

郑 静 编著

**Business English Writing Research:
Theories and Practice**

**商务英语写作研究：
理论与实践**



化学工业出版社

郑 静 编著

Business English Writing Research: Theories and Practice

商务英语写作研究： 理论与实践



化学工业出版社

· 北京 ·

商务英语是属于专门用途的英语,具有别于普通英语的语言特点和交际功能。掌握商务英语写作不仅要具备一般英文写作技巧,更要熟悉不同商务文本体裁和商贸文化常识。本书从商务英语写作能力培养的角度,对比分析了相关实证研究的结果,指出以体裁分析为基础的方法(Genre-based approach)更有利于提高商务英语写作水平。在理论研究基础上,本书对商务英语写作的各个方面提供了指导,系统阐述了商务英语写作的特点,选词、造句和组织篇章的原则,还详细介绍了各种商务文本的写作,包括不同类型的商务信函、商务报告、商务合同,以及在商务交往中可能用到的其他体裁,内容涵盖各种写作的基本概念,文本结构,语言特点,写作要领、赏用表达和范文等。内容较为系统全面,注重写作理论与实践的结合。

图书在版编目(CIP)数据

商务英语写作研究:理论与实践/郑静编著.—北京:
化学工业出版社,2012.7
ISBN 978-7-122-14636-6

I. 商… II. 郑… III. 商务-英语-写作 IV. H315

中国版本图书馆CIP数据核字(2012)第138812号

责任编辑:杨燕玲
责任校对:顾淑云

文字编辑:梁玉兰
装帧设计:张辉

出版发行:化学工业出版社(北京市东城区青年湖南街13号 邮政编码100011)
印刷:北京永鑫印刷有限责任公司
装订:三河市万龙印装有限公司
710mm×1000mm 1/16 印张12½ 字数272千字 2012年7月北京第1版第1次印刷

购书咨询:010-64518888(传真:010-64519686) 售后服务:010-64518899
网 址: <http://www.cip.com.cn>
凡购买本书,如有缺损质量问题,本社销售中心负责调换。

定 价:39.00元

版权所有 违者必究

Forewords

With our country's rapid economic development, and increasing demands of international business, to cultivate students' English writing skills for conducting daily communication and dealing with the affairs in foreign trade has become one of the important goals in foreign language teaching and learning. According to basic English teaching requirements for higher education by Higher Education Department of National Education Committee, the English teaching of higher education should lay a solid language foundation for students and cultivate their communication competence as well, making students capable of effectively conveying messages in both spoken and written English in common everyday communication and at business work.

As a compulsory course of business English majors, the teaching effects of business English writing (BEW) are not optimistic. By analyzing the theories and the empirical research results, the book points out some affecting factors in BEW teaching and learning and gives guides for every link of BEW. Therefore, the book is an academic work while it can also be served as a guide book of BEW for the students of intermediate and advanced levels, especially the college students in business English major, and the self-taught learners at the same level.

The writer discussed the results of newly conducted researches. By analyzing the empirical studies of different theoretical perspectives, the writer pointed out that BEW learning should be genre-based, which can not only enhance the general writing abilities, but also improve the learners' command of business writing styles, structures, and business common knowledge. On the basis of those research results, the book gives guides for every aspect of BEW, including the basic technical writing knowledge and techniques, and the writing practice as well. The first four chapters put the emphasis on basic writing principles and skills while the following four chapters highlight the specific business writing formats and skills. Each chapter of the book tries to combine theory with practice, offering rich samples and trainings for students easy to catch and practice. The book is written in simple English, which is suitable for students of intermediate or advanced levels, and also convenient for them to get a direct contact with the usage of useful expressions and the specific requirements for business writing, and will also be helpful for improving their language proficiency.

The materials in this book are mostly adopted from newspapers, magazines, audio-visual materials, and other teaching materials as well. For some of them, we even don't know the names of their original writers, so it's difficult to trace and acknowledge the sources of all the materials having been used and are also impossible to give a

complete list of references in our bibliography. While this is so, we would like to take the opportunity here to express our heart-felt gratitude to those wonderful writers, teachers, and researchers whose names remain unknown. Special thanks also go to my college, Mr. Tao Neng wei, for his efforts in completing part of chapter eight.

