

阅读理解中的重述现象探析

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摘要: 阅读的目的在于获取信息,包括文章的字面信息和隐含信息。重述现象是大学英语阅读教学中一项很重要的技巧,掌握得如何直接应影响应试者的得分。作者通过对重述现象在阅读理解中出现场合的分析,旨在帮助应试者提高阅读理解能力。

关键词: 重述现象; 阅读理解; 解释; 同义

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0 引言

阅读是掌握语言知识,获取信息,提高语言应用能力的基础。在目前情况下,阅读能力仍然是大部分学生今后工作中所需的主要技能^[1]。因此,大学英语的各种教材都很注重对学生阅读技巧的培养,而其中的重述现象是帮助学生猜词悟义,透彻理解文章的一个重要手段。重述现象是对原概念的再释义,换言之,它解释、体现或保留原概念,但在文字表述上有差别。简单地说,重述是用不同的语言形式表达相同的概念。重述现象在阅读理解中出现频繁,使用广泛,它为正确解题提供了明显的信息或可供参考的线索,是阅读理解中不可缺少的一个重要环节。大学英语四级试题的阅读理解部分每篇文章后有5道选择题,下面把一篇阅读理解3道题应选择的答案与原文相应的句子作一对比:

(1) 答案 ...a large population will provide a chance for developing transport system.

原文: ...a large population gives more scope for the development of facilities such as ports, roads, and railways,...

(2) 答案 ...people will perhaps go out of work if the birthrate goes down.

原文: A decreasing birthrate may lead to unemployment...

(3) 答案 ...different governments have different views of the question.

原文: ... official attitudes to population growth vary from country to country.

不难看出,以上3题中,每题应选的答案就是原文相应句子的重述,意思既没有增加,也没有减少,只是用不同的说法重新表达作者在原文中所表达的意思。在大学英语四级考试的阅读理解试题中,用重述方法编的选择题占有相当大的比例,能否正确地解答这类题目,对学生成绩的影响是不可低估的^[2]。笔者根据自己多年从事阅读教学的体会,并结合阅读理解试题中重述现象使用场合的分析,对阅读理解中的重述现象进行简单的分析归纳,希望能为应试者提供一些有益的帮助和指导。

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1 文章中的重述现象

原概念和重述同时出现在阅读文章中,重述主要用来解释某些有难度的或者生僻的词语,为读者准确理解这些词语提供帮助。通过重述现象帮助应试者理解词语意义的暗示词较多,表示定义的常用词语有: can be defined as, can be described as, is considered to be 等;表示进一步解释的常用词语有: furthermore, moreover, for example, what is more 等;表示语义关系的常用词语有: in other words, that is, that is to say, likewise, similarly, on the contrary, or, for example, such as, namely 等。例如:

(4) He was known as a man of great erudition or knowledge.

(5) Mary felt perturbed, that is, she was greatly disturbed by her sister's action.

(6) Lubricants, such as oil and grease, are used to reduce friction in moving parts of machinery.

但在阅读理解试题中,此类暗示词出现的情况不太常见,给准确辨认重述乃至正确答题造成了一定的困难,这就要求应试者能够正确理解原文,熟悉重述的其他表现形式,如定义、解释、句内结构(借助关联词和标点符号等找逻辑关系)、语义关系(同义、反义、上下义)等,以便迅速准确地辨认重述及解题^[3]。例如:

(7) Some industries hire apprentices who learn as they work. (用定语从句重述)

(8) The most common forms of figurative language are the metaphor, simile and hyperbole. (用下定义方式重述)

(9) One of the remarkable features of the Nile Valley is the fertility of its soil. This rich earth that supports plant growth made it possible for Egyptians in a dry region. (用后句重述)

(10) Sometimes a direct definition of the unknown word or a synonym——a word with a similar meaning——is provided in the sentence. (用标点符号重述)

(11) Jane was talking with others while Eliza remained reticent all the time. (用对比重述)

重述出现在文章中,主要考查应试者阅读中猜词悟义的能力,主要题型为词语型试题,要求应试者进行判断、分析、综合,不仅把握词与词、句与句之间的语义关系,还要考虑段与段之间的语义关系。试题主要测试关键词,被提问词对考生来说是生词的词语,这类难词、偏词由于多半是原文的关键词,所以在原文中往往得到直接或间接的解释。例如:

(12) 原文: "For many centuries it was believed that the moon affected people who were mentally ill. For this reason, persons who were mentally ill were often referred to as lunatics."

题目: The word "lunatics" originally meant_____.

A. twelve lunar months

B. the home of the moon goddess

C. a person on whom the moon had a bad effect

D. a guard against

划线部分 "mentally ill" 为媒体对 "lunatic" 一词的间接解释,故正确答案为 C。

2 题干中的重述现象

原概念出现在文章中,重述则出现在题干部分,这种重述往往为正确解题做了必要的提示,可以采用查读法,凭已知信息和线索返回原文,查找所需信息,从而确定正确的选项。例如:

(13) 原文: "Psychologists take opposing views of how external rewards, from warm praise to cold cash, affect motivation and creativity."

