



世纪英语专业系列教材

“十一五”国家重点出版规划项目

天津市高等学校精品课程

基础英语写作



陈法春 / 主编

English Writing



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21 世纪英语专业系列教材
“十一五”国家重点出版规划项目

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总 序

北京大学出版社自 2005 年以来已出版“语言与应用语言学知识系列读本”多种,为了配合第十一个五年计划,现又策划陆续出版“21 世纪英语专业系列教材”。这个重大举措势必受到英语专业广大教师和学生的欢迎。

作为英语教师,最让人揪心的莫过于听人说英语不是一个专业,只是一个工具。说这些话的领导和教师的用心是好的,为英语专业的毕业生将来找工作着想,因此要为英语专业的学生多多开设诸如新闻、法律、国际、经济、旅游等其他专业的课程。但事与愿违,英语专业的教师们很快发现,学生投入英语学习的时间少了,掌握英语专业课程知识甚微,即使对四个技能的掌握并不比大学英语学生高明多少,而那个所谓的第二专业在有关专家的眼中只是学到些皮毛而已。

英语专业的路在何方?有没有其他路可走?这是需要我们英语专业教师思索的问题。中央领导关于创新是一个民族的灵魂和要培养创新人才等的指示精神,让我们在层层迷雾中找到了航向。显然,培养学生具有自主学习能力和能进行创造性思维是我们更为重要的战略目标,使英语专业的人才更能适应 21 世纪的需要,迎接 21 世纪的挑战。

如今,北京大学出版社外语部的领导和编辑同志们,也从教材出版的视角探索英语专业的教材问题,从而为贯彻英语专业教学大纲做些有益的工作,为教师们开设大纲中所规定的必修、选修课程提供各种教材。他们把英语专业教材的出版看作是第十一个五年计划期间组织出版“十一五”国家重点出版规划项目——《面向新世纪的立体化网络化英语学科建设丛书》的重要组成部分。这套系列教材要体现新世纪英语教学的自主化、协作化、模块化和超文本化,结合外语教材的具体情况,既要解决语言、教学内容、教学方法和教育技术的时代化,也要坚持弘扬以爱国主义为核心的民族精神。因此,今天北京大学出版社在大力提倡专业英语教学改革的基础上,编辑出版各种语言、文学、文化课程的教材,以培养具有创新性思维、具有实际工作能力的学生,充分体现了时代精神。

北京大学出版社的远见卓识,也反映了英语专业广大师生盼望已久的心愿。由北京大学等全国几十所院校具体组织力量,积极编写相关教材。这就是说,这套教材是由一些高等院校有水平、有经验的第一线教师们制定编写大纲,反复讨论,特别是考虑到在不同层次、不同背景学校之间取得平衡,避免了先前的教材或偏难或偏易的弊病。与此同时,一批知名专家教授参与策划和教材审定工作,保证了教材质量。

当然,这套系列教材出版只是初步实现了出版社和编者们的预期目标。为了获得更大效果,希望使用本系列教材的教师和同学不吝指教,及时将意见反馈给我们,使教材更加完善。

航道已经开通,我们有决心乘风破浪,奋勇前进!

胡壮麟

北京大学蓝旗营

2007年2月

前言

英语写作是普通高等学校英语专业基础阶段的必修课。近 20 年来,我国英语教学与研究界同仁充分吸收第二语言习得、英语作为第二语言和英语作为外语教学的研究成果,积极进行教学改革,取得了丰硕的成果,为本教材提供了大量具体的指导。

