


大学英语阶梯写作

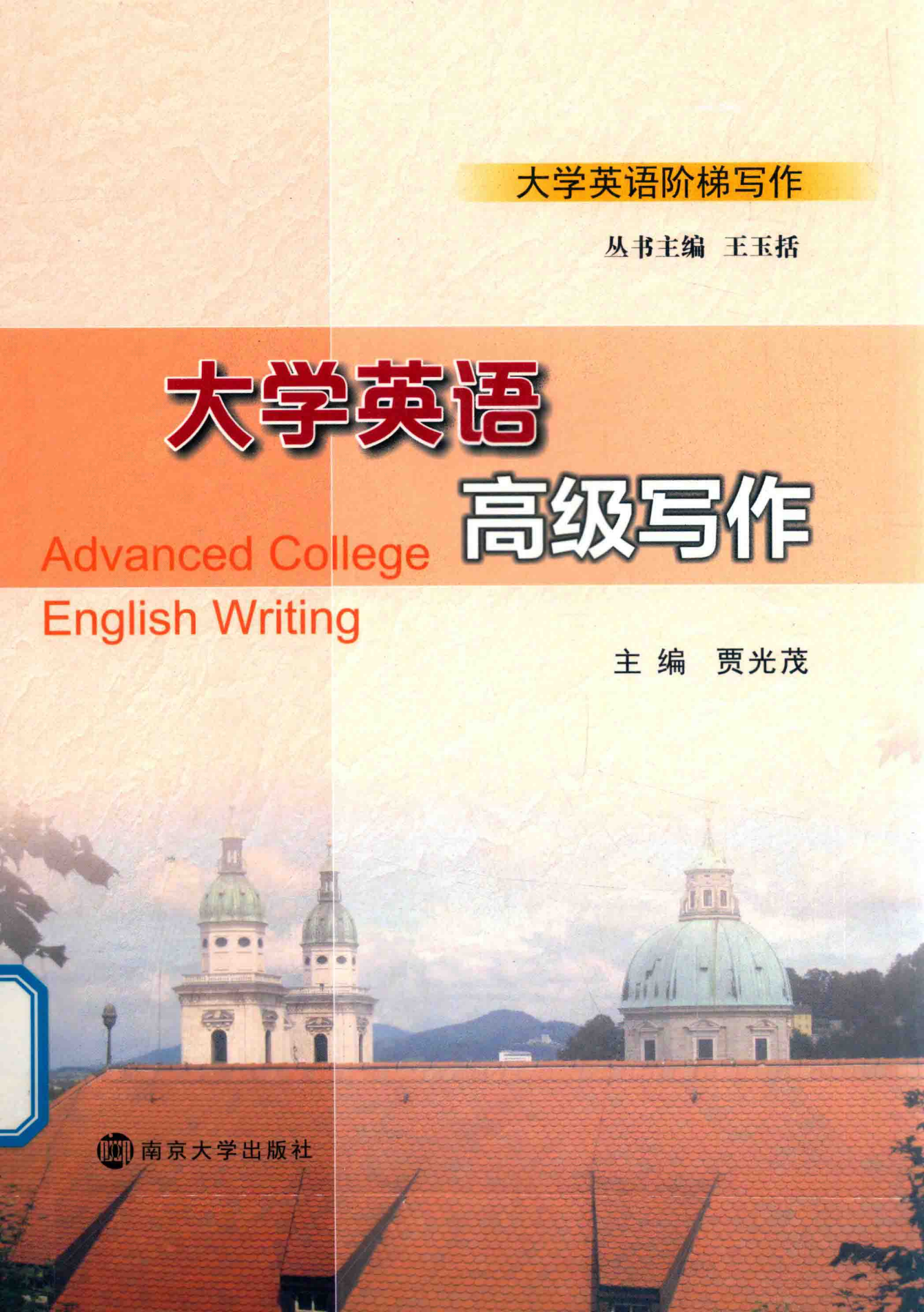
丛书主编 王玉括

大学英语 高级写作

Advanced College
English Writing

主 编 贾光茂

 南京大学出版社



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前 言

英语写作能力对于英语学习者极其重要,也是学习的难点。近年来,关于写作教学的理论和方法层出不穷,如基于内容的教学(CBI)、任务性教学法、概念型教学法和产出导向法等,但是要将这些理论研究的成果应用到英语写作教学中,编写出体现新教学理念的教材是关键。

