文本特征与阅读理解

Text Features and Reading Comprehension

● Mary Lee Field 著

中小学英语教师发展丛书
SEAMEO RELC PORTFOLIO SERIES

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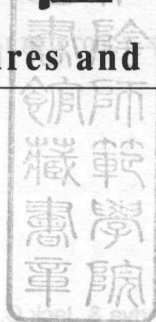人民教育出版社
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Series Editors: Willy A. Renandya & Jack C. Richards

丛书总序

自上个世纪80年代以来，我国的教育经历了数次重大的变革，就中小学英语教育而言，三次重大的课程改革推动着英语教育的发展，教学质量迅速提高。在这些改革的浪潮中，首当其冲的是一线教师。他们必须提高专业基础，掌握先进理论，更新教育观念，优化教学方法。

实践证明，高素质的教师队伍不仅来自于各个层次的教师职前培训和职前教育，更来自于教师终身的职业专业化发展过程。在这个发展过程中，教师首先要忠于教育事业，关爱学生，以立德树人为本，努力做到"学为人师，行为世范"。同时，为了在教学中能够帮助学生学会具有积极的学习态度和学习方法，教师自身不仅要有精湛的英语专业知识和能力，还要有教育学科方面的知识和教学行动研究的能力。更为重要的是，教师的教育教学观念和业务水平必须与时俱进。

由此可知，中小学英语教师的职业综合性很强，创造性要求很高，而且要在不断的变革中承受很大的压力。然而，教师的工作辛苦，在身心负荷很重的情况下，要把英语教育与自己的理想联系起来，当作自己终身奋斗的事业，而不仅仅是一种谋生的手段，这的确不易。令人欣喜的是，过去30年，在改革的潮流中涌现出了一批又一批高素质的英语教师和教研人员，他们成了骨干、带头人。他们忠于本职，潜心钻研，学习理论，勇于实践，积累经验，获得了成绩，成为研究型的英语教师。他们真正具有了可持续性发展的能力，展现了"教师发展"的美好人生，为我们树立了榜样。

《中小学英语教师发展丛书》的出版目的就是为了帮助更多的中小学英语教师成为上述那样的高素质教师、研究者和课程与教材的开发者。全套丛书共有12个选题，涉及英语教育的五个研究课题：教学技能、教学方法、教学资源开发、教学评价和教学研究等。

这12本小册子不同于许多深奥难懂的理论丛书，其特

点是:

一、理论阐述深入浅出,文章短小精悍,所用的英语语言文字通俗易懂,又有旁注,不同水平的英语教师都能轻松地看懂。读者既能从中汲取外语／二语教育和教学的理论,而且可以从中学到英语,提高自己的英语水平。数十页一本的小书用不了多时就能读完,这可以使读者产生成功感,激发他们持续不断阅读的兴趣。

二、丛书的作者都长期从事英语教育和教学工作,具有丰富的英语作为外语或二语的教学理论和实践经验。每册书围绕一个专题,理论紧密联系实际,既有理论依据,又有方法和案例,因此对实际教学有很强的针对性。例如有关词汇、语音、阅读和听力教学技能的介绍,教师读后便可实践,可取得立竿见影的效果。

三、这套丛书以教师的发展为出发点和归宿,特别注意采用启发式和互动式的方法呈现新的语言学理论观点,而不是生硬地灌输某些观点。每个专题的讨论几乎都由提问的形式开始,设置不同形式的任务,引导教师在完成任务的过程中预测并思考作者的观点。这样一来,教师必然要参与专题的讨论,动脑思考、动手实践、“读”“练”结合,把理论与实践联系起来。作为读者的教师,此时已不是“客体”,被动地接受书中的观点,而是“主体”,可以分析、实验、验证、批判,甚至可以补充或发表不同的见解。充分利用这套书的长处,教师可以取得较大的收获。

我希望,越来越多的英语教师能够克服困难,挤时间充分利用此类书籍,研读理论,联系实际,思考问题,立题研究,提升自己。要知道,教师的魅力来源于勤奋而又有创造性的工作,来源于广泛的阅读和深入的思考。只有这样,才能成为高素质、高水平的英语教师,提高教学质量,进行教学研究。我也希望,出版界的同行们努力为中小学教师开拓更多的选题,把理论书籍编得通俗易懂,使其真正成为教师们的“益友”,让教师感到它们亲切友好,容易接受,好懂、适用。

刘道义

2007 年 9 月于北京

Series Editors' Preface

The RELC Portfolio Series consists of short practical resource booklets for ESL/EFL teachers. Booklets in the series have the following characteristics:

- They are practical and techniques-oriented.
- They are written in an accessible, non-academic style.
- They focus on both principles and procedures.

