

From Ideas to Text:

A Cognitive Study of English Writing Processes

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认知心理研究

王俊菊 著



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王俊菊，博士，山东大学外国语学院教授、应用英语系主任。1987年获山东大学英语文学学士学位，1993获山东大学双语翻译文学硕士学位，2004年获香港中文大学应用语言学哲学博士学位。1999~2000在英国雷丁大学做访问学者，并访学美国、加拿大、新加坡、韩国等地。长期从事英语教学和应用语言学领域的研究工作。合著有Introduction to Academic Writing，主编、参编教材和学习书籍多部，并在Asian Journal of English Language Teaching、Journal of Asian TEFL等国内外重要学术期刊上发表论文多篇。

FOREWORD BY GUY COOK

China is very obviously the world's fastest growing and most significant site for English language teaching. However we calculate the figures, it accounts for the largest numbers—if not the absolute majority—of the world's EFL teachers and learners. In addition it is, both culturally and linguistically a unique language learning context. Coupled with its rapidly growing economic and political influence, these facts should make it a focus of attention for applied linguistic study of all aspects of the learning and teaching of English: both as a place to be studied for its own intrinsic interest, and one which will yield important findings of relevance and importance to the rest of the world. Yet as the author of this book points out, there are surprisingly few major studies focusing specifically upon the teaching and learning of EFL in China, and in particular upon the writing processes of Chinese learners.

Understanding the complexities of the writing process in language-specific and culture-specific contexts is crucial to applied linguistics in the contemporary world. Writing has taken on a new significance in a world increasingly dominated by computer-mediated communication. The modern English language learner is as likely—if not more likely—to use their new language at the computer screen than in face-to-face communication. Thus while the communicative movement of the 1980s and 1990s tended to privilege spoken interaction and thus the skills of speaking and listening, there is good reason

to say that the tables have now turned. If any of the four skills should be prioritised as the most necessary for the modern learner, they should be reading and—even more—writing. These tendencies are perhaps more marked in China than elsewhere for two reasons. Firstly, as a country which is home to the world's largest population and the world's largest language, it is inevitably a place in which foreign visitors and enterprises will remain a minority. Encounters with them, and thus the need for face-to-face interaction, are for many learners less likely than the possibility or the need for written communication. Secondly, as a country at the forefront of developments in computer-mediated communication in business, it is writing rather than speaking which will be important for many of today's Chinese learners, especially in employment which makes use of their language skills. For they are very likely indeed to conduct the greater part of their everyday English-language communication through email and other electronic means, in other words through writing—albeit in a writing style which is not as measured or considered as in times before the computer era.

This book is a very important contribution to understanding of the writing processes of EFL learners, providing as it does a much needed investigation of these processes in Chinese learners at a range of proficiency levels. As such it makes an invaluable contribution in three different ways. Firstly it gives an insight from inside China to the wider international applied linguistics community, clearly describing and analysing the writing strategies adopted by a sample of the world's largest EFL learning population, and the problems and solutions encountered. Secondly, because this author is well versed in current applied linguistics, and because this book will inevitably be of particular interest to scholars inside China, it helps to disseminate applied linguistics findings to that relatively new and growing reader-

ship. Thirdly because it concerns, as all good applied linguistics should, a practical problem—how best to teach and learn the skills of writing in English—it will have a beneficial effect on the actual teaching of writing in China.

Writing processes, as the author often remarks, are unbelievably complex, especially when conducted in a new language. There are a vast number of angles from which they can be approached, an immensity of relevant variables, and a range of academic disciplines which have something to say about them. It takes a cool head and a scholarly mind to balance all these aspects, and do justice to each. It is much easier to simplify and distort. In this book Junju Wang takes the harder option. The study is based on systematic and rigorous research informed by relevant theory. She assesses and describes her topic in a clear, balanced and approachable style, but without avoiding the inevitable complexity of the daunting subject matter she has taken on.

It has been my privilege to have taught this author, to have heard her speak at conferences, and to have visited her home university in Jinan. I have always been aware that she is at the forefront of a new generation of Chinese applied linguists, making a key contribution to the discipline, both within their own country, and internationally. This book confirms that impression, and will consolidate her position as a major new authority on writing processes in English as a foreign language.

Guy Cook

Editor of *Applied Linguistics*

Chair Professor of Language and Education

The Open University

United Kingdom

FOREWORD BY YAN HUANG

This book, which grew out of Wang Junju's PhD dissertation, presents a cognitive study of writing processes of Chinese EFL learners—a topic that is of vital importance to EFL writing, second/foreign language teaching and learning, and applied linguistics. Apart from its general import, the book makes a number of important theoretical and methodological contributions. Theoretically, the author puts forward four analytical models dealing with thought presentation, second language writing, EFL writing process, and EFL writing instruction. Next, from a methodological perspective, the data is collected combining a number of techniques such as utilizing questionnaires, interviewing subjects and analyzing think-aloud protocols. Throughout the book, objective evaluations, insightful observations and original interpretations abound, with the result that the book will be essential reading for scholars, teachers and advanced students in EFL writing, second/foreign language teaching and learning, and applied linguistics. Furthermore, the findings of the book should also be of interest to anyone with a professional interest in language and communication.