20 世纪 70 年代以来,人本主义教育提倡在学习过程中以人为中心,在肯定教师的促进和指导作用的同时强调学生的参与。交际理论认为,写作过程是群体交际活动而非个人行为。Murray (1980) 和 Richards (1990) 提出的过程写作教学模式(the process-focused approach)注重以学生为中心,倡导写作过程中学生的体验、实践、参与、合作与交流。Zamel (1982)指出,“写作课的重点应放在写作表达和创作的过程中。”与传统的成果教学法不同,过程教学法把作文教学分成三个阶段:写作前、写作中和写作后,重视通过一系列的交流、协商活动和修正机会,帮助学生在各个阶段发挥主观能动作用,激发创造力,提高作文质量。过程教学法对传统的重视语法、语言形式等教学法提出挑战,旨在把注意力从评价、评估学生的写作成品转向帮助学生更好地认识写作过程。20 世纪 90 年代以后,后过程(post-process)理论指出写作的“公开性、解释性和环境局限性”(“the writing act is public, thoroughly heremeneutic and always situated”)(Kent, 1999),对文本、读者和用外语写作的社会文化背景予以关注(Matsuda, 2003)。这实际上表明,作文教学不仅要关注写作过程,还应该更在更广阔的领域内帮助学生把握写作内容和表达方式。

实践表明,学生在写作中遇到的两大障碍,一是缺乏思想,不知道该写什么;二是写完初稿后除了提高语言的准确性外,不知如何对文章进行修改、提高。Zamel(1987)发现,有经验的写作者在开始写作时脑子里并没有太多具体想法,而只是一些模糊的东西。因此,作文课教学既要在学生开始写作前帮助他们启动思维,通过讨论、辩论、重组故事、音像资料评论、头脑风暴(brainstorming)、自由写作(free writing)等方式帮助学生拓展思路,发现素材,形成观点,产生写作冲动,又要强调写作的反复性,消除不良心理因素的影响,引导学生反复思考,不断明确思路,选择更为有效的形式表达思想。如果说写作前阶段的各种活动“就像运动前的热身一样必要,可以让写作者伸展四肢,放松肌肉”(Raimes, 1996),那么,写作水平的提高也应向运动水平的提高一样允许循序渐进,容忍和理解失误,写作课教师应该像教练员一样通过多种途径帮助学生提高写作技能。

因此,教师在写作教学过程中应发挥三种作用:写作活动的组织者、写作内容的引导者、写作成果的反馈者。写作是一种复杂的认知过程,其非线性、动态性和反复性

要求教师在写作过程的各道程序辅助学生。教师要合理安排课堂时间,灵活设置活动内容,有效评估课堂活动,发挥写作活动组织者的作用。

除了帮助学生形成观点、明确思路外,教师在写作课中的引导作用还表现在对英语写作知识、技巧的介绍和结合优秀范文进行的导读两个方面。后者呼应了后过程理论对文本、读者和用外语写作的社会文化背景的关注。由于我国高等学校英语专业的学生在中小学都受过中文写作训练,教师对英语写作知识和技巧的介绍应重点放在中英文的差异方面,以减少英语学习者所受的文化差异方面的限制。在这方面,阅读优秀文章可以有很大的帮助,这不仅是因为足够的可以理解的语言输入是有效语言输出的前提,而且还是因为写作教师引导的阅读有很强的针对性。教师可以把以技巧为本的教学模式与语篇分析相结合,根据不同的教学内容与对象选择具有针对性的方法,引导学生从宏观和微观层面理解阅读材料(Kintsch & van Dijk, 1978),分析范文的整体结构、作者的思维模式、语言的灵活运用、作者和作品所处的社会历史背景等问题,进而引导学生从他人文章的成败得失中领悟作文之道,把所获得的各种有效信息加工后进行语言重组和再造,同时引导学生掌握推理和逻辑思维方法,使他们具备写好文章的基础(祁寿华,2001)。

