeply in the story situations, stimulate students' creativity and imagination, and enhance their text understanding and language application abilities.

4.2. Carrying Out Diversified Evaluations

The English Curriculum Standards for Senior High Schools (2017 Edition) points out that teaching evaluation based on the core literacies of the English subject should focus on the diversification of evaluation subjects, the diversity of evaluation forms, the comprehensiveness of evaluation contents and the multi-dimensionality of evaluation objectives. Therefore, the evaluation of English continuation writing should take into account three forms: self-evaluation by students, peer evaluation, and teacher evaluation. It should carry out diverse, and multi-dimensional evaluations of students' works to give full play to the functions of promoting learning and teaching through evaluation.

The specific implementation is as follows. First of all, refine the scoring criteria to provide detailed and clear basis for students' self-assessment and peer assessment. Teachers need to refine the scoring criteria for the continuation task of the college entrance examination, guide students to study and understand the scoring criteria and evaluation contents of each level of the continuation task, provide students with more direct writing guidance, and offer references for subsequent evaluation activi-

ties. Secondly, with students as the main body, emphasis should be placed on the diversification of evaluation subjects. The evaluation model dominated by teachers is not conducive to mobilizing students' enthusiasm and initiative, and affects the improvement of students' continuation writing skills. What's more, observe from multiple dimensions and emphasize the comprehensiveness of the evaluation content. The Examination Instructions point out that the evaluation of continuation writing should cover four aspects: organizational structure, content, language and logical connection. After completing the continuation task, teachers should guide students to evaluate these four observation dimensions, grasp the advantages and disadvantages of the article from multiple aspects, and polish the article. Finally, pay attention to the diversification of evaluation forms and construct a three-dimensional interactive model. The traditional evaluation form of writing teaching is relatively simple, mainly based on teacher evaluation, lacking self-evaluation by students and peer evaluation. Therefore, only by constructing a three-dimensional interactive evaluation model and forming comprehensive and detailed feedback can the promoting effect of evaluation on reading and writing teaching be exerted.

Teachers should focus on cultivating students' awareness of different text types in reading and writing instruction, enabling them to understand the characteristics of various text types and develop the ability to distinguish between them. Currently, most of the reading materials for continuation writing are narrative texts. Grasping the six elements contained in a narrative text, namely when, where, why, what, who, and how, is crucial for maintaining consistency in text style. Taking the continuation writing task of the college entrance examination "Halloween Pumpkin Fun" as an example, the text includes four elements: when, who, where, and why, and also touches upon some aspects of what, but is lacking the how element, that is, the description of the author's situation trapped in the pumpkin and the response after the video was posted online. Readers should supplement this part of the information. Therefore, conducting continuation writing task based on the six elements can not only enrich the story plot but also help maintain consistency in text style. From the linguistic perspective, register refers to the way of writing or speaking.

At present, most high school students are rather weak in register awareness and find it difficult to achieve consistency in register style with the original text during continuation writing. In reading and writing instruction, teachers should strengthen the cultivation of students' register awareness, which can be achieved by analyzing rhetorical devices, good words and sentences to enhance students' sensitivity to the register of the text. After training, students should have a preliminary awareness of register and be able to actively observe and independently analyze the word choice and sentence structure of a text when encountering it, summarize its register characteristics, and use this as a reference for continuation writing. For instance, the vocabulary used in the real test is of low difficulty and contains no rare words. The

continuation writing should also follow this feature and avoid using difficult and rare words as much as possible. The real test uses a variety of sentence patterns, and during continuation writing, students can imitate these sentence structures to write articles with a combination of long and short sentences and rich diversity. On the basis of achieving consistency in text style and register style with the original text, students should also strive for consistency in expression style. Many students, even when they know the content to write, find it difficult to express it in their own words, resulting in empty and dull content and a lack of certain expression techniques.

Taking the test material "Halloween Pumpkin Fun" as an example, based on the first sentence of each paragraph, students have clearly understood that the content to be written includes "the author's situation trapped in the pumpkin" and "the situation after the video was posted online", but few students can describe these contents in detail, that is, they lack detailed descriptions, which stems from their weak language expression ability. In contrast, the language expression of the original text, the author uses the first-person monologue ("I'm going to set it down, now.") The passage meticulously describes the narrator's state and emotional changes from multiple perspectives such as appearance ("bent over and pressed", "pulled"), actions, and psychology ("My excitement was short-lived", "got into panic"), making readers feel as if they were there. This is something worth learning from for readers. Therefore, students can imitate the expression techniques of the test questions to achieve a unified style with the original text.

4.3. Cultivating Students' Continuous Writing Thinking Ability

Teachers can adhere to problem-driven teaching in the teaching process. Problem-driven means that teachers set questions in different teaching links and run through the entire process of reading and continuation writing teaching in the form of questions. The question chain is a form of continuation scaffold. Students read under the drive of questions, using reading skills such as skimming and scanning to find key words and sentences, gradually clarify character relationships, plot development, logical structure and deepen their understanding of the article. Taking the continuation task of the "Halloween Pumpkin Fun Story" in the January 2021 Zhejiang College Entrance Examination paper as an example, teachers can set the following questions in the pre-reading stage to promote students' understanding and thinking about the article. What are the main characters of this story? What happened to the author? Why did it happen? Then, combined with the first sentence of the paragraph given in the real test questions, "I was stuck for five or six minutes though it felt much longer." That video was posted online the day before Halloween. Teachers can expand students' continuation thinking through the following questions: How did the author feel when stuck in the pumpkin? How did the author finally get out? What was people's response to the video? How did the author and his

/ her family feel about the video? Students conceive the development of the story plot while thinking about problems and complete the continuation of the story. Secondly, teachers can cultivate students' thinking qualities by having them construct mind maps. Mind mapping is a tool for organizing and processing information. Applying it in discourse teaching can effectively improve students' reading comprehension ability. Taking the fourth unit "The Night The Earth Didn't Sleep" in the first compulsory course of the People's Education Edition as an example. Teachers can guide students to draw mind maps from three aspects: before, during and after the earthquake, sort out the information of the article, and understand and experience the emotions therein. Based on the mind map, teachers can appropriately adjust the content of the text, add the first sentence of a paragraph, and use it as the continuation material, allowing students to conduct continuation training from the perspective of rescuers or survivors, and make full use of the textbook resources. Teachers can make appropriate adjustments to the last two paragraphs of the original text and design the opening sentence of the continuation from the rescuer's perspective, for example: I was completely shocked by what I saw. After days of efforts, I was delighted that the Tangshan city began to revive and breathe again. Teachers can guide students to continue writing based on it.

5. Conclusion

To sum up, under the background of the new college entrance examination, teachers can help students grasp the key points of continuation and stimulate their creative enthusiasm by creating scenarios, conducting various evaluations, improving students' language imitation ability and cultivating students' continuation thinking in the teaching of high school English continuation writing. Meanwhile, the above strategies can help students clarify the direction of continuation writing, enhance the effect of continuation writing, and promote their development in multiple aspects such as language knowledge, logical thinking, and emotional expression. Teachers should constantly explore teaching strategies in the teaching process to lay a solid foundation for students to deal with the English continuation writing, and also provide strong support for the improvement of high school English teaching quality, promoting the continuous innovation and progress of English teaching under the background of the new college entrance examination.

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