

A STUDY ON THE INSTRUCTION OF DISCOURSE COHESIVE DEVICES IN CSL WRITING TEXTBOOKS

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ABSTRACT: This paper selects four current intermediate and advanced Chinese as a Second Language writing textbooks: *Developing Chinese, An Intermediate and Advanced Chinese Writing Course for Foreigners, A New Chinese Writing Course*, and *Jumping High: A Systematic Chinese Course-Writing Textbook*. Using the cohesion theory of Halliday & Hasan (1976) and Hu (1994) as a framework, this study examines the teaching content of discourse cohesion and coherence in these textbooks. In comparison, all four textbooks contain relevant content, but some cover only means of conjunction, while others include additional means such as reference and lexical cohesion. Overall, there are phenomena such as incomplete variety and inconsistent quantity in Chinese writing textbooks. This paper also briefly analyzes the reasons for these issues and proposes suggestions.

KEYWORDS: Chinese as a Second Language (CSL); Writing Textbooks; Discourse; Cohesive Devices

Introduction

Discourse is a challenge in CSL teaching, especially in cohesion and coherence, which students often overlook and frequently make mistakes in. Problems such as errors in reference forms use (Gao, 1996; He, 1999; Lu, 1999; Xin, 2001; Ma, 2002; Chen, 2005a, 2005b), misuse of conjunctions (Lu, 1999; Li, 2014), and incoherent discourse (Wang, 1996; He, 1999) are common in the expressions of international students.

As an important platform for L2 learners to produce discourse, the writing course should rightly emphasize discourse teaching. Since the introduction of the product approach, process approach, genre approach (Hyon, 1996), and the process-genre

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approach (Badger & White, 2000), the teaching methodologies of writing courses have become increasingly systematic and scientific. Do the writing textbooks also possess a well-established system for teaching cohesion and coherence? Yang (2018) found that there are issues in the discourse teaching content, across different grammar textbooks for CSL, such as inconsistencies in the types and quantities of complex sentences and in the non-uniform classification of sentence patterns across different grammar textbooks for CSL. Is it the case that similar problems exist in writing textbooks for CSL as well? This paper intends to examine this issue.

Halliday & Hasan (1976) proposed the Cohesion Theory, categorizing the cohesive devices in English discourse into five types: reference, substitution, ellipsis, conjunction, and lexical cohesion. Reference refers to a semantic relation in which the meaning of a linguistic element cannot be interpreted independently but must be retrieved from elsewhere in the discourse. It is further divided into personal reference (e.g., personal pronouns and zero anaphor), demonstrative reference (e.g., this/that, these/those), and comparative reference (e.g., comparative adjectives and adverbs). Substitution is defined as the replacement of one linguistic item (typically a noun phrase, verb phrase, or clause) by another (e.g., one, do, same) to avoid repetition, where the substituting item and the substituted item do not share identity of reference. For instance, in example (1), 'do' substitutes 'draw' from the first clause. Ellipsis refers to the omission of certain elements within a structure that can be recovered from other clauses or sentences in the discourse. An example is 'colored' as an elliptical form of 'colored television' in example (2).

(1) 你 画 得 不 像, 让 我 来。
 you draw (particle) not resemble let me do
 You didn't draw it well, let me do it.

(2) 甲: 我 弟 弟 想 买 一 台 黑白 电 视 机。

A my younger brother want buy one (classifier) black-and-white TV

A: My younger brother wants to buy a black-and-white TV.

乙: 要 买 就 买 彩色的。

if buy then buy colored

B: If you are going to buy one, get a colored one.

