

普通高等教育“十一五”国家级规划教材



新世纪高等院校英语专业本科生系列教材(修订版)

总主编 戴炜栋

实用新闻英语读写

Practical English News Writing

徐青根 徐兴方 张鄂民



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总 序

随着改革开放的日趋深入,社会各界对外语人才的需求持续增长,我国英语专业的招生规模逐年扩大,教学质量不断提高。英语专业本科生教育的改革、学科建设及教材的出版亦取得了巨大的成绩,先后出版了一系列在全国有影响的精品教材。21 世纪的到来对英语人才的培养提出了更高的标准,同时也为学科建设和教材编写提出了新的要求。随着中国加入世界贸易组织,社会需要的不是仅仅懂英语的毕业生,而是思维科学、心理健康、知识面广博、综合能力强,并能熟练运用英语的高素质专门人才。由于中学新的课程标准的颁布,中学生英语水平逐年提升,英语专业本科生入学时的基础和综合素质也相应提高。此外,大学英语(公外)教育的迅猛发展,学生英语能力的提高,也为英语专业学生的培养提出了严峻的挑战和更新更高的要求。这就规定了 21 世纪的英语教学不是单纯的英语培训,而是英语教育,是以英语为主体,全面培养高素质的复合型人才。教材的编写和出版也应顺随这种潮流。

为了迎接时代的挑战,作为我国最大的外语教材和图书出版基地之一的上海外语教育出版社(外教社)理应成为外语教材出版的领头羊。在充分调研的基础上,外教社及时抓住机遇,于新世纪之初约请了全国 25 所主要外语院校和教育部重点综合大学英语院系的 50 多位英语教育家,在上海召开了“全国高等院校英语专业本科生系列教材编写委员会会议”。代表们一致认同了编写面向新世纪教材的必要性、可行性和紧迫性,并对编写思想、教材构建、编写程序等提出了建议和要求。而后,外教社又多次召开全国和上海地区的专家、学者会议,撰写编写大纲、确定教材类别、选定教材项目、讨论审核样稿。经过一年多的努力,终于迎来了第一批书稿。

这套系列教材共分语言知识和语言技能、语言学与文学、语言与文化、人文科学、测试与教学法等几个板块,总数将超过 150 余种,可以说几乎涵盖了当前我国高校英语专业所开设的全部课程。编写内容深入浅出,反映了各个学科领域的最新研究成果;编写体例采用国家最新有关标

准,力求科学、严谨,满足各门课程的具体要求;编写思想上,除了帮助学生打下扎实的语言基本功外,还着力培养学生分析问题、解决问题的能力,提高学生的人文、科学素养,培养健康向上的人生观,使学生真正成为我国 21 世纪所需要的外语专门人才。

本套教材编写委员会由我国英语界的知名人士组成,其中多数是在各个领域颇有建树的专家,不少是高等学校外语专业教学指导委员会的委员。教材作者均由编写委员会的专家在仔细审阅样稿后商定,有的是从数名候选人中遴选,总体上代表了中国英语教育的发展方向和水平。

鉴于该套教材编写理念新颖、特色明显、体系宏大、作者权威,国家教育部已经将其列入了“十五”重点教材规划项目。我们相信,继“高等院校英语语言文学专业研究生系列教材”之后,外教社该套教材的编写和出版,不仅会满足 21 世纪英语人才的培养需要,其前瞻性、先进性和创新性也将为外语乃至其他学科教材的编写开辟一条新的思路,拓展一片新的视野。

戴炜栋

上海外国语大学校长

Foreword

The past decade has witnessed an increasing effort on the part of Chinese media to offer English news services in newspapers and TV programmes, both local and national. The effort has been very much appreciated by English speaking communities in China. However, progress was not made without difficulty. In some cases the difficulty overwhelmed the effort, so that English services had to be suspended. The big difficulty lay in the fact that there were not enough qualified English news reporters and that most English articles were produced by translating Chinese news reports, which turned out to be painstaking but “thankless” work. In rapidly-developing China there was a growing demand for a large number of English reporters, while very few Chinese universities offered English news writing programmes. Where would good English news writers come from? We, English instructors in universities, began to think about offering courses in English news writing. To our disappointment, there were very few journalism textbooks in English in bookstores; those to be found were imported; even fewer practical English news writing textbooks were available for Chinese students of English. We decided to do something about it.