国内已出版英语写作类教材已经比较丰富,但还存在以下不足:

(1) 缺乏跨文化对比,对学生写作中的常见问题尤其是不地道的表达或中式英语未能进行深入的分析和详细的归纳,难以帮助学生克服母语干扰;

(2) 现有教材多强调写作知识的传授,很少提供写作活动的设计,写作任务互动性不强,未能体现产出导向教学的理念,难以激发学生写作兴趣;

(3) 现有的与学术语体相关的英语写作教材很少能够体现学科特色,与信息学科相关的写作教材尤为缺乏。

为解决上述问题,本书的编写以概念型教学法、任务型教学法、产出导向法和基于内容的教学法为指导。概念型教学法主张从概念层面而不是语言表层出发探讨英语表达中的错误和不地道现象,有望能够更深刻地揭示母语干扰的规律。任务型教学主张以任务为导向,通过让学生做事,从而提高语言表达能力。产出导向法主张以语言产出为导向,通过输入促成等步骤,提高语言表达能力。基于内容的教学法认为语言教学应该与学科结合,因为学科知识的学习可以为学生提供真实的英语学习环境,符合英语学习的需求。

基于以上理论,本书框架如下:

第1章 引言

第2章 语言准确性、复杂性和地道性

第3章 描写文

第4章 记叙文

第5章 说明文

第6章 议论文

第7章 学术论文写作 I

第8章 学术论文写作 II

第9章 考研英语写作

第10章 雅思和托福英语写作

本书以如何改进英语写作能力的衡量指标如准确性、复杂度和地道性为基础,进而通过介绍不同文体写作步骤和过程,辅以大量英语时事文章以提高学习者英语表达的流利度和地道性,同时在一定程度上通过与学生专业相结合,使信息类高校学生在进入专业英语学习之前能够打好写作基础。本书适合大学本科高年级学生以及研究生,也可以供英语教师参考。

本书是在南京邮电大学外国语学院院长王玉括教授的关心和指导下编写的,教材第1、2、5、6、7、8章由贾光茂老师编写,第3、10章由杨丽老师编写,第4、9章由姜玲娣老师编写。本教材受到南京邮电大学教改项目“基于概念型教学法的英语写作教材研编”(JG00917JX92)和南京邮电大学教材项目(JG00917JC19)资助。最后,谨向笔者的授业恩师南京大学丁言仁教授表示感谢,并对南京大学出版社提供出版机会以及编辑的辛勤劳动致敬!

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Chapter 1 Introduction

Section 1 The Nature of English Writing

Discussion

In groups, discuss the following questions:

1. What is English writing?
2. What are the problems you have in English writing?

English learning usually involves four skills: listening, reading, speaking, and writing. Listening and reading are called language input, which means that language learners receive information from others by listening and reading. Speaking and writing are called language output. That is, people express their ideas or feelings by speaking and writing. Listening and reading are also termed receptive skills, whereas writing and speaking are also labeled as productive skills.

As a productive skill, writing involves a large number of factors, such as grammar, vocabulary, text structure, style, rhetorical devices, modes of thinking, culture, and so on. If one does not learn grammar well, he or she can not produce sentences that are correct in English. If one's vocabulary is small, he or she will find it hard to express himself or herself. To write good essays, one also needs to understand structure of various texts so that the essays are well organized. Writers sometimes need to use some rhetorical devices like metaphor, personification and so forth. As second language learners, it is not easy for them to avoid the influence of Chinese, so writers need to understand differences between Chinese and English in terms of ways of thinking and culture.