Conjunction refers to the use of connective words or phrases to signal logical-semantic relationships between clauses or sentences in discourse. It is generally divided into four subcategories: additive (e.g., and), adversative (e.g., but), causal (e.g., because), and temporal (e.g., then). Hu (1994) expanded the temporal subcategory

into “temporal-spatial.” Based on Hu’s descriptions for each subcategory, we conducted a more detailed semantic classification. The additive category includes coordination, alternative, progression, and exemplification. The adversative category includes general adversative and concessive relations. The causal category consists of general causal relations, purposive relations, conditional relations, and hypothetical relations. The temporal-spatial category consists of three types: real time, logical time, and space.

Lexical cohesion refers to the semantic connections that exist between certain words within a discourse. It encompasses lexical repetition, general word, similarity (synonyms, near-synonyms, and antonyms), taxonomic relations (hyponymy, meronymy, co-hyponymy, coherence relationships), as well as collocation. In summary, we integrate the frameworks of Halliday & Hasan (1976) and Hu (1994) to propose the analysis framework adopted in this paper:

Figure 1: Framework for the Analysis of Cohesion devices in CSL Writing Textbooks

Reference	Ellipsis	Substitution	Conjunction	Lexical Cohesion
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Personal Reference • Demonstrative Reference • Comparative Reference 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Additive • Adversative • Causal • Temporal-Spatial 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lexical Repetition • General Words • Similarity • Taxonomic Relation • Collocation

Cohesion Devices in Writing Textbooks

This study selects four CSL writing textbooks: Developing Chinese (hereafter “Developing”), An Intermediate and Advanced Chinese Writing Course for Foreigners (hereafter “Course”), A New Chinese Writing Course (hereafter “New Course”), and Jumping High: A Systematic Chinese Course-Writing Textbook (hereafter “Jumping High”). All of these textbooks were published after 2012, reflecting contemporary relevance, and are designed for intermediate to advanced Chinese levels. Using Figure 1 as the research framework, this study will analyze the instruction of discourse cohesion in these four textbooks.

1. Reference

The means of reference are addressed in three of the four textbooks: “Developing,” “Jumping High,” and “New Course”; however, the content explained is not completely consistent across them.

Personal reference is a common component across all three textbooks, with the omission of personal pronouns as the key teaching point. In terms of content, the “New Course” emphasizes the use of zero anaphora in subject position—a point not highlighted in the other two textbooks. Chen (1987), Zhou (2011) and Tian (2018) pointed out that in both written and spoken Chinese, the primary syntactic position for zero anaphora is the subject. Furthermore, studies by Gao (1996) and Chen (2005b) indicate that Chinese learners most frequently make referential errors due to improper subject omission within sentences. Thus, emphasizing subject omission is very necessary. However, the three textbooks present differently. “Developing” addresses this feature only through exercises. “Jumping High” both explains the knowledge point and identifies common errors made by Chinese learners. “New Course” presents it through a combination of explanation, example sentences, and exercises.

Demonstrative reference is addressed in both “Developing” and “New Course.” The difference is that the former textbook describes the usage of multiple words such as ‘这’ (this), ‘那’ (that), ‘这里’ (here), ‘那里’ (there), ‘这样’ (like this), and ‘那样’ (like that), while “New Course” only describes the usage of the word ‘this’. In fact, neither textbook provides a complete account; for instance, the two important plural demonstrative pronouns ‘这些’ (these) and ‘那些’ (those) are not mentioned.

Comparative reference also appears in both “Developing” and “New Course.” The former includes nine linguistic forms, while the latter includes eight, indicating a similar quantity. However, the only form shared by the two is ‘比’ (compare). Notably, “Developing” further explains the specific means of comparison in survey report genres, such as ‘占+比例, 比…….’ (account for + proportion, comparatives...), whereas “New Course” does not make genre-based distinctions. In terms of presentation, “Developing” relies primarily on sentence-making exercises, while “New Course” presents the content through a combination of explanations, example sentences, and exercises.

2. Conjunction

Conjunction is an emphasized cohesive device in all four textbooks, but significant differences exist in both quantity and content across them.

