Analysis on the Application of the Process Genre Approach in the Teaching of Continuation Task in Senior High School

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Abstract

Continuation task is a new form of examination in the writing part of the college entrance examination in recent years. It combines reading and writing and puts forward higher requirements for students' reading and writing abilities. In order to improve the relevant abilities of senior high school students and meet the examination requirements of this writing type, it is necessary to explore more efficient teaching methods, improve the teaching innovation ability and optimize the teaching process. The process genre approach combines the advantages of previous methods and is a more comprehensive and systematic writing teaching method. This paper attempts to apply it to the teaching of continuation task, introduces the relevant background of continuation task and process genre approach, and discusses the teaching process in the classroom after the combination of the two. The author hopes that the content discussed in this paper can provide reference for front-line teachers and help them improve the teaching effect of continuation task.

Keywords

Continuation task, process genre approach, English teaching

1. Introduction

As an expressive skill, writing, due to its complexity and particularity, occupies less time and receives less attention in English teaching than reading teaching and listening teaching. In addition, the traditional writing test form of proposition composition type often fails to achieve the effect of truly improving students' writing ability due to its characteristics of formalization and standardization. In response to this phenomenon, many scholars have carried out relevant researches and tried to improve the current situation of writing teaching in China. Among them, “Xu” argument is an innovative achievement of language learning theory in recent years, which advocates promoting the improvement of learners' language application ability through “Xu”. “Xu” is the continuation of the story of the original article. In this process, it is also the imitation and learning of the original author's writing style and language use. As a result, this argument has also promoted the reform of English writing teaching and examination forms in recent years. The English Curriculum Standards for Normal High Schools (2017 Edition, 2020 Revision) states that “the writing part of the college entrance examination mainly tests the students' writing ability, including the ability to express meaning, transmit information and reproduce life experience in written form; the main test forms include story continuation, reading pictures and writing reports, proposition composition and summary writing (Ministry of Education, 2020).” However, although continuation task has received more and more attention from front-line teachers in recent years, and has even become an important teaching task, at present, most middle school teachers are still unable to teach it and do not know...
when to start teaching. Therefore, in view of this phenomenon, the most important thing is to have an operable and executable teaching method to support teachers' teaching. At present, there is a tendency of exam-oriented research on continuation task. In view of this problem, the author believes that in order to effectively highlight the effect of continuation task itself in promoting learning, more attention should be paid to how to effectively teach it in the English class in senior high school. In this regard, this paper will try to introduce the process genre approach into the practical teaching of continuation task, analyze the possibility of combining them and the specific operation, so as to further explore the teaching of continuation task in the classroom. The author hopes to provide valuable reference for front-line teachers and improve the current teaching situation.

### 2. Introduction to the continuation task

The detailed description given in the English Curriculum Standards for Normal High Schools for the continuation task is: “The examinee reads the story passage and continues to write the story according to the plot to make it complete”. As for the specific form of the test questions, the instructions of the Examination Center of the Ministry of Education have mentioned. That is, “provide a section of language material within 350 words, and ask candidates to continue writing (about 150 words) according to the content of the material, the opening words of the given paragraph and the key words marked, and develop it into a short article with logical connection, plot and complete structure with the given material (Examination Center of the Ministry of Education, 2015).” In practical application, continuation task first appeared in the college entrance examination English of Zhejiang Province in 2016. With the popularity of it in other provinces and cities in recent years, the exploration and research on this type of question has risen. According to the instructions from the Examination Center of the Ministry of Education (2015), the evaluation criteria for continuation task are mainly based on the following aspects: (1) the degree of cohesion with the given passage and paragraph opening words; (2) the richness of content and the coverage of key words given; (3) the richness and accuracy of applied grammatical structure and vocabulary; (4) context coherence. In short, unlike the traditional propositional composition that points to a single language ability, continuation task examines the learners' reading comprehension ability and written expression ability at the same time. It emphasizes more on the ability requirements of language, culture, thinking and other aspects, which is consistent with the content of the English core literacy.

### 3. Introduction to the process genre approach

Badger and White (2000) first proposed the “process genre approach”. They tried to combine the “product teaching approach”, “process teaching approach” and “genre teaching approach”, and give full play to their respective advantages. Consciously avoid the shortcomings of each approach in order to achieve the best teaching effect. In the process genre approach, the writing process includes six stages: (1) situation; (2) purpose; (3) consideration of mode, field and tenor; (4) planning; (5) drafting; (6) publishing and text. These six stages involve the participation of teachers, students and texts respectively. The whole writing practice process forms a cycle, and includes context knowledge, writing purpose, language knowledge and writing skills. In short, the main purpose of this writing approach is to make the writer write a specific text according to a specific context. In this process, the teacher provides the learners with the necessary contextual knowledge and language knowledge to help them understand the writing purpose and master the writing skills, and finally produce the writing works.