Limited by my writing time and abilities, we may probably have many defects and neglects. We will be grateful to have any suggestions and criticisms from all teachers, learners and experts in foreign language teaching and learning.

前 言

随着我国经济的高速发展,国际商务交流日益频繁,培养学生进行日常交流和处理外贸事务的写作能力已成为外语教学的重要目标之一。根据国家教委有关高校英语教学基本要求,高等教育英语教学应在加强学生语言基础的同时,培养学生的交际能力,使学生具备进行日常交流、常规商贸事务的写作和口语能力。

商务英语写作更是商务英语专业学生的必修课。然而,长期以来商务英语写作的教学效果并不理想。本书通过阐述商务英语写作的理论,分析相关实证研究的结果,剖析了商务英语写作的要素,并在理论研究的基础上为写作的各个环节提供了指导。本书既是商务英语写作研究的专业著作,也可以帮助中、高级水平的外语学习者掌握商务英语写作的理论知识和写作技能。

本书论述了商务英语写作的最新研究成果,对比分析了从不同理论视角进行的实证研究,指出商务英语写作训练应该以体裁分析为基础,通过对大量写作范例的分析、讨论和模拟,不仅能提高基础写作能力,更能帮助学习者掌握商务写作体裁,结构,以及商务常识。根据研究成果,本书对商务英语写作的各个方面提供了指导,内容涵盖写作的基础知识、商务写作技巧、商务常识等,同时还提供了大量实践范例。前四个章节着重阐述商务写作的基本原理和技巧,后四个章节介绍了具体的商务写作体裁,写作格式和技巧。每章节力图把理论与实践相结合,为读者提供了丰富的写作范例和练习。写作范例通俗易懂,借鉴性强。全书用英文书写,文字简洁易懂,适合中、高级英语水平的读者,方便读者直接接触英文表达方式和了解商务英语的语言特点,促进英语语言水平的提高。

本书参考资料主要来自大量英文书刊,视听资料和其他相关著作和教材。其中部分资料很难追根溯源,作者迭名或无从考证,因此无法在参考文献中罗列所有援引资料,谨在此对所有作者、教师和研究者们表示衷心感谢。同时,还要特别感谢我的同事陶能为老师,他完成了第8章部分内容的编写。由于时间仓促,能力有限,谬误在所难免,敬请各位师生和专家们批评指正。

Contents 目录

Chapter 1	Researches on Business English Writing 商务英语写作研究	1
Chapter 2	Principles of Written Communication 写作的原则	5
Chapter 3	Choice of Right Words 正确选词	19
Chapter 4	The Formation of Sentences and Paragraphs 组句与谋篇	37
Chapter 5	The Writing of Business Letters 商务信函	59
Chapter 6	The Writing of Business Contract 商务合同	77
Chapter 7	The Writing of Business Report 商务报告	98
Chapter 8	Guides for Different Types of Business Letters and Other Practical Writings 不同类型的商务信函和其他实用写作指导	111
Bibliography	参考文献	194

Chapter 1 Researches on Business

English Writing

商务英语写作研究

Introduction 引言

This chapter will first clarify the basic concepts of business English Writing (BEW), and try to explore the skills that constitute it. Moreover, the theories behind BEW learning and teaching will also be discussed, and the reflection about that will be made on the overview of the relevant empirical studies, which will be served as the theoretical basis for the coming chapters.

Concepts 概念

The clarification of concepts always comes first no matter whether we are concerned about BEW learning or teaching. Therefore, what is Business English and what are the characteristics of it are given the priority. Business English is a branch of English for Specific Purposes (ESP), which implies a specific language corpus and emphasizes particular kinds of communication in a specific context. However business English differs from other varieties of ESP in that it is often a mixture of specific content (relating to a particular job or industry), and general content (relating to general ability to communicate more effectively, especially in business situations). Business English carries much more information than General English: more business information, especially those special terms used Business English; more cultural information behind those words, especially business cultural information.