(1) Additive relation

“Developing,” “Comprehensive,” and “New Course” all include additive relations, but the content of these textbooks exhibits both similarities and differences. The shared categories are three types: coordination, progression, and alternative. However, exemplification is provided in “Developing” and “New Course” but not in “Comprehensive.” The explanations in the three textbooks also differ. “New Course” presents them in the form of explanations, example sentences, and exercises; “Developing” only presents exercises; “Jumping High”, besides listing language forms, also analyzes common conjunction mistakes in writing. Thus, in terms of quantity, content, and presentation method, the three textbooks are vastly different.

Coordination is the most emphasized connective type in the three textbooks. “Developing” introduces thirteen linguistic form, “Jumping High” introduces seven, and “New Course” introduces five, suggesting considerable variation in quantity among the textbooks. The only linguistic form common to all three textbooks is ‘既.....又.....’ (both... and...). Two of the textbooks include ‘一边.....一边.....’ (at the same time) and ‘一方面.....一方面.....’ (on the one hand... on the other hand...). The three textbooks also differ in their mode of presentation. “New Course” presents additive relations through a combination of explanations, examples, and exercises. “Developing” presents them through exercises only. “Comprehensive,” in addition to listing linguistic forms, includes an analysis of common conjunction errors in student writing. Thus, in terms of quantity, content, and presentation, the three textbooks differ substantially.

The exemplification appears only in “Developing” and “New Course.” A possible reason is that, compared with other types of cohesive relations, this relation is not among the nine major complex sentence types in Chinese grammar, making it easy to overlook. Both “Developing” and “New Course” list five linguistic forms, with three overlapping: ‘以.....为例’ (take...as an example), ‘比如’ (for instance), and ‘例如’ (for example), indicating a high degree of overlap in both quantity and content. The presentation method is similar to that used for coordination.

Differences in alternative relations across the three textbooks are also quite substantial. “Developing” introduces only one word —‘或者’ (or)—whereas “Jumping High” includes eight forms, and “New Course” includes three. No linguistic form is common to all three textbooks. The forms ‘或者’ (or), ‘要么.....要么.....’ (either... or...) appear in two of the textbooks. In terms of presentation, “Developing” and “New Course” remain consistent with their previous approaches, while “Jumping High” merely lists the relevant sentence patterns without further elaboration.

The progressive relation is emphasized by three textbooks. “Developing” features ten sentence patterns, “Jumping High” eleven, and “New Course” ten. The quanti-

ties are fairly balanced, but there is little content overlap. The forms ‘不仅……而且……’ and ‘不但……而且……’ (not only... but also...) are the only two shared by all three textbooks. Additionally, “Jumping High” and “New Course” both include ‘不但……还……’ (not just... but still...) and ‘不但……也……’ (not just... but also...). Notably, “Developing” introduces some additive constructions such as ‘尤其是’ (especially), ‘特别是’ (particularly), ‘更重要的是’ (more importantly), and ‘更多的是’ (more), which can enrich the language expression for international students. From the perspective of presentation, “Developing” addresses these forms through exercises. “Jumping High” explains common usage errors in progressive relations, whereas “New Course” continues to maintain its three-step presentation format of explanation, examples, and exercises—an approach very similar to that used in Chinese comprehensive textbooks.

(2) Adversative relation

Adversative relations are addressed in three textbooks: “Developing,” “Jumping High,” and “New Course.” In terms of quantity, “Developing” overwhelmingly surpasses the other two (thirty-three, thirteen, and seven forms, respectively). From a content perspective, general adversative relations are common to all three textbooks, whereas concessive relations appear only in “Developing” and “New Course.” More specifically, within general adversative relations, “Developing” features thirty-two linguistic forms, while “Jumping High” and “New Course” feature only thirteen and four forms, respectively. Three factors account for the larger number in “Developing.” First, it includes a more comprehensive range of conjunctive words. Second, it incorporates many non-conjunctive expressions, like ‘就是’ (it is just) in the sentence in ‘这套房子什么都好, 就是房租有点儿贵。’ (‘This apartment is good in every way, it is just that the rent is a bit high’). Third, there are many combinations of connectives (e.g., ‘虽然……却……相反……’ (although... yet... on the contrary...), ‘虽然……但……甚至……’ (... but... even...). The forms ‘虽然……但是……’ (..... but...) and ‘尽管……但是……’ (although) are common to all three textbooks.

