

A Study of Strategy for Continuation Writing Rapport—“Questioning the Author” Theory Perspective

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Abstract: As a new question type of the new college entrance examination, continuation writing has gradually become another major hot spot of current teaching research. At present, the relevant researches mainly focus on the promoting effect, synergistic effect and reading materials of continuation writing, but neglect that students should also pay attention to the author's writing intention and the internal logic of style in the process of continuation writing. Therefore, with the help of the theoretical achievements of narrative research, this paper builds a rapport strategy framework from three aspects: characters, plot and language, guided by the central theme of the original text. In addition, this paper also selected a sample of continuation writing in the college entrance examination for analysis, trying to put forward some specific suggestions for the current teaching of continuation writing.

Keywords: Continuation writing; Questioning the author; Rapport strategy; Narrative analysis

1. Introduction

The key to the development of second language ability and the improvement of learning efficiency lies in the close combination of understanding and output, and the closer the combination of the two, the better the learning promotion effect (Wang Chuming, 2014)^[1]. As a method of combining reading comprehension and writing practice, continuation writing embodies the interaction and cooperation of language input and output, and has obvious effect on promoting learning. As an important index to evaluate the quality of continuation writing, language coherence is the primary concern and research focus of front-line teachers and researchers.

At present, the relevant researches mainly focus on the promoting effect, synergistic effect and reading materials of post-reading writing, but neglect that students should also pay attention to the author's writing intention and the internal logic of style in the process of post-reading writing. Therefore, this paper starts from the coherence of the language, that is, the harmonization. It emphasizes the interaction between the reader and the author in the process of writing after reading, guessing the author's writing intention, and inferring the story direction along the context of the text, so as to continue writing the text.

Studies have shown that narrative writing, as a kind of writing style describing characters' experiences and the development and changes of things, has a high frequency in students' daily life and learning, and has strong readability and continuity, which is conducive to students giving full play to their imagination and creativity in the process of continuation writing and improving their writing ability and level. Therefore, at present, the type of reading materials that are continued after reading in China is mainly narrative. Narrative is a discourse means to gain insight into cause and effect, characters, and values (Taylor, 2016)^[2]. The theory of "Questioning the Author", as a narrative research result, focuses on the interactive dialogue between readers and authors, which can provide some new ideas and ideas for students to continue writing after reading.

2. Rapport strategy for continuation writing

In 2006, Beck & McKeown (2006)^[3] proposed the “Questioning the Author” theory in response to the obstacles that textbooks often cause students to understand. The theory emphasizes on focusing students' attention on building an ideological understanding of the text, rather than thinking of

understanding as learning facts and extracting information from the text as in traditional infusing teaching. In other words, in the process of continuing to write the text, students should try to have a dialogue with the author, speculate the author's writing intention, and experience the author's writing emotion and attitude.

A reader has a thousand Hamlets, so there are naturally many interpretations of the author's intention, and these interpretations are not always correct, so we call the interpretation of the author's intention "assumed intention." This assumed intention is actively created by the reader in the process of interpreting the text in combination with his own understanding and experience, and is not necessarily the author's real intention (Gibbs, 2004)^[4]. Generally speaking, people in daily life also use the actions and micro-expressions of others to infer the intentions of others, and this reading idea is just a transfer and expansion of this behavior.

In the same way, texts, as a presentation of the author's ideas, are not always clear or complete. When students realize this, texts seem less daunting. The responsibility to understand no longer depends solely on the reader's ability to understand, but also on the writer's ability to create an understandable text. Therefore, the purpose of questioning the author and the text is not to deliberately find faults or disparage the author, but to encourage the dialogue between the author and the reader, mobilize the reader's initiative and creativity, so as to jump out of the literal meaning of the text, deeply understand the ideas expressed in the text, and enhance the ability to understand and appreciate the text (Shen Junqi, 2021)^[5].