The peculiar features of business English determine the special characteristics of BEW, which not only encompasses the general writing skills, such as the skills to use writing mechanism, grammatical knowledge, organizing methods, and writing strategies, but also involve the knowledge about the diversified genres, and the conventions of business world. In fact, BEW occurs in the real business environment which covers lots of varied specific tasks such as internal business documents, business solution documents, marketing communications, and public relations materials, so it serves as the chief instrument of external communication in business. BEW functions three main purposes:

conveying a message; providing a permanent record for future reference and legal disputes and offering opportunities to increase good will and favorable impression of the company or the writer.

Literature Review 文献综述

Following the clarification of basic concepts, what we would like to make sure is the way to successful learning or teaching of BEW. As for the former one, there are very few studies on the autonomous learning since it is really a tough task for learners to be highly qualified in writing skills and well-informed in business background as well. Therefore, classroom learning research has flourished in this field, which is often discussed in the studies of the teaching approaches. In other words, the present studies mainly focus on the learning that occurs in the classroom environment, and under the guide of teachers, that is, the teaching approach.

There are mainly three different teaching approaches for BEW: genre-based approach, task-based approach, product and process approach. Since business English is a branch of ESP, which emphasizes the learners' needs, the relation to a certain professional fields and highlights the use of the lexical, syntactical rules and contextual structures, genre-based approach is quite prevalent.

Genre was originated from the Latin word, which has started assuming importance in linguistics only recently. There are a number of definitions of genre. For Marin (1984), he describes that "genre is staged purposeful social process through which a culture is realized in a language". According to Swales (1990), "genre is a class of communicative events, the member of which share some set of communicative purposes. These purposes are recognized by the expert members of the parent discourse community and thereby constitute the rationale for the genre. This rationale shapes the schematic structure of the discourse and influences and constraints choice of content and style". To sum up, each genre is an instance of successful achievement of specific communicative purpose using conventionalized knowledge of linguistic and discourse resources. Correspondingly, the primary concern of genre analysis consists of two parts: "first, to characterize typical or conventional textual features of any genre-specific text; and second, to explain such a characterization in the context of the social-cultural as well as the cognitive constraints operating in the relevant area of specialization, whether professional or academic". (Bhatia, 1993:16) Genre-based approach usually revolves around descriptions or discussion of genres, which are served as useful discourse models. Typical teaching procedures include: model analysis, imitating analysis, group discussion, deep analysis, and imitating writing. The aim is to scaffold learners to grasp the genre through analyzing, discussion and writing practice. In this approach, authentic writing samples and the imitation of the real life environment are essential.

Task-based language learning appeared in 1980s, emphasizing learning in doing. The core part of task-based teaching approach is the tasks. In BEW, it refers to the designing of the business situation, in which several business writing tasks may be involved. It aims to arouse the learners' learning interests and stimulates them to apply the knowledge into practice and involve them in classroom learning. One of key point of this approach is the ways to link different writing tasks and make them as a whole unit.

Product and process approach are opposite to each other, and are often viewed as inseparable partners. Product approach takes teachers as the center of classroom learning and teaching. Teachers are responsible for imparting the knowledge, and learners passively receive and recite. There are generally three steps: prewriting, drafting, and revising. Product approach is a traditional teaching approach, which is quite common for today's classroom. The negative sides are also obvious, so has been widely criticized. On the contrary, process approach emphasizes the learning process and the learners' involvement and creativeness. However, since 1980s, it has been doubted by many teachers and experts, for it over frees students and makes them perplexed at adopting writing strategies, and applying contextual devises, so fails to improve writing abilities. Now it has been recommended that the two rivals unite as a whole and balance their merits and demerits.

Existed Problems and research findings 现有的问题与研究成果

BEW, as a compulsory course for business English majors, although has been put in a core position, the teaching effects and learning results are not so optimistic. The problems mainly reflect in the following three aspects. First, the teaching methods are rigid and almost fossilized, lack of flexibility and creativity, which can hardly satisfy learners' needs and arouse learning interests. While BEW require both solid foundations of writing ability and rich background knowledge about business conventions, cultures, and procedures, the classroom teaching seems to fail in the two aspects. Second, the teaching material often confines the business writing to business letter writing, and overweighs the lecturing on writing skills while neglecting the introduction of the business background knowledge. The inadequacy in offering the writing models is also what has been complained about by both teachers and learners. At last, but not the least, learners are often weak in mastering contextual structures and cohesive devises.

