

英语专业规划教材

李 静 主编

英语语类写作教程

A Course in English
Genre Writing

◆ 苏州大学出版社

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李 静 主编

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《英语语类写作教程》编委会

主 编：李 静

副主编：曹瑞明 胡富茂 王丽慧

编 委：张庆芳 赵 博

策 划：汤定军



前言

《英语语类写作教程》(A Course in English Genre Writing)的读者对象是大学英语专业三四年级学生,也适用于高等教育自学考试、函授、夜大学等英语专业的学生以及具有相应水平的英语爱好者。本书的目的在于帮助读者了解并掌握英文写作的一般规律和技巧。

本书前半部分着重陈述了英语写作中的一般规律和惯例,从选题到提纲,从选词到句子,从句子到段落,从段落到文章,都分别进行了详细的陈述,并配有大量的范例。本书后半部分介绍了不同语类(体裁)的写作特点。通过这部分的学习,读者不仅可以掌握不同语类的词汇和语法特点,而且能够了解特定语篇的信息组织方式,了解如何构建语篇以及对于一定语境下的语篇应该把握什么。也就是说,读者应该了解什么是语类(体裁)期望值。语类(体裁)期望值是指在一定的社会文化背景中一定体裁的语篇必须符合人们所期待的并且是公认正确和适合的形式。当读者意识到不同的语类有着各自不同的语言资源时,就可以在语类规定的框架内传达个人的意图,从而实现写作目的。

本书由李静负责总撰,在全体编写人员充分讨论的基础上,各单元分工如下:

李静(洛阳理工学院外语系)编写 Suggestions to Teachers, Introduction, Part One, Part Three, Part Four, Part Five, Key to Part Three, Key to Part Four 和 Key to Part Five;

曹瑞明(洛阳理工学院外语系)编写 Exposition of Part Six, Key to Part One, Key to Part Two 和 Key to Part Six;

胡富茂(洛阳理工学院外语系)编写 Part Seven;

王丽慧(河南科技大学外国语学院)编写 Part Eight;

张庆芳(洛阳理工学院外语系)编写 Narration, Description, Argumentation 和 Common Errors in Writing of Part Six;

赵博(洛阳市卫生学校)编写 Part Two, Part Nine 和 Key to Part Nine。

本书得到了外语界同行以及美国专家 Randall Lloyd Shenold 的大力支持与帮助,后者对该书进行了认真的审阅,并提出了许多宝贵意见。值此本书出版之际,谨向他们致以衷心的感谢。

在本书的编写过程中,编者参考了不少英美国家和我国国内出版的有关写作方面的书刊,书末附有主要参考书目表,书中所采用的大部分范例以及某些观点出自这些参考书中。为了节省篇幅,引文没有一一注明出处,谨此向这些作者深表谢意。辛献云的写作讲稿,刘养之、李泽民编写的 *Rhetoric and Composition*,丁往道、吴冰等编著的《英语写作手册》,何向明主编的《现代实用英语写作大全》,陈立平主编的《新编英语写作教程》以及王墨希、肖福寿主编的《英语写作案例教程》对编写本书帮助和启发最大。

本书虽经多次修改,但由于水平所限、时间仓促,书中肯定有不足之处,望广大读者批评指正。

编 者

2008年6月26日

Suggestions to Teachers

The concept of genre appears to be a potentially powerful pedagogical tool. Some researchers such as Kay and Dudley-Evans (1998: 311 – 312) have made several useful suggestions as to how to avoid the tendency of prescriptivism of this genre-based approach. They suggest that a teacher should:

(1) ensure that generic structures are not considered prescriptive, but allow for variations due to cultural and ideological factors;

(2) contextualize a text before its presentation by discussion of purpose, audience, institutional beliefs, values, etc, and subsequently ensure that all discussion of linguistic features takes place in the context of their function in the text;

(3) immerse students in a wide variety of texts within a particular genre;

(4) ensure that genre examples selected for teaching/learning purposes are authentic and suitable for learners;

(5) adopt a lesson procedure which facilitates, rather than inhibits interaction, since this is a powerful aid to learning;

(6) use a genre approach in conjunction with other methods—specifically mentioned was the desirability of combining genre and process approaches.

Their suggestions are helpful and applicable in language teaching. Writing is a process of making meanings in certain contexts, which involves students in the process of composing a text of a particular genre, not simply the text as a product.

