

逻辑连接词在阅读理解中的作用

[摘要] 英语逻辑连接词是连接句内或句子间语义关系的逻辑纽带。逻辑连接词在阅读理解过程中起重要作用——通过逻辑连接词,读者可以了解句内或句子之间的语义关系,甚至可经前句从逻辑上预见后续句的语义,从而提高阅读速度,很快理解阅读材料的语义。

[关键词] 英语逻辑连接词; 语义关系; 阅读理解; 重要作用

Abstract :English logical connectors , as we sometimes call signal words , name relationships between ideas in a sentence or a group of sentences. They are very important for readers to grasp the thread of thought in what they are reading. They can help readers understand the relationships between ideas , even predict what will occur next and vary their reading speed , and finally understand the whole ideas of reading materials quickly.

Key words :English logical connectors ; relationships between ideas ; reading comprehension ; important functions

心理学家们认为:由于受人类语言加工能力的限制,人们总是把语义相关的句子靠得比较近;这体现了人类思维的连贯性。为了使人们对语义相关的句子容易理解,作者往往使用逻辑连接词。逻辑连接词是连接句内或句子间语义关系的逻辑纽带,如: first, next, finally, therefore, as a result, so, on the other hand, however, on the contrary 等。不同的逻辑连接词所表达的语义关系不同,如: first, second, next, finally 等表达步骤顺序的语义关系; therefore, as a result, so 等表达因果的语义关系; on the other hand, however, on the contrary 等表达转折的语义关系。通过逻辑连接词,读者可以了解句内或句子之间的语义关系,甚至可经前句从逻辑上预见后续句的语义,从而提高阅读速度,很快理解阅读材料的语义。因此,确切地了解逻辑连接词及其语义关系,对句子、语段、语篇的理解,关系重大。

一.逻辑连接词在句子理解过程中的重要作用

1.逻辑连接词起着连贯表达语义的作用一些句子中,逻辑连接词是必不可少的。没有它们,句子不能连贯地表达语义,这将造成读者对句子意义理解的困难。例如:1) To rewire a light fixture, cut the wire ; turn off the electricity.2) To rewire a light fixture, first, turn off the electricity, and then cut the wires.句子 1)中没有逻辑连接词,语义模糊,读者可能会理解错句子的意义。如果按照这样的指令去重装电灯电线,可能会受到严重的伤害。句子 2)中用了两个逻辑连接词“first”和“then”,表达了步骤顺序的语义关系。它们能帮助读者很快理解重装电灯电线的步骤顺序,安全地完成任

2. 同一个句子中使用不同的逻辑连接词将表达不同的意义

读者必须正确判断句子中的逻辑连接词及其语义关系,才能理解句子的意义。例如:1) Mary went shopping, and Tom went fishing.2) Mary went shopping, but Tom went fishing.3) Mary went shopping, for Tom went fishing.4) Mary went shopping, so Tom went fishing.句子 1)中用了表示并列关系的逻辑连接词“and”,表达了两个人平等的但不同的兴趣。玛丽要去购物,汤姆要去钓鱼。句子 2)中用了表示转折关系的逻辑连接词“but”,表达了玛丽和汤姆两个人平等的但相反的行为。玛丽去购物,但是汤姆不去,他去钓鱼。句子 3)中用了表示因果关系的逻辑连接词“for”,结果在前,原因在后。玛丽去购物是因为汤姆

要去钓鱼。句子 4)中用了表示因果关系的逻辑连接词“so”,原因在前,结果在后。因为玛丽去购物,所以汤姆就去钓鱼。

3. 句子的理解

句子的理解是在字词理解的基础上,通过对组成句子的各成分的句法分析和语义分析,获得句子语义的过程[1]。语义分析是指人们利用句子中的内容词的意义及它与其他词语的关系来分析句子的意义。语义分析是句子理解不可缺少的一个环节。但是,笔者发现,许多读者在理解英语句子时,对语义分析感到困难,他们往往错误地理解句子中的逻辑连接词及其语义关系,从而导致理解句子意义失败。例如:许多读者将“Mary went shopping, for Tom went fishing.”这个句子理解成“玛丽去购物是为了汤姆去钓鱼”,他们把“for”错误地理解成了表达“目的”的语义关系。而这个句子中的“for”,表达的是因果的语义关系,即“玛丽去购物是由于汤姆去钓鱼”。

二、逻辑连接词在语段理解过程中的重要作用

语段又叫句群,是句子组成的语言表达单位,它是句子和语篇之间的中间层次。语段是建筑在逻辑思维基础上的一个语义“层次”。构成语段的各个句子围绕一个中心话题,通过一定的逻辑顺序组织起来,便成为一个较大的语义整体。作者往往在语段中的句子之间使用逻辑连接词,形成一种主要的语义关系模式。读者熟习了解这些语义关系模式,便能很快理解语段的整体语义。

