Critical Peer Feedback in
Business English Writing Teaching
Theory and Practice

商务英语写作中
批判性同伴反馈教学

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理论与实践 （英文）

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内容提要

本书研究了批判性思维与同伴反馈教学的关系，提出了批判性同伴反馈教学的概念框架，综述了批判性同伴反馈教学的理论框架，通过在商务英语写作教学中的扎根研究，发现批判性同伴反馈教学不仅能够提高学生的同伴反馈能力，还能提高学生的写作水平。本书完整陈述了应用 QSR NVivo 进行定性研究的全过程，论证了批判性同伴反馈教学过程中大学生对批判性同伴反馈教学的感知、思维过程、反馈内容和影响因素等，并提出了大学生批判性同伴反馈的思维模式。

本书可作为商务英语教学者的参考用书。

Preface

Peer feedback is an old topic in teaching, but it is still widely used in our daily teaching activities. You have picked up this book because you are interested in peer feedback and want to discover the new development of peer feedback in the academic world.

This book explored "critical thinking" with peer feedback and attempted to investigate how critical peer feedback improves the quality of peer feedback and Business English Writing. Based on the theoretical framework of Sociocultural Theory and Zone of Proximal Development, "Critical Peer Feedback" is defined by the concepts of "critical thinking" and "peer feedback". The mechanism of critical peer feedback is explored by participants' perceptions, process, contents, and factors of critical peer feedback. This study is conducted in the environment of online Qzone weblog. The online features of Qzone weblog are studied to explore how they affect critical peer feedback to improve Business English Writing. A qualitative case study is conducted in this study with a group of six participants of Chinese undergraduates for one semester duration. Three types of data are collected including semi-structured interviews, Business English Writing assignments, and artifacts of critical peer feedback. The data are analyzed by QSR NVivo 8.0 with the content and thematic analyses. The codes are quoted at descriptions, and the nodes and models are

illustrated with visualization in findings.

The findings reveal that "critical peer feedback" improves the quality of peer feedback, and the quality of Business English Writing among Chinese undergraduates. The participants prefer Revised Bloom's Taxonomy of critical thinking skills for critical peer feedback. Critical peer feedback follows a four-step mental process in Business English Writing. The eight issues in critical peer feedback are perceived in this study. Qzone weblog is believed to be a reasonable information and communication technology (ICT) platform for critical peer feedback, and the most popular weblog among Chinese undergraduates. The five online features of Qzone weblog positively affect critical peer feedback to improve Business English Writing. A critical peer feedback model is concluded by the mechanism of process, contents, factors and issues for attention during critical peer feedback.

This book also discusses the implications for the policy makers, lecturers and learners, and make some recommendations of further research. This study is significant to the research of peer feedback on second language writing. It constructs a model for higher-order peer feedback, promotes the higher-order thinking instruction in tertiary education, and expands the use of Qzone weblogs in language instruction.

This book is divided into two parts and sixteen chapters. The first part including first seven chapters introduced the relevant theories of critical peer feedback and the overviews of the relevant studies. The second part from chapter eight to chapter sixteen introduced the qualitative study practice and findings of critical peer feedback for Business English Writing in an EFL context.

In the perspective of academic study, this book aims to not only introduce the theory of critical peer feedback in TESL, but also the complete process of qualitative study methodology in the study of critical peer feedback for Business English Writing. Hopefully, it is helpful to the lecturers in TESL and the academic followers in the long way of academic studies.

Content

Part I   A Theory of Critical Peer Feedback

Part II   A Practice of Critical Peer Feedback in Business English Writing

Appendices

Part I   A Theory of Critical Peer Feedback

Chapter 1 Research Background of Critical Peer Feedback for Business English Writing

This chapter will start with the introduction of four aspects of study backgrounds of critical peer feedback for Business English Writing including discipline background, academic background, social background and practical background.

Discipline Background

English for Business Purposes (or Business English) is a variety of English for Specific Purposes (ESP) (Carter & Nunan, 2001; Chen, 2010; Jiang, 2016), which has special features from the aspects of language and pedagogy. In China, Business English has been studied as a discipline in tertiary education (Zhang, 2008; Chen, 2010; Jiang, 2016), which is different from the western countries where it is not a discipline but only a course in Business program. In 2007, Chinese Ministry of Education authorized Business English as a university discipline (Zhang, 2008; Chen, 2010; Jiang, 2016). Before this reform, Business English was regarded as a study program or research approach belonging to the discipline of English Language and Literature in China. This emphasizes the importance of Business English in Chinese tertiary education and demonstrates the social needs of Business English talents.

By 2016, 350 universities and colleges have set up the discipline of Business English, and thousands of universities and colleges have the program of Business English in China (Wang, 2016). But by 2012, there are only 62 universities and colleges applying for Business English discipline (Wang, 2012). Business English discipline in universities and colleges cultivates various levels of Business English talents such as diploma, degree, master and even doctorate (Wang, 2015). Business English discipline shall be applied by universities and colleges and then authorized by Provincial Department of Education and recorded by National Ministry of Education in China (Wang, 2012).