Next, how to correct students' writing by teachers is worth considering. Most students find it very dispiriting if they get a piece of written work back and it is covered in red ink, underlinings and crossings-out. It is a powerful visual statement of the fact that their written English is terrible. Of course, some pieces of written work are completely full of mistakes, but even in these cases, over-correction can have a very de-motivating effect. Harmer has given teachers some good suggestions (2004) as follows:

As with all types of correction, the teacher has to achieve a balance between being accurate and truthful on the one hand and treating students sensitively and sympathetically on the other.

One way of avoiding the “over-correction” problem is for teachers to tell their students that for a particular piece of work they are only going to correct mistakes of punctuation, spelling, grammar, etc. This has two advantages: it makes students concentrate on that particular aspect, and it cuts down on the correction.

Another technique which many teachers use is to agree on a list of written symbols (S = spelling, WO = word order). When they come across a mistake they underline it discreetly and write the symbol in the margin. This makes correction look less damaging.

However many mistakes you may want to identify, it is always worth writing a comment at the end of a piece of written work—anything from “Well done” to “This is a good story, but you must look again at your use of past tenses—see X Grammar Book Page XX”.

Two last points: correcting is important, but it can be time-consuming and frustrating, especially when it is difficult to know what the mistake is because it is unclear what the student is trying to say. Common sense and talking to students about it are the only solutions here. The other really important point is that correction is worthless if students just put their corrected writing away and never look at it again. Teachers have to ensure that students understand the problems and then redraft the passages correctly in time.

Introduction

Writing is an encoding-decoding process. The writer encodes information in words and the reader decodes it. In terms of literal meaning, the word “writing” means the action of composing and committing to manuscript. *The Oxford English Dictionary* (Murray, 1989) defines it as “expression of thoughts or ideas in written words”. Another way of defining writing is made by Neufeld (1985) that writing is thought transformed into a visual form. The process of writing begins with an idea or ideas coming from an individual reaction to events occurring within his environment and within himself. By reconstructing his perception, feeling and knowledge, he creates an idea. Thus writing is the process of taking an idea from inside of one’s head and putting it into a code so that it can be shared with others.

Writing is a physical and mental act. On the one hand, writing is the physical act of committing words or ideas to some medium, whether it is hieroglyphics linked onto parchment or an e-mail message typed into a computer. On the other hand, writing is the mental work of inventing ideas, thinking about how to express them, and organizing them into statements and paragraphs that will be clear to a reader. On the meaning of mental work, it can be used to define writing as a way to inspire thinking in a second language. Its purpose is to express and impress.

Writers typically serve two masters: themselves, who desire to express an idea or feeling, and readers, also called the audience, who need to have ideas expressed in certain ways. Writers must then choose the best form for their writing—a shopping list, notes from a meeting, a scholarly article, a novel, and poetry are only a few of the choices. Each of these types of writing has a different level of complexity, depending on its purpose. Writing is both a process and a product. The writer imagines, organizes, drafts, edits, reads and rereads. This process of writing is often cyclical, and sometimes disorderly. Ultimately, what the audience sees, whether he

is an instructor or an even wider audience, is a product—an essay, a letter, a story or a research report.

Writing is universally recognized as having a dual role; on the one hand, it can be used to consolidate and harmonize other language skills in language study; on the other hand, it serves as an important means of communication between people. Writing plays an important role in SLA (second language acquisition) and is not merely a language skill. According to Swain (1995), comprehensible output plays a part in L2 acquisition. Output can serve a consciousness-raising function by helping learners to notice the gap in their interlanguages. That is, by trying to speak or write in the L2 they realize that they lack the grammatical knowledge of some feature that is important for what they want to say. Writing enhances language acquisitions. Learners experiment with words, sentences, and larger chunks of writing to communicate their ideas effectively and to reinforce the grammar and vocabulary they are learning in class. When students write, they also have a chance to be adventurous with the language, to go beyond what they have just learned to say, to take risks. Additionally, when students write, they automatically become very involved with the new language. The effort to express ideas and the constant use of eye, hand, and brain are a unique way to reinforce learning. As students struggle with what to put down next or how to put it down on paper, they often discover something new to write or a new way of expressing their ideas. They discover a real need for finding the right word and the right sentence. The close relationship between writing and thinking makes writing a valuable part of language learning. Therefore, writing is more a mode of learning than merely a language skill.

