

# 研究生英语写译教程

## 写作



沈 阳 出 版 社

# 研究生英语写译教程

## 写 作

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沈阳出版社

# 前 言

英语写作与翻译是研究生英语教学中的重要环节，也是英语测试中的重要组成部分。为了提高非英语专业研究生的英语实用能力，本书编者根据最新教学大纲，采用循序渐进的方式，编写了本套教材。本教程选材考虑时代性、科学性、实用性和趣味性相结合，是一本精泛兼顾的英语教材。适用于非英语专业硕士研究生和博士研究生，也适用于非英语专业本科生高年级的英语选修课。

《研究生英语写译教程》的目的在于通过写作课和翻译课来培养和提高学生的语言应用能力。本教材强调实践性和实用性相结合，让学生通过一定的写作训练和翻译实践来掌握写作和翻译的技巧，做到学以致用，以达到教学目的。在教材的内容上，所选编的语言材料有一定的横向联系，围绕相同或类似的主题或题目展开，以便于学生在这些主题范围内掌握更多的相关词汇、表达方法和相应技巧，进而增强驾驭英语的能力。在教学方法上强调实践的重要性，在学习过程中强调以理论学习和实践相结合，充分调动学生主观能动性，让学生在反复实践中不断提高英语写译能力。

在编写过程中，我们充分考虑到对英语学习者的写作策略和翻译技巧的指导。研究生阶段对英语的实用性要求高，在这一阶段很多的学生面临着阅读大量的英文文献和科技论文写作的任务，他们即使能看懂原文大意，通常很难用地道的译语表达原

文。对于写作，他们最需要的是如何用英语正确、得体的表达自己的思想并符合英语表达习惯。

《研究生英语写译教程》分写作、翻译两册，写作共 10 章，采用理论与实践相结合的方式介绍了从句子、段落、篇章到各种应用文体写作的基本知识、要点及技巧。每章包括概述、写作要求，例文评析和练习。翻译包括英译汉和汉译英共 20 章。讲述翻译的一般理论、原则、方法和技巧。主要通过翻译实例来探讨各种翻译技巧的实际运用。各章既有联系又相对独立，学生在使用本教材时，可根据自己的水平和实际需要进行取舍。

在编写过程中，我们参考并引用了近年来国内外出版的同类书刊，在此谨向这些作者致以谢意。同时由于编者水平有限，书中的疏漏在所难免，欢迎同行和读者批评指正。

编者

2006 年 7 月

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1. *Reading makes a full man; conference a ready man; and writing an exact man.*

读书使人充实；讨论使人机智；写作使人准确。

2. *So long as you have put in a great deal of effort, you can grind an iron into a needle—perseverance spells success.*

只要功夫深，铁杵磨成针。

## Chapter One

### Sentence Writing

What is a sentence?

A grammatically complete sentence is one that contains at least a subject and a verb. It should express a complete meaning. If the verb is transitive, there should be an object. If the verb is a link-verb, there must be a predicative or complement. A passage is formed of groups of sentences of relevant meaning. The making of a sentence, therefore, directly affects the whole passage. A piece of good writing begins with sentence-writing.

It is important to remember that a sentence should be, at least, grammatically complete. Students should avoid making sentences without a subject or a predicate. A sentence should be consistent in subject and verb, and correct in tense, mood, and grammatical rule.

Generally, a good sentence should at least satisfy the following conditions: unity, coherence, conciseness, emphasis and variety. Here are some typically faulty examples that Chinese students often made:

**Faulty:** It was raining hard. They could not work in the fields.

**Improved:** It was raining hard; they could not work in the fields.

**Or:** It was raining hard. They could not work in the fields.

**Faulty:** It is incredible to many people. Cigarette smokers spend money for illness.

**Improved:** It is incredible to many people that cigarette smokers spend money for illness.

**Faulty:** There are many boys play football on the sports ground.

**Improved:** There are many boys playing football on the sports ground.

**Faulty:** I was born in a small village, in the village there was only one school, I studied there for five years.

**Improved:** I was born in a small village. In it there was only one school. I studied there for five years.

**Or:** In the small village where I was born, there was only one school, and I studied there for six years.

It is easy to see the differences between the faulty sentences and the improved sentences. The use of comma in place of a period often appears in Chinese writing, while a complete English sentence should end with a period. If a sentence is incomplete in meaning; or a series of independent sentences express the meaning that are repeated at some point, it is also against the basic requirement of a sentence. In above examples the choosing of the improved sentences depends on the writer's intention or the arrangement of the context.

## Unity

Unity is the first quality of an effective sentence. A unified sentence expresses a single complete thought. If a sentence consists of ideas that are not closely related, it is contrary to the rule of unity.

Faulty: Born in a small village in South America, he grew up to be a promising painter.

The two parts of the sentence are not logically connected because a man born in a small village would not necessarily grow up to be a promising painter. A sentence of such kind should explain how he should necessarily become so.

Revised: He was born in a small town in South America. Later, he received education in an Arts School, and grew up to be a promising painter.

Faulty: Bicycles are so popular in China.

