

Exploration of the Optimization of “Promoting Writing by Evaluation” Teaching Model in Business English Writing Based on PiGaiWang

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Abstract. The research on “promoting writing through evaluation” in business English writing based on PiGaiWang mainly aims to deeply explore how to make full use of this technological tool, PiGaiWang, to promote innovation and improvement in business English writing teaching. The primary objective is to foster students’ business English writing competencies and to enable them to acquire self-assessment and peer-assessment skills within the domain of business English writing. This is achieved by combining the comprehensive writing feedback from the automated reviews on PiGaiWang with the specialized insights provided by teachers in the field of business English, so that students can understand and apply the core contents and elements of business English writing more effectively.

Keywords: promoting writing by evaluation, business English writing, PiGaiWang

1. Introduction

The significance of business English writing must not be underestimated; it holds a vital position in business communication. It serves as the basis for effective communication [1] and demands that the writer possess excellent logical thinking abilities, knowledge of language style and grammatical skills [2], as well as a grasp of the key points of various business English genres. Additionally, as globalization progresses and technology advances, business English writing has become a cornerstone of global business communication. [3] Therefore, it is imperative for individuals and organizations to focus on and consistently refine their proficiency in business English writing. However, traditional approaches to teaching business English writing face several challenges, which need to be tackled. The traditional approach of demonstrating and reviewing model texts can offer students some writing techniques and examples, yet it lacks targeted guidance for individual differences among students. Simultaneously, students frequently commit grammatical mistakes and have a monotonous sentence structure during the writing process. When dealing with different types of business English application texts, students make grammatical errors such as an unclear structure and incorrect expressions of business English vocabulary. Therefore, how to optimize the business English writing teaching model, improve students’ writing quality, and enhance students’ command of business English writing ability is the current problem that requires attention. Consequently, how to refine the business English writing teaching model, elevate the quality of students’ compositions, and bolster their proficiency in business English writing skills demands our immediate consideration.

2. The Current Status and Issues of Business English Writing Instruction

Business English writing serves as an essential instrument of communication in international economic and trade cooperation. As globalization continues to expand, its significance in facilitating international trade and investment has grown more pronounced. Historically, the proficiency and conventions of business English writing have been shaped and honed over an extended period. Early research emphasized key elements such as planning, outlining, considering the reader, using short sentences and simple vocabulary, and critically evaluating one’s own writing.[4] Over time, researchers have further explored the following characteristics of business English writing: as a functional variety of language, its expression is objective, accurate, and plain, with vocabulary having industry-specific meanings; it adheres to pragmatic principles such as cooperation, politeness, relevance, and economy, guiding effective information transmission; stylistic features include precise and professional word

usage, semantic standardization, and rigorous writing; syntactically, the structure is rigorous and complex, constructing formal professional documents; it reflects the needs of cross-cultural communication, requiring mastery of language characteristics and adaptation to different cultural backgrounds; it emphasizes practicality, practicability, and purposefulness, improving application ability through practice. [5, 6] These attributes collectively define the distinctive style of business English writing, which is vital for learners of business English to acquire and understand.

Despite the indispensable role of business English writing in the business world, it is not difficult to identify some significant issues in the actual teaching process, which might affect students' mastery and application of business English writing skills.

First of all, the teaching mode is outdated. In the traditional teaching of business English writing, teachers often adopt a lecture-based teaching method, cramming knowledge into students' minds. They first explain the writing theories and techniques, and then ask students to imitate writing. This mode lacks interactivity and practicality. It often focuses on imparting theoretical knowledge while neglecting the cultivation of practical skills, making it difficult to stimulate students' learning interest and initiative in learning. With the trend of economic globalization and changes in market demands, the traditional teaching mode of business English can no longer meet the needs of modern society for business English talents. [7]

Secondly, the feedback is untimely and non-specific. From the perspective of teaching methods, traditional business English writing instruction tends to focus on imparting theoretical knowledge while overlooking immediate feedback and specific guidance in practice. This teaching model may lead to students being unable to get timely and effective solutions when encountering problems in practical situations. [8] Additionally, as most teachers are responsible for more than a hundred students, after students completing writing tasks, their teachers need to spend a considerable amount of time correcting and grading assignments, resulting in a lengthy feedback cycle. Students may have to wait at least one week to get their feedback and cannot receive timely guidance and suggestions from teachers, making it challenging to correct their writing errors in a short period. Moreover, the feedback is often too general, preventing students from accurately understanding where their problems lie.

