



The Application of Discourse Analysis in English Continuation Writing in Senior High Schools—A Case Study of 2025 National College Entrance Examination New Curriculum Standard Volume II

Jia Liu

School of Foreign Languages, China West Normal University, Nanchong 637009, China

Email: 1915148619@qq.com

How to cite this paper: Liu, J. (2026). The application of discourse analysis in English continuation writing in senior high schools—A case study of 2025 National College Entrance Examination New Curriculum Standard Volume II. *Education and Social Work*, 4(2), 96–106. ISSN Print: 3079-515X, ISSN Online: 3079-5168.

<https://doi.org/10.63313/ESW.9133>

Published: 2026-05-30

Copyright © 2026 by author(s) and

Erytis Publishing Limited.

This work is licensed under the Creative

Commons Attribution International

License (CC BY 4.0).

<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>



Abstract

This paper focuses on the application of discourse analysis theory in the continuum writing in high school English, and takes The English Language Test of the 2025 National College Entrance Examination (New Curriculum Standard, National Volume II) as a case study. Firstly, the development of discourse analysis theory and the related background of continuum writing are sorted out, and the core concepts of discourse, discourse analysis and continuum writing are clarified. Then, this is followed by an in-depth analysis of the discourse of continuum writing in terms of the dimensions of discourse patterns and articulatory coherence. In terms of discourse patterns, the discourse takes the “problem-solving mode” as the core, supplemented by narrative mode, and constructs narrative conflict through the chain of problem generation—strategy evolution—new problem derivation, which provides a logical guide for the continuation of the writing; in terms of articulation and coherence, the discourse's surface structural connection and deep semantic connection are analyzed from the means of denotation, logical connection, and lexical articulation. The results of the study show that the theory of discourse analysis can effectively guide students to grasp the logic and discourse features of reading and writing. Finally, the results of the study suggest teaching implications, emphasizing the incorporation of discourse analysis in teaching to improve students' discourse comprehension, logical thinking and comprehensive language use ability, and to implement the core literacy requirements of the new curriculum standards.

Keywords

Discourse Analysis; Continuum Writing; Discourse Patterns; Articulation; Coherence

1. Introduction

Discourse analysis theory has demonstrated strong explanatory power and guiding force in English teaching, especially in reading and writing instruction. As early as the 1990s, Chinese scholar Tang Jinxiang linked discourse analysis to language teaching, arguing that daily language teaching should constantly absorb new achievements and perspectives of discourse analysis to compensate for the deficiencies of traditional language teaching (Tang, 1996). Pan Shaozhang applied this theory to writing research, pointing out that writing knowledge and skills are inseparable from discourse analysis (Pan, 1993). In the 21st century, Hu Zhuanglin explored the application of discourse analysis in writing teaching, stressing the importance of genre analysis (Hu, 2001). In recent years, research enthusiasm has remained high, and Chen Song and Liu Dan (2024) further discussed specific strategies of discourse analysis in practical writing teaching. Meanwhile, with the implementation of the Curriculum Standards for Senior High School English (2017 Edition, 2020 Revision) (hereinafter referred to as the Curriculum Standards), senior high school English education in China is undergoing a profound transformation from focusing on the transmission of linguistic knowledge to core literacy orientation (Ministry of Education, 2020). The new curriculum standard defines four core competencies of English discipline, focusing on cultivating students' comprehensive language application ability. Continuation writing integrates in-depth reading comprehension and creative language production, capable of developing diverse thinking and linguistic skills, which aligns with curriculum education concepts. First adopted in Zhejiang's National College Entrance Examination (NCEE), this question type was officially introduced to Sichuan NCEE in 2025. Compared with conventional practical writing, it sets higher requirements on text interpretation, logical construction and language output. Serving as an advanced assessment of students' comprehensive language proficiency, it also poses a major difficulty in senior high school English teaching. In view of this, a growing number of scholars have noticed the important role of discourse analysis in English continuation writing. At the same time, with the promulgation and implementation of the new Curriculum Standards and its emphasis on cultivating students' comprehensive language application ability, research on the combination of discourse analysis and continuation writing is on the rise. This study focuses on the application of discourse analysis theory in senior high school English continuation writing teaching, and takes the continuation writing task in the 2025 NCEE English (New Curriculum Standard, Volume II) as a case for discussion.