The "Questioning the Author" theory provides a new way for students to construct their understanding of the text. In traditional teaching, students usually deal with the details of the text and interpret the author's ideas after reading the whole text, which is easy to increase the burden of reading and memory for students and weaken their understanding of the internal logic of the text. While the "Questioning the Author" theory emphasizes intervening in the reading of the text, inspiring students to think about the information in the text by asking questions such as what the author wants to express and what the author has said to make you think that way, solving problems through cooperation, and discussing the main ideas of the text to achieve understanding of the text.

In narrative discourse, the center or theme of an article is the author's intention to convey, and the author's writing intention is reflected in all aspects of narrative elements, such as characters, plots, and environment. Therefore, students need to highly integrate these elements and strengthen collaboration when they continue to write after reading. The following part is a discussion of the specific content of these elements and the relationship between them (see Figure 1).

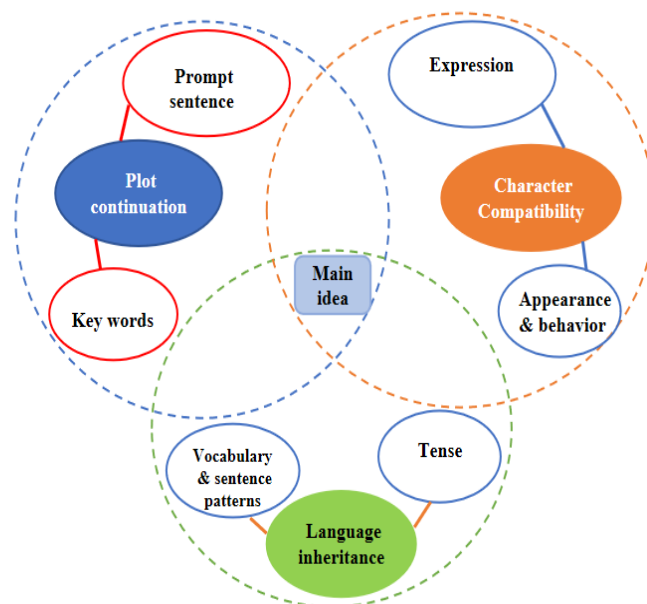


Figure 1: Model diagram of continuation writing rapport strategy

2.1. Grasp the gist

The main idea is the soul of the text, which reflects the author's thought, viewpoint or value orientation. To ensure continuity, students need to quickly and accurately capture the main idea of the text, which is the point that the author has repeatedly emphasized. Then how to extract the central theme from the narrative text with many elements? In this way, we have to start with the three elements of character, plot and language. Through the clues of the interaction between these three elements, we can roughly infer the center and theme of the article. Then, on this basis, students continue to write the content from the three aspects of plot development, character and language expression to ensure the consistency of the theme.

2.2. Continue to write content

Plot refers to the process of change in the development of events and the causal relationships implied therein. From a deep level, it is the process of conflict or problem solving (Lan, 2020)^[6]. After reading the material will usually explain the cause of the story and introduce the relevant characters before continuing to write. Students only need to continue to write the development and ending of the story on this basis. However, the addition of the plot is not completely random. Students should combine the prompt sentence at the beginning of the paragraph with the key words given by the material.

2.2.1. Prompt sentence

The first sentence of a paragraph is usually provided as a cue for continuing the reading. The first prompt sentence of a paragraph often serves as a link between the preceding and the following, which not only helps students to clarify the logical relationship of the text, but also facilitates the emergence of synergistic effects and helps students to clarify the general direction of continuing writing. In general, the first sentence of the paragraph will provide the key characters involved in the continuing part and the general direction of the story, so that students can have some freedom to play without straying from the central theme. If students can make an overall plan for the continuing content according to the prompts given, it will be helpful to speculate on the subsequent plot.

2.2.2. Key words

Keywords are the key to the continuation of the plot and direction, which suggest and limit the general direction of the story. According to the continuation writing requirements of Zhejiang paper, students need to use 5 or more key words underlined in the reading material, which often hide the prompts of the proser for the content of the continuation writing. In general, these keywords are nouns and are an important part of the reading material, running through the story. When reading the text, if students can analyze and classify the keywords given based on the theme of the article, and select the keywords that best fit the theme, they can describe the general plot of the writing.