Titles in the series provide teachers with practical ways of applying new ideas in their own teaching. In addition, they could be used as the basis for workshops and in-service courses and can also be combined in different ways according to needs.

Mary Lee Field's booklet *Text Features and Reading Comprehension* discusses how text features enhance text comprehensibility and how readers can utilise these features to aid comprehension. In this booklet, Field shows how teachers can help learners exploit text features at the different stages of reading (pre-, while- and post-reading stages) to process textual information more effectively. The booklet will be a valuable resource for teachers, teacher trainers and other language professionals who are interested in helping second/foreign language learners become better and independent readers.

We are grateful to the contributors to the RELC Portfolio Series for sharing their expertise with other teachers and teachers in training. Their willingness to do so without compensation has made it possible to publish these booklets at a price that is affordable to language teachers in the SEAMEO countries.

Willy A. Renandya
Jack C. Richards

内容简介

我们每一个人在阅读过程中都会发现不同于标准字体和字号的文本特征，它们有多种多样的表现形式。作为阅读的辅助手段，文本特征可以帮助我们更有效地处理阅读信息，从而提高阅读速度，增强阅读效果。

本书共分为六章。第一章通过具体事例描述什么是文本特征以及它的表现形式。接着解释了母语阅读中的文本特征及文本特征的功能，并指出文本特征对阅读不仅能起促进作用，而且有时也能起干扰作用。

第二章介绍了如何从母语或第一语言入手，把文本特征的使用迁移到第二语言的阅读当中，并通过大量的练习来巩固学生对文本特征的使用。

第三章介绍了阅读开始前文本特征的作用。利用文本特征的各种形式（如标题、副标题、图表）进行预测活动、激活已有背景知识、突出中心思想，是阅读开始前的三种有效方法。

第四章介绍了阅读过程中文本特征的作用。图表的采用可以使阅读材料更具视觉效果；把有关内容按序排列可起总结或强调作用；而把文本特征的各形式综合在一起可以增强整体阅读理解。

第五章介绍了阅读后文本特征的使用。与那些传统的用处不大的课后练习相比，文本特征可以帮助学生加强对课文中心大意的理解，提高他们的预测能力，激活更多的背景知识，并进而帮助他们形成自己的综合阅读技能。

第六章是结论，主要说明文本特征为学生提供了一种掌握阅读技能和成为从第一语言向第二语言成功迁移的有效阅读者的重要工具。

特别值得注意的是书中每一章的任务。这些任务旨在帮助教师动手实践，从而更好地理解每一章的内容。

Introduction

Text features are familiar parts of our everyday experience. We see them in newspapers, magazines, advertisements, textbooks, and on the internet. They used to be the special province of publishers and artists, but with the spread of personal computers they have become everyday items that we manipulate in memos, letters, e-mails, flyers, and dozens of other written texts. We use text features because we want to make a text more readable, emphasize certain points, influence the readers' processing of the text, and probably to flaunt our computer literacy! In so far as text features enhance the text, they also serve as aids to reading.

Chapter 1 of this booklet explains and illustrates the role of text features in the reading process. Some text features help us predict what will come next; some help us quickly grasp the main point of a section; some provide graphic illustrations of examples or ideas. These examples of text features illustrate for teachers how much we depend on such devices in our native language reading. Chapter 2 explains how to use text features while reading in a second language, and how our skill at using text features can be transferred to L2 texts as well.

Chapter 3 illustrates the use of text features in L2 "before reading" tasks – how they can help us make predictions, visualize, understand the main idea, activate background knowledge, and prepare for reading an L2 text. The next chapter illustrates the role of text features as an aid to comprehension monitoring "while reading" in L2. Text features are especially powerful in the during-reading process because they may provide a framework, a visualization tool, or a monitoring device for making sure that we understand what we are reading.

