

高级英语写作教程

A Course for Advanced Written English

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前言

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高级英文写作课是英语专业学生的必修课程,是培养学生遣词造句、谋句成篇、文本构思、文体润色、论文写作等各方面技能的主干课程。该课程以实用性和时效性为特征,是全面衡量学生英语语言学习整体素质的一个重要标杆。然而,由于教材开发的滞后、划一,很难找到一本适合民族院校英语专业学生的高级英语写作教程。这便是本教程得以编写的初衷。

修辞和文体知识是民族地区学生最欠缺的、亦是最感迷茫的。一是概念上的模糊,二是语用上的模糊。搞不清语法、修辞和文体究竟是什么关系。语法、修辞和文体总是联系在一起的。只不过语法着眼于语言本身,属于死的或静态的东西;而修辞和文体依托于语言又超越于语言,着眼于言外世界和说话人及受话人的社会认知和心理表征。语法旨在遣词造句的基本规则,以做到正确无误;修辞重在探究词语的运用、句式和语体的选择以及常用修辞格式。即遣词造句怎样做到准确、鲜明、生动,以尽收言之效果;文体则以语言使用时的变异为重点,通常特别注意如何有意识地使语言的使用臻于完美和优美。另外,写作与阅读密不可分。没有扎实的英语语言基础、没有一定的英文阅读量、没有一定的英文文献检索知识,高级英文写作将流于形式,学生的科研能力也就成了空话。这在学生的课程论文和毕业论文写作中表现得尤为突出。因此,本教程的主干必然包括修辞文体写作和论文写作。同时,鉴于英汉两种语言文化间的差异所导致的语用失误和实际写作可操作性的考虑,选编了语误分析和文本赏析两个部分,以求理论、实践和方法的有机统一。具体言之,《高级英语写作教程》主要由以下五部分构成。

第一部分总说。该部分介绍修辞、修辞语境的构建要素、修辞语境

的构建过程和常用策略,以便为第二、第三部分的学习和学生的自主实践打下一定基础。

第二部分修辞文体写作。该部分从消极修辞和积极修辞两个方面依次分别介绍常见的词法交际修辞手段、句法交际修辞手段和词法美学修辞手段、句法美学修辞手段,以便学生了解其用途和用法,增强元语言语用意识和语码切换意识,掌握遣词造句、连句成段的常用方法、策略和技巧,从而实践、阅读、欣赏和评论相关题材的文本。

第三部分论文写作。该部分主要结合 APA 和 MLA (兼 Chicago Manual) 两种国际通用文献格式,介绍文献检索、文献阅读、文献运用以及论文写作的体例要求。

第四部分常见语误分析。该部分主要根据学生在措辞、造句、谋篇、表意、表态等方面可能出现的问题加以分析,并提供相应的练习。

第五部分文本赏析。该部分主要在以上部分,尤其是在第一、第二部分学习的基础上,了解记叙文、描写文、说明文、议论文四大文体及其写作策略和技巧。所有习文后均附有思考题和参考性评论。通过自主学习或在教师的指导下,学生可根据要求完成相应题材的写作任务。

重点术语可见《附录》中的汉译。

本《教程》适用于边远少穷地区高校英语专业高年级学生、英语自学者和英语爱好者。教师在了解教程总体框架的前提下,可结合教学对象的实际情况灵活处理。教学安排为两学期,第一、二、五部分为一学期的内容,第三、四部分为一学期的内容。《教程》的教学指导思想是“授人以渔”。

在编写《教程》的过程中,编者参阅了国内外多种教材、辞书和相关文献,书后《参考文献》中一并列出。在此,谨对所有的编著者表示真诚的谢意。本书能与读者见面,亦惠于西北第二民族学院领导和科研处在经费上的大力支持以及责任编辑谭立群老师的辛勤工作,再一次深表谢忱。

