

## Develop students' ability from L2 Reading to Writing

Li Jing<sup>1,\*</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Nanjing institute of international studies, Jiangsu, Nanjing 210039, China

\* Corresponding Author. Jing Li (1983- ), lecturer, research interests: applied linguistics, functional linguistics.  
E-mail: 109304094@qq.com

**Abstract.** This paper first discusses the two characteristics of information processing in reading process of interactive reading model by Stanovich and then discusses the sharing of knowledge and Discourse Cohesion Mechanism to judge the impact of discourse coherence on reading, and the effect of these two factors in information processing in reading. Interactive reading model reveals the psychological process of reading to discourse coherence of writing methods. Finally, it can be concluded that: first, writers should read as much as possible to provide adequate information for readers and writers to activate appropriate sharing knowledge, helping readers to predict the information for processing from top to bottom; the writer can use different cohesive devices to provide enough information for the lower reading, which is semantic information, an information processing for reading from the bottom up.

**Keywords:** L2 reading; L2 writing; developing ability.

With the expansion of foreign exchange, as a means of communication, English becomes more and more important, and on many occasions, written expression is an essential skill. English is widely used in international trade or international academic exchanges. So in college, how to improve students' English writing ability seems especially important at present. In the process of training, what teachers need to pay special attention to? Based on functional linguistics, genre-based teaching approach from the perspective of discourse analysis is discussed. At present, English writing practice has been a headache to students and teachers, who do not know how to use the word to clearly express their meaning. Teachers should help students to improve their writing ability from different ways. But in fact, although the teacher let the students learn to use some vocabulary and grammar, which may make them capable of making sentences, when students are required to connect sentences into articles, problems arise. Students generally lack certain context of conjunctions or means of semantic coherence, as well the knowledge of the structure. In view of this situation, teachers can focus on the analysis of the whole discourse in the daily teaching, make students understand and master the discourse reference, substitution, ellipsis, conjunction and lexical cohesion, and then repeatedly use various ways to strengthen the students through practicing various categories and its expression of the understanding of the training and expressing themselves in order to achieve complete, smooth, and accurate essays.

### 1. Students' English reading comprehension and analysis

The first stage of establishing "field knowledge" is to analyze the text. The background and context of discourse should be discussed at this stage. To compare the different culture and different characteristics in common use and similar languages in context, we should discuss the languages to describe the activities in the first language and foreign language, and the problems arose from the difference, and so on.

Through this stage, students are enabled to learn the text before the contents of learning, and they will have a certain understanding with a solid foundation. The foundation for analysis of texts and creative activities is relatively easy. This stage of discourse modeling is the analysis stage of discourse. However, the emphasis of discourse analysis is not only on one discourse analysis but on discourse analyses. Therefore, this text should be regarded as an example of discourse in teaching. The choice of text can be in textbooks, or can be chosen from other places. Discourse refers to the language unit used in practice, which is a series of consecutive sentences or sentences in a

communicative process. It can be a dialogue or a monologue, including written language and spoken English. In actual writing teaching process, the sentence is still the main unit of teaching, the text will be invisible ignored, and more emphasis is put on grammar than on semantic understanding. This teaching method in the classroom brings the text into a series of relatively independent units, while reducing the basic knowledge of the language. The intra textual semantic and structure separate students' understanding from the whole discourse and do harm to the ability of reading comprehension and writing ability of students. English teaching from the perspective of discourse refers to the gradual analysis of the relationship between sentences and paragraphs from the perspective of understanding the whole. To find out the main idea and some important information, a long and complex sentence and sentence should be taken back to the actual context, namely analyzing and understanding in the context so as to make students understand the communicative function of the expression by language phenomenon, and after a certain time, it can improve the students' ability to achieve coherence.

## **2. The unique nature of evoText**

### *2.1 References*

In the process of communication, reference assumes the role of a signal to show that the information is based on context. Personal reference is usually first, second and third person pronoun. Demonstrative references are usually demonstrative pronouns, definite articles, locative and time deixis etc.. Comparison of structures of adjectives or adverbs of expressions commonly used in different context is especially necessary.

Ellipsis and substitution are cohesive means to avoid repetition, highlight key words and make context closely connected. Some of the components in a sentence are known information in the upper and lower contexts as long as people know what the omitted information is in the context. This connection must be established in context.

