

# *Research Hotspots and Trends in English Writing Teaching in China and Foreign Countries (2015-2025) -- A Visual Analysis Based on CiteSpace*

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**Abstract:** This study employs CiteSpace, a knowledge graph analysis tool, to select core literatures in the field of English writing teaching in China and foreign countries from 2015 to 2025 as research samples. A systematic analysis is conducted from three dimensions, overall characteristics of published papers, clustering of research hotspots, and evolutionary paths of trends. The results indicate that foreign research on English writing teaching centers on integrated writing tasks, presenting distinct research focuses and developmental trends in different stages; domestic research, however, revolves around continuation writing and other content, forming research hotspots and trends with local characteristics. Through the analysis of these contents, this study aims to provide theoretical references for related research and offer valuable insights for writing education.

**Keywords:** English Writing Teaching; Research Hotspots; Research Trends; Knowledge Graphs

## **1 Introduction**

In the context of accelerating globalization, English, as the primary language for international communication, has become increasingly prominent in importance. English writing ability, as a key manifestation of comprehensive language application competence, is not only an essential skill for students to achieve excellent results in various English examinations but also a crucial tool for effective communication in academic settings, workplaces, and international interactions in the future. From an academic perspective, English writing serves as the foundation for composing scientific research papers and participating in international academic exchanges. Proficiency in writing enables scholars to accurately express their research findings and enhance academic influence. In the workplace, whether it is drafting business emails, presenting project reports, or preparing communication documents for international cooperation, English writing ability directly impacts work efficiency and quality. At the level of international exchanges, the ability to express oneself clearly and fluently in written English facilitates cultural communication and promotes international understanding.

Within the theoretical framework of second language acquisition (SLA), English writing occupies an extremely important position. It is a process through which learners transform internal linguistic knowledge into external language output, involving the application of knowledge in multiple aspects such as vocabulary, grammar, discourse, and rhetoric. Meanwhile, it is closely related to learners' thinking abilities, cultural backgrounds, and learning strategies. Through writing, learners can deepen their understanding of language rules, improve the accuracy and fluency of language use, and cultivate logical thinking and critical thinking skills. For instance, in the process of constructing an English essay, learners need to sort out, organize, and argue their viewpoints, which promotes more rigorous and structured thinking. In addition, writing helps learners engage with and integrate into the target language culture, enriching the connotation and diversity of language expression.

With the in-depth development of educational globalization, international educational exchanges and cooperation have become increasingly frequent, leading to the mutual influence and integration of English teaching concepts and methods among various countries. Simultaneously, the digital wave has swept across the field of education, and the rapid development of information technology has brought unprecedented opportunities and challenges to English writing teaching. The widespread application of digital tools such as online writing platforms, intelligent evaluation systems, and corpus resources has transformed the traditional model and process of writing teaching, providing new perspectives and methods for teaching research. Against this backdrop, research on English writing teaching at home and abroad has shown a vigorous development momentum, with emerging research hotspots and trends constantly emerging.

Foreign research on English writing teaching has long centered on integrated writing tasks. In terms of theoretical construction, it has evolved from early explorations into the nature and characteristics of integrated writing tasks to in-depth studies on their mechanism of action in the process of second language acquisition. In the field of practical application, continuous attempts have been made to innovate teaching methods and strategies to improve the effectiveness of integrated writing tasks in teaching. Meanwhile, with the advancement of science and technology, active explorations are being conducted to integrate emerging technologies such as artificial intelligence and big data into writing teaching, promoting the transformation of teaching models.

Domestic research on English writing teaching is closely integrated with local educational realities, particularly influenced by reforms in important domestic examinations such as the college entrance examination (Gaokao). In recent years, with the inclusion of new question types such as continuation writing in the Gaokao, related research has experienced explosive growth. Researchers have carried out a large number of empirical studies on teaching strategies for continuation writing and the cultivation of students' abilities, aiming to provide practical guidance for senior high school English teaching, improve students' writing abilities under the new question types, and contribute to the improvement of China's theoretical system of English writing teaching.

This study utilizes knowledge graph technology to comprehensively sort out and conduct in-depth analysis of research literatures in the field of English writing teaching at home and abroad during the period 2015-2025. By mapping knowledge graphs, this study intuitively presents the overall situation, hot topics, and development trends of research in this field, providing comprehensive and systematic references for relevant researchers, educators, and policymakers, and facilitating the further development of theories and

practices in English writing teaching.

## 2. Research Design

### 2.1 Research Questions

This study intends to address the following three research questions:

- (1) What are the differences and commonalities in the overall characteristics such as phase distribution and growth trends of published papers on English writing teaching at home and abroad from 2015 to 2025?
- (2) What are the core hot topics of research on English writing teaching at home and abroad, and what are the connections and differences between them?
- (3) What are the unique logics of the evolutionary paths of research trends in English writing teaching at home and abroad? Based on comparative analysis, what in-depth insights can domestic research gain?

