

The Review of Continuation Task in China

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Abstract: This paper briefly reviews the research on continuation task in China. While summarizing the main research achievements in this field, points out the problems to be further solved, aims to enable people to have a comprehensive understanding of the research status in this field.

Keywords: Continuation task, Review, Domestic research Status.

1. The Introduction of Continuation Task

Writing as a basic skill of language which can fully demonstrate how well a language learner has mastered a language. However, English writing has been remaining a weak part of English learners in China. How to help students make improvement in their English writing has always been a concern of researchers and teachers. Many of them have strived to explore teaching methods to facilitate students improve their writing, yet there still doesn't show significant improvement in English writing in China. Based on Interactive synergy theory, Professor Wang Chuming proposed the term "continuation task" in 2012 to improve English writing teaching, which refers to writing the following content for a given reading material after reading this reading material. This task combines the reading comprehension with writing practice, which is also a method to combine input theory with output theory. Huang Yining (2015) also proposed that the theoretical basis of this task also includes "read to write", "write to learn" and "imitation and innovation".

2. Domestic Research Status

Since the term "continuation task" was put forward, the number of the related researches has been growing in China. In this paper, the academic journal papers published on CNKI with the theme of "continuation task" are searched and manually filtered. Finally, a total of 38 related research papers

in China's core journals were selected, covering the period from 2012 to 2019. Drawing on Li Zhixue and Li Shaoshan's classification of foreign language teaching research methods in 2008, these papers are divided into two categories: empirical research and non-material research. According to analysis, there are 4 non-material researches and 34 empirical researches in 38 papers, which may be due to the development of the continuation task.

The focus of the language is mainly on English in empirical research. Among 34 empirical researches, there are five studies focusing on the learning of other languages. Wang Chuming (2015); Hong Wei and Shi Wei (2016); Wang Qi and Wang Fenglan (2016) and Wang Qi (2019) studied the teaching of Chinese with the continuation task, while Liu Peng (2019) compared the learning of Spanish and English about the effect of alignment of continuation task and Zhang Ge, Liu Meng and Shen Huaming (2022) studied the teaching of French with the continuation task.

Table 1.1 has shown that most research subjects are English as second language learners, which takes up 82.3% of research subjects of these experimental studies while Chinese as second language learners as the research subjects rank the second which account 11.8%. Besides, table 1.1 also presents that researchers have also focused on other language learning under the influence of continuation task, such as Chinese, French and Spanish. Although the percentage of the study focusing on other language learning is small, it is a good trend to develop the application of continuation task in other languages.

Table 1. Statistics of research subjects of "continuation after reading" in China from 2012 to 2022

research subject		number	total number	percentage
English as second language	Non-English major undergraduate students	8	28	82.3%
	English major undergraduate students	17		
	High school students	3		
Chinese as second language		4	4	11.8%
French as second language (French major)		1	1	2.9%
Spanish as second language (Spanish major)		1	1	2.9%
Total number		31	34	100%

Through the analysis of related literature, we can find that these empirical researches mainly focus on the following four aspects.

(1) Verify the alignment of continuation task

Over the past few years, many researchers have been interested in alignment in language use in China (Atkinson et

al. 2007; Wang Chuming 2010; Wang Chuming 2011). As Wang Chuming proposed the continuation task in 2012, many researchers have paid their attention to verify the alignment of continuation task by comparing different read and write modes. Wang Min and Wang Chuming (2014) verified the effect of alignment between linguistic interpretation and

production and its influence on foreign language use in continuation task. The subjects were divided into two groups. One group completed the task of reading English materials and writing in English while the other group completed the task of reading Chinese materials and then writing in English. Then, a series of studies began to verify the alignment of continuation task on the learning of other languages (Wang Qi and Wang Fenglan 2016; Wang Qi 2019; Liu Peng (2019).

(2) Verify whether that some factors in the continuation task have influence on the effect of alignment.