The conjunctive connection, also called the logical relational word, indicates a kind of relationship, which can only be understood completely by referring to other parts of the text, and is a kind of cohesion. This means of cohesion is relatively complex and its cohesion can be realized through conjunctions, adverbs and phrases.

Therefore, in explaining the text, teachers should focus on letting students grasp the knowledge of reference, ellipsis, substitution, connection and so on. Teaching materials should be central to writing instructions and be widely used to stimulate, model, and support writing. They tend to be mainly paper-based, but also include audio and visual aids, computer-mediated resources, and real objects. These materials provide most of the input and exposure to written language that learners receive in the classroom, and as a result, our decisions about texts, course books, and practice media are no less important than those we make when planning syllabuses and lessons. Because course outcomes significantly depend on them, teachers need to ensure that their classroom materials relate as closely as possible to the profiles of their learners, to program goals, and to their own beliefs as teachers. This means they have to be able to develop clear principles and procedures to make the best use of existing resources and create their own teaching model.

Focusing mainly on printed resources, teachers will explore the role of materials in L2 writing instruction, the value of authentic materials, textbook assessment, and procedures for modifying and developing materials.

In order to theoretically describe the psychological process of information processing in reading, linguists have designed some reading models. These models include bottom-up reading, top-down reading and interactive reading. This paper focuses on the interactive reading model.

### *2.2 Reading models*

#### *2.2.1 Bottom-up reading model*

Before Stanovich's interactive reading mode as the analysis object, we briefly refer to bottom-up and top-down reading model to analyze the characteristics of interactive reading model in comparison.

Bottom-up reading model holds that reading begins with the identification of visual information, then the decoding of words, and finally understanding the meaning. Reading is a process in which the morpheme is perceived as part of the word, and the word is perceived as part of the sentence, and the sentence is perceived as part of paragraph (Gough,1972). The perception process begins from the bottom of the lower layer language information to the top, which is not affected by the upper information perception process, namely the identification of morphemes is not affected by the word, syntactic and textual level information. This reading mode is subject to many criticisms. Critics believe that the process of understanding meaning is not a simple decoding process. Stanovich (Carrell, Devine&Eskey,1989:31): “a serious flaw in these patterns is the lack of information feedback..... It is difficult to explain the relationship between sentence and context, and the role of prior knowledge related to the topic of the article.”

### 2.2.2 Top-down reading mode

Top-down reading mode believes that the upper level of information processing will affect the lower level of information processing. For example, identification of a sentence will affect the context of a sentence. This pattern interprets the reading process as a “prediction”, “confirmation”, and a process of “correction”. The reader first assumes hypotheses about the content of the article to be read, and then samples some articles to test his or her hypothesis, and then begins a new hypothesis- Sampling-testing. The top-down model of Goodman (1970) describes the reading process as a psychological guessing game.

Like bottom-up models, top-down models have received many criticisms. Critics argue that although this model emphasizes the upper information predicted by context clues or background knowledge and reading skills, but ignores the information reading skills, the text, words, and grammar that form lower, fast and accurate information identification. Critics pointed out that in many articles, readers do not have the knowledge of the topic on these articles, and then the article becomes the most difficult to predict information, or even impossible.

### 2.2.3 Interactive reading mode

Stanovich’s interactive reading mode describes reading as the interaction process between top-down and bottom-up information processing. This model assumes that language comprehension is an interactive process of the text to identify information from the lower layer to the upper layer that represents the world knowledge schema. The whole process of the two-way flow of information processing is affected by the schema information from the bottom up, and vice versa. The most representative of these models is the reading model of Stanovich. An important concept of this model is that “any level of information processing can compensate for other levels of information processing deficiencies” (Stanovich 1980:36). On the one hand, if reading the words to identify is a kind of slow or inaccurate identification, however, if he or she has the knowledge of the topic of the article, then top-down information processing can make up for him or her to identify the lack of words. On the other hand, if the reader is not familiar with the topic of the article but can skillfully identify words, then he or she can start from the word recognition, mainly rely on bottom-up information processing. We can draw this conclusion: in the Stanovich mode, regardless of the information structure level, any level of information communicate with other levels endlessly, in this sense, this mode is interactive; when reading a specific source of temporarily missing or insufficient information, you can rely on other more abundant sources of information, and in this sense, this model is complementary. “Stanovich has made a special contribution to the reading model, because his model for us theoretically explains the obvious irregularities in many specific studies.”(Carrell et al,1989:32)