In terms of presentation, “Developing” emphasizes the function of certain conjunctions in argumentative texts. For example, ‘与其……不如……’ (would rather... than) indicates the speaker’s chosen viewpoint and is used to compare their own viewpoints with previous ones; ‘可是’ (but) and ‘相反’ (on the contrary) serve as means of connecting multilayered sentences. “Jumping High,” by contrast, points out that words such as ‘然而’ (however) and ‘但是’ (but) can serve as transitional devices in writing, while “New Course” provides no specific explanation in this relation. This suggests that the depth of explanation for similar cohesive devices varies across textbooks.

As for concessive relations, “Developing” includes only the form ‘即使……也……’ (even if...). “New Course” includes three forms: ‘即使……也……’, along with ‘哪怕……也……’ (even if...) and ‘就是……也……’ (even if / even though...). “Jumping High” does not cover concessive relations at all.

(3) Causal relation

Causal relations include general causal relations, purposive relations, conditional relations, and hypothetical relations. All four types appear in “Developing,” “Jumping High,” and “New Course,” though the quantity and presentation mode vary across the three textbooks.

First, with respect to general causal relations, “Developing” includes eight linguistic forms, “Jumping High” includes eight, and “New Course” includes three. The forms common to all three textbooks are ‘因为……所以……’ (because... so...) and ‘由于’ (due to). In terms of presentation, “Jumping High,” both lists the linguistic forms and points out the errors of this relation. It also highlights the function of ‘因此’ (thus) and ‘因为’ (because) in facilitating textual transitions. “Developing” similarly notes the role of words such as ‘因为’ (because), referring to it as a means of achieving cohesion between multi-level sentences.

Secondly, purposive relations receive relatively little emphasis across the textbooks. In “Developing” the only linguistic form is ‘为了’ (in order to), which is also the sole form common to all three textbooks. Additionally, “Jumping High” contains nine forms, while “New Course” contains three. Moreover, the expression and exercise of these forms in all three textbooks are simple, without explaining their special function.

Thirdly, with respect to conditional relations, “Developing” contains the largest number of forms, with a total of ten, while “Jumping High” and “New Course” have fewer, with seven and six, respectively. All three textbooks share two linguistic forms: ‘只有……才……’ (only if... then...) and ‘无论……都……’ (no matter what/how), indicating a limited degree of overlap. In terms of presentation, “Developing” provides a detailed explanation of the function of ‘无论’ (no matter) in argumentative texts—specifically, how it can clearly express and emphasize the writer’s own viewpoint—and stresses its written-language style. The other two textbooks provide no special explanation in this regard.

Finally, the distribution of hypothetical relation also varies across the three textbooks. In terms of quantity, “New Course” introduces the fewest forms (three), “Developing” presents an intermediate number (eight), and “Jumping High” includes the most (twenty-three). ‘如果……就……’ (if... then...) is the only form shared by all textbooks. With respect to presentation, “Developing” again maintains its advan-

tage by pointing out the function of ‘即使……也……’ (even if) in plausible reasoning analysis within argumentative writings, whereas the other two textbooks provide no introduction to such a function.

(4) Temporal-Spatial Relation

Temporal-Spatial relations are the only type of connective relation common to all four textbooks. However, from a more specific perspective, “Course” includes only real time; “Jumping High” includes both real time and logical time; while “Developing” and “New Course” encompass all three means: real time, logical time, and space. These differences in teaching content directly lead to corresponding differences in quantity.

