

Research on the Teaching Strategies of Senior High School English Continuous Writing Task

Lan Susu

School of Foreign Languages, Gannan Normal University, Ganzhou, Jiangxi, 341000, China

Abstract: *Considering the poor quality of English teaching in China, many domestic experts and scholars have spared no effort to explore effective teaching methods for foreign language teaching. The continuous writing task proposed by Wang Chuming in 2012 has been confirmed by a large number of experts and scholars from the theoretical and practical aspects of its excellent learning-promoting effect. In order to improve the quality of English teaching in our country, continuous writing task has gradually been adopted in the English writing questions of the New college entrance examination in various provinces. However, the new writing question type puts forward higher writing requirements for students' writing ability, thus this new writing question type is a new challenge for students. There are a series of problems in the students' continuous writing task, such as deviant theme and inconsistent continuous content with the given material gist; simple, bland and illogical continuous writing plots; improper use of vocabulary and grammar and confusing language expression, etc. In order to enhance students' continuous writing task performance, the author proposes three effective teaching strategies: firstly, analyse the original text carefully and focus on synergy with the original text and the coherence of the whole text; secondly, excavate the original text to enrich language expression; thirdly, pay attention to multiple evaluation methods to form a multidimensional interactive evaluation mode.*

Keywords: *English writing; continuous writing task; teaching strategies*

1. Introduction

As an international language, the importance of English is self-evident, so our country has always attached great importance to English teaching all the time. Many domestic English teaching experts have spared no effort to study this, but the quality of English teaching in our country is still unsatisfactory. From the perspective of teaching, there are two prominent problems in English teaching in our country. First, there exists the problem of separation of learning and use in the process of English teaching. "Separation of learning from use" refers to the problem of the disconnect between input and output in the English teaching model. It is one of the most essential problems in foreign language teaching in China since implementing the reform and open policy, and it is also a key problem in the curriculum reform of China's basic foreign language education in the new era ^[1]. This long-standing drawback seriously affects the efficiency of foreign language teaching. Second, many English teachers focus on single language skills training rather than comprehensive language skills training in English classroom teaching. This greatly violates the teaching philosophy of the English Curriculum Standard for High School (2017 edition) ^[2], which emphasize that comprehension skills (listening, reading and viewing) and expressive skills (speaking and writing) complement and promote each other. Teachers should provide students with sufficient comprehensive language practice activities to develop students' language skills and lay the foundation for real language communication. However, these two major problem has greatly hindered the development of English teaching and learning in our country.

At the same time, the new round of curriculum reform has put forward higher requirements for talent development, and the new English curriculum standards also advocate the cultivation of students' core literacy of English subjects. Therefore, the researchers in the field of domestic English teaching and learning has to explore effective ways to improve English teaching. Wang Chuming formally proposed the concept of continuous writing task in 2012. It can effectively solve the above-mentioned problems in teaching, and also greatly meet the requirements of the new curriculum reform and new curriculum standards.

2. The overview of continuous writing task

In this task, the learners are first provided with a text that consists of a story with its ending removed. They are then required to read the text of the incomplete story and finish it through writing in the most coherent and logical way possible^[3]. Wang Chuming believes that it is a good way to improve the efficiency of foreign language learning by combining input and output, organically combining language imitation and creative use, and practically combining language learning and application^[4]. Its effect of promoting learning has been confirmed by many experts and scholars from the theoretical and practical aspects. Because of its remarkable effect of promoting learning, it has even been adopted as the category of the new college entrance examination reform. More and more provinces have adopted continuous writing task to the English writing question types of the new college entrance examination reform. In this type of writing question, candidates are provided with the language material within 350 words, and then continue to write a short essay of about 150 words according to the content of the article, the beginning of the two paragraphs and the underlined keywords to ensure that in their continuous writing task the logic level is clear, the plot development is reasonable, and the organizational structure is complete. In this task, the main content of the examination includes the following four points: (1) The degree of cohesion with the given passages and the beginning of the given paragraphs; (2) The richness of the content and the coverage of the given key words; (3) The richness and accuracy of the application of grammatical structure and vocabulary; (4) contextual coherence.

