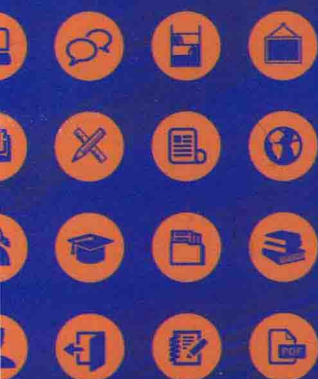


外语学科中青年学者学术创新丛书

Critical Thinking in Second  
Language Writing:  
Concept, Theory, Teaching  
and Assessment

# 二语写作中的 思辨能力研究： 概念、理论、教学与测评

董焱宁 ● 著





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# 序言

高校英语教学应高度重视培养学生的思辨能力，实现语言能力与思辨能力的同步发展，这一点在外语界已形成广泛共识。当务之急是：如何在英语课堂教学中有效培养思辨能力？如何在英语教学背景下评测学生的思辨能力？这方面的研究急需全面展开，董焱宁博士的著作为此做出了非常有意义的探索。

该研究旨在设计并验证二语写作教学中思辨能力的有效教学方法和测评方法。作者对思辨能力概念的研究现状进行了系统的阐述，并基于此提出了以思辨能力培养为导向的二语写作教学理论框架。作者运用混合研究方法，论证了显性思辨教学、建构主义学习环境，以及由头脑风暴、初稿撰写、同伴互评和初稿修改这四个环节构成的写作过程教学法，可以有效促进学生思辨能力和写作能力的同步提升。该项研究还发现了思辨能力与写作能力之间的高度正相关性，论证了在二语写作中进行思辨教学的可行性和必要性。此外，作者设计的专门用于思辨教学的头脑风暴工具和自评互评表以及二语写作中评测思辨能力的专项评分量表对于二语写作教师也具有非常高的参考价值。

近年来我一直倡导在高校英语专业的语言技能课教学中乃至大学英语教学中进行“思辨英语教学”，融合培养语言能力与思辨能力。以思辨能力培养为导向的英语教学改革和学术研究才刚刚展开，董焱宁博士的探索勇气和创新精神因此值得特别赞赏。

期待该领域涌现更多扎根本土教学实践的原创研究成果！

孙有中

2017年7月于北外

# Preface

I am delighted to write a preface for Yanning Dong's book, which is based on her PhD study from 2011 to 2015 in the Department of Language and Literacy Education, University of British Columbia.

Dr. Dong's research is cutting edge, exploring the reciprocal effects between critical thinking (CT) and second language writing. By drawing insights from the Critical Thinking Model (Paul & Elder, 2001), Skill Acquisition Theory and the theory of Constructivism, Dr. Dong designed a CT-oriented writing approach and evaluated the effectiveness of this approach in actual teaching practice involving 44 second-year English majors in a Chinese university. The study, with a quasi-experimental design, demonstrated how an intervention of a CT-oriented writing approach (with a CT-oriented brainstorming worksheet, CT-oriented peer review checklist, and CT-oriented rubric for assessing writing) helped students in the experimental group perform significantly better than those in the control group. The study conceptualizes and illustrates 1) how critical thinking skills can be taught by illustrating abstract rules with concrete examples in writing practice, and 2) how critical thinking disposition could be cultivated in a constructivist learning and writing environment where students collaborate with one another as critical thinkers. The external examiner (Professor Hossein Nassaji at University of Victoria) spoke highly of Dr. Dong's work in the examination report:

The thesis is carefully organized and well written. The literature review is effectively constructed, including the major theoretical and empirical studies in the domain under investigation. The theoretical framework is well conceived, reflecting the candidate's excellent knowledge and

understanding of the complexities involved in the area of research. The findings and their implications are discussed very well. Given the paucity of research in the area, the present study is also timely and can serve as a basis for similar studies in the future. ... Overall, this is a well-researched piece of work with important implications and of interest to second language teachers and teacher educators.

Dr. Dong's research is timely and significant because it not only makes a theoretical advancement to the instruction of critical thinking in teaching English writing, but also demonstrates how writing pedagogy can be advanced with research. Many students, including some Chinese students, have been criticized for a lack of critical thinking and individual voice in their English writing. Writing instructors have also been searching for instructional tools to guide students in developing and using critical thinking. Dr. Dong's CT-oriented approach provides students and instructors with specific guidance in developing a better understanding of critical thinking and in forming ideas and arguments effectively in writing using critical thinking strategies.