修改是写好文章的关键(Murray,1978)。区别一个写作能手与写作新手的关键之一在于作者是否愿意并有能力大幅度修改自己的原始作品(Beach, 1976)。学生在一次写作过程中对其习作进行不少于三次的修改是把写作看成不断发现和完善思想的过程的最直接体现。传统写作教学习惯于关注学生一次性写作成品,教师在批改作业时侧重语言形式,如语法、句法、词汇的使用,而常常忽视内容、篇章结构、逻辑思维等因素,对学生所处的环境关注更少,所提出的改进意见更多是评价性的,即便提出了建设性的改进意见,也很少在乎学生对意见的反应,学生则更关心分数或者评价的高低,对教师提出的修改意见往往不予以重视。这种师生间一对一的一次性单向交流作业模式是导致多数学生写作水平停滞不前的重要因素。

三次三向反馈交流模式以学生的写作过程为核心,旨在带动同学间和师生间的多次交流,达到提高写作水平的目的。Keh (1990)把过程教学法中的信息交互分为三种形式:同伴反馈(peer feedback)、会谈式反馈(conferences as feedback)和批语式反馈(comments as feedback)。经过写作前阶段,学生根据讨论或辩论记录、自由写作的底稿构思完成作文初稿,然后自行修改,判断所写文章是否有明确的主题,所选内容是否与主题相关,所述观点是否有支撑并连贯一致。在此基础上,学生可以对彼此的作文初稿进行互评、互改。研究表明,同伴反馈能为学习者提供真实的读者,让学习者得以了解他人对自己作品的不同看法,帮助学习者学会批判性地阅读自己的作品(Keh, 1990)。学生可以分组交换阅读彼此的作文,讨论、评点小组内每篇文章。教师可以参与讨论,提供会谈式反馈。该过程还可以促进学生之间运用目的语交流,增加语言实践的机会,提高学生主动学习参与度,创造出积极的学习氛围(Long & Porter, 1985)。

对于学生根据交流意见完成的作文第二稿教师要进行认真阅读并提出反馈意见。

从理论上讲,比学生更强的语言能力和更加丰富的英语写作经验使教师成为学生写作结果的重要反馈者。Swain (1995)指出,教师的反馈能让学习者重新构建对目的语形成的假设,对语言结构进行重组,使学习者沿着目的语的轨道前进。需要注意的是,教师的反馈首先还是帮助学生完善构思,充实内容,寻求更佳的表达方式,而不是急于或者仅仅指出、改正学生在语言准确性方面出现的失误。当然,为了减少外语学习者所受的语言限制,教师提供的语言帮助也是必要的。这就需要教师做出适合学生外语水平的判断,把握反馈的最终目的是使学生掌握自我修改能力的原则。教师在反馈中应该多给一些鼓励和具体的修改建议。Fathman 和 Whalley (1990)的研究结果显示,教师带有具体修改建议的鼓励性批语对于学生作文内容的改进有很大帮助。对于学生作业中的语言失误,教师可以标出错误类型,鼓励学生自己改正(张雪梅、戴炜栋,2001)。同时,教师还应该因材施教,区别对待不同的学生。我们发现,对学习热情高和英语水平好的学生进行的诸如谋篇布局、思维拓展、高级词汇运用等方面的“高级关注点”(high order concerns—HOCs, Keh, 1990)的修改能有效地促进师生感情,进一步提高学生的学习兴趣。教师还可以对学生作文二稿进行集中点评,分析普遍问题和常见错误,让学生了解错误的原因,开展合作学习讨论错误的修改方式。

学生根据教师的修改建议和讨论结果进一步修改作文,写出三稿。教师对作文三稿进行具体的修改并就“高级关注点”进行再次反馈。实践表明,通过三次改进,学生作文的整体水平有明显的提高。因为篇幅限制,同时考虑到不同类型学校的实际,本教材没有充分展示学生作文的修改过程,但是,不少于三次的修改过程是本教材推崇的核心理念。同时,我们认为,英语写作课的成效在很大程度上取决于学生提高英语水平的热情和意志,取决于教师对英语写作课的热爱程度和投入精力。