3. The current situation of senior high school English continuous writing task performance

It can be seen from the above-mentioned examination content of continuous writing task that the continuous writing task puts forward higher requirements for students' writing ability. Therefore, from students' continuous writing works, their scores are generally not high. Even many students will feel fearful and resistant when facing this new writing question type.

3.1 Deviant theme and inconsistent continuous content with the given material gist

Due to the difficulty of the reading material and students' weak reading ability, some students have difficulty in understanding or in-depth analysis of the original material and the first sentence of the continuous paragraphs, so they cannot understand the story setting, story plot, characters emotion, theme and so on, resulting in the deviation of the continuation part from the previous text. If students cannot fully understand the given material and the first sentence of the continuous paragraphs, they are extremely simple to deviate from the theme when writing.

3.2 Simple, tedious and illogical continuous plot

When some students finish their continuous writing tasks, the storylines designed are mostly simple and boring, without ups and downs and climaxes, which make readers dull [5]. Some students blindly use their imaginations to pursue novelty, and strive to achieve "innovativeness" through bizarre and exaggerated plots, so as to achieve the purpose of attracting attention. But those are mostly wrong ideas that don't follow the logic of the original text.

3.3 Improper use of vocabulary and grammar and confusing language expression

Vocabulary is the smallest unit of an article, and grammar is an important rule for combining vocabulary and constructing sentences in an article. Some students do not have good language expression ability due to their weak basic knowledge of English, or they use too many simple dialogues in their articles. Many students can't even use tenses correctly, misapply grammar and make too many wrong sentences.

4. Teaching strategies for English continuous writing task in senior high school

4.1 Analyze the original text carefully and focus on synergy with the original text and the coherence of the whole text

In the teaching process, teachers should guide students to comprehend the given reading materials in terms of theme, content and structure. Only by guiding students to deeply understand the reading

materials, can they clarify the direction of continuous writing and improve the quality of continuous writing. The focus of continuous writing task is the combination of "reading" and "writing". Reading is an important basis for continuous writing. On this basis, continuous writing task needs to maintain the effective alignment between the theme and plot in the continuous writing and the original reading materials.

Many students just browse the original article roughly and then start to write. They are unable to deeply understand the main point of the original article, which leads to the deviation of the theme of their continuous writing from the original article. In order to improve the ability of continuous writing task and develop a good thinking for continuous writing, it is necessary to teach students to read the original article in depth, sort out the writing ideas of the original article, and deeply understand the emotion of the original article, so as to lay the foundation for subsequent writing. Plot is an important element of narrative writing. Students should study the material in depth to understand the plot development of the original text, so that the content of the continuous writing task and the original text have the coherence of plot. Characters run through the development of the plot throughout the whole article. In order to make the continuation writing effective and reasonable, the characters in the continuation must be related to those in the original text, so that the plot of the continuation article is more logical.

4.2 Excavating the original expression and enriching the language expression

Language input is the basis for effective output. Many students are left speechless when confronting continuous writing task, partly because of insufficient language input. Teachers should focus on leading students to appreciate the rich verbs, vivid adjectives, etc. as well as authentic expressions and various sentence patterns in the original text, and make students master good words and sentences through anatomical analysis, imitation and creation, etc. Specifically, teachers should teach students the method of appreciation, and require students to analyze the expression of the original material from the perspectives of language content, structure, and language, which can make them understand the language expression characteristics, expression methods and expression keys of the original material. In this way, through the appreciation of the language of the original material, students will have a stronger grasp of the language characteristics of the original material.