In recent years, many researchers have studied the ways to improve business writing abilities. Most of the studies (Cheng Cuicui 2007, ShuaiJianlin 2007, Pengyanlin 2008, He Jianju 2010, Wang Shuangfei 2012, Zhou Wenhong 2010) emphasized the importance of sample writing in BEW. Cheng Cuicui (2007) have found that the class revolving

around the genre analysis may improve both the knowledge about language and writing skills. In the process of writing model discussing, imitating, and learners' drafting and revising, learners can have a better command of the skills to produce and interpret business written discourse. ShuaiJianlin (2007) also argued that genre analysis was a powerful pedagogic tool for BEW teachers and was beneficial for students.

Conclusions 结论

From the findings of those studies, we may conclude that the learning of BEW should require both a good foundation in general writing abilities and the rich knowledge about the written business discourse. Furthermore, a large number of writing models are crucial for learners to get familiar with every aspect of BEW. Therefore, in the following chapters, some basic BEW principles, skills, and specific genres and rich models will be provided to help teachers and learners to get an access to successful BEW.

Chapter 2 Principles of Written Communication

写作的原则

Introduction 引言

The last chapter has offered a theory-based discussion about Business English and Business English Writing (BEW). While this chapter will strive to uncover the features and social functions of BEW, so that the learners can explore all the potential power of that.

Concepts 概念

To clarify the characteristics of business writing, it's better to distinguish the concepts of "technical writing" and "non-technical writing", which are two categories all types of writing can be grouped into.

There are many explanations for the concept of "technical writing" (技术写作). There are two of them, most clearly generalizing the characteristics of business writing. The one is Kepp. The other is Mancuso. Kepp (*Technical Writing*, 2003) generalized three characteristics of technical writing. First, he thought technical writing is largely requested writing, and the writer has to think about what the reader wants to hear, not just about what the writer wants to say. Second, technical writing deals with a concentration of facts, and usually has great density, great weight of information. Finally, he thought technical writing often involved the communication between technical people and non-technical people, so technical writing should put information in the right medium of communication (交流媒介)—verbal, mathematical, visual—for reception and understanding by the reader. Mancuso (*Mastering Technical*, 1990) offered four characteristics of technical writing: they supply information and persuade people into doing something; they usually appeal to audience with specific needs; they are written with specific purposes in mind; they are accurate because lives and dollars often depend on them. These explanations give us a very clear picture of technical writing. Technical writing is to convey the factual information (事实信息) for the practical use of his or her readers, often for a specific reader. The purpose of technical writing is always to inform rather than entertain or please

the readers. A good technical writing can objectively and clearly present the information that readers will need. With the rapid development of science and the economic globalization, technical writing has become the most common and frequently used type of writing of almost all walks of life. In business world, technical writing dominates written communication. Therefore, to have a good command of technical writing skills is essential for business writing.

Differences between technical writing and non-technical writing 技术写作与非技术写作的差异

The main differences between technical writing and non-technical writing lie in the author's point of view. Technical writing often explains the facts on an objective basis (客观基础), while non-technical writing usually expresses one's inner experience or personal opinions, having a subjective basis (主观基础). Therefore, poetry, fictions or essays expressing one's personal views are not technical writing. The following three passages are about the same topic: eagle. Please read carefully and try to find which one is the technical writing and tell why you think so.

Passage I

Laughing Rose

by William Henry Davies

If I were gusty (大风的) April now,
How I would blow at laughing rose;
I'd make her ribbons slip their knots,
And all her hair come loose.

If I were merry April now,
How I would pelt her cheeks with showers;
I'd make carnations (粉嫩), rich and warm,
Of her vermilion (鲜红的) flowers.

Since she will laugh in April's face
No matter how he rains or blows—
Then O that I wild April were,
To play with laughing Rose.