In China, such approach has also been concerned and studied by many scholars. As a result, many optimized process genre approaches have emerged, which are more perfect and consistent with the actual teaching situation. As the first Chinese scholar to introduce this method, Han (2001) believes that the implementation of process genre approach in English writing teaching should include four steps: analysis of model text, imitation writing, independent writing and editing and revision. These four steps are highly operational and lay an important foundation for the further promotion of process genre approach in China. Zhao (2005) also elaborated the steps of process genre approach in writing teaching, and divided the application of process genre approach into three stages: (1) pre-writing, that is, information input stage; (2) while-writing, that is, information output stage; (3) post-writing, it is the reflection stage. This specific process genre approach becomes more comprehensive, detailed and operable, which is convenient for teachers to imitate and implement in the classroom.

In general, this approach not only uses the advantages of the process teaching approach to teach genre-based writing, but also inputs genre knowledge to enrich the writing process, so as to achieve the goal of flexible teaching to mobilize the enthusiasm of students, and fully considers adapting to different social communication situations. The writing learning under the process genre approach is “suitable for the situation”. Students can not only learn the necessary knowledge of writing, but also experience the whole writing process. The learning form of this approach is highly cooperative and interactive.
4. The teaching process of process genre method in continuation task

Based on the current situation of teaching in China and the characteristics of continuation task, this paper follows the traditional three-stage writing teaching process. Each stage has specific steps. These stages and steps constitute a complete teaching process, completing the input and output of information, which helps to make the whole class transition from reading to writing, and finally complete the whole process of continuation task.

4.1 Pre-writing: information input

(1) Reading the article and being familiar with the context

The continuation task attaches great importance to the combination of writing and reading. Because it always gives an article, the reading of the article is the premise of writing. In addition, in order to learn the specific rules of a certain genre and apply them to writing, learners must read to be familiar with the pattern of the genre. In the process of reading, there are three aspects that need special attention:

A. Reading the main plot of the story and determining the development of the story. After reading, most of the essays provided are narrative. The structure of discourse of a narrative is generally composed of six elements: person, time, place, and the cause, process and result of the event. Therefore, in the process of guiding students to read, teachers need to help students clarify the relationship between characters and characters, characters and plots, characters and space-time, and then grasp the cause and development process of events according to the time sequence of events. The main plot of the passage is an important support for subsequent development, which helps students to carry out logical deduction of the story.

B. Reading the key words and the first sentence of the two continuation paragraphs, and adjusting the development of the story. Since the key words given in the continuation task contain the basic elements of the narrative, they are also important criteria for evaluation, teachers should pay special attention to the explanation of the information of the key words to help students use them to conceive the subsequent plot of the story. In addition, the first sentence of the two consecutive paragraphs also plays a role in promoting the development of the story, so the teacher should also emphasize them repeatedly in the teaching process, pay special attention to the analysis of the internal relationship between the key words and the theme of the article, and analyze the internal relationship between the first sentence of the two paragraphs. It is an important writing skill to predict what may happen in the first paragraph according to the first sentence of the second paragraph and predict the development of the second paragraph.

C. Reading through the characters of the main characters and refining the story. The main characters in the story often have different personalities. Only by understanding the personalities of these characters can students write according to the characters and imagine the behaviors that conform to the characters' characteristics, so as to make the development of the story more logical. Teachers should guide students to pay attention to the interpretation of the characters' behavior and psychological description, and let students preset their behavior in the subsequent development of the story according to the characters' personality, so that the plot of the continuation content matches the characters' personality.

(2) Analyzing the article and highlighting the key points

Each genre has its own specific structure and language features. Different genres have different communicative functions in discourse, which makes language style and discourse structure different. After the students finish reading the article, their mastery of the characters and plots in the story is still in the preliminary stage. Therefore, in this step, the teacher needs to combine the discourse structure with the language form, and start teaching the discourse on the purpose of inspiring students to think about the social function and construction process of the discourse, so that students can cultivate the awareness of genre. When students know who the article is written for and why, the way to express the information and the language used will be logical, and their writing will be more purposeful. Therefore, in addition to paying attention to the logic of writing and the rationality of content, the continuation task also emphasizes the consistency of language style. The purpose of paying attention to language style is to continue it, and then combine with imitating language features to make writing consistent with the original article in terms of language style and expression. As the guide of teaching, it is necessary for teachers to locate and analyze the language characteristics of the article, so that students' writing can reflect these language characteristics, so as to be more harmonious with the original article.