Writing can be understood from various perspectives. Traditionally, people believe that writing is simply language products such as compositions, essays, articles, letters, notes, theses, and so on. Later some people realize that writing is a way of communication. It is not only a tool to record information but also a way to convey information or feeling to other people. Writing is a process which contains the following steps: planning, composing, revising and editing. In recent years, some experts point out that writing is an important way to learn English. Since only by writing, one can understand his or her real ability of using English to express ideas. That is, one can

notice the gap between his or her real proficiency and the proficiency he or she wants to achieve. This can be an important motivation of English learning.

Good writing are often characterized by accuracy, fluency, complexity, and idiomaticity. Accuracy means that the writing we produce should be grammatically correct and the words or phrases we choose should be appropriate. Fluency is measured by the number of words one can produce in a certain period. For example, if one can write a long essay in a short time, we say this person is a fluent writer. Complexity means that we should be able to use long and complicated sentences or formal words. For second language learners, idiomaticity is also a very important yardstick to measure their writing proficiency since the influence of the mother language is often found in their writing, which is called "Chinglish."

Section 2 Tips for Improving English Writing

Discussion

In pairs, discuss the following questions:

1. What are the tips for improving English writing as proposed in the following paragraphs?
2. Do you agree or disagree with any of the tips? Why?
3. Can you give any new suggestions on how to improve English writing?

Since writing involves so many factors, it is necessary to examine this factors carefully and acquire knowledge concerning them. We need to study grammar well to make our language correct and accurate. We should enlarge our vocabulary, without which one can not express anything. It is important to understand styles of language. Writing is different from speaking, so the words or sentence patterns we choose in writing are of more formal style than those in speaking. It is necessary to distinguish different genres such as literary, scientific, political, practical writing. We need to develop metaphorical competence, that is, the ability to use figures of speech or rhetorical devices to make our writing impressive. To avoid the influence of mother language on second language, it is necessary focus to learn differences in ways of thinking between Chinese and English. Writing involves thinking, so it is essential to learn some basics of logic.

How to improve writing depends on one's understanding of English writing. It is hard to say which method is right or wrong. If we treat writing simply as language products, we may only focus on the language and structure. If we regard writing as a way of communication, we will find the content or ideas we express should be given top

priority. We have to bear in our mind who are our readers. It is of great importance to express ideas clearly rather than puzzle readers. Writers should not simply think from their own perspective but also think from readers' perspective. If we believe that writing is a process or a skill, then we should decompose it into several stages and do practice accordingly. For example, we may make plans and write outlines before writing, revising and editing it after finishing the draft. Since practice is very important for improving writing, we need to regard writing as part of our life. For example, we may write e-mails, blogs or papers in English as often as possible. If we agree that writing is learning, then writing task will be the beginning of acquiring new expressions. To fulfill each writing task, one needs to read related material to find native-like expressions. To keep pace with the contemporary world, one should acquire basic computer skills such as handling files with software such as Microsoft Word, searching for information via database or Internet.

To learn how to evaluate writing by ourselves rather than by teacher is also very important. With regard to accuracy, we have to be strict with diction, that is, the choice of words. We must develop awareness of grammar. As for fluency, we need more practice and read extensively so that we can give examples easily to illustrate an idea. With regard to complexity, we can vary the words and the structures we use. We can improve idiomaticity of our language by observing how native speaker use their language, and memorizing a large number of chunks.

Section 3 Types of English Writing

Discussion

In groups, discuss the following questions:

1. Which types of writing have you practiced before? Do you like them? Why?
2. Which topics of writing are you interested in?