When Xu Qing-gen returned from the United States with a bunch of English news reporting books, Xu Xing-fang returned from Australia with his MA degree in Communications and Zhang E-min completed his second textbook compiling project, the idea of co-compiling a practical English news writing course book became compelling. As Professor Dai Wei-dong was planning in Shanghai a grand plan for a series of new English textbooks for the new century, we were ready.

There was still a long way between the idea and its execution. We are basically English language teachers, but this project demanded expertise in journalism as well. So that made us half qualified at the

start. Sometimes audacity helps, at least at the very beginning of a tough task. We made up our minds and put our weight on one leg we had firmly planted in our English language expertise and stretched the other into the news reporting area as far as possible, gaining a foothold inch by inch. Two years have passed. Here we are. This book, poor as it might be, is something to show for our effort and for us to feel proud of.

This is a practical writing book, a work book. In the compiling process, we never forgot to provide students with plenty of sample readings for input practice and sufficient space for writing practice. This is also a news writing book. Therefore, we spared no effort in providing necessary professional knowledge. With the first three chapters as a “skeleton” and “Professional awareness” and “Points to consider” in each of the other chapters as “muscles”, the book is designed to be an organic “being” capable of smiling at and talking to our students. And this is a practical English news writing course book for our Chinese students after all. We think we have assimilated authentic English news writing theories and practices to be able to produce a book that will help our students write English news stories in a Chinese context with a flavor of “Englishness”. Having done our utmost, we hope that this book will serve as a steppingstone, leading our students one step further up the flight toward our goal — good English news writing.

A complete success of our textbook can only be achieved with the indispensable effort on the part of the teachers who teach with the book and the students who learn by the book. The sketchy mention of journalism in this book is far from enough for an instructor to teach this course with; and the students might often leave their classrooms with some questions unanswered. That is why we give at the end of this book websites for after class work. “No pains, no gains” is certainly true in this course.

Frankly speaking, we owe the users of this book an explanation for the different styles of English scattered in the reading materials. This results from our ambition to gather as many English newspapers

as possible for your reference. The major sources of the sample pieces are given and students are expected to benefit from attempting to figure out the features of each. For this and other difficulties, we humbly await your understanding of our particular situation and your sympathy for our effort as well as your advice for future improvement .

Finally we wish to avail ourselves of the opportunity to give our sincere thanks to Mr. James deSantis and Mr. Colin Heggie, our Canadian teachers in 2004, for their generous help standardizing our English, to express our appreciation of the assistance from Ma Wei and Shen Hui, our close friends in the United States, and to acknowledge the sustained moral support and encouragement from Ms. Xie Yu of Shanghai Foreign Language Education Press.

February 6, 2005

Qing-gen Xu
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UNIT 1

Introduction

1. What is news?

What is news? There are many answers to that question because the elements that constitute news are constantly changing. And different reporters have different views of what is news. What may be news in one community, for example, may not be news in another. However, there is a general agreement that news is a combination of information people are or should be interested in and that items of news have the following intrinsic characteristics known as news values:

- **Timeliness** — Is it a recent development, or is it old news?
- **Conflict** — Is the issue developing or does anybody care?
- **Prominence** — Are any well-known or famous people involved?
- **Consequence** — What impact will the story have on individuals or the community?
- **Novelty** — Is it interesting, unusual, even bizarre?

Timeliness Timeliness is a very important measure of news. An accident today that held up the local rush-hour traffic for one hour is timelier than one that happened three days ago with the same consequence. When a tsunami hits, readers want to know what the immediate effect is and what is happening now. The stories of recent happening will get more attention in a newspaper.