囿于学识和水平,难免有错误和疏漏之处,敬祈专家、学者和同行批评指正。

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Part I

Preliminaries

Unit 1

An Introduction to Rhetoric and Writing

Language learning can be best promoted when language is used purposefully and communicatively, when language is viewed as the means for true expression, when language accuracy serves linguistic fluency and is subordinate to it. Therefore, proficient EFL writers experience writing as a process of creating meaning. Rather than knowing from the outset what it is they will say, these students explore their ideas and thoughts on paper, discovering in the act of doing so not only what these ideas and thoughts are, but also the form with which best to express them. Moreover, they recognize the importance of being flexible, starting anew when necessary, and continuing to rework their papers over time as they take into account another reader's frame work of reference in rhetorical organization. But researchers have proved that competence in the organization of written discourse develops late and that appropriate instruction has an impact on this competence. Thus, to be proficient EFL writers, it is primarily necessary for us to know the basic notions of rhetoric and writing which are helpful for us to recognize the format of this coursebook and to make effective practice while learning this course.

1.1 Rhetoric

What is rhetoric? This is the question facing any reader or writer who is engaged in the study of English rhetoric. The term 'rhetoric' comes from Greek *techne rhetorike*, meaning 'art of speech'. It traditionally refers to the study of effective use of language in communication. However, it has now been understood, in particular situation, as the art of using language skillfully for persuasion, or for literary expression, or for public speaking. In the later twentieth century, with the development of semiotics, stylistics and pragmatics, an interest in traditional rhetoric has been revived. The term has now come into modern linguistics and

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literary theory in new senses which reflect current rather than traditional perspectives; or in senses that are loosely connected with the more traditional ones.

Geoffrey Leech sees rhetoric as the effective use of language in its most general sense, “applying it primarily to everyday conversation, and only secondarily to more prepared and public uses of language” (1983: 15). He says that the point about the term is the focus it places on a goal-oriented speech situation, in which the speaker uses language in order to produce particular effect in the mind of the hearer.

Based on Halliday’s (1973) distinction of metafunctions of language in his functional theory, Leech distinguishes two kinds of rhetorics: interpersonal rhetoric and textual rhetoric, which are formed by “a set of conversational principles which are related by their functions” (ibid). According to him, each of the rhetorics consists of a set of principles, such as the Cooperative Principle and the Politeness Principle, which, in turn consist of a set of maxims and sub-maxims in the hierarchy as below:

Rhetorics (consisting of)

Principles (consisting of)

Maxims (consisting of)

Sub-maxims

Leech’s interpersonal rhetoric mainly includes Grice’s CP and his own PP, together with a series of others such as Irony Principle, Banter Principle, Interest Principle and Pollyanna Principle. And his textual rhetoric includes Processibility Principle, Clarity Principle, Economy Principle, and Expressivity Principle.

Halliday (1973) holds that there are three metafunctions of language intrinsic to grammar, i.e.

- The ideational function: language functioning as a means of conveying and interpreting experience of the world.
- The interpersonal function: language functioning as an expression of one’s attitudes and an influence upon the attitudes and behavior of the hearer.
- The textual function: language functioning as a means of constructing a text, i.e. a spoken or written instantiation of language.

Different from Halliday, Leech distinguished the three metafunctions into two domains: identifying grammar as ideational, pragmatics as interpersonal and textual. He describes semantics as grammatical and pragmatics as rhetorical, for he sees the former as “part of the grammar”, and the latter as “part of the use of the grammar” (p. 5). His distinction is based on

one of his postulates that semantics is rule-governed and pragmatics is principle-governed. As this coursebook is concerned, we generally agree with him. Such is because semantics traditionally deals with meaning as a diadic relation, as in “What does X mean?”, while pragmatics deals with meaning as a triadic relation, as in “What did you mean by X?”. Thus meaning in pragmatics is defined relative to a speaker or user of the language, whereas meaning in semantics is defined purely as a property of expressions in a given language, in abstraction from particular situations, speakers, or hearers. Based on this, Leech distinguishes pragmatics into a grammatically-related linguistic pragmatics (pragmalinguistics, which may be language-specific) and a sociologically-related pragmatics (sociopragmatics, which may be culture-specific). As the mode of language use, speech is so, so is writing.

Besides, Leech not only touches upon the study of “relatively permanent parameters” of situation in relation to language choice, such as ‘register’, but also ‘style’, a heading in the study of Crystal and Davy (1969). In his opinion, the difference between pragmatics and register corresponds to a distinction of DYNAMIC and STANDING features of communication.