English writing can be classified according to various principles, of which theme and genre are the most common ones. Theme refers to the topic or subject of writing, which can be broad or specific. Broad topics include politics, economy, history, culture, religion, literature, art, science, etc. Specific topics can be those about current affairs or one's own experience, for example, how to reduce haze, an unforgettable day in my life. Genre is also called style of writing. In literature, genre refers to form of writing that developed by conventions. Typical genres in literature include poetry, prose, novel, and drama. In English writing classes, writing, however, can be roughly classified into the following categories according to genre: essays, academic writing, and practical

writing. Essays are of four types: description, narration, exposition, and argumentation. Since exposition and argumentation are closely related to academic writing, this book focuses on exposition and argumentation before dealing with academic writing.

Types of English writing are listed as follows.

3.1 Description

Description is a type of writing that mainly deals with appearance and feelings. It is very similar to painting. The only difference is that writer use words instead of paint. Topics for description may be a person's look, mental state, language, and gestures, or the environment, or certain objects. Descriptive essays can be classified according to the content, namely, description of a person, description of a place, description of an object, and even description of an event. The writer of a descriptive essay can be compared to a painter, with the only difference that the former paints pictures in words. They both try to attract readers' attention by making their works unique, picturesque, and impressive. To achieve these effects, they may use similar techniques.

The most important technique in description is the skillful use of language since descriptive essays attract readers mainly through language. To make description vivid or lifelike, writers often use adjectives, verbs, adverbs, participial phrases, independent structure, and complements. For example, adjectives such as *watery*, *teary*, *weary*, *bulging*, *almond-shaped*, *round*, *glittering*, *twinkling*, *piercing* and so on may be used for describing one's eyes. When describing one's face or skin, people may use *freckled*, *wrinkled*, *spotless*, *tanned*, *creamy*, *silky*, *smooth*, *rough*, *dry* and so forth. To describe one's body shape, *slim*, *slender*, *plump*, *stout*, *skinny*, *curvy*, and *flabby* are usually used.

3.2 Narration

Narration is the act of telling a story. Narrative writing is telling a story about events or actions. Narrative essays often follow time order, with the organization: Beginning, complication, climax, and ending. At the beginning, the context in which an event takes place may be described, including time, place and the main characters. Complication means the development of the event, in which more participants are involved and scenes may be shifted. Climax is the part when conflict reaches summit. In the end, the conflict is resolved.

Narrative essays usually involve the following elements: (1) Context, which answers the questions when and where an event takes places. (2) Plot, which means the series of events that take place in a story. It answers the question "what happens?" (3) Story, which is more complicated and complete than plot. For example, "The king murdered his wife" is merely plot, and "The king murdered his wife out of jealous rage"

is a story. That is, a story involves both action and motive, while plot is only about action. (4) Conflict or tension, the opposition of persons or forces that gives rise to the dramatic action in a story, is crucial for a good story. We see conflict in three ways: internally within the mind/spirit of a character; between characters; or between a character and nature. (5) Characters, which answers the question who are involved in the story. In a story where there is a conflict, characters can be protagonists and antagonists. (6) Theme, which is writing purpose, for instance, to prove a theory, to illustrate a concept, to condemn a vice, or to praise a virtue.

3.3 Exposition

Exposition is the type of writing that is most frequently used by a student, a scientist, a professional. In a broad sense, writings concerning exposition include experimental report, business report, newspaper report (i.e., feature), textbooks used in schools, research papers by scientists, and even pamphlets of products. In a narrow sense, exposition refers to essays written by students in school for explaining certain things. Unlike description, which is mainly about appearance and feelings, and narration, which deals with events and experiences, exposition is mainly concerned with relationships and processes. To put it simply, description answers the question “what is it like?” and narration addresses the question “what happened?” By contrast, exposition deals with the more complicated questions such as “why is there such phenomenon?” and “how to solve the problem?”