Business English is defined as lingua franca in international business communication and trade (Wang, 2012; Wang, 2015). Business English discipline is an interdisciplinary major which mainly includes three disciplinary majors such as linguistics, management and economy (Lv, 2013). From the perspective of linguistics, Business English is a variety of English for Specific Purposes (ESP). From the perspective of management, Business English is focused on business communication such as business strategy, communication strategy and cross-culture strategy. From the perspective of economy, Business English and economy both agree with the value of language (Cao, 2011).

The curriculum of Business English discipline covers the courses in the three majors such as linguistics, economy and management (Wang, 2015). Business English Writing is one of the compulsory courses in the discipline of Business English, which is widely used in the international business communication. Business English Writing is regarded as a kind of EOP (English for Occupational Purposes) or EVP (English for Vocational Purposes) writing (Hu & Che, 2013). Business English Writing has specific characteristics such as accuracy, clarity and simplicity in form (Chen, 2005; Chen, 2010); readability (Bilbow, 2004); the special registers of business (Trauth & Kazzazi, 2000); and goal-oriented, real-time communication in business settings (Chen, 2005; Chen, 2010; Jiang, 2016).

The syllabus of Business English Writing focuses on two parts: the academic writing on business researches, and business writing amid business activities (Zhang, 2008; Zheng, 2010; Wang, 2014). However, Chinese university (college) lecturers pay much attention to "business writing" rather than "academic writing" (Zhang, 2008; Zheng, 2010). This is caused by the current social needs of international trade and business activities in light of the on-going economic globalization in China. The human resource market needs many international businessmen with solid proficiency in English language, which also promotes the education reform of universities (colleges) of applied science.

From the perspective of education policy, many famous scholars in Business English study like Wang Lifei (2015), Ye Xingguo (2015), Yan Ming (2015), Peng Qinglong (2015) and Xu Dejin (2015) advocated to built *National Criterion of Teaching Quality for BA (Bachelor of Art) Program in Business English* (NCTQPBE), and described the key issues of program (discipline) positioning and objective, quality, knowledge and ability of the Business English majors, the curriculum framework and design, teacher development, and development tendency of college Business English program in China, and emphasized that the quality of connotation improvement is the key to sustainability of Business English program. NCTQPBE has been accepted by Chinese Ministry of Education and will be authorized as the national education criterion for Business English discipline in China.

Academic Background

Business English Writing course adopts a process-oriented instruction approach of writing. The process-oriented approach of writing focuses on the process instead of the final product, and emphasizes "the importance of feedback from both teachers and students" (Brown, 2010). At present, peer feedback, rather than teacher feedback,

is the major instruction method in the process-oriented approach of writing in China (Wang, 2007, 2012). At the teacher-centered instruction in China, the teacher dominates the teaching who is the authority on knowledge and intelligence, and the students need to respect and obey their teachers' instruction and not question or doubt their teachers (Xiao, 2005). A Chinese student in teacher-centered teaching activities is a follower and listener instead of a participant and thinker. However, with the enlightenment and boom of cognitive and constructivism approaches in instruction in China, Chinese educators pay more attention to the role of students in teaching and encourage them to participate in classroom activities as participants and thinkers. Nowadays, the student-centered teaching is advocated in Chinese classes.

Peer Feedback is a popular student-centered teaching method in China. However, in Chinese EFL environment, peer feedback in Business English Writing is still regarded as time consuming, inefficiency, and lack of motivation (Zhang, 1995; Lin, Liu, & Yusan, 2001; Song, 2010). Teacher feedback has been considered as reliable and valid instruction in China (Song, 2010). It is significant to study how to motivate Chinese students to participate in classroom activities and develop their subjective initiatives. Peer feedback focuses on the role of peers in learning and teaching activities to motivate others to study actively. This is the key point of current student-centered instruction reform in China.

Peer feedback research emphasizes the writing instruction in different settings, and which feedback content is the most efficient in writing (Narciss, 2008; Poulos & Mahony, 2008). The present questions in relation to peer feedback are how to improve the efficiency of peer feedback and how to improve the quality of peer feedback in writing.

The quality of peer feedback is significant to improve the quality of writing. This is because high-quality peer feedback enables students to identify the gap between their own performance and a given set of expectations, and provides advice about

their own writing for improvement (Emo, Wen, & Ashill, 2006; Lizzio & Wilson, 2008; Bayerlein, 2014). The previous studies imply that students in tertiary education are less satisfied with peer feedback because of the inefficient and poor quality of peer feedback (Nicol, Thomson & Breslin, 2014). Feedback does not automatically lead to positive results (Kluger & DeNisi, 1996; Hattie & Timperley, 2007; Narciss, 2008; Shute, 2008; Strijbos, Narciss, & Dunnebier, 2010). It infers that high-qualified feedback does not emerge unconsciously, and it needs the higher-order thinking stage and the reasoning skills.