Real time is a key focus in all four textbooks. In addition to covering extensive content and a large quantity, it also includes the classification of different temporal expressions and explanations of their special usages. “Course” explains six types of real-time expressions, all of which are common constructions in practical writing. Examples include ‘值此……之际’ (on the occasion of...) used in congratulatory letters, ‘此时此刻’ (at this very moment) used in farewell speeches, and ‘……年……月……日’ (year... month... day...) used in diaries. These show little overlap with the content of the other textbooks. “Jumping High” ranks first with 30 forms. “New Course” and “Developing” contain 21 and 18 forms respectively, ranking second and third in terms of quantity. There are no connective devices shared across all four textbooks, and only ‘后来’ (later) is common among three textbooks (“Developing”, “Jumping High”, and “New Course”). Notably, “New Course” includes not only conjunctions and adverbs that indicate time but also specifically mentions the use of nouns and numerals to express time—a feature not found in “Developing.”

In terms of presentation, each textbook has its own characteristics. “Course” treats these expressions as commonly used connective devices in practical writing. Both “Comprehensive” and “New Course” classify the connectives, though their criteria differ. From „both categorize connectives” according to the quantity of time: “Jumping High” divides them into time points and period, while “New Course” distinguishes between specific time and time progression. In addition, “Jumping High” further classifies them according to temporal sequence into anteriority, simultaneity, and posteriority. Regarding the function, “Developing” emphasizes the role of conjunctions in discourse, noting that temporal conjunctions can link contextual elements. “Jumping High” highlights the overuse of ‘……的时候’ (...when) and ‘然后’ (then...) in Chinese learners’ writings. This demonstrates that, among the four textbooks, real time is the most thoroughly treated semantic category in terms of content, quantity, and method of presentation.

Logical time expressions conclude words that partly indicate sequential and consecutive relations. These words appear in three of the textbooks: “Developing,” “Jumping High,” and “New Course.” They are typically used to represent a particular order within the discourse and do not necessarily correspond directly to real-life time. In terms of quantity, “New Course” contains the most forms of this type, with a total of ten; “Developing” follows with eight; and “Jumping High” has the fewest, with only six. The forms common to all three textbooks include the conjunction ‘然后’ (then), the pattern ‘第一.....第二.....第三.....’ (first... second... third...), ‘先.....再.....’ (first... then...), and ‘一是.....二是.....三是.....’ (one is... two is... three is...). In terms of presentation, both “Developing” and “Jumping High” treat these words as means of achieving contextual cohesion or serving as textual transitions.

Spatial devices appear in both “Developing” and “New Course.” The former briefly introduces only two linguistic forms: ‘前面/后面.....+是/有+事物’ (in front of/behind... there is/are...) and ‘从.....到.....’ (from... to...). The latter provides more detailed, further dividing spatial devices into two subtypes: the “fixed type” and the “guided type.” The fixed type refers to situations in which the author’s perspective remains unchanged while the description of space shifts. The guided type refers to situations in which both the author and the described space move, with the space following the author. Key cohesive words in this category include ‘东/西/南/北边’ (east/west/south/north side), ‘一路上’ (all the way along), among others.

In addition to the various cohesive devices discussed above, “Developing” also emphasizes the omission of connectives. This is primarily addressed through exercises, in which learners are asked to delete connectives that can be omitted from example sentences. Such exercises aim to enhance discourse coherence and help international students appreciate the characteristic of “parataxis” in Chinese.

3. Lexical Cohesion

Lexical cohesion devices are not commonly addressed in writing textbooks. Even when covered in “Developing” and “Course,” the content is limited and varies significantly between the two.

“Developing” points out the method of achieving contextual cohesion through word repetition, for example:

- (3) 长大 以后, 我 一直 相信.....; 我 也 一直 相信;
 grow up after I always believe ...; I also always believe ...;
 我 还 一直 相信.....。
 I still always believe ...