Chapter 5 gives teachers exercises and illustrations for using text features for review and summary after reading. While many reading texts provide (often endless) comprehension questions and grammar exercises, few use the naturally occurring element of text features to guide students through a complete review of a reading text. Making students more conscious of text features, what they are and how they aid our reading comprehension, is another step toward developing students' reading in a second language – moving them closer and closer to the behaviours they have when reading in a native language.

Throughout this booklet are sample readings rich in text features, accompanied by exercises for classroom teachers to use with their students. Each text and exercise is selected to make clear the power of text features as an aid to reading comprehension.

Mary Lee Field

Contents

What Are Text Features?

Before we can explore the value of text features as an aid to reading comprehension, we must understand exactly what they are. A basic definition would go like this: changes made to printed materials that provide visual aspects different from standard print type[1]. The letter "b" at the beginning of this paragraph is enlarged, takes up more than one line of text space, and draws attention to itself. By inserting a darker, larger, more emphatic letter "b" the printer/author/editor has inserted a text feature. This kind of text feature is often used (as it is here) to mark the beginning of a chapter. On this level, text features include changes such as the following:

- **Bold**, underline, *italics*
- **Different** font **types**
- Different font sizes

All readers are familiar with these text features because they are used extensively in newspapers, magazines, advertisements, and dozens of other printed materials.

Text features, however, include much more than print size and appearance. They include the addition of other visual features to a printed page such as the following[2]:

- Pictures
- Graphs
- Charts – including pie charts, bar charts, 3-dimensional charts
- Sidebars
- Lines
- Boxes
- Illustrations
- Tables
- Graphics
- Colours

1. 文本特征: 指对印刷材料所作的改变, 以提供与标准印刷体不同的视觉特征。

2. 文本特征除了包括字号与字体外, 还包括照片、图表、工具条、线条、方框、说明、简表、颜色等表现形式。

Even naming all the kinds of text features is a difficult task because editors, graphic designers, artists, and others concerned with printing materials are constantly finding new ways to make texts more visually dynamic and interesting. They create new fonts, design new graphics, and conduct market research to see what appeals to readers in order to change the text features accordingly. In addition, cultural values have an influence on the use of text features in different languages. Some symbols – such as the crossed lines called a "swastika" – in North America have unpleasant connotations and would not be used in many contexts. Other popular images, like animation characters so popular in Japan, are only used for children's materials in North America. As text features have become more common, printers develop bolder ones to catch our attention. Most people who own personal computers or word processors experiment with text features. They play with sizes of type, charts, types of fonts, text boxes, and various other features, just as you see in this book. As teachers of reading, both in first (L1[1]) and second languages (L2[2]), we can help our students read more efficiently through the awareness and use of text features.

TEXT FEATURES IN NATIVE LANGUAGE[3] READING

The teacher's first task is to become more conscious of text features and how they are used in our native languages. How do our L1 newspapers, for example, use text features?

1. 第一语言: 一般指一个人的母语或最先习得的语言。

2. 第二语言: 不是一个国家的本族语, 但作为交际媒介使用的语言, 通常与其他语言同时使用。

本小节讨论母语中文本特征的使用。

3. 母语: 一般指一个人幼年时习得的语言, 它是家庭里所使用的语言或者是他/她所居住的那个国家的语言。有时这一术语也作第一语言的同语词使用。

Task 1.1

Becoming Conscious of Text Features

Examine the front pages of two newspapers written in your native language. Select papers that are different in their general audiences, political orientation, level, etc.(e.g. a sports news weekly and a serious, perhaps conservative, newspaper that reports local, national and international news). How do these two front pages look? Do they have similar size headlines? Pictures? Graphics? Make lists of

all the text features you can find on both pages. Save them for a later task.

Increasing awareness of the nature and frequency of text features is crucial to your ability to help students use them as an aid to reading comprehension. In our native language reading we are often unconscious of the ways that text features influence our reading and our comprehension. Becoming conscious means recognizing when a text feature (such as a headline or a picture):

- Influenced our decision to read, or not to read, a given article
- Activated our background knowledge on a topic
- Led us to formulate a prediction about the information to follow
- Organized a set of ideas, clarified a concept, or confirmed our comprehension of the main idea

Whatever case, the words or the pictures had some influence on you. What was it? Why?