And according to *Longman Modern English Dictionary*, rhetoric is the art or science of communication in words. Whether speaking or writing, one has to get oneself across effectively, i.e. to be eloquent, accurate, impressive, persuasive and expressive. The study of how to express oneself effectively, generally speaking, is the main concern of rhetoric.

Of course, different scholars may have different definitions from different perspectives. In general, rhetoric can be regarded as a study of how to make an effective choice between two synonymous expressions, how to promote cooperation by means of linguistic and non-linguistic symbols amongst those people who can respond to symbols innately, or as a strategy to make a practical discourse systematic, consistent and reasonable, or as a method for cognition, i.e. understanding the world. For the better understanding and ease of practice, we tend to introduce two kinds of rhetorics, namely, communicative rhetoric and aesthetic rhetoric, from the broad pragmatic view since the two rhetorics are akin to each other in language use.

1.1.1 Communicative Rhetoric and Aesthetic Rhetoric

In the category of humane tradition, English rhetoric may be subdivided into communicative rhetoric and aesthetic rhetoric. The former is what Mr. Chen Wangdao, the master of modern rhetoric, referred to as passive rhetoric, and the latter active rhetoric. To be exact,

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communicative rhetoric lays particular stress on lexical accuracy, structural meticulousness and contextual appropriateness so as to bring its linguistic communicative role into full play, while aesthetic rhetoric gives special emphasis to the employment of figures of speech in virtue of imagination and association so that the language used will be more colorful and expressive, the images created on the reader's mind will be more vivid and impressive.

As we know, rhetoric is the art or science of effective communication in words. For effectiveness, both communicative rhetoric and aesthetic rhetoric can be employed by means of logical thinking.

There are two widely-held views about rhetoric. One is that rhetoric is nothing but the employment of figures of speech, such as simile, metaphor, metonymy, personification, antithesis, hyperbole, parallelism, pun, euphemism, irony, understatement and analogy, etc. When one speaks of rhetoric, s/he means aesthetic rhetoric only; the other is that communicative rhetoric does exist, but it is inferior to aesthetic rhetoric, so it cannot be put on an equal footing with the latter.

Are these two views reasonable? As a matter of fact, there is no superiority and inferiority between them. We cannot say which is better or which is worse because the choice of language is up to the speaker's or the writer's intention or illocutionary point. It is often the case that they are mingled and permeated with each other. To illustrate this, here is an excerpt from Erich Segal's novel *Man, Woman and Child* which tells about how Sheila (the wife, W for short) was shocked when Robert (her husband, H for short) confessed that he once had an affair with another woman.

- 1) H: Honey, I gotta talk to you.
- 2) W: Sure. Is something wrong?
- 3) H: Well, sort of. Yes.
- 4) W: Bob, something in your voice scares me. Have I done anything?
- 5) H: No. It's me. I've done it. Sheila, remember when you were pregnant with Paula?
- 6) W: Yes?
- 7) H: I had to fly to Europe—Montpellier—to give that paper ...
- 8) W: And?
- 9) H: I had an affair.
- 10) W: No. This is some terrible joke. Isn't it?
- 11) H: No. It's true. I—I'm sorry.

- 12) W: Who?
- 13) H: Nobody. Nobody special.
- 14) W: Who, Robert?
- 15) H: Her—her name was Nicole Guirin. She was a doctor.
- 16) W: And how long did it last?
- 17) H: Two, three days.
- 18) W: Two days or three days? I want to know.
- 19) H: Three days. Does all this matter?
- 20) W: Everything matters. I thought our marriage was based on total honesty. Why didn't you ever tell me?
- 21) H: I was waiting for the right moment.
- 22) W: And ten years later was the right moment? No doubt you thought it would be easier. On whom?
- 23) H: I didn't want to hurt you, Sheila. If it's any consolation, that's the only time.
- 24) W: No. it isn't any consolation. Once is more than never.
- 25) H: Sheila, that was so long ago. I had to tell you now because—I mean ... She's dead.
- 26) W: For God's sake. Bob, why are you telling me all this?
- 27) H: Sheila, I am telling you because she had a child.
- 28) W: And we have two—so what?
- 29) H: He's mine. The boy is mine.
- 30) W: Oh, no, it can't be true.
- 31) H: Yes, it's true. I didn't know about him. Sheila. Please believe me.
- 32) W: Why? Why should I believe anything you tell me now?
- 33) H: Sheila, listen—
- 34) W: No. I've heard enough. Bob, why'd you have to tell me? Why?
- 35) H: Because I don't know what to do. And because I somehow thought you'd help.
- 36) W: You can't know how it hurts. I trusted you. I trusted. —
- 37) H: Please, honey. I'll do anything to make it right.
- 38) W: You can't.
- 39) H: You don't mean that you want to split ...?
- 40) W: Robert, I don't have the strength right now. For anything. You could do me a big favor.