2. Theoretical Foundations

2.1. Discourse Analysis

Discourse analysis is one of the core research directions in linguistics. Discourse analysis first appeared in an article entitled Discourse Analysis published by

Z.Harris in *Language* in 1952 (Harris, 1952). Discourse analysis based on systemic functional linguistics has also been developing continuously (Halliday, 2004). In theoretical construction, systemic functional linguistics has been constantly improving its theoretical system (Martin & Rose, 2003), which has promoted the development of discourse analysis to a certain extent. Later, many scholars at home and abroad absorbed interdisciplinary research achievements to enrich the perspectives and theories of discourse analysis. A discourse can be analyzed from the perspectives of phonetics, writing, discourse structure, cohesion and coherence, so there is no unified regulation on the perspectives of discourse analysis. This study will analyze the 2025 NCEE (New Curriculum Standard, Volume II) continuation writing discourse from discourse pattern analysis and cohesion and coherence in discourse analysis theory.

2.2. Continuation Writing

Wang Chuming is the pioneer and founder of the continuation writing teaching method in China's foreign language education circle. In the 1990s, Wang Chuming, Niu Ruiying and others proposed the Writing Length Approach, which often encourages students to supplement content and write long essays through continuation writing (Wang et al., 2000). Based on the interactive alignment model by Pickering and Garrod (2004), Wang Chuming first put forward the concept of "continuation writing" in *Continuation Writing—An Effective Method to Improve Foreign Language Learning Efficiency*. Wang Chuming holds that continuation writing is a task type that requires learners to continue writing and complete the text based on plot development and linguistic features after reading a foreign language material with an incomplete ending (Wang, 2012).

According to the Examination Center of the Ministry of Education (Examination Center of the Ministry of Education, 2015), the reading material of continuation writing in the new NCEE is limited to no more than 350 words. Candidates are required to read the preceding text and continue writing two paragraphs according to the given topic sentences, with a total of about 150 words. Based on the 2025 NCEE (New Curriculum Standard, Volume II) continuation writing task, this study conducts discourse analysis mainly including discourse pattern analysis, discourse cohesion and coherence, so as to explore the specific guiding role of discourse analysis theory in continuation writing.

3. Discourse Analysis of the 2025 NCEE (New Curriculum Standard, Volume II) Continuation Writing

3.1. Discourse Pattern Analysis

Discourse pattern analysis is a study focusing on the macro-structure of discourse, a method of classifying discourse from the perspective of its form and actual semantic content structure, and a high-level semantic structure. According to Hoey (1983)

and McCarthy (1991), discourse patterns can be classified into problem-solution pattern, claim-counterclaim pattern, narrative pattern, question-answer pattern and general-specific pattern. The core discourse pattern adopted by the 2025 NCEE (New Curriculum Standard, Volume II) continuation writing discourse is the problem-solution pattern, which is the most prominent and dominant pattern of this discourse, and the secondary pattern involved is the narrative pattern.

3.1.1. Problem-Solution Pattern

The text constructs a tense narrative conflict through the problem-solution chain. Figure 1 clearly shows the specific process of the event. The pronunciation of Chinese international student Qiuyu's name poses a challenge for native English speakers. Faced with this dilemma, the author's coping strategy evolved over time: initially, she repeatedly corrected the pronunciation, but the resulting awkwardness in the classroom led to psychological distress; ultimately, to avoid social discomfort, she chose to passively compromise. However, this compromise creates a new problem: the cultural significance embedded in her name—the poetic imagery of “Qiuyu”—is lost, and she misses an opportunity to share her cultural identity. This creates a conflict between “convenient communication” and “cultural transmission,” laying the groundwork for a key conflict in the sequel. The sequel section uses the given sentences “In a class discussion, I was invited to explain the meaning of my name.” and “Many of my classmates got interested and came up to me after class.” The core task is to restore the balance between communication convenience and cultural identity by sharing the cultural significance of the name, demonstrating how the protagonist seizes the opportunity to convey cultural context, gains understanding and resonance from classmates, regains cultural confidence, and completes the “problem—solution” cycle, thereby echoing the theme of cultural identity.