According to the analysis, the author finds that many researchers have explored the affecting factors of the alignment in the continuation task. These factors include genre type (Zhang Xiuqin and Zhang Qian, 2017); interactive guide task (Gu Jing and Zhou Yumei, 2018); complexity of text (Xin Sheng and Li Lixia, 2020); context reproduces cue orientation (Wang Qi et al.2022); familiarity with topic (Gu Qiyi et al.2 022)

(3) The effects of continuation task on language knowledge

From the lexical perspective, there are four studies focus on it. Jiang Lin and Tu Mengwei(2016) chose 41 English major freshmen as the research subjects who were in two classes. These two classes are required to summary writing and continuation task separately. This study found that the effect of continuation task is better than that of summary writing in the three dimensions of word form, word meaning and usage. Gu Jing and Zhou Yumei (2018) found that the use of interactive guidance in the continuation task can improve the correct rate of vocabulary use. Yang Mei and Cai Miaoxia (2022) divides 94 research subject into two groups to complete the cooperative and independent continuation task and both group need to take the immediate and delayed vocabulary post-test. This research found that the use frequency, accuracy and creative use frequency of target words in the cooperative writing group are significantly higher than those of the independent writing group, and the learning effect of word form, word meaning and usage of the cooperative writing group is also significantly better than that of the independent writing group. Hong Wei and Shi Wei (2016) found that continuation task contributes to the effect of Chinese second language quantifier learning for the Chinese learners.

From the grammar perspective, Xin Sheng (2017) investigated the effect of continuation task on the acquisition of grammatical structure of L2 learners. Compared with simple continuation task, text reinforcement in the continuation task can significantly promote the acquisition of subjunctive mood in high school students. The subjunctive with relatively simple grammatical structure has better acquisition effect than the subjunctive with complex grammatical structure under the condition of reinforcement and continuation. Sun Qingmei and Wang Yu (2018) explored the effect of continuation task on the acquisition of articles. The study found that continuation task can effectively promote the article learning of high level and low level learners, but has no significant effect on the article learning of medium level learners. The effect of continuation task on promoting the learning of articles is better than the simple reading task. Wang qi and Wang Chuming (2019) investigated the effectiveness and feasibility of using relative clauses in English in the continuation task, which found that the effect of continuation task on promoting learning relative clauses is significantly better than reading without writing, which have implications for teaching and learning English complex

syntactic structures. Wang qi and Cao Qin (2020) took the English passive sentence as the target structure, which proved that continuation task is an effective way to improve the master of English passive sentence.

From the general language knowledge perspective, Zhang Xiaopeng(2014) chose fifty-eight junior business English majors participated in a 12-week follow-up experiment and completed a writing journal. The results of Coh-Metrix text analysis show that continuation task has a significant impact on the text characteristics of students' compositions, such as vocabulary, syntactic structure and discourse coherence. Wang Qi (2019) chose 58 Chinese learners as research subjects and this study compared the alignment effect of two typesetting methods (word-by-word version and word-by-word version) on the continuation task of Chinese text. The results showed that: the alignment effect occurs at the level of words, word blocks and syntactic structures, but the alignment effect varies with different target structures; word segmentation and conjunction can improve the understanding of Chinese text and significantly reduce grammatical errors in the continuation of writing, but it has no significant effect on the error frequency of a few structures.

(4) The application of continuation task

Wang Chuming and Qi Luxia (2013) explored the reliability and validity of continuation for foreign Language proficiency test. From the perspective of validity, the score of continuation task is significantly correlated with the scores of English reading comprehension and written expression of the college entrance examination with similar difficulty, and is also significantly correlated with the students' English proficiency, indicating that continuation task can effectively measure students' reading and writing proficiency. From the perspective of reliability, the reliability of continuation task depends largely on the quality of scoring tools, the training of raters and the operation of scoring, rather than the continuation task itself. According to the rating scale of this survey, students of different ability segments can be distinguished well. Zhang Lin and Qing Ting (2020) investigated the effects of continuous task on writing anxiety and writing ability of English majors, which indicated that the continuation task is beneficial to reduce the writing anxiety and promote the imagination of learners.

3. Research Expectations

Nowadays, the research on the learning promotion effect of continuation task has reached a relatively mature stage at the theoretical level. however, we still need to deepen the research on experimental level. From the research content aspect, more studies need to conduct to confirm the long-term effect of continuation task on the language learning. From the research subject aspect, most of the existing researchers focus on college students, especially on the English major students. The future research needs to pay more attention to the high school students, middle school students and even primary school students. Besides, the future research also needs to pay more attention to other language learners. From the application aspect, future research also needs to develop the suitable textbooks that are about continuous task for students of different ages to learn and develop the test material in continuous task to give the language learners the chance to test their writing ability.

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