Thirdly, the evaluation is not comprehensive enough. The current evaluation system for business English writing mostly follows the language testing model of College English. When teachers assess students' writing, they mainly evaluate from the perspectives of vocabulary, syntax, and text. This assessment method only tests one of the students' comprehensive abilities—linguistic competence, overly focusing on grammatical and vocabulary errors, while the evaluation of the content, structure, logic, and other aspects of the article is not in-depth and comprehensive enough. It neglects the practicality of the content, logical coherence, and the integration of business culture in the content, as well as overlooking other aspects such as application ability and professional literacy. [9] Although language use (such as error rate, lexical complexity, etc.) is part of the assessment, these factors are not sufficient to fully reflect students' business writing abilities. For example, while lexical complexity is positively correlated with teacher ratings, error rate is a negative predictor. [10] This indicates that the existing assessment system has limitations in content. The evaluation system is often too singular and lacks multi-dimensional evaluation criteria, failing to fully cover the various skills and knowledge required for business English writing, which is not conducive to comprehensively assessing students' learning outcomes.

3. The Advantages of Applying PiGaiWang in Business English Writing Teaching

PiGaiWang is an online platform specifically designed for writing correction and review, where teachers and students can upload essays, provide correction guidance, and engage in review exchanges. The powerful PiGaiWang platform offers more possibilities and convenience for teaching business English writing.

3.1. Quick Automatic Scoring and Feedback

PiGaiWang, as an Automated Writing Evaluation System widely used in many fields, has powerful and practical functions. PiGaiWang covers many crucial inspection dimensions, including spelling problems, complex collocations, punctuation usage, error-prone article usage, and word selection, etc. [11] The application of the PiGai system can significantly reduce the workload of teachers, liberating them from the arduous task of composition marking. Thus, teachers have more time and energy to provide individual guidance to students, understand the learning situation and needs of each student, and thereby provide more targeted and personalized educational services. [12]

3.2. Rich Corpus and Model Essays

PiGaiWang utilizes online resources, such as free web indexes and corpora, to offer students an extensive collection of examples and reference materials specifically for business English writing. [13] This wealth of resources serves as an invaluable aid for students seeking to master the nuances of this specialized field. By having access to numerous model essays, students can observe the proper structure, language usage, and formatting required for successful business communication.

3.3. Interactive Communication Platform

PiGaiWang supports dynamic communication and lively discussion among students and between teachers and students. This platform creates an environment where ideas can be shared, and questions can be raised. Whether its students collaborating on a writing project or seeking clarification from teachers, the interactive nature of this feature enhances the learning experience.

4. Optimization Strategies of “Promoting Writing by Evaluation” Teaching Model in Business English Writing Based on PiGaiWang

4.1. Implementation Steps of “Promoting Writing by Evaluation” Teaching Model

Firstly, students submit their compositions to the PiGaiWang platform for collection. Automated Writing Evaluation program (AWE) has gained increasing ground in ESL/EFL writing instruction and has been seen as one of the most promising tools in English teaching and learning. [14] Students will submit their writing assignments on the PiGaiWang platform, and the real-time feedback system will automatically generate revision suggestions. These suggestions cover aspects such as grammar, spelling, word choice, and sentence structure. Students can make revisions on their own based on the modification opinions generated by the system to enhance their awareness of grammar, word usage, and sentence structure. This process not only helps students correct specific language errors but also encourages them to think deeply about how to express their views more precisely. At the same time, teachers can also promptly view the problems that students encounter in writing, summarize and identify common issues among students, and emphasize these aspects in class, thereby improving the overall writing skills. However, it should be noted that students may feel anxious when using AWE because they are aware of their weaknesses. [15] Therefore, how to effectively utilize AWE and combine it with traditional teacher assessment is the key. [16]

