

语言理论与实践

工作论文

Coherence and the Teaching of EFL Writing

Writing is one of the four basic abilities (listening, speaking, reading and writing) that an English learner as a foreign language learner should have. But writing well is not an easy task. An excellent writer should have not only a good command of grammar, but also should know how to make his composition coherent in structure and content. My experience in teaching writing to undergraduates at Central South University shows that incoherence is a recurring problem in the students' writing and can be a major obstacle to their success in writing classes. "I can not follow your argument" and "I do not understand what you are saying" are just two of the comments written on student's papers to indicate the inability of the papers to be understood by their teachers. Unfortunately, unlike grammatical errors which can be easily corrected, errors in coherence are more difficult to handle as they involve a chunk of units, such as a series of sentences and paragraphs. Most ESL teachers may believe that they have a sense of what coherence is, but they often discuss coherence with their students in vague terms. As a result, students do not have a clear understanding of the concept of coherence, often focusing only on errors at sentence level when asked to revise their own work or that of their colleagues.

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