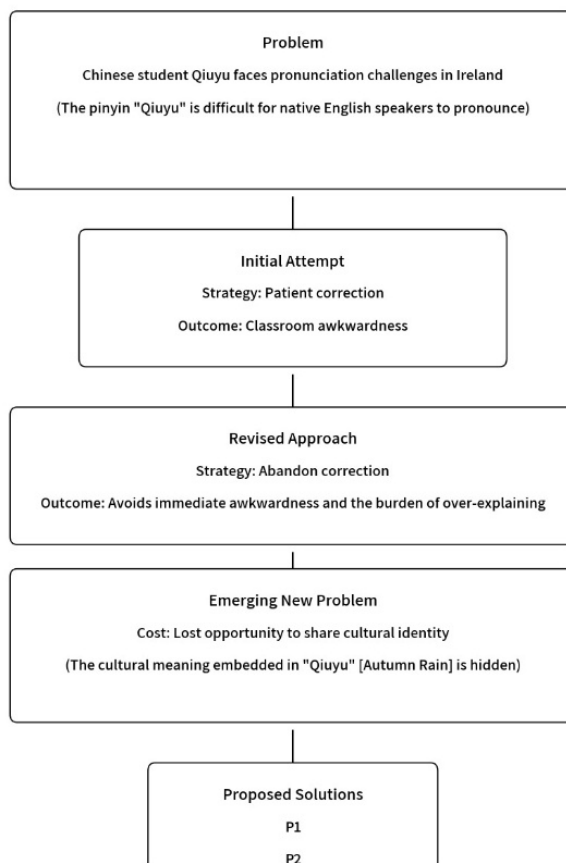


Figure 1. Problem-solution chain.

3.1.2. Narrative Pattern

The narrative pattern in discourse analysis is a theoretical framework for deconstructing textual narrative structure and meaning generation mechanism, whose core is to reveal how narratives convey information, emotions and values through linguistic organization. Different schools and theories have different focuses on the construction of narrative patterns. American linguist William Labov divides a complete narrative structure into six elements: pointing, orientation, complicating action, evaluation, resolution and coda, known as Labov's narrative model (Labov, 1972). This paper analyzes the 2025 NCEE (New Curriculum Standard, Volume II) continuation writing discourse based on Labov's narrative model. Figure 2 clearly shows the complete structure and development process of the event.

- **Pointing:** The discourse directly raises the topic with the high-frequency question "What is your name?", establishing the name as the core theme of cultural conflict and identity.
- **Orientation:** The subsequent explanation of the differences between Chinese

and English pronunciation constitutes the orientation, providing background for the pronunciation dilemma of the name Qiuyu.

- Complicating action: The main event—the scene where the professor repeatedly tries and finally fails to pronounce the name in class—is the complicating action, pushing the narrative conflict to the climax.
- Evaluation: The psychological description of the author choosing to stop correcting and ending the embarrassment with a shrug, as well as the reflection of “losing something more important”, constitute the deep evaluation, profoundly revealing the hidden worry of cultural identity caused by compromise.
- Resolution: At the beginning of the continuation paragraphs, the original discourse provides two prompts Paragraph 1 and Paragraph 2, which jointly point to the potential resolution direction and reserve space for the continuation writer to construct the coda—the author may re-examine and actively share her cultural identity in the process of classmates taking the initiative to understand the meaning of her name, realizing the response and transcendence to the opening dilemma.

