

# 浙江师范大学 2007 年硕士研究生入学考试试题

科目代码: 451      科目名称: 英语写作

## 提示

- 1、本科目适用专业: 050201 英语语言文学、050211 外国语言学及应用语言学;
- 2、请将所有答案写于答题纸上, 写在试题上的不给分;
- 3、请填写准考证号后 6 位: \_\_\_\_\_。

## I. Summary writing (40%).

Read the following passage and complete these two tasks:

- (1) Supply a title for the passage (5%);
- (2) Write a summary of the passage in around 100 words (35%).

The practice of teaching foreign languages, especially English, in the primary school is not a new phenomenon. ... The question now is whether materials development has kept up with the changes in the goals of language instruction. While the traditional, carefully structured materials might be appropriate in cases where the aim is to provide exposure and enrichment, they may not be the best choice where the goal is to prepare children for English-medium instruction in the general curriculum. Traditional ELT materials may fail to provide adequate support for development of L2 academic literacy. Carefully selected children's literature, however, offers an alternative, motivating medium for foreign language acquisition.

Children's literature is no stranger in North American or Australian ESL classes, where for many years literary circles and a rich variety of reading response activities have been used to foster first and second language development. I will argue here that the use of children's fiction also has a number of justifications in primary school EFL instruction, particularly in those contexts where academic language proficiency is the goal.

First, children's fiction, with its primarily narrative form, responds to the universal human need for narrative (Hardy 1978). Story, which should be central to a first language program, is therefore equally justified in an EFL program.

Bruno Bettelheim (1986: 4) recognized the significance which reading material has for the developing child, and for the way the child learns to understand the world and him/ herself. If reading material is 'so shallow' in substance that little of significance can be gained', the act of reading 'becomes devalued when what one has learned to read adds nothing of importance to one's life'. Although Bettelheim's remarks do not refer to L2

learners, one can easily draw an analogy between L1 reading material and the language used in an L2 class. One need only substitute the word 'language' for 'reading' in Bettelheim's statement to understand its significance in ELT instruction. Exton and O'Rourke (1993: 27-8) express a similar concern in an ESL context: reading and language activities generated by the typical basal reader texts fail to offer readers any satisfaction, and may actually foster a notion that 'reading and perhaps language in general involves the expenditure of effort upon texts that give back neither pleasure nor information in return'. In the ELT class, there is the added danger that the learner will see the new language in this light.

Machura (1995) presents a delightful anecdotal description of her experience with children's literature in Hungary. Her 'advanced 12 year-olds' enthusiastically worked through *The Very Hungry Caterpillar* (a picture storybook for young children, by Eric Carle). The same story kept a kindergarten EFL class of 4 year-olds in Lebanon intensely occupied for four weeks (Ghosn 1997). The appeal of this story to such a large age span demonstrates the power of a skillfully constructed narrative represented though language that is both rich and predictable in its repetitious features. The superb illustrations undoubtedly add to the appeal as they not only clarify and extend the language but provide a visually aesthetic experience as well.

Judging from scores of books and articles in professional journals, children's literature has found a permanent place in many ESL classrooms. That is easy to understand, bearing in mind that literature is not only interesting to children, but also facilitates integration of the language skills. It can also offer predictable yet natural language which promotes word recognition, as well as opportunities for authentic reading and writing tasks, and it is not grammatically sequenced. All of these features are in line with the natural language acquisition theory.

Margaret Meek (1995: 6) makes an excellent point in noting that 'Stories teach children the verb tenses of the past and the future when they are intensely preoccupied with the present'. Yet most primary-level EFL texts have overlooked this potential and keep to the simple present, which is unnatural, especially since children's lives are largely organized around the narrative. David Crystal (1987) also strongly argues against this emphasis on simple present tense --- a form of communication he sees as unnatural, except in a sports commentary. It seems to me that stories with their often familiar 'story grammars', provide an ideal context for verb tense acquisition. Literature may also help L2 learners to internalize the new language by providing access to a rich variety of linguistic items and a context for their communication efforts. Literature, therefore, seems to offer a medium that can create an acquisition-rich environment in the classroom

context.

Literature is full of examples of real-life language in different situations, as Hill (1986) has pointed out, and offers a variety of models for communication. However, traditional EFL course books have been criticized as being 'stiff imitations of the dynamic spontaneity of real life', their characters as 'nice, decent, and characterless', and the situations 'generally unreal and dull' (Crystal 1987: 15). More recently, some interesting series for EFL classes have appeared on the market, but by and large, EFL course texts tend to be highly structured, albeit communicatively oriented and colorful.

Another significant point in favor of literature, as Bassnett and Grundy (1993: 7) have pointed out, is that

Literature is a high point of language usage; arguably it marks the greatest skills a language user can demonstrate. Anyone who wants to acquire a profound knowledge of language that goes beyond the utilitarian will read literary texts in that language.

We should be careful not to retain the young EFL learners at the 'utilitarian' level of basic dialogues about mundane daily activities, or have them endlessly limited to the present tense. Yet that is still a common approach in many ELT texts, including even the newer ones. Part of the reason for this, of course, can be attributed to the constraints imposed by publishers seeking to reach the widest possible market for their materials.

It also seems to me that through the medium of literature we can provide young EFL learners with language experiences that will not only motivate and foster oral language, but also deepen their awareness of the target language in its written form. For example, the study of the writer's craft in quality stories can raise students' awareness of what language can do, and provide models for their own writing. Seven and eight-year old L2 learners can examine the effect that amusing repetitious phrases or onomatopoeia have on their reading pleasure. They can then create their own similar texts, for example, by dictating to the teacher. Ten to twelve-year olds will enjoy analyzing the vocabulary or grammar in the context of a captivating story or poem in order to make sense of the author's meaning. In contrast, traditional EFL materials offer few such opportunities, and limited models for writing.

The excitement created by a good story is also likely to generate much more 'pupil talk' than the often rather artificial language texts. This sort of enthusiastic talk will also result in more opportunities for receiving feedback and for negotiating meaning, both of which are associated with L2 learning.

## **II. Exposition writing (50%).**

Suppose you had been given a DC Canon Powershot A620 on your 10<sup>th</sup> birthday (which of course, was not possible) and you had been using it ever since then. What moments in your life would you have chosen to capture? List three of your choices and explain in about 300 words.

Amazon describes your product as such: The A620 incorporates a total of 20 shooting modes, including full Manual mode, a Custom mode for allocating preferred shooting settings, and a shutter speed priority mode, with shutter speeds ranging from 15 seconds to 1/2500 second. Eight scene modes--such as Night Snapshot, Snow, and Underwater--maximize results in a variety of shooting situations. High-quality movies are selectable from VGA (30/15 frames per second), QVGA (30/15 frames per second), Fast Frame Rate (for slow motion replays in camera), and Compact Mode (for clips that are ideal for e-mailing). ...

### **III. Argumentation writing (60%).**

English is a must for non-English majors at many of the colleges in China today. What is your opinion of this? Write an essay of about 500 words to state your view. You should supply an appropriate title and provide sufficient and well-arranged evidence to support your arguments. Marks will be awarded for content, organization, grammar and appropriateness. Failure to follow the above instructions may result in a loss of marks.