

# An Examination of the Current State and Future Trends of Reading-to-write Pedagogy in Chinese Senior High School English

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[ **Abstract** ] Based on a review of domestic and international research on the relationship between reading and writing, this paper focuses on the current situation of English continuation writing instruction in county-level high schools. It explores the application value of reading-driven writing teaching strategies in stimulating students' writing interest and improving their continuation writing ability. Through a literature review, this paper analyzes the development stages of domestic research on the relationship between reading and writing, pointing out that the current research trend is shifting from unidirectional promotion to holistic research and task design. Addressing the challenges faced by continuation writing instruction in Chinese county-level high schools, this paper proposes a development trend of reading-based writing instruction and hopes to verify its effectiveness through empirical research. The aim is to provide theoretical support and practical guidance for high school English writing instruction under the context of the new National College Entrance Examination.

[ **Keywords** ] reading-driven; writing instruction; continuation writing; high school English; new National College Entrance Examination; county-level high school

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## 1 Introduction

Against the backdrop of increasing globalization, English, as a crucial tool for international communication, plays a vital role in basic education in China. However, facing the multiple changes brought about by the new curriculum standards, new textbooks, and reform of the National College Entrance Examination (Gaokao), English teaching in China is facing new challenges and opportunities. Classroom teaching, as the main battlefield of school education and teaching, is an important place for students to acquire key knowledge, master essential skills, improve comprehensive abilities, and develop core competencies. High school English reading instruction is a major type of course in high school English classroom teaching, and is also the core component of high school English teaching. Students' English writing ability directly reflects their level of comprehensive application ability. From the perspective of Chomsky's linguistic theory, spoken English is considered an innate natural learning ability in humans. However, writing ability, as a form of written communication, can only be acquired through long-term systematic study and training. Therefore, it is necessary to incorporate writing instruction into the classroom system and strive to effectively connect teaching and examination.

In the context of the new Gaokao reform, continuing a text serves as an important writing question type, designed to examine students' language application ability, logical thinking ability, and creative thinking ability. However, the current situation of high school English writing instruction is generally characterized by an emphasis on grammar over pragmatic use, and an emphasis on memorization over practical application, resulting in weak

writing skills, a lack of interest in writing, and difficulty in coping with the challenges of the new Gaokao. Especially in county-level high schools, writing instruction is even more lagging behind due to objective limitations such as weak teaching staff and a scarcity of teaching resources.

## 2 Current status of research on reading-writing integration teaching

Currently, English teaching in China is facing multiple challenges brought about by the new curriculum standards, new textbooks, and Gaokao reform. Classroom teaching, as the main battlefield of school education and teaching, is an important place for students to acquire key knowledge, master essential skills, improve comprehensive abilities, and develop core competencies. High school English reading instruction is a major type of course in high school English classroom teaching, and is also the core component of high school English teaching. Students' English writing ability directly reflects their level of comprehensive application ability. From the perspective of Chomsky's linguistic theory, spoken English is considered an innate natural learning ability in humans. However, writing ability, as a form of written communication, can only be acquired through long-term systematic study and training. Therefore, it is necessary to incorporate writing instruction into the classroom system and strive to effectively connect teaching and examination.

At the end of the 1990s, many researchers began to pay attention to the correlation between reading and writing, and gradually reached a consensus that the two are more related (Luo Xiaojie, 2006).

Xie Weina (1994) analyzed the internal connection between reading and writing from the perspective of cognitive psychology, arguing that writing is based on reading and is influenced by the author's reading ability. She proposed that writing is an activated reading process, while reading is an activated writing behavior. Therefore, reading and writing are inseparable and intertwined.

Wang Qiang (2006) also emphasized the role of reading in writing, pointing out that reading articles can provide students with writing examples, and that only through structured reading can clear writing ideas be cultivated. It can be seen that reading provides an important foundation for writing.

Wu Peng's (2001) teaching experiment showed that the experimental class, which increased the amount of reading and strengthened language input, achieved significant improvements in reading comprehension and writing ability, surpassing the control class. The results of this study highlight the importance of reading as the foundation for writing and give us the inspiration that we should pay attention to the quality and quantity of reading materials in teaching to effectively improve teaching results.