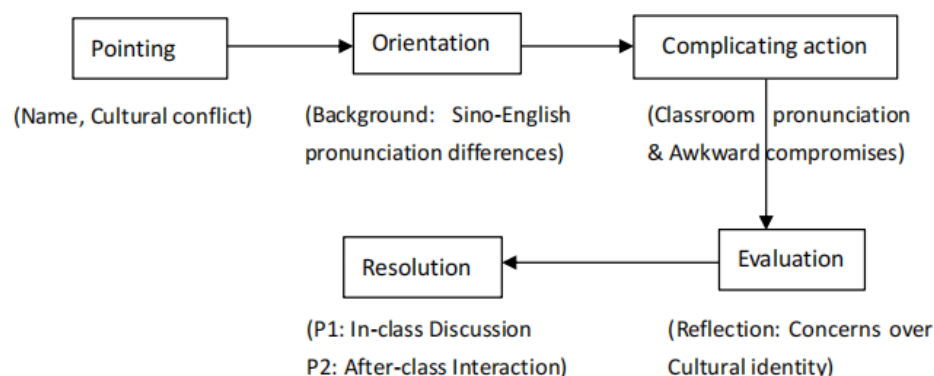


Figure 2. The Event process based on Labov's narrative model.

3.2. Cohesion and Coherence Analysis

3.2.1. Personal Reference

Personal reference is mainly used to track the core characters, the author and other participants in the discourse, including professors, classmates, etc. It is a key means to construct narrative perspective and character relationship network. Functional linguists Halliday and Hasan (2001) include personal pronouns, possessive pronouns and the general one in personal reference. The full text is consistently narrated in the first person I, forming a clear main line. Expressions such as “It was

the first challenge I encountered...”, “Every time I gave a self-introduction, I had to explain...”, “My given name Qiuyu”, “I feared...”, “I realized...”, “I shrugged...”, “I forced...”, “I stopped...”, “I just smiled...” always narrate experiences, feelings, behaviors and decisions from the author’s perspective, closely integrating the identities of narrator and experiencer, forming a strong subjective narrative flow and emotional main line, which is the core skeleton of discourse coherence and keeps readers following the author’s perspective.

In addition to the first person, many third-person pronouns appear in the text.

- “...for native speakers of English, some Chinese words are rather difficult to pronounce. My given name Qiuyu..., for instance, happened to be a great challenge for many of them.” Here they refers to native speakers of English in the previous sentence, avoiding repetition and concisely establishing the connection between native speakers and those who struggle with pronunciation.
- “Every time I gave a self-introduction, I had to explain... at least five times, yet they still could not say it...” Here they refers to those who listen to the author’s self-introduction and try to pronounce the name, usually new interlocutors or audiences.
- “...the professor tried repeating my name after me... in front of thirty classmates. I really did not know whether I should continue correcting him...” Here him refers to the professor mentioned in the previous sentence, clearly indicating the object of correction.

The use of personal reference enables readers to clearly distinguish the narrative subject from other participants and clarify character relationships. By using personal pronouns to refer to nouns already mentioned in the previous text, redundant repetition is avoided, making the writing fluent and helping readers track the roles of different characters in the event.

3.2.2. Demonstrative Reference

Demonstrative reference is mainly used to refer to events, situations, methods, abstract concepts, etc. mentioned in the discourse. It connects preceding and following concepts or events through demonstratives. Demonstrative reference is a grammatical cohesive device realized by pronouns such as this, that, these, such (Ding et al., 2009). The demonstratives used in this discourse include that, this, the.

- “After that incident, I stopped acting as a Chinese teacher.” Here “that incident” refers to the whole embarrassing event described in detail in the previous text. This phrase is an important bridge connecting the third paragraph and the second paragraph, guiding readers’ attention from the previous detailed description to the consequences of the event and greatly enhancing logical coherence between paragraphs.
- “Instead of correcting others... I just smiled and nodded approvingly.

This approach spared me the discomfort...” Here “This approach” refers to the new strategy of “just smiled and nodded approvingly” described in the previous sentence. It closely follows the specific behavior description, referring to and summarizing this behavior mode, and then the sentence turns to discuss the result of this mode, namely “spared me the discomfort”. The use of “This” tightly connects the two information units of behavior and effect, making the internal logic of the sentence clear and fluent.

- The definite article “the” is often used to refer to things or concepts already mentioned in the discourse or unique/specific in the context. It is a demonstrative itself, equivalent to that but weaker and more common. “I realized that if I didn't stop, the entire lecture would be ruined.” Here “the” refers to the “lecture” mentioned above. “the opportunity to share a small part of my cultural identity” Here “the” refers to the specific opportunity to share culture by correcting pronunciation mentioned earlier. “the meaning of my name” In the prompt of Paragraph 1, “the” refers to the specific meaning of the name “Qiuyu”, which is inherent in the name and clear in the context.