本教材有关常用英语写作技巧的章节包括概念导入、概念简介、范文阅读、写作建议、相关词汇、实践训练等内容。为了提高学生的综合素质,满足 TEM-4 的相关要求,本教材用一章篇幅介绍英语书信和便条的体例及写作注意事项。教材努力体现英语写作教学的研究成果,降低学生对用英语写作的畏难情绪,营造友好的学习环境,提高学生的学习兴趣。但是,因为编者水平有限,经验不足,谬误之处在所难免,敬请读者批评指正。

本教材在天津外国语学院经过多年实践,效果良好。2005年,天津外国语学院基础英语写作课被评为天津市普通高等学校2004—2005学年精品课程,课程组成员除本教材编者外还有刘红英、胥丽华、胡向华和美国教师 Joshua Parker。本教材在合理利用原有材料的基础上,根据最新教学实践,大幅度更新了内容。

编者

2006年8月

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Sentence Skills

Types of Sentences

A. Declarative, interrogative, imperative and exclamatory sentences

According to their **use**, sentences are declarative, interrogative, imperative or exclamatory.

- ★ 1. A declarative sentence makes an assertion or a statement.
- ★ 2. An interrogative sentence asks a question.
- ★ 3. An imperative sentence expresses a command or a request.
- ★ 4. An exclamatory sentence expresses a strong feeling or emotion, such as surprise, pain, or joy.

1

B. Simple, compound, complex, and compound-complex sentences

According to their **structure**, sentences can be divided into four categories: simple, compound, complex, and compound-complex sentences.

1. Simple Sentence

A simple sentence contains one main clause without any subordinate clause. It has only one subject and one predicate-verb, but it may contain more than one object, attribute or adverb. Short simple sentences are usually emphatic and powerful; they have special clarity and provide variety when used with longer sentences.

For Example

1. He is a handsome boy.
2. What has happened here?
3. It can't be true.
4. Man holds in his mortal hands the power to abolish all forms of human poverty and all forms of human life.

2. Compound Sentence

A compound sentence is made up of two or more main clauses but no subordinate clauses. That is, all the clauses express a complete thought. If the clauses are separated with a full stop, they can be independent sentences except with the coordinate conjunction, *for*. All main clauses are joined by either a semicolon or one of these seven coordinate conjunctions: *and*, *but*, *or*, *nor*, *for*, *so*, *yet*. Coordinated ideas should be compatible and roughly equal in importance, or take shape one by one in orderly sequence.

For Example

1. The heavy rain started suddenly, so we had to cancel all the outdoor activities.
2. Dennis wanted to go camping, but his girlfriend wanted to go skating.
3. Mary majors in English; Tim majors in Economy.

3. Complex Sentence

A complex sentence is made up of one main clause and at least one subordinate clause with a subordinate conjunction denoting the relation between the two parts. The subordinate clause may play the part of a subject, an object, a predicative, an attribute, or an adverbial in the main clause. As a rule, the major idea is expressed in the main clause and the idea or ideas of lesser importance in the subordinate clauses.

For Example

1. The government took some effective measures to purify the air, **because** the air pollution became serious.
2. **Although** the shop sold some bargains, I didn't buy what I didn't need.
3. These apple trees, **which** had borne lots of fruit before, were cut down for some reasons.

4. Compound-Complex Sentence

A compound-complex sentence is made up of at least two main clauses and at least one dependent clause—a combination of a compound and a complex sentence.

For Example

1. **When** I returned to school after a long absence, the warm-hearted English teacher helped me with my make-up work, **but** the cold-hearted Physics teacher made me flunk.
2. **When** an examination is approaching, some students begin to study harder than before, **and** other students still keep their usual attitude toward it.

3. Helen hated overtime work, **because** the boss was mean with the overtime pay **and** it made her very tired.

Practice

Rewrite the following by putting the short sentences into compound or complex sentences.