Task 1.2

The Influence of Text Features

Look again at the headlines you examined in Task 1.1. Which article would you select to read first from each paper? Why? How did the text feature influence your decision?

FUNCTIONS OF TEXT FEATURES

本小节总结了文本特征的九个主要功能，并分别加以简略介绍。

Text features serve a variety of purposes. The overall function of making the text more accessible visually can be partitioned into several more specific functions. While this book cannot address all of the possible specific functions, an examination of the major ones will serve as a foundation for teachers to build upon.

Eight major functions of Text Features include the following:
- Activate background knowledge

- Outline main and subordinate points in the text
- Synthesize information
- Emphasize key points
- Organize items into a list
- Provide visual reinforcement for a point
- Explain a concept visually in a picture, graph, chart
- Present supplementary information
- Present a summary of main points

The illustrations below provide examples of each of these eight functions.

1. Activate background knowledge

One of the quickest ways to survey a chapter or article is to preview the headings and subheadings it contains. Examine the list of headings and subheadings below from an article entitled "Teacher Codeswitching[1] in the EFL Classroom."

Example: Headings and subheadings

> **Teacher Codeswitching in the EFL Classroom**
> Research on Codeswitching
>   Research Questions
> Method
>   Subjects
>   Procedures
>   Transcription and Analysis of the Data
> Results and Discussion
>   Types of codeswitching
>   Examples 1 through 6
>   Codeswitching "Triggers"
>   Verbal indicators of "negative responsiveness"
>   Examples 7 through 11
>   Effects of Codeswitching
>   Examples 12 and 13
> Conclusion
>
> *(Hosoda, 2000: 69-93)*

The headings and subheadings in the above illustration present a familiar pattern, typical of research articles in English language teaching, linguistics, second language acquisition[1], and other related fields. A quick glance at these text features tells the reader how the article is organized and where to find the most important information. The same glance activates background knowledge about this kind of organization and about the topic. Anyone who has heard the word "codeswitching" will immediately be able to bring to mind some background knowledge about this topic. The more we know about a topic, the more we can coil up before we begin to read. "Teacher codeswitching" is an even more specific phrase, and we can guess that the article will address how/why/when teachers engage in codeswitching.

2. Outline main and subordinate points in the text

The article on teacher codeswitching is written at a rather high level, and it includes a lot of material. These headings/subheadings, however, identify its main sections and have done the job of outlining the text for us. Studying this outline constitutes a valuable pre-reading activity. From it the reader can recognize the organization of a scientific article that follows the established sequence of reviewing literature, formulating research questions, explaining the method used, and then discussing examples from the study.

3. Synthesize information

In another example we see how a chart can synthesize information and put it into a format that is easy to understand.

Example: Text features that synthesize information

The polysemy of **wing** in English, French and Russian			
	English	French	Russian
Wing of an aeroplane	✓	✓	✓
Wing of a building	✓	✓	✓
Wing of a stage	✓	✓	✗

Wing of a political party	✓	✗	✓
Flank (of an army)	✗	✓	✓
Position in football	✓	✗	✗
Blade (of a propeller)	✗	✓	✗

(Ward & Renandya, 1999: 154)

This chart makes systematic and visually clear points about words and provides a quick comparison and contrast of the usages that would be hard to explain in a linear prose description. We are quite familiar with such charts in L1 reading, but their usefulness in prediction, understanding key points, visualizing, and seeing contrasts is also an aid to L1 comprehension. If we are conscious of these features, we can use them in L2 also.

4. Emphasize key points

Using darkened (bold) letters, italics, larger type or different-looking fonts is another way to emphasize key ideas or main points. In the following list, the author has put key concepts into "bold" letters. The reader can hardly avoid focusing on the darkened works and seeing them as the key points in the reading.

Example: Text features to emphasize key points

1. **Respect** – the understander has respect for the speaker's decisions and opinions, and must be non-judgmental.
2. **Empathy** – the understander attempts to see things through the speaker's eyes.
3. **Honesty** – the understander has genuine respect and empathy *(not pretending)* in order to help the speaker develop.

(Ward & Renandya, 1999: 25)

5. Organize items into a list

In dense academic texts, a writer often tries to present or to