Passage II

The rose is attributed to femininity. The rose is also known as the symbol of

achievement, completion and perfection. In other words, a rose can be seen as symbolizing the tests and difficulties of life to help find inner harmony, union and happiness. The purity of the rose equalizes the bliss of nothingness and harmony. Faulkner uses the rose as a symbol of Emily and how she lived her life.

Take for example the symbolism of the colors of roses. William Faulkner helps to show the different sides of Emily like the colors of the rose. The white rose symbolizes purity, innocence and unconditional love. She has an unconditional love for her father that was hard for her to let him go. Faulkner states, "The day after his death all the ladies prepared to call at the house and offer condolence and aid, as is our custom. She told them that her father was not dead."

Passage III

A rose is a woody perennial (多年生的) of the genus *Rosa*, within the family Rosaceae. There are over 100 species. They form a group of erect shrubs, and climbing or trailing plants, with stems that are often armed with sharp prickles. Flowers are large and showy, in colours ranging from white through yellows and reds. Most species are native to Asia, with smaller numbers native to Europe, North America, and northwest Africa. Species, cultivars and hybrids are all widely grown for their beauty and fragrance. Rose plants range in size from compact, miniature roses, to climbers that can reach 7 meters in height. Different species hybridize easily, and this has been used in the development of the wide range of garden roses.

The name *rose* comes from French, itself from Latin *rosa*, which was perhaps borrowed from Oscan, from Greek *ρόδον rhodon* (Aeolic *βρόδον wrodon*), related to Old Persian *wrd-*, Avestan *varəda*, Sogdian *ward*, Parthian *wâr*, Armenian *vard*.

The same topic is explained from different viewpoints. The first passage is a poem. The writer describes rose metaphorically (比喻性地). "I were gusty April", and the "roses" are "laughing" and wear "the ribbons on their hair". We can clearly see the whole description is based on the writer's imagination. From the poem, what we can learn is not only the image of rose, but also the writer views roses as the symbol of love and maidens. Such a description is not technical writing because it is not an objective recording of facts.

The second passage is an essay, which presents the writer's personal opinions. The writer thinks roses symbolize "the tests and difficulties of life to help find inner harmony, union and happiness, and the purity of the rose equalize the bliss of nothingness and harmony". The writer also uses the example of William Faulkner to

illustrate that. Any factual information in the passage is subordinate to the writer's opinions.

The last passage is taken from an encyclopedia. We can see the description about the rose is purely factual information and on an objective basis.

From above examples, you can get a clear idea about the characteristics of technical writing and non-technical writing. So you must remember when making technical writing, you should reports facts, without personal opinions, for the reader's practical use. For many business writing, trying to be objective and facts-oriented will be a very important rule.

The importance of developing your technical writing skills 提高技术写作能力的重要性

Writing is always an important language skill, which has long been treated as a measure of one's language proficiency. In the basic English teaching requirements for higher education, students' writing skills, especially their practical writing skills are put in a very important position. "The English teaching requirements" clearly requires that the college students should have the basic abilities to effectively and efficiently conduct communication at business work and in daily life, and students' technical writing skills will be finally tested by a nationwide exam, called The Test of English Communication Competence of College Students. It's no doubt that technical writing skills should be paid much attention to by English teachers and learners.

On the other hand, after China's open policy, with the increasing chances for international communication, English is more widely used than it was in China. English writing skills, technical writing in particular, has become more and more important. It's estimated that roughly 85 percent of communication in the working world is carried out in writing. In many circumstances, your ability to write effectively in English will determine if you will be qualified for or successful in a job.

Otherwise, in business communication, writing has many specialties and well-beings that other forms of communication do not have. For example, it will be more convenient for you to talk with your customers or colleagues over technical, statistical and detailed information in a letter than by a call. A receiver of a letter will feel easy to find a convenient time and place without interruptions to review the materials. A letter in a trade can be saved as a document that may be legally acceptable as a binding contract or as evidence in a court of law. Furthermore, one letter can be distributed to several individuals so that it can often save your time and money to inform of the same message one by one through phone calls or personal visits. Finally, letter writing may offer you

more time to consider and arrange the content of your message to make it in the most advantageous and persuasive way, and generally speaking, people will attach greater importance to a letter than to a phone call.