After growing up, I have always believed that ...; I have also always believed that ...; I have still always believed that

By continuously repeating ‘have always believed that,’ it connects several paragraphs that are similar in content yet have certain distinctions.

The “Course” emphasizes the role of similarity in discourse cohesion. It notes that synonyms can avoid repetition in context, while antonyms can create contrast between different parts of the text, thereby making the argument more compelling. For example:

(4) 大家都因为她口吃而轻视她，而我却从没有
everyone all because her stutter (particle) look down on her but I however never
小看过她。
underestimate (aspect) her

Everyone looked down on her because of stutter, but I have never underestimated her.

(5) 人生既是快乐的，又是痛苦的。之所以快乐，是因为.....;

life both is joyful and is painful the reason why joyful is because ... ;

之所以痛苦，是因为.....。

the reason why painful is because ...

Life is both joyful and painful. The reason why it is joyful is that ... ; the reason why it is painful is that

In Example 5, ‘轻视’ (look down on) and ‘小看’ (underestimate) are synonyms. Their combined use enhances the richness of the language expressions and avoids monotony. In Example 6, ‘快乐’ (joyful) and ‘痛苦’ (painful) are antonyms. Using these two words to describe life creates a vivid contrast and makes the writing more profound.

However, the three methods of general words, taxonomic relation and collocation do not appear in any of the writing textbooks examined. Crosthwaite et al. (2018) investigated the use of discourse bridging reference in Chinese by native speakers of Japanese, Korean, and English, and found that L2 learners have difficulty acquiring this complex cohesive device, which involves the syntax-pragmatics interface. Bridging relations are similar to the whole-part cohesion found in taxonomic relations. The absence of such knowledge in textbooks may result in international students struggling to acquire this device.

Discussion

The analysis reveals that all four textbooks include instructional content related to discourse cohesion, with a primary focus on conjunction devices—particularly adversative, causal and temporal-spatial relations. What is worth noting is that all the textbooks have recognized the importance of knowledge of discourse cohesion in

writing. They consider it key to composing good essays and have acknowledged that cohesive devices, especially conjunctions, are both critical and challenging for learners in acquiring Chinese discourse competence.

However, the teaching of discourse cohesion in the four textbooks still exhibits several problems. First, each textbook lacks certain aspects of discourse cohesion. Specifically, substitution, ellipsis, and most lexical cohesion devices are not covered in any of the four textbooks. Second, with respect to the cohesive devices that receive the greatest emphasis, there are significant differences in both the quantity, content, and presentation of instruction across the textbooks. This finding aligns with Yang's (2018) research on Chinese grammar textbooks. These issues make it difficult for students to acquire sufficient knowledge of discourse cohesion from a single textbook and indicate that the systematicity of discourse cohesion content in CSL writing textbooks still needs improvement. Finally, the boundary between writing textbooks and other types of textbooks remains unclear. This lack of clarity is reflected in both teaching content and presentation methods. In terms of content, all four textbooks focus primarily on connectives in conjunctions, while other cohesive methods—such as substitution and lexical cohesion—are relatively scarce. However, a coherent discourse cannot rely solely on conjunctions, especially in Chinese, a topic-prominent language (Li & Thompson, 1976), where other devices with stronger parataxis may better reflect its characteristics. Furthermore, genre, as an important element in writing, determines both the macro-level discourse framework and the micro-level choice of words. However, only “Developing” and “Course” address this element in their content. This lack of attention to genre is not conducive to improving students' genre awareness. Therefore, unlike other types of textbooks that tend to focus on language accuracy, writing textbooks should also emphasize the coherence and appropriateness of language.