Then, teachers will provide professional feedback specific to business English writing to make up for the inefficient words and phrases in the field of business and trade in the PiGaiWang corpus. Although PiGaiWang performs well in grammar error correction, there are still shortcomings in the professional assessment of business English. Business English often involves a large number of industry-specific terms and commonly used phrases, which are often not covered by regular grammar-checking systems. At this time, the feedback from teachers becomes particularly important. They can provide detailed guidance on business expressions, industry terms, and the structure of different types of practical writing. Although PiGaiWang can identify certain grammatical issues, its understanding of the context of business English writing is relatively limited, especially when dealing with professional documents such as business contracts and industry reports. Therefore, the role of teachers is not only to point out problems but also to explain where the problems lie and provide practical demonstrations and suggestions. Teachers can focus on the “5W” (five elements)- why, what, where, who, when, the “3 Functions”-informational or informative function, transactional function, persuasive function and the “7C” (seven principles), namely Clearness, Conciseness, Correctness, Concreteness, Consideration, Courtesy, and Completeness, to help students understand how to construct clear and logical business documents and how to express their ideas using professional expressions in business English.

Group observation and peer review is a key element that encourages cooperative learning and interaction. [17] Based on the feedback provided by both PiGaiWang and teachers, students make revisions on their own first. Then, students will be divided into groups to observe the received feedback from each other, reflect on whether they have these problems, and evaluate whether the revised writings of each other have been modified according to the feedback and whether they meet the requirements of business English writing. By observing the writings of other group members, students can also obtain new ideas and inspiration. At the same time, through peer evaluation, students will be encouraged to critically analyze and evaluate the works of their classmates, cultivate their assessment ability, help them better understand the strengths and areas for improvement in writing, and ultimately gain an in-depth understanding of the elements of business English writing and apply them flexibly.

After class, teachers would provide students with after-class self-study materials, including examples of business English writing, case analyses, and relevant reading materials, and encourage them to conduct in-depth research and practice writing outside of the classroom. Students can find demonstrations of different types of business English documents in these materials to understand professional writing styles and standards. Case analyses will enable them to study the writing skills in actual business scenarios. In addition, relevant reading materials will expand their knowledge and vocabulary and provide support for higher-level writing.

4.2. Evaluation Methods of “Promoting Writing by Evaluation” Teaching Model

The implementation and efficacy of the blended assessment model within the context of college-level business English writing instruction can be examined through various lenses. To begin with, this model integrates digital and traditional educational tools and techniques, with the goal of bolstering students’ proficiency in English writing.

According to research conducted in 2018, this teaching model has significantly improved students’ English writing abilities in terms of content relevance, content sufficiency, structure, and language expression. [18] Here, we use the blended assessment model as follows and mainly teacher-student collaborative assessment (TSCA).

Assignment Evaluation: For the business English writing assignments submitted by students, quantitative and qualitative evaluation methods can be adopted. Quantitative evaluation can include scores in aspects such as grammar, spelling, word choice, as well as ratings for document structure and logic. Qualitative evaluation can cover aspects such as the clarity, expression ability, and professionalism of the writing. These evaluations can be conducted on the PiGaiWang platform or combined with professional feedback from teachers.

Professional Evaluation: The professional feedback provided by teachers can be considered through qualitative evaluation. Teachers can evaluate students' writing based on the standards of business English writing, such as "5W", "3 Functions", and "7C". These evaluations include written or verbal feedback, pointing out the students' strengths and areas for improvement.

Group Observation and Peer Evaluation: Mutual observation and peer evaluation among students are also part of the evaluation methods. Students can evaluate their classmates' works, provide feedback, assess whether each other's revisions comply with the feedback suggestions, and whether they meet the standards of business English writing. This can be accomplished through group internal discussions, score sheets, or other collaborative evaluation tools.

After-Class Self-study Evaluation: Evaluating students' after-class self-learning can include the additional works they submit, such as case analyses, reading notes, or practice writings. These materials can be evaluated to determine students' understanding and application of business English writing.

Overall Assessment: Finally, a summative evaluation can be conducted for the entire teaching experiment, including students' overall progress in business English writing, their involvement in self-learning, and the influence of teachers' feedback and guidance on students. This kind of evaluation can be conducted through questionnaires, student feedback, or other methods.

The above blended assessment methods can comprehensively assess students' performances in all aspects in the business English writing experiment, including language skills, professional knowledge, cooperation ability, and self-learning ability. Such multi-dimensional evaluation helps to understand the effect of the teaching experiment more comprehensively and provide useful feedback for further teaching.

