

# Analysis and Enlightenment of college English writing teaching in China and America

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## Abstract:

In the era of globalization, English as a universal language, people pay more attention to English learning. English writing learning is a difficult problem for many English learners, both first and second language learners will encounter corresponding problems. However, the teaching of English writing in China and the United States is different for various reasons. Therefore, this paper first analyzes the current situation of contemporary Chinese and American English writing teaching, and draws out the main topic to be discussed, and analyzes the similarities and differences between Chinese and American English writing. Then it introduces the similarities and differences between China and the United States in the teaching of college students' English writing, and studies and analyzes the causes of these similarities and differences and the reflections on cultural differences. Based on the above analysis, the author finally analyzes the similarities and differences in the teaching methods of English writing in China and the United States.

**Keywords:** TESOL; ESL; L1; Globalize.

## 1. Introduction

According to a article about the effect of reading on improving the writing of EFL-English as a foreign language-students. Researcher went to Malaysia to do a survey on the importance of reading to writing. Students who read the book can write more grammatically correct sentences. This is why many countries choose to read the literature before writing. One of

the limitations of this study is the length of intervention to teach participants. In this study, it takes three to four weeks to teach interventions. However, for example, if it is better or more effective, it can be extended to a year. The result is expected to be realized. In this way, students' fear of returning to the old and their own way of learning will be reduced, that is, independent learning. Another problem of this study should be regarded as another limitation. Although

there are many other ways to improve students' writing performance, this study only focuses on one aspect of reading, that is, the combination of reading and writing to cultivate students' literacy skills as the best technique for effective teaching/learning writing. When testing other methods, further research may be carried out, such as the use of reading strategies, reading skills or interesting reading, to enhance students' writing. This study is also limited to EFL students from Iran. Future research can change the background and study the impact of reading and writing on ESL students from other countries such as Malaysia. According to another article that talks about the requirements for English writing. The requirements include clear structure, logical thinking, and correct grammar and spelling. When writing, there must be a clear theme and position, make sure that the whole article revolves around the them, etc. Thus, no matter which country will emphasize with academic skills.

The emphasis on academic writing in China and the United States is reflected in Standardized exams such as ACT in the United States have writing parts, and candidates must show their writing skills, including argumentative writing and narrative writing. In China, the English subject of the college entrance examination includes an essay topic, and candidates need to complete it within a limited time, which puts forward high requirements for students' writing ability.

From these perspectives, it can be seen that both China and the United States attach importance to the learning of writing and improve students' writing ability through various educational systems, examinations, competitions and digital resources. Although the specific practices of the two countries may be different, the emphasis on cultivating good writing skills is the same.

In conclusion, whether in China or the United States, learning English writing emphasizes mastering grammar rules and the use of vocabulary. Students need to understand various sentence structures and use words correctly to improve the fluency and accuracy of writing. Second, before writing, students usually need to read relevant literature and materials to get inspiration and materials from them. This process helps students expand their thinking and improve the depth and breadth of their thesis. Finally, whether in the academic community of China or the United States, the importance of academic writing is widely recognized. Students are encouraged to follow the format of academic papers, make rigorous arguments, and quote relevant research results in writing to enhance the credibility and persuasiveness of the papers.

## 2. Similarity in English Writing Teaching between China and the United States

On the other hand, there are three kinds of similarities between Chinese and American learning writing.

### 2.1 Similarity one: The similarity of grammar and vocabulary

First, there is the emphasis on grammar and vocabulary. Both Chinese and American students emphasize basic grammar and vocabulary when learning English writing. Whether in China or US, students from both countries use a lot of verbs and nouns in their writing. There are differences in the use of metaphorical words by Chinese and American students in specific situations, but this difference reflects more the differences in cultural backgrounds than the limitations of the language itself. Therefore, in some cases, Chinese and American students can flexibly use metaphorical words to enhance the expressiveness of the article. From a macro perspective, the sentence structure written in China and the United States is similar, and both use compound sentence patterns. This shows that they have a common grammatical framework in sentence structure.