In terms of presentation, how should the cohesive devices be taught? Can the three-step presentation method—explanation, example sentences, and exercises—typically used in grammar courses truly help students grasp the role of cohesion in these devices and recognize their importance in Chinese discourse? We believe that the presentation of cohesive devices in writing classes should not be superficial. Instead, it should focus on their discourse function and highlight common language errors among the students, thereby helping them construct more coherent texts. In this regard, “Developing” performs well. It encompasses the widest variety of cohesive devices, providing students with more building blocks for writing. Moreover, it introduces the discourse-cohesion function of different devices in the most detailed manner, including paragraph-level cohesion and its use in specific genres. Therefore, international students can better

understand how to use different cohesive devices in specific contexts, thereby truly achieving a “targeted approach.” The strengths of “Jumping High” are shown in the following two aspects. First, it reviews the connectives in conjunction, which students usually have learned in Chinese grammar class, into a single lesson without occupying excessive lesson time, thereby leaving more room for other key points in discourse knowledge. In addition, “Jumping High” also focuses on summarizing and correcting discourse errors. For example, it explains common errors by having students correct interlanguage texts that contain mistakes. In this way, students can intuitively perceive language errors, correct them, and avoid recurrence in their own writing, thereby improving the accuracy of their language use.

Why do these issues appear in writing textbooks? This may be due to a deviation in aligning the textbooks with the Chinese teaching curriculum. Both the International Curriculum for Chinese Language Education and the Curriculum for Foreign Students in Institutions of Higher Education (hereafter “Long-term”) mention discourse cohesion. However, the teaching requirements in the former syllabus are only broadly discussed, without specifying at which stage particular discourse knowledge should be acquired. The „Long-term” curriculum Chinese learning is more detailed. In addition to presenting different compound-sentence forms in a graded manner, it explicitly states that discourse cohesion devices—such as repetition, substitution, and ellipsis—should be taught at advanced levels, thereby providing a reference for textbook compilation and classroom teaching. However, when compared with the Cohesion Theory (Halliday & Hasan, 1976), the cohesion devices outlined in the “Long-term” syllabus do not present lexical cohesion. Furthermore, there is conceptual confusion regarding ellipsis and reference devices. Consequently, the existing teaching syllabus provides weak standardization and limited guidance for textbook compilation, resulting in significant differences across textbooks. Moreover, the alignment between the textbooks and the syllabus is weak. For instance, no single textbook encompasses all four types of discourse cohesion devices listed in the “Long-term” syllabus. “Jumping High” and “New Course” cover only one type each, while “Developing” includes two types. The similarity cohesion in “Course” goes beyond the syllabus.

Summary and Recommendations

Based on the above analysis, we found that although all four textbooks address the teaching of discourse cohesion devices, there are significant differences in their teaching content and presentation methods. These differences may be related to the textbooks’ underlying writing concepts and the weaker compatibility between the

textbooks and the syllabus. Accordingly, we propose the following three suggestions for the compilation of CSL writing textbooks.

First, a scientific and systematic teaching syllabus should be established prior to textbook development. Such a syllabus should clearly describe specific macro-level and micro-level discourse knowledge and should be graded and quantified to provide a foundation for textbook compilation. The textbooks should adhere to the syllabus standards rather than rely solely on teaching experience. At the same time, the syllabus should be continuously refined based on textbook usage and teaching feedback.

Second, writing textbooks should be clearly differentiated from textbooks of other course types. Adjustments should be made to the focus and presentation of the same knowledge points across different course types. Writing textbooks should fully reflect the emphasis of writing courses on various levels of textual expression and genre characteristics, establish a systematic textual concept that integrates the whole and its parts, and avoid limiting explanations of cohesive devices to just one or two clauses.

Third, it is necessary to incorporate advanced research findings, particularly on discourse errors and discourse development in L2 acquisition. Efforts should be made to strengthen comparisons between Chinese discourse and discourse in other languages, between correct discourse and erroneous discourse, as well as between elementary discourse, intermediate discourse, and advanced discourse. Such comparisons can help students to avoid potential errors in advance and to improve their textual awareness and writing ability in CSL learning.

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