## 2.3 Discourse coherence

Textual coherence is the criterion to measure the completeness, consistency and quality of discourse. However, different linguists have different definitions of coherence concept because of their different research perspectives. Generally speaking, textual coherence refers to the semantic connection and semantic consistency of the whole text. The factors determining textual coherence are divided into two categories: internal condition and external condition. Internal conditions refer to discourse meaning and cohesion mechanism, while external conditions include “cultural context”,

“situational context”, “cognitive schema”, “psychological thinking” and other factors. As far as external conditions are concerned, these classifications explain the factors affecting textual coherence from different perspectives. However, this classification is divided from the language of the speaker/writer, or listener/reader’s one-way perspective, without considering the degree of value of discourse coherence in communication. That is to say, the judgment of coherence is always unequal. So, which one of the discourse coherence judgment is more important? In general, language communication is the purpose of the speaker/writer to get the hearer/reader to understand their communicative intention, therefore, the author thinks that the hearer/reader’s discourse coherence is the leading factors in attributive judgment of the coherence of the discourse, and communication from the hearer/reader’s view on consistency is more important than the speaker / writer’s judging coherence. Then from the hearer/reader's perspective, what is the effect of discourse coherence of external factors? The author thinks that in the cultural context, situational context, cognitive schema, mental factors and so on, the speaker/writer’s judge decides the part of the factors of the discourse coherence from the hearer/reader’s identity or background. Therefore, from the perspective of the hearer/reader, in the external conditions that determine the coherence of the text, knowledge shared by both sides of the communication is the dominant factor to determine the coherence of the text. Shared knowledge here refers to the factors commonly recognized by both sides in cultural context, situational context, cognitive schema and psychological thinking. Therefore, shared knowledge is also an external comprehensive factor that influences textual coherence.

From the coherent internal conditions, the meaning of the text by the convergence mechanism reflected from the view of external condition, knowledge sharing is a combination of factors. This paper discusses the discourse coherence effect of understanding processing information in the process of reading from two aspects of knowledge sharing and cohesion mechanism.

### 2.3.1 Shared knowledge and discourse coherence

Nuttall (2002) believes that only when the reader and the writer have some shared knowledge, reading comprehension is likely to succeed. For example, several seemingly unrelated sentences are put together, so long as they activate the shared knowledge of the writer and the reader in meaning, they can be reasonably understood. Read the following three sentences:

John bought a cake at the bake shop.

The birthday card was signed by all of the employees.

The party went on until after midnight. (Carroll 2000)

Readers tend to assume “the cake” and “the card” and “the party” with the related birthday-party event. Carroll (2000) held that it is due to the share knowledge of writers and readers about the birthday and birthday party, which make them able to make the three reasonable interpretation of the sentences. For the reader's psychological judgement, the three sentences’ coherence in reading articles, and the process of information processing, can be attributed to the shared knowledge of top-down information processing. The above is an example of reading and writing on the cultural context, situational context, cognitive schema, mental knowledge of shared reading part, which is an important factor to determine the coherence of the information , an important one in the process of discourse comprehension.

### 2.3.2 Cohesion and discourse coherence

Discourse cohesion mechanism is embodied through different cohesive devices. Halliday and Hasan (2001) divide cohesive devices into two categories: unstructured cohesion and structural cohesion. In this paper, some cohesive devices in unstructured cohesion are analyzed to discuss the role of cohesive devices in maintaining textual coherence and their role in reading comprehension. Non-structural cohesion is divided into grammatical cohesion and lexical cohesion. Grammatical cohesion includes reference, ellipsis, substitution and connection, which includes the pronoun that refers to the relationship, indicative relations and comparative relations; lexical cohesion including repetition, synonymy, hyponymy relations, and antonym relations. Cohesive devices play an important role in maintaining textual coherence and contribute to discourse understanding (Carroll, 2000). Take lexical cohesion as an example to illustrate the role of cohesion in maintaining textual coherence and the process of information processing in reading comprehension. As in “We got to the

airport in time and the plane was taken by us.”, “airport” and “plane” have a relationship in meaning, therefore, so there is cohesion here.