2.3. Create an image

In narrative text, characters are not only the carriers of plot development, but also the promoters of story plot development. Therefore, in the narrative text, the author always focuses on the description and characterization of the characters. Characters are complicated, so when analyzing characters, students should not only pay attention to the characters' behavior and language, but also understand the characters' character and moral character, so as to have a more comprehensive understanding of the characters. A successful continuation writing often involves a variety of character descriptions (Rimmon-Kenan, 2002)^[7]. Therefore, in the process of writing after reading, students can shape the character image from the aspects of language, behavior, details, psychology, etc., explain the change process of the character's psychology, and create a sense of reality for the reading.

2.4. Inherit style

Writing after reading has higher requirements for students' language expression. It is necessary for the writer to diversify the language of the narrative text and enrich the theme of the story on this basis (Herman, 2010)^[8]. Students need to ensure consistency in language style and tense by constantly going back to the reading material. Therefore, when continuing to write, students need to constantly taste and

learn from the language expression style and characteristics of the text. On the premise of ensuring the accuracy of the language, they should choose and integrate the previous words and sentence patterns to enrich the diversity and interest of the language.

2.4.1. Vocabulary and sentence pattern

Continuation writing requires students to respect the author's vocabulary and sentence pattern characteristics and language style. Before continuing to write, students can mark the advanced words and rare words of the text through the form of circular sketch, and pay attention to the characteristics of the words and sentences of the previous text. At the same time, students should also mark the author's commonly used sentence patterns, have a general understanding of the proportion of simple sentences and complex sentences, summarize the author's style and language characteristics, and imitate them.

2.4.2. Consistency of tense

The stories that follow are usually written in the present to describe events that happened in the past, and the tense is dominated by the simple past tense. Therefore, students should pay attention to the consistency of tenses and ensure coherence before and after writing. At the same time, it is necessary to infer tenses with context. For example, in the verbal and psychological descriptions of characters, the simple present tense is often used.

3. Sample analysis based on the rapport strategy for continuation writing

To apply the strategy of harmonization of continuation writing, the author selected the sample of continuation writing of 2021 Zhejiang General College Entrance Examination (see the two-dimensional code at the end of the article), collected a large number of post-writing texts from a class of senior three in the internship school, and selected the most representative one as the analysis sample of this case.

3.1. Sample analysis

Zhejiang is the first province to adopt the read-after-write question type. The following is an analysis of the sample on continuation writing from the Zhejiang paper of the June 2021 college entrance examination in English (see Table 1).

Table 1: Sample analysis

Writing type	Narration
Theme	Human and society
Story fragment	The article tells the story of the author's summer vacation when he was 8 years old, and a group of children weeded the fields of the neighbors and worked to earn money.
First sentence of paragraph 1: The pay day arrived at last...	
Imago: money	
Plot: The pay day arrived, the author must do something with his money.	
First sentence of paragraph 2: I understand immediately what my parents were worried about.	
Characters: me, my parents	
Plot: Through something the author suddenly understood his parents.	
Key words	Dad, family, future, farmer, learned, tiring, growing up, realize, fair
Target theme	The meaning of growing up is to know dedication and sacrifice.

3.2. Sample case analysis

Next, the author will analyze the sample cases (see Table 2) from the aspects of language, characters, plot and theme.

Table 2: Sample case analysis

The pay day arrived at last. Holding the money I earned through two-week's hard work, I couldn't contain my joy and kept thinking the question: "how should I spend such a large sum of money?" Well, a new pair of football shoes would get me closer to my dream of being a footballer. Suddenly, Dad's words came to my mind, "I'm glad you that if you can use the money to support our family." "But it's unfair!" another voice replied. The two voices occupied my mind, and I finally decided to give half of the money. As I went home, I heard mom was explaining that they need to buy something. But they didn't have enough money. Dad sighed with a sad face.