In short, the use of the relies on readers’ understanding of the preceding text or shared knowledge, which forces readers to actively establish semantic connections between preceding and following texts, thus enhancing the overall integrity and coherence of the discourse and avoiding unnecessary repetition. Personal reference and demonstrative reference achieve close cohesion between sentences and paragraphs on the linguistic surface, and support the coherence and logic of the narrative in deep meaning, laying a semantic and logical foundation for the subsequent continuation—the scene of explaining the name meaning prompted by Paragraph 1 and Paragraph 2. Therefore, candidates need to continue this reference mode in continuation writing, especially the first person I and possible demonstratives, to maintain the overall coherence of the discourse.

3.2.3. Logical Conjunction

Hu Zhuanglin (1996) believed that logical conjunction focuses more on semantics, because the means of connection are not limited to conjunctions in traditional grammar, but can also be realized through adverbs, prepositional phrases and even zero form. Through logical conjunction, people can grasp the connection between sentences and predict the possible semantics of the next sentence. The following is an analysis of logical conjunctions in the 2025 NCEE (New Curriculum Standard, Volume II) continuation writing discourse.

- “What is your name?” is a question most frequently asked when people meet for the first time. But for me, it was the first challenge...” The conjunction “But” makes a strong contrast between the general situation

and the author's specific experience. This conjunction lays the foundation of narrative tension between universality and individual particularity, and is a key connection for theme introduction and situation construction.

- "...some Chinese words are rather difficult to pronounce. For instance, my given name Qiuyu... happened to be a great challenge..." "For instance" is used to transition from general to specific, clearly indicating that the previous sentence is a general viewpoint and the next sentence is a specific example. It strengthens the argument and naturally shifts the focus of discussion to the author himself, paving the way for the subsequent narration of personal experience.
- "Once in a lecture, the professor tried repeating my name..." "Once" marks the time point of a specific event. It switches from the universal difficult scene introduced by "Every time" to describing a specific and memorable class event. This temporal conjunction leads to the climax of the discourse, enabling the narrative to move from background introduction to specific plot development.
- "This approach spared me the discomfort of having to over-explain. However, I soon found that by doing so, I might be losing something more important..." "However" leads to the second key logical turning point and ideological sublimation of the discourse. It marks a major shift in the narrator's thinking, from focusing on superficial social convenience to paying attention to the intrinsic value of cultural identity, promoting the deepening of the theme.

3.2.4. Lexical Cohesion

Lexical cohesion refers to the use of words with semantic connections in the discourse to establish a semantic chain running through the discourse and ensure discourse coherence. For simplicity of classification, this paper synthesizes the classification methods of Halliday (1976) and Hu Zhuanglin (1994), mainly analyzing reiteration and synonymy or near-synonymy in lexical cohesion.

Reiteration refers to the repeated occurrence of the same word or root (Halliday & Hasan, 1976). The core word name appears with high frequency: your name, my name, pronounce my name, repeating my name, meaning of my name, forming the most core lexical chain. It constantly emphasizes the theme and reminds readers that the core object of the discourse is "name". All events and reflections revolve around it, ensuring a high concentration and unity of the theme. In addition, pronounce and its related forms also appear repeatedly: pronunciation system, difficult to pronounce, pronounce my name, how to pronounce, etc., constructing the core problem domain of "pronunciation", focusing on the specific manifestation of

the conflict, and closely interweaving with the name chain to jointly define the core contradiction.

Synonymy or near-synonymy refers to words with the same or similar meanings. Difficult, challenge, struggling in the text all express the semantics of difficulty and effort, describing the intensity of pronunciation obstacles and others' coping status from multiple perspectives, avoiding monotonous repetition, enriching expression while continuously strengthening the core problem. International student, Chinese refer to the author's identity in different contexts, jointly constructing the author's role positioning as the background basis of her experiences and feelings. Discomfort, awkward moment describe embarrassing and uncomfortable feelings, depicting the narrator's psychological experience in the conflict situation and explaining part of the reasons for her subsequent behaviors.