As her PhD research supervisor, I witnessed how well Dr. Dong completed her research and developed as a scholar. She is one of the most creative and thorough students I have worked with as regard to scholarly ability. Dr. Dong came to her PhD studies with a wealth of academic and professional achievements which include an excellent MA thesis from Leiden University in the Netherlands and seven years of managing and developing textbooks and digital learning materials for English learners in tertiary education in China. During her four-year PhD program, Dr. Dong completed her coursework with an outstanding average grade of 90%, and published two papers in refereed journals. The following characteristics have emerged in my interactions with her: insightful, reflective, professional, analytical, and intellectually eager.

Dr. Dong is gifted in bringing theory into practice. Having demonstrated considerable capacity as a scholar, Dr. Dong is expected to devote her full efforts to implementing her research in her current position as the vice president of Higher English Education Division at Foreign Language Teaching and Research Press in China.

Ling Shi

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Ling Shi', with a horizontal line extending from the end of the signature.

Professor

Department of Language and Literacy Education

Faculty of Education

University of British Columbia

# Abstract

Recognizing the reciprocal connection between critical thinking (CT) and writing, many second language (L2) instructors attempt to infuse CT in their writing classrooms but encounter great challenges due to the fact that teaching CT in a specific subject requires a “substantial reconstruction of a teacher’s model of how to teach a discipline” (Nosich, 2005, p. 65). To facilitate this reconstruction, this study is designed to provide the needed conceptual, theoretical and pedagogical supports. Based on a clarification of the concept of CT in L2 writing and the establishment of a theoretical framework that draws insights from Skill Acquisition Theory and Constructivism, I developed a CT-oriented L2 writing approach that included both explicit CT instruction and CT-oriented writing activities. The effectiveness of this approach was evaluated in actual teaching practice that involved 44 second-year L2 undergraduates in a Chinese university. Employing a mixed-method research design, the study involved a pre-study questionnaire survey, a quasi-experiment and a post-study interview. After the study, the participants’ pre-test and post-test CT and L2 writing scores were analyzed. The results of the statistical analyses indicate that the CT-oriented L2 writing approach was effective for improving students’ CT and L2 writing scores and that there was a significant high positive relationship ( $r=0.89$ ,  $p<.01$ ) between students’ CT and L2 writing scores. The analysis of the post-study interview and the participants’ essays and worksheets reveals that the CT-oriented L2 writing approach has facilitated students’ learning of both CT and L2 writing by connecting the abstract CT theories and practical interactive activities and naturally infusing the instruction of CT into that of L2 writing. The development of the CT-oriented brainstorming



worksheet and peer review checklist, as well as the “criteria for evaluating CT in L2 writing” facilitated the teaching, learning and assessment of CT in L2 writing in the present study. Exploring the effectiveness of an approach to CT in L2 writing, the study provides pragmatic supports for L2 researchers and instructors who wish to cultivate their students to become not only proficient language users for effective written communication, but also independent critical thinkers for their life-long learning.

# Acknowledgements

This book grows out of my PhD dissertation, which was completed at the University of British Columbia in 2015. My deepest and sincerest gratitude goes to my supervisor Dr. Ling Shi for her continuous support of my PhD study and related research, for her patience, motivation and encouragement. With her professional expertise in TESL and particularly second language writing, as well as her rich experience in PhD research supervision, Dr. Shi has given me priceless suggestions on the selection of courses, the design of my research and the writing of my dissertation. I could not have imagined having a better research supervisor for my PhD study.

I would also like to express my sincere gratitude to my supervisory committee members, Dr. Monique Bournot-Trites and Dr. Ryuko Kubota. Their different perspectives have broadened my views on the research questions under investigation and the research methods that could be employed for the present study. They have provided insightful suggestions and inspiring ideas that have greatly improved my research design.

My sincere thanks also go to Dr. Lee Gunderson, Dr. Patricia Duff, Dr. Lesley Andres and Dr. John Egan, whose courses have not only helped me to construct an understanding of the important concepts and theories, but also equipped me with a tool for thinking that illuminates my journey of research exploration.

I am also deeply indebted to Prof. Sun Youzhong, who spent his precious time on reading my book and wrote the preface for the book in spite of his tight schedule. As the leading expert in critical thinking education in China, Prof. Sun has inspired me with the ideas for my doctoral research. His insightful ideas and theories as well as his great enthusiasm and strong sense

of responsibility for promoting the educational reforms in second and foreign language education have greatly influenced me before, during and even after my PhD study. I have learned so much from him.

Last but not least, my wholehearted thanks go to my parents and my husband, who have given me endless love and care. Their warm encouragement and support have greatly comforted me and have given me courage and confidence to carry on.

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