### 3. Interactive reading model for coherent textual writing

The important characteristics of the psychological reading process is represented by the interactive reading model: The interactive process between information processing and bottom-up information processing; Besides, in the process of interactive information processing, a level of information processing can make up for other levels of information processing deficiencies. We can draw such a conclusion: the sharing knowledge and discourse cohesion of the writer and the reader are not only language dominant factors of coherence, but also contribute to the comprehension of information processing. Reading is a process of decoding the text to understand the meaning, and writing is just the opposite process, that is, the author will encode the meaning of the text to organize the process. Because of the different world knowledge of writers and readers, the judgment of textual coherence is also different. Therefore, in the writing process, the writer should have the reader's awareness, and realize how the reader will judge the coherence of the text. This requires the writer to judge the coherence of discourse basing on the reader's judgment. To this end, the writer should have a certain understanding of the decoding process, which can help him/her encode more effectively. In other words, the writer's knowledge of the reading process helps him/her write more coherent articles for the reader.

### 4. Reading to writing

By providing enough information to activate readers' appropriate sharing knowledge in order to maintain the coherence, readers' and writers' sharing knowledge for reading in the reading process provides a bird's-eye view to activate top-down information processing, helping readers to predict the information (Nuttall, 2002:16). However, in the process of writing, the writer thinks his sharing knowledge of reading and writing are not always perfectly matched with that of the readers, therefore, the gap between the two larger information processing is more difficult. So, the author believes that for the writer, he/she should be aware that the information processing difficulties may occur due to the lack of shared knowledge. In other words, his/her article should provide the reader with as much information as possible in order to activate as much knowledge as possible between the reader and the writer. Thus, the discourse is more coherent to the reader. Writers should provide enough information for the reader to activate his/her appropriate reading knowledge to ensure the correct understanding of discourse.

Through the use of cohesive devices to maintain coherence based on the interactive model of reading, when information processing cannot move from top to bottom, he/she will rely mainly on bottom-up information processing. For the writer, he/she should provide enough information for the reader through various cohesive devices. From the analysis of the following paragraphs, we can see appropriate cohesive devices can provide the information for the reader, this information not only to maintain coherence, but also conducive to the information processing in the process of reading from the bottom-up.

*Ex: Many years ago, before China got developed, people dreamed to live in the city, because the life in city was colorful, everyone was chasing for the prosperity, the attracting thing for the city life lies in that people will find the chance to get succeed. Now, China has been developing, the citizens start to chase the country life, they like the quiet environment, the air is much fresh. City life and country life, which is better? City life is convenient, people can buy what they want, while the country life is quiet and peaceful, I think the old prefer the country life, the young prefer the city life. People in different stage will chase for different life, that makes the difference.*

In the above paragraph, time indicatives as “before” “now” and conjunctions as “because”, as well verb phrase “start to” all show the process of change in people's opinions on the city and country life, making the readers easily process the meaning.

## 5. An example of an evoText analysis

This paper first discusses the two characteristics of information processing in reading process of interactive reading model by Stanovich and then discusses the sharing of knowledge and Discourse Cohesion Mechanism to judge the impact of discourse coherence on reading, and the effect of these two factors in information processing in reading. Interactive reading model reveals the psychological process of reading to discourse coherence of writing methods. Finally, it can be concluded that: first, writers should read as much as possible to provide adequate information for readers and writers to activate appropriate sharing knowledge, helping readers to predict the information for processing from top to bottom; the writer can use different cohesive devices to provide enough information for the lower reading, which is semantic information, an information processing for reading from the bottom up; In writing, the organic combination of methods and methods can ensure the continuous information interaction and information gap between information processing of the top-down and bottom-up information processing. The organic combination of the two methods is to achieve the necessary condition of coherence. In the process of teaching in English writing through reading, teaching learners to understand the characteristics of the psychological process of reading can help learners understand the discourse coherence in information processing in reading, and can help learners understand the significance of the encoding process taking into account possible reading skills in the process of decoding.

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