There are a lot of methods of learning grammar. For example, the language sense enhancement. It can be divided into various parts. First of all, some listening exercises, which means students may be asked to practice hierarchical listening: Starting from slow listening, gradually increase the speed to adapt to different speeds of speech. Next, listening by diversified materials: Choose different types of listening materials such as news, skits, interviews, etc. to increase the breadth and depth of listening. Moreover, they may use English dictionaries to cultivate English thinking and vocabulary. The second way to enhance the English sense is extensive reading method—read English materials widely, increase background knowledge, and help understand the culture and context in listening materials—and intensive reading method—focus on analyzing long and difficult sentences and key paragraphs, understand the author's logic and intention, and improve logical thinking ability. These two kinds of means are quite close to writing, especially the last one.

Intensive reading has significant advantages in learning writing, which is mainly reflected in the following aspects: Intensive reading can help students deeply understand the structure and content of the article. Through careful reading and analysis, students can master the layout of the article, the method of using words to make

sentences, and the use of rhetorical techniques. This in-depth understanding helps students to better organize language and express their ideas when writing. In addition, intensive reading helps to improve students' language perception. In the process of intensive reading, students need to concentrate on analyzing the beautiful sentences and rhetorical techniques in the grass, which can not only improve their interest in reading, but also cultivate their sensitivity and appreciation of language. This kind of language perception is very important for writing, because good language expression requires a deep understanding and application of language. Moreover, intensive reading can also improve students' writing skills. By reciting and imitating passages in classic works, students can learn the writing methods and skills of masters. This kind of imitation and practice can help students gradually form their own writing style and improve their writing level. It can also cultivate students' critical thinking ability. In the process of intensive reading, students need to think deeply and analyze the content of the article, which helps them to form independent insights and critical thinking. This kind of thinking ability is very important for writing, because excellent writing often requires the author to have profound, thinking and unique insights. To conclude, the intensive reading method provides students with comprehensive writing training by deeply understanding the content of the article, improving their language perception ability, improving their writing skills and cultivating critical thinking ability, thus significantly improving their writing level.

## **2.2 Similarity two: Read the article before writing**

Reading is the foundation for improving writing ability. Due to the lack of professional English teachers to provide professional reading and writing guidance, many students' English reading and writing skills have become a weak link, and they cannot fully apply the English knowledge they have learned to daily reading and writing. Many teachers only care about the interpretation of words and phrases in the teaching process, and ignore the arrangement of textbooks in writing tasks, resulting in students rarely receiving classroom writing guidance from teachers and not effectively mastering writing skills, let alone developing good writing habits [1]. Therefore, choosing some classic literary works or high-quality articles to read, paying attention to their structure, language use and logical thinking. The school will also let students refer to some professional writing tutorials and guidance books to learn specific writing skills and methods. Moreover, the TOEFL, the world's recognized test of English proficiency,

has two sections in the writing test. One of the parts is to read a short article first and then analyze it. The part of this is to get students to simulate what it's like to look at article before writing a paper in a college class. Additionally, the research results show that by incorporating reading into writing tasks, the writing skills of participants have been significantly improved [2].

## **2.3 Similarity three: Academic importance**

Both China and the United States emphasize the normative and logical nature of academic writing. By adopting strategies such as integrated textbooks and courses, writing exercises, accurate feedback, personalized guidance and diversified reading, students can gradually improve their English writing ability [3]. This includes the reasonable arrangement of the structure of the article, the clear expression of the arguments and the effective supports of evidence. These elements are the key factors or ensure the quality of learning writing. Although cultural differences affect rhetorical means and ways of thinking, China and the United States are trying to improve students' rhetorical ability and critical thinking skill.

## **3. Differences in English Writing Teaching between China and the United States**

After analyzing the same thing in English Writing Teaching between China and the United States, at this time the paper will introduce the differences between two countries' English writing teaching ways.

### **3.1 Difference One: The different limitation in the number of words**

In Chinese campus, no matter in writing normal assignments or formal exams, students are always required to write an essays with only 200-300 words. But in USA, when their students in senior high school, they need to write nearly 1000 words, and in university period, the most ordinary homework need more than 1500 words. Just as Chinese CET-6 examinations (CET-6: College English Test- 6), when it comes to the writing parts, it is necessary to write an essay for over 200 words, and writing for 300 to 400 words is enough. CET-6 is a very authoritative exam, and nearly all Chinese students will take part in this exam, and the scores of this exam can be the very important evidence of one student's English skill. But for USA students, when they are in senior high school, they definitely are ordered to write more than 3000 words for dissertation. And in CA test in USA, students are used to