In addition, Sun Yunbo (2003) emphasized the importance of organically combining reading and writing. After conducting a reading and writing course for graduate students, he found that students held a positive attitude towards the integration of reading and writing, believing that it helps them express themselves authentically, create more meaningful works, and enhance their self-confidence, prompting students to change from passive learning to active exploration, thereby improving their writing ability.

Zhou Li (2011) proposed the PRIDW teaching model (Pre-reading—Reading—Information Processing Discussion—Writing), which is another attempt to combine reading and writing.

Wen Qiufang proposed the "output-driven, input-enabled" hypothesis. This hypothesis emphasizes first clarifying writing goals and methods, and then using this as a guide to select reading materials. This model focuses on integrating reading and writing practices from multiple dimensions such as analyzing text structure, training thematic language, internalizing emotions, and enhancing thematic ideas. Specifically, students can experience and apply language knowledge through writing tasks such as designing, imitating, rewriting, and continuing the text based on the characteristics of the text, thereby comprehensively improving their language skills.

He Lianzhen and Min Shangchao (2012) found that reading input can significantly improve the quality of written text, and integrated writing is superior to independent writing in terms of content, vocabulary, and language expression. Wang Chuming (2015) emphasized continuing the text as an effective entry point for combining reading and writing, and believed that reading and writing are in line with language learning laws, and can promote learning by providing context, stimulating expression, and combining input and output. Zhang Xinling and Zhang Siyu's (2017) research revealed the complexity of the constituent elements of reading and writing abilities, and pointed out that the combination of the two helps to more accurately assess writing ability and improve teaching efficiency.

Current research tends to study and analyze reading and writing as a whole, and incorporate them into the task design of large-scale examinations to explore the constituent elements of their concepts.

Since July 2020, Hefei City, as a national demonstration zone, took the lead in implementing the new curriculum and new textbooks, and promoted it to all ordinary high schools in Anhui Province in September 2021. As the main basis for students to acquire knowledge and teachers to teach, the new textbooks provide students with completely new text resources. Mei Deming and Wang Qiang pointed out in "Interpretation of the General Senior High School English Curriculum Standards (2017 Edition)" that the articles in the new textbooks and supporting reading materials are all expertly selected model essays, which are highly coherent in language, thinking, and content, and are worthy of in-depth study.

### **3 Empirical research on reading-writing integration teaching**

Empirical research on the relationship between reading and writing in China has generally gone through three stages:

Unidirectional Promotion Stage (Early Period to the 1990s): This stage focused on reading as a comprehensible input, having a unidirectional promoting effect on writing. Emphasis was placed on reading providing language materials and writing examples.

Interactive Correlation Stage (Late 1990s to Early 21st Century): Researchers discovered that reading and writing actually have similar cognitive mechanisms. Both involve meaning construction and are closely integrated and mutually reinforcing. Emphasis was placed on the activating role of reading and the reader awareness in writing.

Holistic Research and Task Design Stage (21st Century to Present): Research tends to study and analyze reading and writing as a whole, incorporating them into large-scale exam task designs to explore their conceptual components. Emphasis is placed on the commonalities of strategies, skills, and thinking between reading and writing abilities.

## **4 New curriculum standards, new textbooks, and new College Entrance Examination: background analysis and challenges**

### **4.1 Guiding significance of the new curriculum standards**

The "General Senior High School English Curriculum Standards (2017 Edition)" proposes the core competencies of English learning. Among them, language competence is the foundation, cultural awareness is the guarantee, thinking quality is the key, and learning competence is the support. In writing teaching, attention should be paid to cultivating students' ability to use language, improving their ability to communicate effectively in English. Students should be guided to understand the culture of English-speaking countries, cultivate cross-cultural communicative awareness. Critical and innovative thinking should be cultivated, improving students' ability to analyze and solve problems. Students' autonomous learning ability should be cultivated, enabling them to

continue learning and developing.

#### **4.2 Textual resources of the new textbooks**

Textbooks, as the main carrier for students to acquire systematic knowledge and the main basis for teachers' teaching, provide all students with new textual resources. As Mei Deming and Wang Qiang pointed out in "Interpretation of the General Senior High School English Curriculum Standards (2017 Edition)", articles in English textbooks and extracurricular reading materials are usually carefully selected mature texts, characterized by language coherence, thought coherence, and content coherence, and worthy of in-depth thinking, careful appreciation, and active imitation.