3.4 Argumentation

Argumentation, as its name suggests, is to argue with other people. Argumentation is closely related to exposition since the ways of exposition such as exemplification, definition, classification, cause/effect, comparison/contrast are also used very often in argumentation. Both expository and argumentative essays follow the structural pattern: introduction, body, and conclusion. However, argumentation differs from exposition in that while the purpose of exposition is to inform, explain or analyze, the purpose of argumentation is to convince or persuade the readers. Another difference is that in argumentation writers should voice their own views explicitly whereas in exposition writers often try to hide themselves between the lines so that the writing sounds objective. An argumentative essay necessarily concerns a clear argument and sufficient evidence to support the argument.

3.5 Academic writing

Academic writing refers to writing which happens in the academic field, including research articles or reports written for publication in academic journals, books published for academic purposes, term papers, theses and even Ph. D. dissertations. Academic

papers answer a specific question, or questions, using a set of well-structured, logical arguments. The arguments are often based on research carried out by the writer or other researchers. Academic texts contain references to previous research, which are documented at the end of the text. Academic writing is characterized by certain language features such as technical terms, nominalization, the use of passive voice and present tense, etc.

3.6 Practical writing

Practical writing, which happens in one's personal life or business, includes notices, notes, letters, e-mails, short messages, resumes, etc. If you are a member of Students' Union, you may often announce a meeting, a party, a contest, a show, a match, etc. In these cases, you need to write notices. When you want to ask for leave, make apologies, show thanks, and inform somebody of arrangements, you can write notes. These days, you may send short messages via QQ or WeChat. Letters are of various types according to the writing purposes, for instance, letters of invitation, application, recommendation, and congratulations.

Section 4 Process of English Writing

Traditionally, teachers often give their students writing tasks, and then students submit their essays to teachers for receiving feedback. This method is later criticized by some scholars and teachers in western countries, who contend that students can better develop writing skill if they get involved in the process of writing. That is, if students themselves have discussions about the topics before writing, and revise essays themselves after writing the drafts, they can get more practice. Students are more likely to get motivated through the cooperation with peers in such classes than in traditional classes. In the process of writing, it is also more convenient for teachers to provide them with more guidance. The following steps are usually adopted in a process-oriented writing approach.

4.1 Planning

In the phase of planning, teachers and students often take such activities as discussing and brain-storming to generate ideas. In these activities, students may be inspired by others when they do not know what to write or how to organize their essays. They could get to know what others may write so that they can understand how to write differently from others since being innovative is a very important feature of writing. Through planning, students can select relevant information for the essays and make proper organizations.

4.2 Composing

The phase of composing involves the choice of words, sentence patterns or texts to express ideas. Sometimes it takes writers hours to write a single sentence either because they cannot find appropriate expressions or because they know little about the topic. To solve this problem, one should put a paper-version or electronic Chinese-English dictionary at hand. It is also needed to collect related reading material about the topic so that one can learn more about the topic of writing.

When one writes several paragraphs or finishes an essay, he or she may want to throw the paper into garbage. This is because writing involves thinking. When one writes some sentences, he or she may realize that the sentences are not appropriate. However, time and energy has been wasted if one revises the paper at this stage. A clever way is to write an outline first. An outline for an essay may include thesis statement, topic sentence for each body paragraph, and the conclusion. If one writes an outline before writing the first draft, it will be easy for him or her to revise it later.

4.3 Revising

Revising is a pivotal phase of writing process. It is to polish writing in terms of content, structure and language. Since writing is very complicated, it is essential to make a checklist first. For different types of writing, the checklist should be different. For instance, a good checklist for a descriptive essay may include the following questions:

1. What is writing purpose?
2. Does the author focus on the most prominent features?
3. What order does the essay follow?
4. Are there cases of skillful use of language?

A good checklist for a narrative essay may contain questions listed as follows:

1. Did he/she select one main incident and stick to it? Was the story touching?
2. Is there a clear writing purpose?
3. Did he/she choose details carefully?
4. Are there vivid descriptions about mental state, context, and look?
5. Did he/she arrange the events chronologically?