write for nearly 600 words in this writing part. These two different standard examinations from China and USA can reveal that in these two countries has different standards for students' writing skill, and it is possible to explore the reasons from two aspects. Firstly, there is the difference between the goal that two countries' teachers want to let their students to achieve: for Chinese teachers always use writing homework or examinations to enhance students' skill of students' language application ability and expression ability related to the topic. When students in examination rooms, they have little time to read the composition requirements, and quickly write an essay even without making a draft. Particularly in Chinese campus English examinations, when an essay with too much words will lead to make bad impression on revisers and get low scores in writing. It is believed that native English raters judge the level of English writing because of their language intuition and native English. In the context of English as a foreign language in Chinese English writing education, there are few native English teachers, and most of the English compositions of Chinese college students are graded by native Chinese raters or native English raters, so there are differences in English writing marking and teaching [4]. For USA teachers, this high word requirement not only tests the students' ability to use the language, but also pays more attention to the students' research ability, critical thinking and logical reasoning ability. When it comes to students write an essay two or three times more than the required word count, USA teachers won't deduct point for this factor. American education encourages individual development and respects the uniqueness and creativity of each student. When it comes to word count, this philosophy translates into more flexible requirements, allowing students to determine the

length of the essay according to their own interests and depth of thought. The another reason I will talk from cultural background and writing habits. In China, Chinese culture values rigor and integrity, and this concept is also reflected in English writing. Students tend to elaborate on their ideas and fully demonstrate their arguments in essays to show their comprehensiveness and depth. Therefore, the word requirement is in line with the writing habits of Chinese students to some extent. And in USA, American culture emphasizes openness and freedom, and this cultural background also affects students' writing habits. American students are more inclined to express their views succinctly and clearly, and pay attention to the logic and persuasiveness of the articles. Therefore, the word count requirements are more flexible and open.

### 3.2 Difference Two: Different writing teaching in essay structure

Now this part will use an analysis to tell the differences between Chinese and USA English writing teaching structures including differences in topic sentences, cohesion and coherence in discourses.

#### (A) Topic sentences

When it comes to an essay, one of the most important element is topic sentences. In these sentences it is possible to find one essay's or paragraph's main idea in a short time and words. This is also an essential aspect to show one essay's logic and rigorism. In consequence, it is necessary to explore the different usages and positions of topic sentences in essay is an important way to dig out the main different in two countries English writing teaching ways as Table 1 shows.

**Table 1. Topic sentence in different locations between two countries**

Topic sentence	Beginning	Middle	Ending
Chinese	N/A	11%	89%
English	99%	1%	N/A

According to this chart, it is easily found that Chinese teachers always lead students to write topic sentences in ending; at the same time USA teachers always let their students to write topic sentences at the beginning [5]. When it comes to the reason of this phenomenon, the most influence factor is the different talking thoughts between two countries. In contrast, American college students express their ideas more directly, while Chinese college students are more indirect and tend to express their views in a roundabout way, with the euphemistic characteristics

of Eastern languages [6]. At the same time, the characteristics of Chinese students in English writing are highly related to traditional cultural thinking habits. First of all, the traditional Chinese Confucianism, Taoism and Buddhism pay attention to "understanding" and "meaning between the words", the language has a certain fuzziness, readers need to understand the article through their own thinking [7]. American people focus on clear determination of topic sentences, in this way topic sentences are usually put in the beginning part of essays, and this is influenced by

American traditional cultural thinking mode of self-centered. Because of the influence of Chinese integrative thinking and since ancient times, China has regarded euphemism as beauty, central ideas and topic sentences are often in the middle or ending parts of writings to achieve the function of euphemistic expression.

(B) Discourse Cohesion and Coherence:

Discourse Cohesion and Coherence are also integral elements in a sentence and in an essay. When Chinese teachers teach their students, the most important thing they teach will use structure or the relationship between contextual paragraphs to show the dialectical thinking and the logic of one essay. In this way, these two elements to a certain extent take the place of the conjunctions. But in

American, teachers are used to teaching students to writing with clearly conjunctions, for instance the transitional words and conjunctions to show the logic and the relationship between every paragraph.