Conflict Most conflicts — whether they involve individuals, administrative bodies or sports teams — are newsworthy. Physical conflicts may lead to injuries and damages, which often arouse emotions and can therefore be of enormous and immediate importance. Wars are

classic examples of conflicts of a more disruptive nature that always occupy space on the front page.

Prominence Some occurrences are newsworthy simply because prominent people are involved. Whatever they do or whatever happens to them makes news because of its consequences. Big names make big news.

Consequence Any event that affects many people is newsworthy. Some events are of more consequence than others, and they will take more space and larger headlines. The impact of mass layoffs by major employers is not limited to the employees and their families only, but is also felt throughout their communities. It is not surprising that media give prominent play to these happenings.

Novelty Readers and editors alike love novelties in the news: the three-eyed baby, the 60-kilo cabbage, the tortoise finds its way to the person who saved its life 20 years ago, etc. Anything unusual, even bizarre, has strong reader appeal.

2. What makes a good reporter?

Professional journalists are supposed to be intuitive, inquisitive and insightful. In other words, they should have an insatiable curiosity, a flexible and sociable personality, a nature that relishes a variety of experiences, a tolerance permitting objective observations of people and events, and most certainly, self-discipline to uphold social justice. We might as well add that ability to write clear, carefully constructed sentences is essential. Journalism is not a logical career choice for anyone who does not enjoy writing. Perhaps the most difficult challenge facing every reporter is the ability to separate personal beliefs and biases from what is being written. A good reporter simply must take a position as an unbiased witness in reporting the facts.

Good reporters are not born but made. Most of the attributes of a successful reporter are acquired, not inherited. Although many successful reporters were brought up in the newsroom, college education is extremely important for a reporter. Journalism students at college

are generally required to take English courses to enable them to get a broad knowledge of the English language and the ability to use words with style and grace. They are also required to take courses in literature, history, political science, economics, psychology, and one or more of the natural sciences as well. College training in journalism not only affords a shortcut to learning the basic journalistic techniques and skills, but also gives beginners a broader understanding of their work. A college-trained reporter with a broad liberal arts education brings to the job not only knowledge of history, psychology, political science and the like but also the ability to use that knowledge to help interpret the events of the day from a proper perspective so that the reader can understand them. Journalism courses are designed to show how to use the knowledge obtained in other courses for the benefit of the readers. Although educational training for journalists dates back to the turn of the century, college-educated journalists were not common on most newspapers until well into the 1930s. It is not without reason that today it is often difficult to obtain a reporting job without a college degree and, in many cases, a degree in journalism.

3. What are press ethics?

What does the press cover? Some people in the news business still cling to the cherished hope that a newspaper has a right to print anything it wants to, but most responsible editors and reporters know better. A newspaper simply cannot and in many cases should not put anything in the paper. Moreover, not every story can be conveniently put into a “print” or “do not print” category in an ethical sense. Since there is no authoritative public standard by which to decide what should and what should not be printed, the conventional view that “news” is simply a mirror placed before reality still works. Unfortunately, public attempts by newspapers to explain how the mirror works frequently turn into embarrassing failure. Fortunately, some professional groups have been trying to establish a code of ethics. In order to encourage the highest ethical and professional performance, the American Society of

Newspaper Editors sets forth a Statement of Principles as a standard, which includes Responsibility, Independence, Truth and Accuracy.

Responsibility The primary purpose of newspapers is to inform the people and enable them to make their own judgments on the issues of the time. Journalists must be always on guard against all who would abuse the press for selfish purposes. Journalists should respect the rights of people involved in the news, observe common standards of decency and stand accountable to the public for the fairness and accuracy of their news reports.

Independence Freedom of press belongs to the people. Journalists should be constantly alert to the danger of failing to bring an independent scrutiny of the conduct of official power at all levels of government and make sure that the public business is conducted in public and fight against any influence or pressure or temptations that might compromise their integrity.