The sentence is in complete in expression. The word "so" is usually used to introduce the next part the author intends to emphasize. It should be improved as follows:

Bicycles are so popular in China that almost every family has at least one.

## Coherence

Coherence means clear and reasonable connection between parts. A sentence is coherence when its words or parts are properly connected and their relationships are unmistakably clear. In general,



when we write a sentence, words that express the closely related meanings should be placed together. A sentence is not coherent if it has faulty parallel structure, pronouns with ambiguous reference, misplaced modifiers, or confusing shifts in person, voice, mood and tense. The following are the examples of the parallel constructions:

Faulty: He wants to go, to fight and success.

Revised: He wants to go, to fight and to succeed.

Faulty: She is kind, active and loved by all.

Revised: She is kind, active, and lovely. All of us like her.

Faulty: A man is judged not only by what he says but also by his action.

Revised: A man is judged not only by what he says but also by what he does.

Or: A man is judged not only by his words but also by his action.

Parallel ideas had better be expressed in parallel constructions, which need sometimes similar grammar structure so as to not only give clarity and coherence to a sentence, but also indicate the clear thoughts of the writer.

The following examples are of pronouns with ambiguous reference:

His English friend told him that he was wrong.

A bullet hit him in the leg, but it was not serious.

In the first sentence we are not sure whether *he* refers to him or his English friend. The sentence can be improved by changing the structure. "He was told by his English friend that he was wrong." In the second sentence, according to the context, *it* should be replaced by *the wound*, even if *the wound* does not appear.

Dangling modifier is also a common mistake made by Chinese students. It refers to the modification that is not grammatically related to the noun or pronoun it is intended to modify.

Faulty: To catch the early train, everything is ready.

Revised: To catch the early train, we've got everything ready.

Faulty: Looking from the top of the hill, the village seems beautiful.

Revised: Looking from the top of the hill, we can see a beautiful village.

Or: Seen from the top of the hill, the village seems beautiful.

In each of the above faulty sentences, there is a dangling modifier. One of the remarkable characteristics of such kind of sentences is the inconsistency between the subject in the main clause and the infinitive of *to do* or the participles of *doing* or *done* in the subordinate clause. What should be noted is that a few set phrases often used to modify whole sentences, such as "to tell you the truth", "to be frank", "generally speaking", etc. They look like dangling modifiers, but they are not. The logical subject of these words is often not definite. It can be *we*, *one* or *I*.

The following words can be used in such kind of pattern: considering, allowing, assuming, calculating, concerning, regarding, respecting, speaking of, owing to, excluding, including, etc.

### Conciseness

There is an old saying in China: Work with scrupulous care. It emphasizes that a piece of good writing should be concise. Conciseness makes one's expression powerful. Likewise, a sentence should contain no unnecessary words. If the idea is fully expressed, the fewer words are used, the better. Wordiness only makes the idea obscure, instead of clarifying. There are two main reasons causing the wordiness. One is unnecessary repeating, the other is the using of unnecessary words.

Wordy: He gives many reasons for his absence, but the reasons he gave were not convincing.

In the above sentence, the word "reasons" is repeated. In order to achieve conciseness, we can use pronoun to replace noun. The original sentence, therefore, can be changed into:

He gives many reasons for his absence, but none of them were convincing.

Next sentence is the most commonly made one by Chinese students:

In my opinion, I think your suggestion is reasonable.

*In my opinion* and *I think* expressed the same meaning. The sentence can be improved by avoiding one of them:

In my opinion, your suggestion is reasonable.

Or: I think your suggestion is reasonable.

In order to achieve conciseness, one should re-read the sentence carefully, and delete the words having the same meaning without affecting the meaning expressed or use phrase to replace clause, or a word to replace a phrase. Sometimes, two sentences can be combined into one by changing one of them into a participial phrase, an attributive clause, etc.

### **Emphasis within the Sentence**

Very often, when writing a sentence, we should give emphasis to the part where the main point is. Usually, the beginning and the end (especially the end) of a sentence are the two places that attract the reader's attention. If possible, the important words should be put there. Compare:

A: The man, at the age of fifty, became a painter, having painted many horses.

B: Having painted many horses, the man, at the age of fifty, became a painter.

Sentence A emphasizes the process how the man worked to be a painter, while sentence B lays stress on the final result. Accordingly, the placement of the words of the same pattern usually indicates that the last one is mostly stressed.

e. g. She was clear, kind and honest.

Repetition is a way of laying emphasis. It can be achieved by repeating the same word or by using the emphatic words, such as *very*, *at all*, *let alone*, etc. But unnecessary repetition adds nothing new to the meaning of a sentence; therefore it should be avoided.

Compare:

A: Dear, I will never be late again, *never, never, never* .

B: He is the *very* man I've been looking for.

C: In my own personal opinion, I think we should stop discussing now.

Sentence A indicates the writer's strong will not to be late. Sentence B emphasizes that he (not others) is the right man that I've been looking for; whereas in sentence C *my, own* and *personal* express the same meaning, *my opinion* and *I think* also have the same indication. It's an example of unnecessary repetition.