1. The students have made great progress with their English. They still have a long way to go.
-

2. Napoleon was born in 1769. At that time, France had just acquired Corsica.
-

3. The new workers lacked experience. They were eager to learn from the experienced ones.
-

4. He came back to his hometown. He had been away for many years. He couldn't find the familiar landmarks.
-

5. She appeared on the stage. A stormy applause broke forth.
-

3

C. Loose and periodic sentences

- ★ A loose sentence puts the main idea before all unimportant information. In other words, it puts the more important things first to let the reader know what it is mainly about when he has read the first few words.
- ★ The reverse arrangement makes a periodic sentence: The main idea is expressed at or near the end of it, and it is not grammatically complete until the end is reached. The reader does not know what it is mainly about until he finishes reading it. Compared with a loose sentence, a periodic sentence is more effective and emphatic.

Compare

1. The scientist was offered a long-term professional contract after he won the Nobel Prize in Medicine, according to the newspaper reports.
2. According to the newspaper reports, after he won the Nobel Prize in Medicine, the scientist was offered a long-term professional contract.

The main idea of both sentences is the fact that the scientist was offered a long-term professional contract. This idea is put at the beginning of sentence 1 and towards the end of

sentence 2, thus making sentence 1 a loose sentence and sentence 2 a periodic one. Besides, the first part of sentence 1 is complete in structure, but that of sentence 2 only consists of prepositional phrases and cannot be called a sentence without the second part. So loose sentences are easier, simpler, more natural and direct; periodic sentences are more complex, emphatic, formal, or literary. When in written English, periodic sentences are favored.

Practice

Read the following sentences and say whether each is a loose or a periodic sentence.

1. He played the piano very well because he had been trained for many years.
2. His world collapsed when he wasn't chosen for the promising football team.
3. Badly frightened by the violent explosion, the boy couldn't move or cry for help.
4. Our friends set off before us and promised that they would meet us, but when we arrived at the meeting place, they didn't show up.

D. Short and long sentences

A short sentence is usually emphatic and powerful, whereas a long sentence is capable of expressing complex ideas with precision, because it may contain many modifiers. Short sentences are suitable for the presentation of important facts and ideas, and long sentences for the explanation and illustration of views and theories, or the description with many details.

The following passage, which describes how a man saved a drowning girl, makes good use of short sentences.

He crouched a little, spreading his hand under the water and moving them round, trying to feel for her. The dead cold pond swayed upon his chest. He moved again, a little deeper, and again, with his hands underneath, he felt all around under the water. And he touched her clothing. But it evaded his fingers. He made a desperate effort to grasp it...

He laid her down on the bank. She was quite unconscious and running with water. He made the water come from her mouth, he worked to restore her. He did not have to work very long before he could feel the breathing begin again in her; she was breathing naturally. He worked a little longer. He could feel her live beneath his hands; she was coming back. He wiped her face, wrapped her in his overcoat, looked round into the dim, dark gray world, then lifted her and staggered down the bank and across the fields.

In contrast to short sentences, long sentences are particularly useful for presenting a set of complex, interlocking ideas. They are common in legal, political and theoretical writing, which depends on modification for accuracy. In fiction long sentences are sometimes used to describe a person, a thing or a scene. In the following sentence from *All the Pretty Horses*, American writer Cormac McCarthy relates the dream in its purest form. A dream is a continuous story and when people talk about dreams, they tend to just bubble on. Through the use of a long sentence, McCarthy recreates this feeling and experience of dreaming. Moreover, the protagonist, John Grady, a displaced rancher, continuously compares himself to wild horses in his dreams. The dream is therefore his fantasy, an escape from reality. Through the long sentence, McCarthy also creates John Grady's fantasy.

That night he dreamt of horses in a field on a high plain where the spring rains had brought up the grass and the wild flowers out of the ground and the flowers ran all blue and yellow far as the eye could see and in the dream he was among the horses running and in the dream he himself could run with the horses and they coursed the young mares and fillies over the plain where their rich bay and their rich chestnut colors shone in the sun and the young colts ran with their dams and trampled down flowers in a haze of pollen that hung in the sun like powdered gold and they ran he and the horses out along the high mesas where the ground resounded under their running hooves and they flowed and changed and ran and their manes and tails blew off them like spume and there was nothing else at all in that high world and they moved all of them in a resonance that was like a music among them and they were none of them afraid horse nor colt nor mare and they ran in that resonance which is the world itself and which cannot be spoken but only praised.