A good checklist for an expository essay may consist of the following questions:

1. Is there a clear title?
2. What is the thesis statement?
3. Does it follow a logical pattern?
4. Is there a topic sentence for each body paragraph?
5. Are there enough details in each body paragraph?

A good checklist for an argumentative essay may comprise the following questions:

1. Does the essay have a debatable point?

2. Is there sufficient evidence to convince the reader?
3. Does the author consider the other side of the argument before stating his or her views?
4. Is the writer's reasoning logical and effective?
5. Is the writer's attitude honest and friendly?

4.4 Editing

Editing is to polish essays in terms of spelling, grammar, and punctuation. Luckily, computer software can help people edit essays. For example, the microsoft WORD can identify errors of spelling, grammar, and punctuation automatically. Often wrong words or sentences are underlined with red or green wave line. One just needs to check the underlined words or sentences to see whether there is really an error. However, it should be noted that machines are not always trustworthy. One still needs to memorize words, learn grammar and punctuation, since not all errors can be identified by softwares.

Chapter 2 Accuracy, Complexity and Idiomaticity

As mentioned in Chapter 1, good writing are often characterized by accuracy, fluency, complexity, and idiomaticity. To improve accuracy, one must be aware of typical grammar errors that Chinese students often commit in English writing and choose words carefully. To improve complexity, one needs to understand the differences between oral style and written style of language. It's also important to vary the words or sentence patterns we use. To improve idiomaticity of writing, one needs to learn the differences between English and Chinese cultures and ways of thinking. Writers also should develop metaphorical competence, that is, the ability to use metaphor or other rhetorical devices in the same way as the English natives do. In addition, one should accumulate a large number of collocations, namely noun + verb, verb + noun, adjective + noun, preposition + noun collocation and so forth.

Section 1 Grammar

Grammar is very important for writing. However, grammar is notoriously complicated for second language learners. Some students can get high scores in grammar test but still have trouble in making correct sentences. To help English learners become good writers, it is necessary to find typical errors Chinese students often commit in their writing. In this section, we collected several types of errors in English writing, including errors of punctuation, words, collocation, dependency, dangling modifiers, articles, and fragments.

1.1 Punctuation

Chinese students often use comma in the way which is shown in the following sentence. This is wrong, since comma can not be used to join two coordinate clauses in English.

MOOC can solve the problem of knowledge imparting, it can not replace the functions of University. (wrong sentence indicated by)

MOOC can solve the problem of knowledge imparting, and it can not replace the functions of University. (correct sentence)

In English, a comma and a conjunction should be used when two coordinate clauses are connected. Some students tend to misunderstand adverbs such as *hence*, *however*, *thus*, *instead*, *then*, *therefore* and *like* as conjunctions.

* Traffic is heavy, hence, I had to stop.

* I tried, however, I failed.

Hence and *however* are not conjunctions but conjunctive adverbs. The two sentences should be revised in the following ways: use a semicolon or a period.

Traffic is heavy; hence, I had to stop.

Traffic is heavy. Hence, I had to stop.

I tried; however, I failed.

I tried. However, I failed.

How to use punctuation in writing dialogues is also a headache for English learners, for example:

* She said: "I am Mary".

She said, "I am Mary."

In English direct speech, the colon(:) often precedes an explanation, a quotation, or a statement. The period should be inside the quotation mark.

* "My name is Mary." she replied.

"My name is Mary," she replied.

The direct speech usually closes with a comma inside the quotation mark since the whole sentence ends in "replied."

1.2 Errors with words

Errors with words mainly involve spelling, word class (part of speech), and suffix.

* As we image, the plane landed in front of her again.

As we imagined, the plane landed in front of her again.

* Our country's economic is developing fast.

Our country's economy is developing fast.

* She has been feeling guilt.