Lexical cohesion enhances the overall sense and comprehensibility of the discourse. Extensive semantic connections established between lexical items through reiteration and synonymy form logical chains at the lexical level, enabling readers to track the development of topics and the flow of meaning more smoothly, greatly enhancing the overall coherence and comprehensibility of the discourse. The extension of lexical chains also connects different paragraphs: correct, explain mentioned in previous paragraphs echo explain the meaning in the prompt of Paragraph 1, and share cultural identity echoes got interested, came up to me in the prompt of Paragraph 2, providing writing clues for students' continuation content. In this way, students can grasp the clues and know how to continue writing.

4. Conclusion and Teaching Implications

Taking the 2025 NCEE English (New Curriculum Standard, Volume II) continuation writing discourse as a case, this study systematically explores the application path of discourse analysis theory in senior high school English continuation writing teaching. Through deconstructing the discourse from the dimensions of discourse patterns, cohesion and coherence, it reveals the construction mode of the core problem-solution logic, the promotion law of narrative structure, and the supporting role of cohesive devices for discourse integrity in continuation writing tasks.

In actual teaching, teachers can integrate core analysis dimensions such as discourse patterns, cohesion and coherence into daily teaching and examination preparation training, guiding students to go beyond the superficial understanding of the text and gain insight into its internal organizational mechanism and logical context. This will not only help students create coherent and logically rigorous content in continuation writing tasks, but also fundamentally improve their discourse comprehension ability, logical thinking ability and comprehensive language application ability, so as to effectively implement the cultivation requirements of English core literacy in the Curriculum Standards for Senior High School English.

References

- [1] Harris, Z. (1952). Discourse analysis. *Language*, 28, 1–30.
- [2] Halliday, M. A. K. (2004). *An introduction to systemic functional grammar* (3rd ed.). Arnold.
- [3] Hoey, M. P. (1983). *On the surface of discourse*. George Allen & Unwin.
- [4] Halliday, M. A. K., & Hasan, R. (1976). *Cohesion in English*. Longman.
- [5] Halliday, M. A. K., & Hasan, R. (2001). *Cohesion in English*. Foreign Language Teaching and Research Press.
- [6] Martin, J. R., & Rose, D. (2003). *Working with discourse: Meaning beyond the clause*. Continuum.
- [7] Labov, W. (1972). *Language in the inner city*. University of Pennsylvania Press.
- [8] McCarthy, M. (1991). *Discourse analysis for language teachers*. Cambridge University Press.
- [9] Pickering, M. J., & Garrod, S. (2004). The interactive-alignment model: Developments and refinements—Response. *Behavioral and Brain Sciences*, 27(2), 212–225.
- [10] Chen, S., & Liu, D. (2024). A study of teaching strategies for practical writing in senior high school English based on functional discourse analysis. *Research on Primary and Secondary School English Teaching and Research*, 12, 39–43.
- [11] Ding, W. L., Chen, W. C., & Che, J. (2009). *Text theory and English reading teaching*. World Publishing Corporation.
- [12] Hu, Z. L. (2001). Application of discourse analysis to language teaching. *Foreign Language Education*, 1, 3–10.
- [13] Hu, Z. L. (1996). Reflections on a multi-layered model of textual cohesion. *Journal of Foreign Languages*, 1, 1–8.
- [14] Hu, Z. L. (1994). *Cohesion and coherence in text*. Shanghai Foreign Language Education Press.
- [15] Examination Center of the Ministry of Education. (2015). *Examination specifications for English subject of the national college entrance examination (trial for comprehensive reform provinces)* (1st ed.). Higher Education Press.
- [16] Pan, S. Z. (1993). Discourse analysis and writing teaching. *Shandong Foreign Language Teaching Journal*, 1, 74–76.
- [17] Tang, J. X. (1996). Discourse analysis and language teaching. *Foreign Language Education*, 3, 30–35.
- [18] Wang, C. M., Niu, R. Y., & Zheng, X. X. (2000). Promote learning through writing: An experiment in English writing teaching reform. *Foreign Language Teaching and Research*, 3, 207–212.
- [19] Ministry of Education of the People's Republic of China. (2020). *Curriculum standards for senior high school English*. People's Education Press.