### 3.3 Difference Three: The stylistic of the essay

Because of the different teaching environment between China and USA, the English writing teaching in the United States is mainly the first language (L1) writing teaching, as well the English as a second language (ESL) paper is less than China, at the same time China is the largest and the most famous English foreign language (EFL) teaching country.

**Table 2. Various genres of writing**

Country	Interdisciplinary	Official Document	Expository Writing	Argumentation	Academic papers	Creative Writing	Practical Writing	Technical Writing	Descriptive Writing
USA (L1)	54(26.7%)	2(1%)	2(1%)	5(2.5%)	15(7.4%)	37 (18.3%)	4(2%)	56 (27.7%)	3(1.5%)
USA(ESL)	0	0	0	0	2(20%)	0		2(20%)	0
China(EFL)	3(1%)	0	2(0.6%)	7(2.3%)	3(1%)	-(0.3%)	11 (3.6%)	33 (10.7%)	3(1%)

According to Table 2, it is found that the various genres of writing in these two countries. Through the analysis of writing teaching research papers published in academic journals in China and the United States from 2000 to 2012, American L1 has 631, ESL has 48, and Chinese EFL has a total of 2159 [8]. Both China and the United States pay attention to the teaching of scientific essay writing and some normal categories, such as essay writing, descriptive writing, and practical writing. But the difference is that China is lack in the teaching students to write creative writing and cross-curricular writing (There are 54 in the US, but only 3 in China).

## 4. Conclusion and enlightenment

### 4.1 The conclusion from the difference between two countries

According what have mentioned above, it is found that the English teaching between China and USA has three main differences from words limitation, the essay structure and the type of essays which students are lead to write. English as American mother language, in consequence they prefer to study in teaching content, teaching methods and special attention, and Chinese prefer to pay attention to teaching methods, composition assessment and general

review. In addition, the combination of foreign language and mother tongue teaching experience and error analysis in China is worthy of reference for ESL teachers in the United States, and the American L1 cooperative and collaborative learning model and interdisciplinary writing teaching method are also conducive to the forward development of EFL teaching in China.

### 4.2 The enlightenment of American English writing teaching to China in English writing teaching

First of all, it is necessary to mention the Ministry of Education has a large proportion of exam-oriented English writing teaching in China, which lead to when Chinese teachers teaching English they always give essay questions that are similar in style and content. It is found that there are many defects in the English compositions written by Chinese college students, such as incomprehensiveness, confusion of sentence structure and irrelevancy. Apparently, the most common and typical problems of Chinese students are the lack of concise sentences and improper use of words [9]. In this way Chinese students always have narrow mental space and less critical and creative thinking about problems. Corresponding to this situation, the number of interdisciplinary essays written by contemporary Chinese college students is relatively

small, and they lack the relative ability for some scientific and technological innovation articles that require critical and innovative thinking. Under this circumstance, Chinese English writing ways should more bolster students' ability to critical thinking and make innovation by English writing. Traditional English writing training emphasizes the result of writing but not the process of writing. However, many linguists believe that writing is a process of transition from human thinking to language, which indicates that students' writing should not only express their views, but more importantly, whether they adopt appropriate style, language and style when expressing their views [10]. Using multiple teaching ways such as group cooperation and presentations to develop students' interest in making respective writing skills. Furthermore, Chinese English teachers should try them best to change the traditional English writing teaching only emphasizes the cultivation of grammar knowledge and skills. In the compulsory studying period, Chinese students always demand to write essays in easy practical writing, so that people have not enough time and space to broaden our thinking ways and aspects. Inspired by American English writing teaching ways, Chinese English writing teaching ways should guide students to transform from knowledge absorption type to knowledge learning output type, in order to let students think out of Chinese to write English essays and writing in English can also promote students to improve their communication skills. Writing and speaking are inseparably, just like people want to write something and talking something, the thinking sequence is the same. So if developing the writing skills to output the knowledge what have learned, it is possible to promote the speaking skills. American English teachers always let students make group discussion to change ideas of the given topic, which also bolster students to get more inspiration and use the knowledge they have learned, and this tactic make students get rid of only listening to teachers imparting knowledge and skills to them.

In a nutshell, two countries' English writing skills have its advantages and weak link, and when integrating the teaching methods of the two countries and learning from each other, it will bring greater progress to the English writing teaching in their respective countries.

#### Authors Contribution

All the authors contributed equally and their names were listed in alphabetical order.

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