From above, you should find that even in the modern time when communication has greatly improved, writing skill is also indispensable and crucial in our life and at our work. And technical writing almost dominates business written communication.

The skills of good technical writing 技术写作技巧

To get a good grip of the technical English writing skill is a big challenge for Chinese Students. However writing skill is not an inborn ability and can be trained to be fine. In China, technical English writing is mainly used in the international business circles. To make your business documents effectively and efficiently convey the factual and objective messages while establishing and maintaining the goodwill with your customers, you should try to pay attention to the following points:

1. Meet the specific readers' needs (满足特定读者需求)
2. Make your words clearly understood (表达清楚)
3. Be concrete and specific (言之有物)
4. Avoid overly complex and overly simple sentences (避免使用过难或过易的句子)
5. Build the positive tone (笔调积极友善)
6. Proofread and revise carefully (校对修改仔细)

Meet the specific readers' needs 满足特定读者的需求

Effective writing should offer right information to right people. That is to say, you must adjust your writing style according to the reader's needs, expectations, and his or her educational and professional backgrounds, and so on. No matter how well you organize your words and how professionally you express your idea, if your writing doesn't meet the reader's needs, fit to the reader's knowledge, your writing will not be correctly understood and fully accepted. Therefore, to visualize your readers' characteristics should be very crucial for you to maintain receptivity in the reader and to establish the positive relationship with your customers or counterparts in business.

According to different level of technical understanding, readers can be grouped into experts, technical informed readers and ordinary readers.

For experts, you don't need to simplify and interpret. Here, for instance, is an account of emergency room treatment given to a heart attack victim written for the medical expert:

Mr. X was brought to the emergency room by ambulance at 1:00 a.m., September 27, 1977. The patient complained of severe chest pains, shortness of breath, and dizziness. Auscultation and electrocardiogram revealed a massive cardiac infarction and pulmonary edema marked by pronounced cyanosis. Vital signs were as follows: blood pressure, 80/40; pulse, 140/min; respiration, 35/min. lab tests recorded a wbc count of 20,000, an elevated serum transaminase and urea nitrogen level of 60 mg%. urinalysis showed 4+ protein and 4+ granular cast/field, suggesting acute renal failure secondary to the hypotension.

The patient was given 10 mg. of morphine stat, subcutaneously, followed by nasal oxygen and a 5% D& W IV. At 1:25 a.m. the cardiac monitor recorded an irregular sinus rhythm, suggesting left ventricular fibrillation. The patient was defibrillated started and given a 50 mg. bolus of Xylocaine IV. A Xylocaine drip was started, and sodium bicarbonate was administered until a normal heartbeat was established. By 3:00 a.m., the oscilloscope was recording a normal sinus rhythm.

Written at the highest of technicality, this narrative is only meaningful to the trained medical person. The writer assumes that his reader has the knowledge needed to understand the message.

Other messages written for experts appear in many of the specialized journals in your library's periodical section. Unless these data are translated into simpler terms they will mean nothing to nonexpert.

The technically informed reader knows more than the layperson but less than the expert. This person's needs are the most difficult to identify. A first-year medical student, for example, can be called technically informed, but so can the second-, third-, and fourth-year student. Obviously their levels of understanding differ. Therefore, when you write for technically informed readers, assume that they know less instead of more; explain and interpret your data.

Here is a partial version of the earlier report. This time it is written for medical technicians, nursing and medical students, and medical social workers—all informed readers but not expert.

Examination by stethoscope and electrocardiogram revealed a massive failure of the heart muscle along with fluid build-up in the lungs, which produced a cyanotic discoloration of the lips and fingertips from lack of oxygen.

The patient's blood pressure at 80 mm Hg/40mm Hg was dangerously below its normal measure of 130/70. a pulse rate of 140/min was almost twice the normal rate of 60-80. respiration at 35/ min was over twice the normal rate of 12-16.

This version explains and interprets all the raw data. Because exact dosages are not