These model essays carry rich language and cultural knowledge, connotations, thinking contexts, and characteristics. The new textbooks pay more attention to reading comprehension and writing expression abilities, providing rich reading materials and writing tasks, providing favorable conditions for reading-driven writing teaching.

#### **4.3 Challenges of the new College Entrance Examination completion task**

The new College Entrance Examination's English completion task requires students to extend and develop a story or scenario based on understanding the original text and following context and logic. This requires students not only to have a solid language foundation but also to have good reading comprehension, logical thinking, and creative thinking abilities. The completion task is a comprehensive examination of students' overall language application ability and also a huge challenge to traditional English writing teaching.

#### **4.4 Challenges faced by county-level high school English writing teaching**

Although the new curriculum standards, new textbooks, and new College Entrance Examination bring new opportunities to English writing teaching, county-level high schools still face many challenges in practice. For example: (1) Weak teaching staff. English teachers in county-level high schools generally lack writing teaching experience and insufficient research on the new College Entrance Examination completion task, making it difficult to effectively guide students in writing practice. (2) Scarcity of teaching resources. County-level high schools have insufficient teaching resources, students have a weak foundation, limited vocabulary, and do not have a firm grasp of grammar, resulting in poor writing skills. (3) Great examination pressure. County-level high schools face enormous pressure to improve academic performance, teachers often focus on explaining grammar and vocabulary, neglecting the cultivation of writing skills. (4) Low writing interest. Affected by traditional teaching models, students in county-level high schools generally lack interest in English writing, considering writing a boring task.

### **5 Development trend of reading-writing integration research teaching model**

In response to the challenges faced by English writing teaching in county-level high schools, this study proposes a development trend of reading-writing integration teaching, aiming to stimulate students' writing interest and improve their completion ability through effective reading input. According to previous research, we propose to construct an effective development trend for completion teaching model;

#### **5.1 Select high-quality reading materials and build writing scaffolds**

Select reading materials related to the completion theme that are linguistically standardized and clearly structured as writing examples and references. Reading materials can be texts from textbooks or extracurricular reading materials. Teachers should guide students to deeply analyze the structures, language features, and writing techniques of the reading materials, building writing scaffolds for students.

#### **5.2 Conduct detailed reading and inspire writing inspiration**

Teachers should guide students to conduct detailed reading, paying attention to the details, characterizations,

plot development, and themes of the article. Students' thinking and imagination can be stimulated through questioning, discussion, role-playing, etc., providing inspiration for writing.

### **5.3 Imitate and innovate to improve writing ability**

Encourage students to imitate the language styles and writing techniques of reading materials, but not simply copy them. Innovation should be made on the basis of imitation to form one's own writing style. Students' writing ability can be improved through rewriting, completion, and imitation.

### **5.4 Conduct peer assessment to promote common progress**

Encourage students to conduct peer assessment, pointing out each other's strengths and weaknesses in writing and providing modification suggestions. Through peer assessment, students can learn from each other and make common progress.

### **5.5 Teacher guidance to provide professional feedback**

Effective writing guidance requires teachers to provide timely, professional, and specific feedback. This feedback should clearly point out students' strengths and weaknesses in writing and provide actionable improvement suggestions.

### **5.6 Cultivation of writing interest**

Task-based teaching: Combine writing tasks with students' interests and hobbies, designing interesting and practical writing tasks, such as writing letters, writing diaries, writing blogs, etc.

Emotional factors: Encourage students to express their emotions and ideas, allowing students to feel the joy of writing.

Positive feedback: Through positive evaluation and encouragement, affirm students' writing achievements, thereby enhancing their writing self-confidence.

## **6 Conclusion**

This study still has certain limitations. First, the literature review may not be comprehensive and may not include all relevant research results. Second, the teaching development trend we propose has not yet been verified by empirical research, and its application effect in actual teaching needs further investigation.

Future research directions can be carried out from the following aspects: First, the theoretical foundation can be further improved through more comprehensive literature retrieval and sorting. Second, the effectiveness of reading-driven writing teaching strategies can be verified through experimental research or action research, and its adaptability in different county-level high school environments can be explored. In addition, the impact of different reading material types on completion, and how to design more effective reading tasks to promote writing ability can be examined. Finally, the research results can provide more targeted theoretical support and practical guidance for high school English writing teaching in the context of the new College Entrance Examination, helping to improve the quality of English teaching in county-level high schools.

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