## Variety

Variety is essential to good writing. In a piece of writing, a series of sentences of the same structure and expression would sound monotonous. A large vocabulary and a variety of sentence structures is a prerequisite to writing. Variety can be achieved by using different structure to express the same idea, or to describe the same subject. Generally, short sentences are used in between long ones, simple sentences in between compound and complex ones, period sentences in between loose ones. An occasional question, command, or exclamation among statements may also be helpful. The following are the varied sentence structures in writing:

1. Every time I see her, I think of my younger sister. (positive)  
I never see her but I think of my younger sister. (negative)  
I shall go there if it doesn't rain.  
I shall go there unless it rains.
2. A computer was among the new products on display. (normal order)  
Among the new products on display was a computer. (inverted order)

We did not realize the problem of energy crisis until the end of last century.

Not until the end of last century did we realize the problem of energy crisis.

3. Most metals are good conductors, and silver is the best.  
(compound sentence)

Most metals are good conductors, with silver in the lead. (or: silver being the best) (simple sentence)

If you compare the two methods carefully, you will find the difference.

Careful comparison of the two methods will show you the difference.

4. Nowadays a lot of people work in office, spending most of their time indoors. (present participial phrase)

Nowadays a lot of people work in office and they spend most of their time indoors. (compound sentence)

5. *In fact*, speaking is one of the most important means of communication.

(note the place of the component parts)

Speaking is *in fact* one of the most important means of communication.

*The whole morning* he was working with the farmers in the field.

He was working with the farmers in the field *the whole morning*.

Variety makes a piece of writing colorful and vigorous, but it should not be sought for its own sake. The choice of the sentence pattern is determined by many factors. Under some circumstances, the same idea can be expressed through different structures, but in many cases different sentence structures produce different effect. Your

choice of structure, therefore, should be closely connected with your ideas and emphasis to be expressed. In a word, the structure and length of sentences are primarily determined by the ideas expressed.

The passage below is taken from Martin Luther King's speech: "I Have a Dream" delivered on the steps at the Lincoln Memorial in Washington D. C. on August 28, 1963. While expressing his views and decision in a very forceful way, the speaker uses various types of sentences.

We cannot walk alone. And as we walk, we must make the pledge that we shall march ahead. We cannot turn back. There are those who are asking the devotees of civil rights, "When will you be satisfied?" we can never be satisfied as long as our bodies, heavy with the fatigue of travel, cannot gain lodging in the motels of the highways and the hotels of the cities. We cannot be satisfied as long as the Negro's basic mobility is from a smaller ghetto to a larger one. We can never be satisfied as long as a Negro in Mississippi cannot vote and a Negro in New York believes he has nothing for which to vote. No, no, we are not satisfied, and we will not be satisfied until justice rolls down like waters and righteousness like a mighty stream.

Apart from short and long sentences, loose and periodic sentences, the speaker uses rhetorical question, repetition, and parallel constructions to make his speech full of variety and rhythm.

## **Mistakes in the Students' Writing**

### **1. Punctuation**

My roommate is so troublesome, I can hardly put up with him anymore.

(Analysis: no connection between two parts)

Revised: My roommate is so troublesome that I can hardly put up with him any more.

Wearing traditional clothing is a way to remember our history and culture; however, it is not an effective and prudent way.

( Analysis: *however* is an adverbial word. There should be a period or semi comma before it instead of a comma. )

Revised: Wearing traditional clothing is a way to remember our history and culture. However, it is not an effective and prudent way.

## 2. Tense and grammar

A big tree was fallen down in a heavy rain.

( Analysis: *fall* cannot be used in passive voice )

Revised: A big tree fell down in a heavy rain.

A typical family nowadays is consisted of three or four members

( Analysis: *consist of* cannot be used in passive voice )

Revised: A typical family nowadays consists of three or four members.

## 3. Sentence structure

There are more and more people go abroad nowadays.

( Analysis: go abroad is used to modify people; therefore it should be in present participial form )

Revised: There are more and more people going abroad nowadays.

The reason why fast food is gaining popularity in China is because it is delicious and inviting.

( Analysis: the fixed structure should be: the reason why... is that... )



Revised: The reason why fast food is gaining popularity in China is that it is delicious and inviting.

Recently many people in China are talking about one case happened in Britain lead to the death of a burglar.

( Analysis: *happened in Britain lead to the death of a burglar* is an attributive sentence, modifying case. Therefore, we should use a relative pronoun which to refer to the noun that the sentence is to modify. )

#### 4. Consistency between subject and verb

How you react to the incident reveal what side you stand on . . .

( Analysis: How you react to the incident is the subject. Therefore the verb reveal should be used in the single form. )

Revised: How you react to the incident reveals what side you stand on . . . .

Writing a letter or make regular phone calls helps you maintain a good relationship.

( Analysis: Writing a letter and make regular phone calls should be the same structure. )

Revised: Writing a letter or making regular phone calls helps you maintain a good relationship.

#### 5. Ambiguous reference

If one has talents and self-confidence, we will likely succeed.

( Analysis: *we* is inconsistent with *one* )

Revised: If one has talents and self-confidence, he/she will likely succeed.