I understood immediately what my parents were worrying about. They were talking about the fridge. It needed to be changed because it's so hard to work that food in it were likely to go bad. Kept thinking for several minutes, I came into the house and handed the overall money. "Dad, this is what I earned. You can use it to buy a fridge." With a surprised face for a moment but soon he gathered me into his arms, "You've grown up." Meanwhile, my mom gave me a hug with a proud expression. It was then that I realized what dad had accomplished were much more that what I did at my age.

3.2.1. Plot

In the first paragraph, the author focuses on my mood on the day I got paid. At the moment when I got paid for my labor, my mood was undoubtedly joyful. But recalling my father's teachings and the experience of earning money for the family, another voice rang in my ear, "You should use this money for family expenses." But the author felt that this was unfair, and the two voices kept filling my mind, making me feel tangled. It wasn't until I got home and heard that my parents couldn't buy a refrigerator because they lacked money that I began to understand. The plot of the first paragraph is more in line with the plot trend implied by the first sentence of the paragraph and the internal logic of the text, depicting my mental course from happiness to contradiction to understanding, and the connection is relatively natural. In the second paragraph, my parents are talking about refrigerators, and I was 14 years old at the time and paid to help farmers identify weeds. From what I've done it can be inferred that my pay may not be enough to afford a refrigerator. And this happened in the 1970s, when refrigerators were not yet popular, so it was not common sense. So it can be seen that the student did not interact well with the previous text, and the setting of the plot did not conform to the background of the story.

3.2.2. Character

The work focuses on my character. The first paragraph pays special attention to my psychological description, recording my mental journey after getting paid. The sentence pattern of psychological description changes from question to statement to exclamation, shaping a lively, kind and sensible me. In the description of other characters, the student described the expressions and actions of his parents in the text. The student used explain and sigh to describe the hardship of their parents in maintaining their family. When I contributed my work, the student was surprised and proud to highlight the joy and comfort of my parents.

3.2.3. Language

The study continues and retains the language style and characteristics of the text well. The long and short sentences interspersed in the text are relatively reasonable. The sentence patterns are flexible and changeable, not only have declarative sentences, but also interrogative and exclamatory sentences, such as "how should I spend such a large sum of money?" "But it's unfair!" It depicts the progression of feelings and the change of mentality as more natural. In terms of tenses, except for my psychological description, the rest of the parts are consistent with the tenses mentioned above, using the past simple tense.

3.2.4. Main idea

The continuation plot of the exercise is closely related to the main theme of the article and conforms

to the internal logic implied by the first sentence of the paragraph. The student showed the transformation of my thoughts and behaviors through a large number of psychological and action descriptions. At the end of the article, the student compares and reflects on my achievements with those of my father at the same time, which not only sublimates the main theme of the article, but also highlights the central theme of “grow up”, highlighting the moral education value of the study.

4. Teaching suggestions for continuation writing in senior high school English based on the rapport strategy

English teaching aimed at the development of students' subject core literacy should be guided by thematic meaning and supported by discourse (Ministry of Education, 2020)^[9]. Centering on the main idea of the article, the harmonious narration from the three aspects of plot, characters and language is helpful to ensure the coherence of the reading. Teachers can appropriately adopt this teaching strategy in daily English teaching, and constantly reflect, summarize and optimize this strategy in practice. The following is the teaching flow chart of the implementation of this strategy (see Figure 2).