Truth and Accuracy Since credibility is the foundation of good journalism, efforts must be made on the part of journalists to assure that news reports are accurate, free from bias and that all sides are presented fairly. The sound practice of impartiality requires a clear distinction between news reports and opinions.

Topics for discussion

1. What else do you think should be part of news values? for example, locality?
2. To be a good reporter, one has also to develop a sharp political awareness.
3. How important is the knowledge of media laws, including reporters' rights and information laws, on the part of a reporter?

UNIT 2

News Writing (I)

1. Journalistic English style

The newspaper is mainly written to be read in a hurry; therefore, in news writing simple and accurate and common words are preferred, unnecessary words should be eliminated, and sentences and paragraphs should be kept short. In other words, the basic news style consists of short words, short sentences, short paragraphs. Of course sentences must vary in length if the reader is to be kept interested, and some paragraphs are warranted by their content to be longer than others. Normally skilled reporters average 15 words per sentence and 40 words per paragraph. Besides, news stories are supposed to report issues objectively, rather than render verdicts or give judgments. The reporters should learn how to tell personal opinions from facts. That is to say, let the fact speak for itself, either favorably or unfavorably. After all, news reports are written to express, not to impress.

1) Using simple, accurate and common words

preferred	avoided
man	gentleman
die	passed away
probably true	absolutely true
cancer	carcinoma
money	currency
during	during the period
since	due to the fact
promptly	in a timely manner

2) Cutting unnecessary words

Weak: The director said that he would stay.

Strong: The director said he would stay.

Weak: The conference lasted for a period of three days.

Strong: The conference lasted three days.

3) Keeping sentences and paragraphs short

Weak: The committee will hold a meeting.

Strong: The committee will meet.

Weak: One man died and another was critically injured at about 6 p.m. Tuesday when their Mercury Cougar crossed the median on Interstate 24, just past the Old Hickory Boulevard exit, and struck a Cadillac headed in the opposite direction, then was “totally destroyed” by a tractor-trailer rig loaded with steel bars, State Highway Patrolman Frank Biggs said.

Strong: One man died and another was critically injured Tuesday when their car crossed the median on Interstate 24, struck another car and ran under a tractor-trailer rig. (The details omitted here can be used later in the story.)

4) Letting the fact speak for itself

Improper: Mr. Li Weiling is well qualified for the post.

Proper: Mr. Li Weiling is a PhD graduate from Fu Dan University and has 10 years of experience in the field.

Improper: The boss lost his temper with his secretary.

Proper: The boss shouted at his secretary and slammed the door behind him.

Improper: The suspect lied.

Proper: The witness said that the suspect lied.

2. The making of headlines

Headlines are advertisements of news. Good headlines reach out and grab the reader. Most newspapers have a set of guidelines for writing

headlines. Although the rules can vary according to the particular views of reporters, they often include the following 4 “don’ts”:

- Don’t begin headlines with a verb.
- Don’t leave conjunctions, prepositions and modifiers at the end of the headlines.
- Don’t pile modifiers one after another.
- Don’t use pronouns unidentified.

In modern typography there is a trend toward simplicity. Main heads are shorter and secondary headlines, if any, fewer. Very often only the first letter of the first word in the headline and any proper names are capitalized.

Most common headlines are straightforward statements, made up of

Nouns:

Nightingale’s song

Noun phrases:

A conductor without arrogance

Home where the art is

Research on “Gay Gene” Confirmed

Verb phrases:

Making Morality Everybody’s Business

Adjective phrases:

Ready to fight to the last drop

Better safe than sorry

Complete sentences:

“Baby On Board” Signs Reduce U.S. Auto Fatalities 70 Percent

However, many news writers love to exercise their rhetorical skills to give their headlines special favor. They have adopted a variety of headline techniques, similar to those used in magazine advertising.