1. 时间顺序型语段(Chronology Pattern)作者在描述人的生活经历、历史事件的经过、任务的时间计划时,往往使用表示时间顺序的逻辑连接词,使人们更容易理解。例如:Fessenden was educated in Quebec and worked first as a teacher and school principal. In 1886 Fessenden got a job at the Edison Machine Works in New York City. The next year he became chief chemist at Edison's laboratory in New Jersey. He taught electrical engineering at universities in Indiana and Pennsylvania from 1892 to 1900. During the next two years, while he was working as a wireless telegraph expert for the U. S. Weather Bureau, he began to develop some of his later inventions. One of the most useful of these inventions was an apparatus that measures the depth of water with reflected sound waves.这个语段中作者用了表示时间顺序的逻辑连接词 first, in 1886, the next year, from 1892 to 1900, during the next two years, 清楚地表达了 Fessenden 的工作经历。

2. 分类型语段(Classification Pattern)作者在描述事物的种类时,往往使用表示分类的逻辑连接词。例如:Different kinds of muscles perform different jobs. Some muscles are directly under your control. You decide to raise your hand in class or to pedal your bicycle. The muscles that you control are called voluntary muscles. Voluntary muscles include nearly all the muscles connected to the bones in your arms and legs. Other muscles are not under your direct control. These muscles are called involuntary muscles. Involuntary muscles work automatically. You do not make them move. The muscles in your heart and your digestive system are involuntary muscles.这个语段中作者用了逻辑连接词 kinds, directly under your control, not under your direct control, 表达了分类的语义关系。读者根据分类的语义关系,便能很快理解肌肉根据其功能可分为随意肌

(voluntary muscles)和不随意肌(involuntary muscles)两类。

3. 列举型语段(Listing Pattern) 作者为了证明自己的观点,往往使用列举事理的方法,并在其中使用表示列举的逻辑连接词,使读者更容易理解。例如:There are many reasons why insects are the most successful animals on earth. First, insects reproduce

often and in great numbers. Suppose all the eggs from one pair of houseflies also reproduced at their fullest rate. The total number of flies descended from the first during one summer would completely fill a large high school, floor to ceiling! Second, because they are so varied in size, shape, and color, some kinds of insects can be found everywhere, from Antarctica to the African deserts. Still another reason for insect success is that different kinds of insects with their specialized mouthparts can eat almost anything — from clothing to plaster. Even though an exoskeleton limits their size, small size is an advantage to insects. Insects are able to hide easily from enemies, lay eggs in small places, and don't require much food. 这个语段中,作者用了表示列举的逻辑连接词 first, second, 表达了昆虫是地球上生存最成功的动物的第一和第二个理由,“another”说明了第三个理由,“an advantage”说明了第四个理由。这是个列举型语义关系语段。

4. 比较或对比型语段(Comparison/ Contrast Pattern)

作者在比较或对比事物的异同时,往往使用表示比较或对比的逻辑连接词,形成比较或对比型语段。例如:English has an alphabetic writing system. The symbols of the alphabet represent the sounds of the language. In contrast to English, Chinese does not use an alphabet. It uses ideographs. Ideographs are symbols which represent ideas or words. Furthermore, English is written in lines from left to right, but Chinese is written in vertical columns from top to bottom. The columns are placed on the page from right to left. 这个语段中作者用了表示对比的逻辑连接词 in contrast to, but, 清楚地表达了英语文字和汉语文字的不同之处。读者能很快理解“英语是表音文字,汉语是表意文字”。

5. 因果型语段(Cause / Effect Pattern)

作者在描述事件发生的原因结果时,往往用表示因果关系的逻辑连接词。例如:The work week in America is generally 40 hours: eight hours a day, five days a week. Some companies have experimented with a new schedule: ten hours a day, four days a week. One effect of the four-day week may be happier workers. With a three-day weekend, workers have an extra day for leisure or for shopping. However, another effect of the new schedule may be inefficiency at work. It is difficult to work ten hours a day. By the end of the day, workers may be tired. As a result, they will not work as well. They will be less productive. 这个语段中作者用了逻辑连接词 one effect, another effect, as a result, 表达了因果的语义关系,使读者清楚地明白了由于公司实施一天工作 10 小时,一周工作 4 日的新的计划,导致了两个结果:一个是工人们感到高兴,因为他们可以有更多的时间去休闲或去购物;另一个是工人们的工作效率降低,因为一天工作的时间太长,容易疲倦。

6. 步骤顺序型语段(Process Pattern)

作者在描述实验操作步骤时,往往用表示步骤顺序的逻辑连接词。例如:Ray studied the effects of frustration on problem solving. First he gave subjects a number problem that had no solution. Then he gave them a very easy number problem. He found that subjects could not solve an easy problem if it followed an impossible one. Ray concluded that after people fail, it is more difficult for them to solve problems. 这个语段中作者用了表示步骤顺序的逻辑连接词 first, then, 使读者清楚地理解了 Ray 做实验的操作步骤。

7. 空间位置型语段(Space Pattern)