Although series of short and long sentences can both be effective in individual situations, frequent alternation in sentence length characterizes much memorable writing. Sentence variety to prose can give it life and rhythm. Too many sentences with the same structure and length can grow monotonous for readers. Varying sentence style and structure can also reduce repetition and add emphasis. After long sentences that express complex ideas or images, a short sentence can be refreshing. Look at the following example:

The violence of breaking down the door seemed to fill this room with pervading dust. A thin, acrid pall as of the tomb seemed to lie everywhere upon this room decked and furnished as for a bridal: upon the valance curtains of

faded rose color, upon the rose-shaded lights, upon the dressing table, upon the delicate array of crystal and the man's toilet things backed with tarnished silver, silver so tarnished that the monogram was obscured. Among them lay a collar and tie, as if they had just been removed, which, lifted, left upon the surface a pale crescent in the dust. Upon a chair hung the suit, carefully folded; beneath it the two mute shoes and the discarded socks.

The man himself lay in the bed.

Similarly, a long sentence that follows a series of short ones can serve as a climax or summing-up that relaxes the tension or fulfills that expectation created by the series, giving the reader a sense of completion. Here is a good example:

Oh, how fascinating it was! How she enjoyed it! How she loved sitting here, watching it all! It was like a play. It was exactly like a play. Who could believe the sky at the back wasn't painted? But it wasn't till a little brown dog trotted on solemn and then slowly trotted off, like a little "theatre" dog, a little dog that had been drugged, that Miss Brill discovered what it was that made it so exciting. They were all on the stage. They weren't only the audience, not only looking on; they were acting. Even she had a part and came every Sunday. No doubt somebody would have noticed if she hadn't been there; she was part of the performance after all. How strange she'd never thought of it like that before! And yet it explained why she made such a point of starting from home at just the same time each week—so as not to be late for the performance—and it also explained why she had quite a queer, shy feeling at telling her English pupils how she spent her Sunday afternoons. No wonder! Miss Brill nearly laughed out loud. She was on the stage.

Effective Sentences

Effective sentences are unified, coherent, concise, varied and emphatic.



A. Unity

Unity is the first quality of an effective sentence. A unified sentence expresses a single complete thought. It does not contain ideas that are not related, nor does it express a thought that is not complete by itself.

B. Coherence

Coherence means clear and reasonable connection between parts. A sentence is coherent when its words or parts are properly connected and their relationships unmistakably clear. It is not coherent if it has faulty parallel constructions, pronouns with ambiguous reference, dangling or misplaced modifiers, confusing shifts in person and number, or in voice, tense, and mood.

Practice

The following sentences are not unified or coherent. Try to revise them:

1. Bernard Shaw was the best-known playwright.

2. I read the novel on the train, which did not interest me at all.

3. Tell Peter, if he is at home, I will come to visit him.

4. The children promised to be careful and that they would go home early.

5. If interested in painting, a course can be taken at the evening school.

C. Conciseness

A sentence should contain no unnecessary words. If the idea is fully expressed, the fewer words, the better. Wordiness only obscures the idea.

Compare

Wordy: One of my close personal friends who lives in the city of Taipei at the present time is under consideration of moving his residence to Beijing for the reason that he has been offered a promising position in that metropolis.

Concise: One of my friends in Taipei is considering moving to Beijing because he has been offered a good job there.

Wordy: With regard to the fact that our environment is polluted, members of the committee should draft and consequently enact laws that prohibit pollution in our nation.

Concise: Because our environment is polluted, the committee should pass laws prohibiting pollution.