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41) H: Anything?

42) W: Sleep in your study, please.

Now let us have a detailed study of this dialogue and see how the wonder communicative rhetoric works.

- 1) The careful use of "gotta" instead of "have got to" shows Robert's intimacy and casualness with his wife.
- 2) The proper choice of "something" rather than "anything" indicates Sheila has an ominous presentiment.
- 3) "Well, sort of" reveals that Robert was heavyhearted and felt somewhat difficult in choosing the right words. But after a while he realized the graveness of the matter and got to know that any of his reluctance or evasiveness could not help, so he answered with a definite and straightforward "Yes".
- 4) "Scare" is an informal and mild word, so it is more appropriate than "terrify" or "frighten". "Anything" is well chosen. Here it doesn't mean "any kind of thing" but something grave.
- 5) The three short sentences, using altogether eight words, indicate that Robert was eager to confess his guilt.
- 6) Obviously "yes" should be uttered in rising tone to push him on.
- 7) The two dashes, on the one hand, show that Robert was hesitant and reluctant and that he was bringing back his memory of the affair and coming to the nub step by step; on the other hand, they also reveal that Robert was in a complicated mood: happy memory of the past; bitter, regretful and ashamed at the moment. So it is hard for him to express his feelings in the right way.
- 8) "And" is used to urge Robert to go on.
- 9) "Affair" in English refers to the sexual relationship between two people not married to each other, esp. one that lasts for some time. Here it is accurately employed. Instead of beating about the bush, Robert came straight to the point, frankly acknowledging his fault.
- 10) Here "no" is not a negative word but an exclamation which expresses astonishment, bewilderment and skepticism.
- 11) This "no" is a negative word, affirming that he was serious. And the dash in the next

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sentence suggests that he was in a gloomy and self-reproachful mood.

- 12) Elliptical. The complete sentence reads like this: Who was the woman with whom you committed adultery?
- 13) "Nobody" is deliberately chosen. What if "somebody" is used? If so, Sheila would be more angry and jealous. And that would make the situation even worse.
- 14) That Sheila addressed her husband as "Robert" instead of the intimate form of address "Bob" reveals the change of her feeling.
- 15) This dash makes clear that Robert suffered much pain while making his frank confession.
- 16) Apparently this is a cross-examination.
- 17) Between "two" and "three" the conjunction "or" is omitted for the sake of casualness and triflingness.
- 18) On the contrary, Sheila was very particular about the duration of her husband's adultery with the woman. She wanted to know every detail. So she not only added "or" but also added another "days". This is a kind of trial in a family moral court. Being the "judge", Sheila's tone ought to be sober and dignified. Here we could find no trace of elaborate ornateness. The words are so plain and the sentence pattern so simple, but the effectiveness obtained by means of communicative rhetoric is far beyond the reach of any figure of speech.
- 19) The implication of the question goes like this: This is something of slight importance. Why take it so earnestly?
- 20) The first sentence consists of only two words: one being the subject, the other predicate. Short though its length, it is without doubt forceful. Sheila's anger, prestige and poignancy all come into full view. Instead of blaming Robert and venting her grievance and resentment against him, Sheila acknowledges her misunderstanding of her husband, which reveals her cultivation typical of an intellectual family.

The word "ever" reinforces her tone of anger and resentment.