Writing effective texts involves many different kinds of knowledge and skills. Among them, the ability to select appropriate content and language to suit the communicative task is very important. Students should know not only how to structure a text, but also what is important and appropriate to write about in such a context in which the text is situated. That is to say, students must know “generic expectations” which are what they are expected to write for certain types of texts.

The word *genre* comes from the French word (originally Latin *genus*) for class or kind. Genre is a category of the communicative (social) events (action) in a discourse community of a culture to achieve a certain communicative (social)

purpose. It obtains its meaning from situation (social context). It is socially a dynamic process and shares conventions and rules in form, content and context. The communicative purpose and situation determine the subject matters and the textual structures of a genre, which lead to the recurrence of content and form. Besides the similarity in content and form, genre can be seen to employ language resources to corresponding listeners'/readers' expectation under a particular social situation. It is functional. In one sentence, the communicative purpose of a text determines the type of the genre to which the text belongs.

For students who write a text in a foreign language, acquiring the ability to make appropriate choices in order to create an appropriate text is very important. They need to know that different genres have different linguistic resources for realizing these genres. Students need to know how to write postcards and letters of various kinds, how to fill in forms such as job applications, how to write narrative compositions, reports, newspaper and magazine articles, how to reply to advertisements. They also need to know some writing conventions (punctuation, paragraph construction, etc).

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ENGLISH WRITING

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*Part
One*

Essentials of Writing

As you are learning to write, you should have a clear idea of what is the necessary process in writing a composition and what are the basic principles of writing a good composition. Writing process and writing principles are the essentials of writing.

The process of writing

Writing is a process, which transforms thought into a visual form. When you go about writing, five steps are necessary.



Clarifying your aim

With sufficient preparation, you can begin writing a composition. Before writing, you should work out a plan and gather enough material. When a topic is decided, you should clarify your aim. What are you trying to achieve: to narrate, to describe, to convince, to persuade, or to explain? By answering this question, you can know where your writing is leading. That is to say, you should find a proper thesis or theme. The thesis of a composition is its main point or its central idea. For example,

- { Topic: Smoking
- { Thesis: Smoking is killing us.
- { Topic: Firecrackers
- { Thesis: Firecrackers should be banned.
- { Topic: Air Travel
- { Thesis: The advantages of air travel



Making an outline

When the thesis is decided, you should decide what details to give and the best way to give them and write down as many relevant facts as you can. After you pick out the suitable items, an outline is prepared. The outline illustrates the statement of the main facts or points and the order of the facts or points. A sketch of outline is shown as follows:

Topic

Introduction: thesis (main idea)

Body: main idea 1

sub-idea 1

supporting detail

facts

sub-idea 2

supporting detail

facts

main idea 2

sub-idea 1

supporting detail

facts

sub-idea 2

supporting detail

facts

Conclusion

(Ding, 1995)

● Model

Topic: Everyone Should Be a Vegetarian!

Thesis: Slaughtering millions of helpless animals every year just to satisfy the human craving for meat is unreasonable.

Introduction: Slaughtering millions of helpless animals every year just to satisfy the human craving for meat is unreasonable.

Body:

Main idea 1: From a health standpoint, it is simply not necessary to eat meat.

Main idea 2: In addition to being cruel, eating animals is a waste of resources.

Main idea 3: Furthermore, animals should be our friends.

Main idea 4: Finally, it is important to be aware that we have only one earth to live on.

Conclusion: Stop eating meat, and become a vegetarian.



Drafting your composition

When you are clear about your aim and outline, you can begin to write the composition itself. This will bring you a draft, no end product yet. Writing process is recursive and creative. You may leave enough space between lines for further correction and improvement.



Revising your draft

It is necessary to read through your draft and check the overall flow of ideas and information. Revision does not mean a simple correction of mistakes in grammar, spelling, punctuation and mechanics. Revision also includes correctness of diction, sentences, content, and organization.

1. Revising diction:

- Words are suitable for the topic or style of the whole composition.
- Collocations that are correct in English are not directly translated from Chinese.

2. Revising sentences:

- Sentences are clearly related.
- Sentences are well structured.
- There are no wordy and redundant sentences.
- There are no unnecessary sentences.
- There is variety in sentence type.

3. Revising content:

- The draft fulfills the topic of the composition.
- Thesis is clearly stated and is supported by enough facts.
- There are no irrelevant facts.
- The logic is sound.

4. Revising organization:

- The introduction part introduces the thesis.
- Each paragraph has a separate central idea, which relates to the thesis.