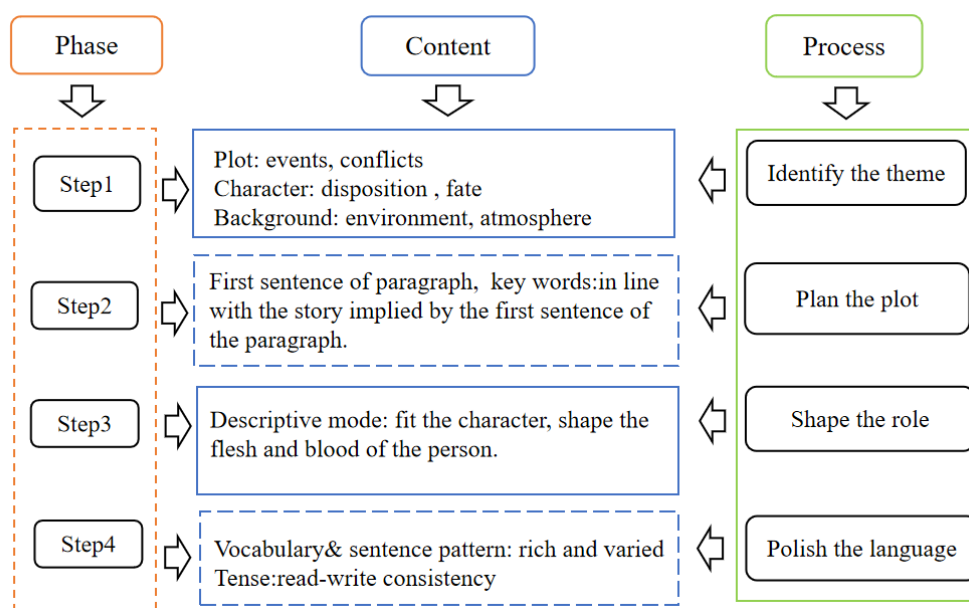


Figure 2: The teaching process of continuation writing based on harmony strategy

4.1. Summarize the main idea of the article and determine the main idea

Students can identify the central theme of an essay by looking at the story line and the author's attitude. Therefore, in the daily teaching after reading and writing, teachers can guide students to infer the main idea of the article by interpreting the title, the words of the characters in the story, the arrangement of the plot, the contradiction and conflict, the narrative perspective, the symbolic meaning of the names/places/objects of the people in the story, and the changes in the characters' personality or fate in the story (Mandell & Kirsznner, 2007)^[10].

4.2. With the help of the first prompt sentence to concatenate the key words of the article

Understanding the positioning of characters in a narrative is the key to text interpretation. Readers must build an inner mental world of characters' activity track with the transformation of the scene (Herman, 2013)^[11]. Before continuing, the teacher should not only guide the students to sort out the context of the article when reading the previous text, understand the causal chain of the story plot, but also remind the students to pay attention to the inner world of the characters, and mark the words that reflect the characters' personality and fate. In the process of continuous writing, students should give full play to their imagination and creativity, predict the general trend of the story plot combined with the first sentence, connect the key words given in the text, and constantly revise and improve.

4.3. Skillful use of descriptive techniques to enrich the image of characters

According to the constructed framework, students should fill in details and materials within the framework. As the main promoter of the plot, the character is an important support for the continuation of the plot and the expression of the theme. Teachers can guide students to identify the main characters in the continuation, and then analyze the characters' personality based on the details of the previous text, such as dialogue, movement, appearance, psychology, description, etc. At the same time, teachers can also organize students to feel the psychology and personality of characters through the form of role play and debate.

4.4. Learn from words and sentence patterns and inherit the language style

In the process of continuation writing, teachers should also guide students to pay attention to the wording and narrative style of the text based on the theme of the full text, such as whether the original text uses figures of speech, personification, parallelism and other rhetorical devices, how many major sentence patterns and sentence patterns are published and how many are in proportion, and whether tenses need to be consistent in the whole text. Teachers can list such questions on the blackboard. It is convenient for students to analyze and view.

5. Conclusion

With the continuous promotion of the new college entrance examination reform, continuation writing has become one of the main types of English questions in college entrance examination, and how to carry out post-reading writing teaching will become a hot topic in English teaching in the future. This research conforms to the trend of emphasizing integration and organizing and using complex information in the field of cognitive science in recent years (Resnick, 2015)^[12]. With reference to the teaching concepts and methods of reading that focus on dialogue exploration and deep thinking about "Questioning the Author", and guided by the central theme of the article, this paper constructs the strategy framework of harmony after reading and writing from characters, language and plot. It provides a new idea for teaching after reading and writing. If teachers can encourage and guide the dialogue between students and the author in the teaching process after reading and writing, and give students timely promotion and guidance, it will help students to deeply understand and analyze the plot and characters.

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