Yan Huang (黄衍)

Professor of Theoretical Linguistics

University of Reading

United Kingdom

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At the time when this book is taking shape, my heart is full of appreciation and gratitude to all those who have helped me in whatever forms to make this book come into existence.

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from home when I studied in Britain and Hong Kong. It is their sacrifices, understanding, and support that have enabled me to finish my studies. Their love is thus worth more than any academic book.

内容简介

本书从历史与现实的角度分析了前人对英语写作过程的研究,结合认知心理学的最新研究成果,有针对性地研究了中国大学生的英语写作过程,提出了外语写作的思维模式、能力模式、过程模式和教学模式。

本书由三部分组成,共分十四章。除“引言”和“结论与建议”外,第一部分为理论综述部分,分为四章,较为详尽地综述了国内外有关英语写作过程的研究历史和现状,主要包括英语作为母语或第一语言的写作过程研究、英语作为第二语言的写作过程研究、英语作为外语和其他外语的写作过程研究、中国学生的英语写作过程研究。在此基础上分析了前人研究的局限性和研究空白,指出了研究中国学生写作过程的必要性和意义。

本书的第二部分为经验性研究部分,分为六章。首先论证了本研究的设计依据,描述了研究方法的设计、数据的收集和分析;然后叙述了本研究的主要结果和发现,其中包括:三组受试学生的写作过程、写作行为、组内和组间的共同点和不同之处;所使用的写作策略的种类、使用频率、组内和组间的不同和相似之处;学生的英语水平与写作子过程、策略的使用情况、母语的使用情况以及作文文本特点之间的关系。同时发现,学生英语水平的高低能够影响英语写作过程中的写前和写中阶段;学生的英语水平能够影响部分写作策略的使用,存在不同程度的正相关或负相关,在其他一些策略的使用方面,可能存在“门槛”现象;学生的英语水平直接影响到学生思维语言的选择和母语的使用量;学生英语水平的高低明显影响英语作文的文本特点和质量。

本书的第三部分包括三章,主要探讨了外语写作教学的理论框架。

首先在前人研究成果的基础上,结合中国的实际情况,分析并讨论了主要研究发现的成因和相关理论依据,提出了有关“语言水平和思想表达”、“二语写作能力”、“中国学生写作过程基本模式”等假设性理论。然后多视角探讨了研究成果对写作教学的启示,强调了过程教学法、写作策略培训、有效使用母语、“为学而写”和“为写而学”相结合的重要性,并针对中国学生的特点提出了提高英语写作教学水平的尝试性建议,构想了“成品—过程—实践”三位一体的写作教学框架。

ABSTRACT

This book is a cognitive study of the writing processes of Chinese EFL learners. On a comprehensive review of previous studies on the writing processes of ENL, ESL and EFL/FL writers, this book investigates the writing processes of three groups of Chinese EFL learners who were at different levels of English proficiency, and explores models for thought presentation, writing competence, the EFL writing process, and EFL writing instructions.

Beginning with an overview of this study, this book consists of 14 chapters and is divided into three parts. Part I provides a comprehensive review of previous studies. Divided into four chapters, it synthesizes relevant studies on the writing processes of ENL, ESL, EFL/FL students, and studies on the writing process of Chinese learners of English both in ESL and EFL settings. It analyses the limitations of previous studies and points out the necessity and significance of studies on the writing processes of Chinese EFL learners.

Part II presents an empirical study on the writing processes of Chinese EFL learners. It consists of six chapters. Chapter 6 is on the rationale for the study, which argues for the need and significance of the qualitative study. Chapter 7 discusses the methodology of the study, including the design of the research, selection of participants, sources of data, and how data were collected, treated, and analyzed. Chapters 8—11 describe the results concerning the background information of the participants, their attitudes towards and perceptions of

English writing, the writing subprocesses, the writing behaviors that they demonstrated, the kinds and frequencies of the writing strategies that they adopted, the role of the mother tongue in the their processes of English writing, and the textual and syntactical features of their written compositions. Within-group and cross-group tendencies and discrepancies were compared and presented with thick qualitative descriptions and multi-faceted quantitative statistics.

Part III is concerned with the pedagogy of EFL writing. It consists of three chapters. Chapter 12 interprets, explains, discusses, and evaluates the major findings of the study by referring to theories of writing and comparing them with the results of previous studies. It hypothesizes three models in regard to “linguistic proficiency and thought presentation”, “L2 writing competence”, and “the writing process of Chinese EFL learners”. Chapter 13 discusses the pedagogical implications of the study. It pinpoints the importance of “teaching about the process”, “the training of writing strategies”, “making good use of the mother tongue”, “combining ‘learn to write’ and ‘write to learn’”, etc. , and tentatively puts forward a trinity model for English writing instructions in the Chinese context.

This book ends with a summarization of the study and concludes that linguistic proficiency has an effect on the writing processes in terms of pre-writing and during-writing subprocesses, the use of most writing strategies, most features of written texts, and the use of the mother tongue. Limitations of the study and recommendations for further research are finally provided.

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