In order to improve the quality of peer feedback, some researchers realized the mindful process of feedback (Narciss, 2008; Poulos & Mahony, 2008). Roscoe and Chi (2008) found that students assessing their peers' works are engaging in a cognitively-demanding activity that extends their understanding of subject matter and writing. Other researchers focused on improving factors such as training, experience, competence level, and the degree of student autonomy (Yang, Badger, & Yu, 2006).

The mental process of feedback on quality feedback is based on the theories of constructivism and psychological cognition (Narciss, 2008; Poulos & Mahony, 2008; Stevenson, 2006; Schraw & Robinson, 2012). These theories aim to study the thinking and reasoning process of feedback in order to improve the feedback quality in the writing activities.

The integration of critical thinking and feedback has significant meaning to study the mechanism of mental activities for efficient feedback such as the mental process and the contents of feedback. Thereby, "critical peer feedback" and "critical feedback" are widely mentioned to improve the quality of feedback and the quality of writing in the academic field.

Therefore, "critical feedback" or "critical method" has been regarded as an efficient method to improve peer feedback (Zhao, 1996; Pearlman, 2007; Li, 2007; Cox el at., 2013; Wolff-Hilliard & Baethe, 2014). There is limited study on critical

feedback which focuses on the study of higher-order thinking and reasoning process to improve the quality of peer feedback. The theoretical problems are the process and contents of critical peer feedback, and factors affecting critical peer feedback in the process of facilitating the quality of peer feedback in EFL writing.

Zhao (1996), who studied the effect of anonymity on critical peer feedback in computer-mediated collaborative learning, articulated the theoretical framework of critical peer feedback from constructivism, epistemology, Darwin's natural selection and criticism, and defined "critical feedback". However, he did not study how critical feedback improves the quality of writing, but focused on the anonymous peer feedback. Pearlman (2007), based on critical pedagogy, tried to transcend peer feedback through critical collaborative assessment, and articulated the importance of critical peer collaborative learning process. Li (2007) explored the effects of critical assessment training on the quality of peer feedback and the quality of students' final projects in peer assessment, but critical assessment was not further discussed. Cox, Peeters, Standford and Seifert (2013) reviewed the ideal preceptor qualities in peer assessment, one of which is to encourage critical thinking and problem solving. Wolff-Hilliard and Baethe (2014) argued to use digital and audio annotations to reinvent critical feedback with online adult students. They further addressed that the experience of writing and receiving critical peer feedback helped students work through the learning experience and students emerged more informed and rejuvenated as developing writers.

There is limited research on how critical peer feedback improves the quality of peer feedback, and what critical peer feedback skills are explored to improve the quality of peer feedback. Therefore, an academic research gap is the missing mechanism of critical peer feedback to facilitate the quality of peer feedback such as perceptions, process, contents and factors.

Additionally, Chinese tertiary education has neglected the instruction of critical

thinking for a long time. Richard Levin, Yale University prior president in 2010, directly argued that Chinese undergraduate education was in shortage of two vital elements: "the width of cross-discipline and the cultivation of critical thinking" (Xiao, 2005). He furthered that Chinese undergraduates were passive listeners and receptors who dared not challenge their lecturers' philosophy. Chinese Ministry of Education has recognized these two shortages in compulsory education and tertiary education, and highlighted the "combination of learning and thinking" to stimulate the students curiosity and critical thinking at *National Medium and Long-term Plan for Education Reform and Development (2010-2020)*.

In addition, from the form of feedback, there are three ways: oral feedback, written feedback and face-to-face feedback. With the development of internet technology (IT) and the application of mobile learning (mLearning), the internet and smartphone are widely used in peer feedback (Siraj, 2012; DeWitt, Siraj & Alias, 2014). Electronic form of feedback is popular such as e-mail, in-text comment, blogs and instant communication tools.

Online feedback is more conveniently applied in computer-assisted language learning (CALL) and teaching via Facebook, Twitter, blogs, and many other Internet-based platforms. Online peer feedback has many advantages such as flexible idea expression, effective peer feedback, positive performative assessment, multi-media learning and teaching, improved autonomy learning, and the construction of authentic learning and working simulation environments (Yunus, Hadi, Salehi, Sun & Embi, 2013). However, there is a gap to study how online features help improve the quality of feedback.

In China, Qzone is one of the most popular weblogs among the youths and is combined with the instant messaging (IM) software—QQ. Qzone has been widely applied in EFL instruction as a CAI (computer-assisted instruction) platform (Wang, 2009; Xie, 2010; Du, 2013; Zhu, 2013). Qzone weblog and QQ have been explored