- 21) Robert's weak defense of himself.
- 22) "On whom": elliptical. Easier on whom?
- 23) Robert tries to console his wife, but fails. "If" and "any" in the next sentence are both appropriately used, indicating that Robert was expecting Sheila's forgiveness.
- 24) A flat refusal. We usually say "Once is more than ever." Here the author elaborately adds the letter "n" to "ever" to stress Sheila's anger and agony. This is a case of

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permeation of communicative rhetoric with aesthetic rhetoric.

- 25) The dash and ellipsis suggest what he is going to say is difficult for him to utter. Short it is, the last sentence expresses a cold fact which is beyond Sheila's expectations.
- 26) The death of Nicole Guirin made Sheila greatly relieved. Hence the intimate form of address Bob.
- 27) Note Robert's generic use of the indefinite article "a" before child.
- 28) Sheila stressed "two", revealing her mistaking Robert's generic use of "a" as the cardinal one. Hence more dramatic.
- 29) This is the theme of the dialogue. Both "he" and "the boy" refer to the same person. "The boy is mine" instead of "The boy's mine" shows that Robert was serious.
- 30) Shocked and unprepared, Sheila used the exclamation word "oh" for the first and last time.
- 31) Another case of appropriate diction. Robert used "didn't know about him" rather than "didn't know of him" to indicate that he knew nothing of the boy. What he said is not only true but also helps him to win Sheila's forgiveness. From this example we can see that choice is rhetoric.
- 32) Here "should" suggests that it is hard for Sheila to take what had happened for granted.
- 33) The dash indicates that Robert wanted to give further explanation.
- 34) "No" expresses a downright refusal. The use of "listen" and "hear" is another case of proper diction. Sheila was very suspicious of her husband's real intention, so she used "have to" to urge him to speak his mind.
- 35) Note the tenses used here. The simple present in the former sentence tells that Robert was helpless at the very moment of speaking while the simple past in the latter indicates that Robert had placed hope on Sheila before, thus prodding her to give him a hand.
- 36) Now it is time for Sheila to speak for herself. The repetition of "trusted" and the following dash show that Sheila was greatly upset and didn't know how to express herself properly. In addition, the repetition of "trusted" also shows Sheila's condemnation against Robert's betrayal.
- 37) "To do anything" reveals Robert's strong determination.
- 38) Here "can't" does not mean Robert's subjective incapacity but the objective impossibility. He did want to make it right, but there was no remedy to cure Sheila's mental wound, so in fact nothing could help.

39) "Split" here means divorce. It's hard for Robert to utter the latter, so he used the former.

40) Now Sheila once again addressed her husband as Robert instead of Bob, which indicates that she had calmed down and began to reconsider their husband-wife relationship.

"Do me a big favor": This seems to Robert a sudden gleam of light casting from the dark clouds.

41) "Anything" betrays Robert's extreme eagerness.

42) On hearing "a big favor", Robert thought there came the opportunity for him to turn over a new leaf, but unexpectedly the "big favor" turned out to be "sleep in your study", which shows the rift between them could not be healed after all. Now this chapter of the novel abruptly comes to an end.

This is a typical and excellent example of skillful application of communicative rhetoric to the oral text. In this dialogue there are altogether 359 words used. Short though it is, it is highly effective and expressive. The author employs few figures of speech. His diction is plain and the sentences are short, but the inner conflicts between the couple and the subtle changes of their feelings are both effectively presented. So the two characters are successfully portrayed. The images created are so vivid and impressive that it is hard to erase them from our minds. All this results from nothing else but appropriate wording, which is so appropriate that no alternative could be adopted without doing damage to the original. In a given context there is but one best way to communicate. If simile, metaphor, and the like were greatly to be employed, the strong flavor of life would be greatly reduced, and the marital tragedy would become a disgusting farce. Anyhow, some stylistic devices such as apostrophe are used in this dialogue for the need of context and artistic appeal.

1.1.2 Rhetoric and Stylistics

Related to the topic discussed above, language learners are also frequently confused about the distinction between rhetoric and stylistics.

Present-day rhetoric consists of two sub-branches, namely, rhetoric and stylistics. The former is concerned chiefly with the following objects of study: 1) the effective power of linguistic symbols in communication; 2) persuasive skills to win audience; 3) writers' techniques to influence readers; 4) the means by which human beings reach identity of view