4.3 Focus on multiple evaluation methods and form a multidimensional interactive evaluation mode

The new English curriculum standard proposes that the implementation of English curriculum evaluation should follow the principle of diversity. In the teaching process of continuous writing task, teachers can use the multidimensional interactive evaluation mode. After students complete a draft, teachers can ask students to conduct self-assessment activities. As a formative evaluation process, self-assessment can help learners set reasonable learning goals, monitor learning progress, reflect on learning results, and promote learner learning [6]. After the students have written the first draft of the continuous writing task, they'd better read it at least twice, from the perspective of the author and the reader respectively, and then check whether their writing meets the requirements according to the evaluation form for the continuous writing task provided by the teacher, and recognize the gap between their own work and the evaluation standards, thus they can make timely reflection and summarization and improvement of undiscovered problems in the writing process.

After the self-assessment, teachers can conduct peer assessment activities. The purpose of the peer-evaluation feedback mechanism is to help students enhance reader awareness, reduce writing anxiety, make up for deficiencies in their own writing, and promote the quality of text output [7]. After students complete the first draft, the teacher asks the students to form groups for mutual evaluation. The team leader organizes team members to appreciate the strengths and weaknesses of the companion's work according to the evaluation rules of continuous writing task, and form evaluation feedback on the organizational structure, content, language, logical connection and other dimensions of the companion's composition.

Finally, the evaluation of teacher-student cooperation is carried out. Based on students' evaluation opinions, teachers guide students to conduct comprehensive and detailed supplementary evaluations of their writing works according to the evaluation standards formulated before class, and give higher-level feedback suggestions. First, listen to the group report on the basis of students' self-evaluation and mutual evaluation; then select several typical ideas for continuous writing to demonstrate and comment with reference to the scoring rules and the evaluation dimensions of the multi-dimensional evaluation feedback form. Teachers mainly evaluate the content, paragraph cohesion, discourse logic and language

expression of continuous writing works, so that students can understand the advantages and disadvantages of different works. Finally, the reference model essay is presented. Both teachers and students can appreciate and comment together, focusing on the cohesion of the text and the polishing of the language, so that the students can clarify the requirements for a high-quality continuous work, discover the strengths and weaknesses of their own composition and point out the direction of their efforts to further polish their writing work.

5. Conclusion

Continuous writing task is a new writing question type, which poses a high challenge to students. When writing, students must not only have independent thinking, but also highly integrate their writing with the original text; students must not only innovate the content, but also imitate the language. In order to improve students' ability of continuous writing task, and to give play to the learning-promoting effect of continuous writing task and to change the predicament of English teaching in my country, teachers need to update their educational concepts and change their teaching ideas in a timely manner during the teaching process, and actively explore effective teaching strategy of continuous writing task.

References

- [1] Xu Hao. *Key issues in the curriculum reform of basic foreign language education in the new era—the perspective of diachronic and developmental* [J]. *Frontiers in Foreign Language Teaching Research*, 2018 (1): 3-11
- [2] Ministry of Education. 2018. *Standard of English Curriculum for General Senior High Schools (2017 Edition)* [M]. Beijing: People's Education Press.
- [3] Wang Chuming. *Content must be created and language must be imitated: the basic idea of effective foreign language teaching and learning* [J]. *Foreign Languages*, 2014(02):42-48.
- [4] Wang Chuming. *Continuation Task: An Effective Approach to Improving Foreign Language Learning Efficiency* [J]. *Foreign Language*, 2012(5):2-7.
- [5] Fang Dan. 2018. *Research on the teaching strategy of English continuous writing task in senior high school* [J]. *New Curriculum (Middle School)*, (2): 11-13.
- [6] Butler, YG & Lee, J. 2010. *The effects of self-assessment among young learners of English* [J]. *Language Testing*, 27(1): 5-31.
- [7] Stanley, J. 1992. *Coaching student writers to be effective peer evaluators* [J]. *Journal of Second Language Writing*, 1(3): 217-233.