5. Practical Case of the "Promoting Writing by Evaluation" Teaching Model for Business English Writing Based on PiGaiWang

5.1. Settings and participants

The participants in this study will be undergraduate business English major students at selected higher education institutions in China. The participants are three classes of sophomore students whose native language is Chinese and who are studying English as a foreign language. There will be around 40 students in one class. The three classes are all experimental groups. The action research was conducted for the whole semester. There was one writing assignment every four weeks. This semester, they have been switched to study under the optimized "Promoting Writing by Evaluation" teaching model. After the end of this semester, a comparison was made between the students' business English writing skills of this semester and those of the last semester.

Throughout the course, students are expected to periodically upload their business English writing tasks to the PiGaiWang platform in alignment with the academic timetable. The platform is designed to autonomously produce revision recommendations that address various facets of writing, including grammar, spelling, lexical selection, and the construction of sentences. Students first make their own revisions based on the system's suggestions, and then submit them to the teacher. The teacher uses the PiGaiWang platform to review the students' assignments, providing professional feedback with particular attention to the professional requirements of business English, business terminology, industry jargon, and document structure. At the same time, students are divided into groups to engage in observational learning and peer review to promote cooperation and collaborative learning. After class, students receive self-study materials related to the course, including examples of business English writing, case analyses, and relevant reading materials, ultimately mastering the ability to write a certain type of business English.

5.2. Effectiveness of the Teaching Model

Firstly, it has enhanced the quality of business English writing: The use of PiGaiWang has significantly improved the efficiency of students' vocabulary acquisition and the writing strategies. The platform's automatic evaluation system provides immediate feedback on vocabulary and grammar, helping students to identify and correct their mistakes, thus enriching the diversity and complexity of their vocabulary in writing. Analysis of the data collected by PiGaiWang reveals that the accuracy of vocabulary and grammar in students' compositions, as well as the use of complex sentences, has increased compared to the previous semester. Peer feedback mechanisms have also been effective in reducing students' anxiety about business English writing and in enhancing their writing capabilities. This not only fosters communication among students but also allows them to learn and improve from the evaluations provided by their peers, thereby refining their writing skills.

Secondly, the "Promoting Writing by Evaluation" teaching model, facilitated by PiGaiWang, offers personalized and targeted guidance. Teachers utilize the platform to provide precise and timely feedback on students' assignments, tailored to each student's writing characteristics and needs. Survey data from online questionnaires conducted in class indicate that 90% of

students affirm that they receive prompt and professional feedback from their teachers after each submission of their business English writing tasks. This feedback includes guidance on the correct use of business English terminology and advice on adjusting the structure and expression of their writing to suit different types of business English writings. Consequently, in the final examination of this semester, the students' average score in business English letter writing has surpassed that of the previous semester.

Lastly, the "Promoting Writing by Evaluation" teaching model, supported by PiGaiWang, offers interactivity and practicality that stimulate students' interest and motivation. Students can share their compositions and correction results with others, learning from and drawing inspiration from the work of their peers, which enhances their autonomy and the effectiveness of their learning. Moreover, the platform's online correction and feedback mechanisms provide timely encouragement for students to improve their writing by addressing errors and shortcomings in the writing process.

6. Conclusion

In the domain of business English writing instruction, the "Promoting Writing by Evaluation" approach effectively boosts students' writing competencies and techniques. Armed with insights and guidance from both instructors and fellow students, learners are positioned to recognize their shortcomings and implement targeted improvements, thereby enriching the caliber of their compositions. Teachers can also offer more personalized guidance, helping students to gain a clearer understanding of the skills required for writing business English essays. Also, it provides an efficient communication platform for both teachers and students. Teachers can offer timely feedback and guidance to students through PiGaiWang, while students can also engage in peer evaluation and learning on this platform, creating a positive academic atmosphere. The "Promoting Writing by Evaluation" model in business English writing is an ongoing process of exploration and improvement. It requires the concerted efforts and active participation of both teachers and students. Through continuous practice and exploration, this teaching model will increasingly demonstrate its value and play a more significant role in the instruction of business English writing.

Fund Project

This study was supported by Research on "Promoting Writing by Evaluation" in Business English Writing Based on PiGaiWang (2023ZH01WY)

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