题目: Psychologists are divided with regard to their attitude towards_____. (1997年1月的大学英语四级试题)

A. the choice between spiritual encouragement and monetary rewards

B. the amount of monetary rewards for students' creativity

C. the study of relationship between actions and their consequences

D. the effects of external rewards on students' performances

其中,原文中的 "opposing", "views" 与题干中的 "divided", "attitude" 相对应, "affect" 转化为名词

“effects”, 所以正确答案为 D。

(14) 原文: We meet at very short intervals, not having had time to acquire any new value for each other.

题目: Frequent meetings prevents us from _____.

- A. refreshing ourselves B. appreciating the values of solitude
C. acquiring new values for each other D. feeling lonely between meetings

题干中的“frequent meetings”是原文“we meet at very short intervals”的重述,“prevent us from acquiring”与“not having had time to acquire”同义,因此,正确答案是 C。

重述型答句较普遍,如文章或段落的主题句,文章中涉及的人物、事件、时间、地点、性质、数量、原因、结果等细节特征,往往会在首句中加以重述,只要细心核对考题内容,一般都能迅速准确地找到答案。

3 选项中的重述现象

原概念在文章中,而重述出现在某一选项中,在这种情况下,重述所在的选项总会包含着正确的答案。因此,应试者的阅读能力不仅体现在理解试题所选的几篇文章上,而且体现在是否理解每篇文章后面的多项选择题上,尤其是每道题所给出的几个选项之间的区别上。做此类试题时,应将所选择的答案与原文相应部分作比较,因为题目的正确答案在不改变原文细节原意的前提下改用新的词语,尽管表达方式不同,但表达的意思应完全相同。例如:

(15) 原文: “... the foundation is planning to repeat Japan's success... will paint chevrons... on selected roads... to test how well the pattern reduce highway crashes.” “... the foundation will conduct its tests in areas where speed-related hazards are the greatest—curves, exit slopes, traffic circles and bridges.”

题目: The American Automobile Association Foundation for Traffic Safety plans to _____. (2000年1月的大学英语四级试题)

- A. try out the Japanese method in certain areas
B. change the road signs across the country
C. replace straight, horizontal bars with chevrons
D. repeat the Japanese patterns

依据文章内容,正确答案为 A,“try out”概括原文的“repeat”和“conduct its tests”,“in certain areas”与原文的“selected roads”和“in areas where...”相对应。

(16) 原文: “It may then take us a long time to render it intelligent by loading in the right software or by altering the architecture but that too will happen.”

题目: In what way can we make a machine intelligent? (1997年6月的大学英语四级试题)

- A. By making it working in such environments as deserts, oceans or space
B. By working hard for 10 or 20 years
C. By either properly programming it or changing its structure
D. By reproducing it

此题正确答案为 C。原文中的“loading in the right software”与选项“programming”相吻合,“altering the architecture”与“changing its structure”同义。

选项中重述较之题干中重述有些难度,解题的关键是对照与判断,应试者可以先将选择项逐一与原文相应部分对照比较,以最接近原文的一项为答案,还可先用自己的语言将原文被提问部分释义,然后与选择项相对照,确定语义相同或相近的选择为答案。

4 结 论

从历年大学英语四、六级考试阅读理解试题形式来看,重述现象在题目中和选项中出现的场合比较

多,其中的暗示和推理题是较难层次的题型,考察应试者是否透彻地了解了文章,是否能够通过字里行间,准确理解文章提供的信息,明白暗含的意思和根据已知的信息作出有事实有依据的合乎逻辑的判断,应试者应加强这方面技能的训练。课堂上教师在解释生词和课文时常用的 paraphrase 就是一种重述。阅读时遇到不认识的词语尽量不查词典,因为任何词只有在给定的句子中,在固定的搭配里,或在特定的语境中才有确切的意义,可利用上下文通过各种技巧猜测词语意义。少用英汉词典,多用英英词典,英英词典中对每个词的解释实质上就是 paraphrase,且英语中有的词语之间的区别只有通过英语解释才容易掌握。另外,在上英语课时,注意教师如何用 paraphrase 来讲解生词和课文,尤其对课文长句和难句的解释,积累同义词,用多种形式表示同一意义,长此下去,必然有助于阅读能力的提高。

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On restatement in reading comprehension

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Abstract: The purpose of reading is to acquire information including literal meaning and implied meaning. Understanding and making use of restatement is an important skill in reading comprehension which can help the subjects in tests. Through analyzing restatements in different situations, this article aims to help students improve their reading ability.

Key words: restatement; reading comprehension; explanation; similar meaning

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Reflection and practice of mathematical modeling

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Abstract: The article states the importance of mathematical modeling in the teaching of Mathematics for technology, based on the practice about our students joining MCM. Moreover, it offers several constructing suggestions on how to improve this project.

Key words: mathematical modeling; mathematics quality; teaching reform