作者在描述建筑物结构时,往往用表示空间位置语义关系的逻辑连接词。例如:The Johnson Wax Company Laboratory is a 142-story glass tower. The tower is rectangular with curved corners. The tower has a central column. Inside the central column there is an elevator, stairs, and pipes. Only this structural core touches the ground. The rest of the tower is above the ground. The floors of the laboratory are built around the central column. There are alternating large square floors and smaller circular ones. Perhaps the most interesting view of the laboratory is seen when the sun is behind the tower. Then the outline of the circular floors shows through the glass.这个语段中作者用了逻辑连接词 inside, above, around, behind,表达了空间位置的语义关系。读者根据这一语义关系,便能很快理解“*The Johnson Wax Company Laboratory*”实验室的建筑物结构。

8. 混合型语段(Mixed Patterns)

作者为了更清楚地表达思想,往往用表示不同语义关系的逻辑连接词构成混合型语义关系语段。例如:(1) The population of the world is far greater today than ever before. (2) People have not expanded at a steady rate, however. (3) For example, in A. D. 476 —when Roman control over Europe and the Mediterranean region ended—there were about 200 million people on Earth. (4) By the year 1700, over 12 centuries later, Earth's population had increased 3 times, to about 600 million. (5) Yet, since the start of the Industrial Revolution—less than 3 centuries ago —the world's population has grown about 9 times. (6) Today, there are over 5 billion people in the world, an increase of over 4.4 billion since 1700.这个语段中作者用了逻辑连接词“however”,表达了句子(1)和句子(2)之间是转折语义关系;“for example”表达了句子(2)和其余句子之间是例证的语义关系;“in A. D. 476, by the year 1700”,“since the start of the Industrial Revolution”和“today”表达了句子(3)至句子(6)之间是时间顺序的语义关系。这个语段中包含了转折关系、例证关系和时间顺序关系。但是,这是一个以时间顺序语义关系为主的混合型语段。读者根据时间顺序的语义关系,便能很快理解人口在不同时期的不稳定增长。

三.逻辑连接词在语篇理解过程中的重要作用

英语的语篇(text),通常是由句子和语段(sentence group)构成的。逻辑连接词可连接语篇内语段与语段之间的语义关系并形成一种主要的语义关系模式。读者能理解各语段之间的逻辑连接词及其语义关系,那么也就能理解语篇的整体语义。例如:(1) Most people who have typewriters and can type well, prefer to type their letters nowadays. (2) There was a feeling a generation ago that typewriting was not quite proper in social correspondence, but, in the United States at least, the prejudice against typewriting in social correspondence has disappeared. (3) Many people, as a matter of fact, prefer that letters written to them be prepared on the typewriter, since it makes them easier to read. (4) On the other hand, the objections to the typewriter are that it is less personal and that it suggests that the writer was in too much of a hurry to sit down and write in longhand. (5) One's handwriting is in some ways as much an expression of his personality as his voice, and in correspondence between friends a great deal of the writer is missing if he uses a typewriter. (6) Therefore, the typewriter is often avoided in letters which express friendly and personal sentiments.这一语篇文字共有6句,分为2个语段:句(1)至句(3)为第一语段,句(4)至句(6)为第二语段。两个语段分别表达了正反两层意思:第一语段表达正面的意思,说明为什么现在大多数人信件往来愿意打字而不愿意手写;第二语段表达相反的意思。上下两个语段通过 on the other hand 连接起来,从而形成语段之间的转折关系,构成转

折型语义关系语篇。(1)Jack London had a very hard and difficult life. II (2) He was born in San Francisco on January 12, 1867. (3) He grew up as a street urchin, and lived on the fringes of society until he was seventeen. II (4) In 1893 he became a sailor.(5) For the next four years he fought and worked his way around the world. (6) He learned the law of the survival of the strong and the death of the weak. (7) He bummed his way across the United States, often begging his food from door to door. II (8) When he was twenty - one he decided to try and get an education, but after a few months he left school and went off to take part in the Klondyke Gold Rush in 1897. (9) He hiked over the famous Chilkoot Pass in North western Canada, got the scurvy, and came back empty - handed. II (10) Two years later he sold his first story to the Overland Monthly in 1899. (11) From that time on he made his living by publishers, and he was sometimes without money.这一语篇内容是关于美国作家杰克·伦敦成名之前的艰难经历,共有5个语段:第一语段为主题语段(句1);第二(句2至句3)、三(句4至句7)、四(句8至句9)、五(句10至11)语段之间用了表示时间顺序的逻辑连接词(on January 12, 1867, in 1893, when he was twenty - one, two years later),因而语段之间是一种时间顺序关系,构成时间顺序型语义关系语篇。逻辑连接词在阅读理解过程中起重要作用——通过逻辑连接词,读者可以了解句内或句子之间的语义关系,可以据前句语义从逻辑上预见后续句的语义。没有它们,句子、语段、语篇难以清楚地表达语义;没有它们,读者对句子、语段、语篇语义的理解将产生困难。确切地了解逻辑连接词及其所表达的语义关系,能增强人们的思维能力和阅读理解能力。但是,作为以汉语为母语的读者要了解熟悉并能正确理解它们,不是一件容易的事。读者只有在大量的阅读实践中,才能掌握它们并形成阅读技能。

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