4.2 Writing stage: information output

(1) Imitation writing and group discussion under the guidance of teachers

This step is an important basis for subsequent independent writing. During this period, teachers should be responsible for guiding students to try to imitate the original article and organizing students to discuss the topic in groups. Firstly,
imitation writing is the familiarity and application of the genre and language style of the original text. After the students understand and analyze the genre, the next step is to try to construct the text. Therefore, starting from imitating writing, students should extract and strengthen the existing information of the brain. At the same time, teachers should design some targeted questions to enable students to imitate the text knowledge of the genre step by step, such as the vocabulary, tense, sentence pattern, etc. to be used in constructing the discourse. In addition, teachers should also guide students to determine the main content and structure, basic language knowledge and writing skills. Secondly, the group discussion is designed according to the characteristics of the continuation task. By sharing and expressing their views on the existing plot and their imagination of the development of the subsequent plot in the group, the students' writing ideas will be broader, which will help them to conceive a more logical story. At the same time, group discussion also helps to generate more writing plans and clarify the theme of writing.

(2) Independent writing

After imitating writing and group discussion, students have formed a certain schema for the language content and form of a specific genre, but to apply what they have learned to writing requires a thinking organization process, so this step is still inseparable from the teacher's guidance on the students' writing process. The following three writing steps determine the quality of students' continued writing content:

A. Listing the outline of key points and grasping the overall situation of the story. According to the teacher's analysis and group discussion, students have formed a general thread of the story in their minds. Next, they need to list the scattered information in the form of an outline and write down the details. Setting out key points and outlines is an effective writing strategy. For students, when they write a narrative, they may repeat similar details or include redundant details, so teachers should give more guidance on the choice of details.

B. Writing complete paragraphs and paying attention to cohesion and coherence. After the outline is listed, students should try to write it completely. The continuation task generally includes two paragraphs, so students should also use appropriate cohesion to follow the writing style of the first sentence of the paragraph. In the process, the teacher should prompt the students to use the commonly used textual cohesion devices such as graphical device, logical cohesion, logical connector and tense and aspect.

C. Modifying the details and paying attention to grammar. The process genre approach also regards the revision and proofreading of articles as an important part of writing, because it helps students find and correct errors in writing, and the same errors may not occur in subsequent writing. In addition to basic errors such as spelling and capitalization of words, students should also pay attention to details, such as the choice of words, the length of sentences, etc. In addition, grammar problems such as tense and sentence structure also need attention.

4.3 Post-writing stage: evaluation and reflection

(1) Self-evaluation and peer evaluation

Writing ability not only refers to the ability to write articles, but also includes the ability to evaluate and reflect. Different from the traditional teacher-driven evaluation model, the process genre approach advocates the interaction of evaluation subjects and the diversity of evaluation methods. The evaluation methods on the students' side mainly include self-evaluation and peer evaluation, which are generally completed by the self-evaluation form. Specifically, after completing the draft, students need to evaluate their compositions with the help of the self-evaluation form, and then exchange comments with their peers and propose revisions to each other. This process can make students realize the importance of cooperation with others, and improve their writing level and evaluation ability from different evaluation results.

(2) Teacher feedback and summary

Teacher feedback has the characteristics of high efficiency and directness. As the last step of the whole teaching process, in order to save time, teachers can use the way of commenting on model essays to provide feedback to the whole class of students. Model essays, or possible versions, can be prepared in advance, or excellent works selected according to the results of student self-evaluation and peer evaluation in the previous step. In the final summary, teachers should review the key points of narrative writing, review the writing process, and summarize the typical errors in students' writing by combining the three teaching stages as a whole. The summary should be as brief as possible and convenient for students to take notes.

5. Summary

It has been several years since the application of the continuation task in the college entrance examination, but there is still much room for exploration in how to teach it. The process genre approach integrates and inherits the advantages of traditional teaching approaches. For students, the process genre approach can help them get familiar with the text,
analyze the text, and improve their ability to continue writing tasks; For teachers, the use of process genre approach in the teaching of continuation tasks can help them better use the text to teach learners. In general, the combination of process genre approach and continuation task has good adaptability. Writing teaching should give full play to their advantages, improve the teaching efficiency of continuous writing tasks in the classroom, and improve the students' writing level.

References