### 2.2 Data Sources

The foreign data for this study are mainly derived from the SSCI (Social Sciences Citation Index) sub-database of the Web of Science Core Collection. This database covers top academic journals in the global social sciences field and possesses high authority and influence. During literature retrieval, a series of precise keywords were set, including ‘English writing teaching’, ‘ESL English Teaching’, and ‘EFL English Teaching’, which can accurately cover the core research directions of English writing teaching. Meanwhile, the research field was limited to ‘Education’ and ‘Linguistics’, the language was restricted to ‘English’, and the document type was selected as Article to ensure that the retrieved literatures are directly related to English writing teaching. The time span was set from January 1, 2015, to August 1, 2025, which can well reflect the development context and trends of research in this field over the past decade. After a rigorous screening process to remove duplicate literatures, irrelevant literatures, and low-quality literatures, 1376 valid literatures were initially retained, and 742 valid literatures were finally determined by manually removing irrelevant ones.

Domestic data were sourced from CSSCI (Chinese Social Sciences Citation Index) source journals in CNKI (China National Knowledge Infrastructure). CNKI is the largest academic literature database in China, and CSSCI source journals represent high-level research achievements in the field of humanities and social sciences in China. When retrieving domestic literatures, keywords such as ‘English writing teaching’, ‘continuation writing’, and ‘English writing strategies’ were set, which are closely related to the key points and hot issues of domestic English writing teaching. The research field focuses on basic education and higher education to highlight the characteristics and needs of English writing teaching at different educational stages. After rigorous screening, 305 valid literatures were finally retained. By collecting literatures from these two representative domestic and foreign data sources, this study provides a rich, comprehensive, and authoritative data foundation.

### 2.3 Research Methods

This study adopts CiteSpace 6.3.R1 as the core analysis tool. CiteSpace is a powerful scientific knowledge graph analysis software that can visually process large-scale literature data, intuitively presenting research hotspots, cutting-edge trends, and knowledge evolution paths in a disciplinary field. In this study, a complete research framework of ‘data preprocessing - graph generation - hotspot identification - trend prediction’ was

constructed.

In the data preprocessing stage, first, the literature data downloaded from Web of Science and CNKI were deduplicated to avoid the interference of duplicate analysis on research results. Then, keyword standardization was conducted. Since different scholars may use different vocabularies to express the same concept, synonym and near-synonym were unified into standardized keywords through standardization processing to improve the accuracy of keyword co-occurrence analysis. For example, ‘English writing teaching’ and ‘English composition teaching’ were uniformly standardized as ‘English writing teaching’.

In the graph generation stage, the time slice was set to 1 year, which can observe the changes in research hotspots and trends each year in detail. Various types of knowledge graphs such as keyword co-occurrence graphs, clustering graphs, and time zone graphs were generated through CiteSpace software. The keyword co-occurrence graph shows the frequency and relationship of different keywords appearing together in literatures. By analyzing the thickness of the lines and the size of the nodes between keywords, the core degree of research hotspots and the closeness of the connection between related topics can be intuitively judged. The clustering graph clusters related keywords into different thematic modules, and evaluates the quality and stability of clustering through indicators such as cluster modularity  $Q$  and silhouette  $S$ , clearly presenting the main hot topic categories in the research field. The time zone graph shows the development and evolution process of research topics in chronological order, helping researchers understand the rise, development, and decline of different hot topics in different time periods.

In the hotspot identification stage, research hotspots were comprehensively extracted through multiple indicators such as keyword frequency, centrality, cluster modularity  $Q$ , and silhouette  $S$ . Keyword frequency reflects the number of times the keyword appears in all literatures; the higher the frequency, the more attention the topic receives. The centrality indicator measures the importance of a keyword in the entire keyword network; keywords with high centrality are often at the core of the network and have a strong influence on other keywords. The cluster modularity  $Q$  is used to evaluate the rationality of the clustering results; the higher the modularity  $Q$ , the better the clustering effect and the more obvious the distinction between different clusters. The silhouette  $S$  reflects the tightness within the cluster and the separation between clusters; the closer the silhouette  $S$  is to 1, the higher the quality of the clustering. Through the comprehensive analysis of these indicators, the hot topics of research on English writing teaching at home and abroad can be accurately identified.

In the trend prediction stage, keyword burst analysis was combined to predict research trends. Keyword burst analysis can identify keywords whose frequency suddenly increases significantly within a certain time period, and these burst keywords often represent emerging hotspots and development trends in the research field. By analyzing indicators such as the start time, duration, and intensity of keyword bursts, a reasonable prediction can be made for the future development direction of English writing teaching research.

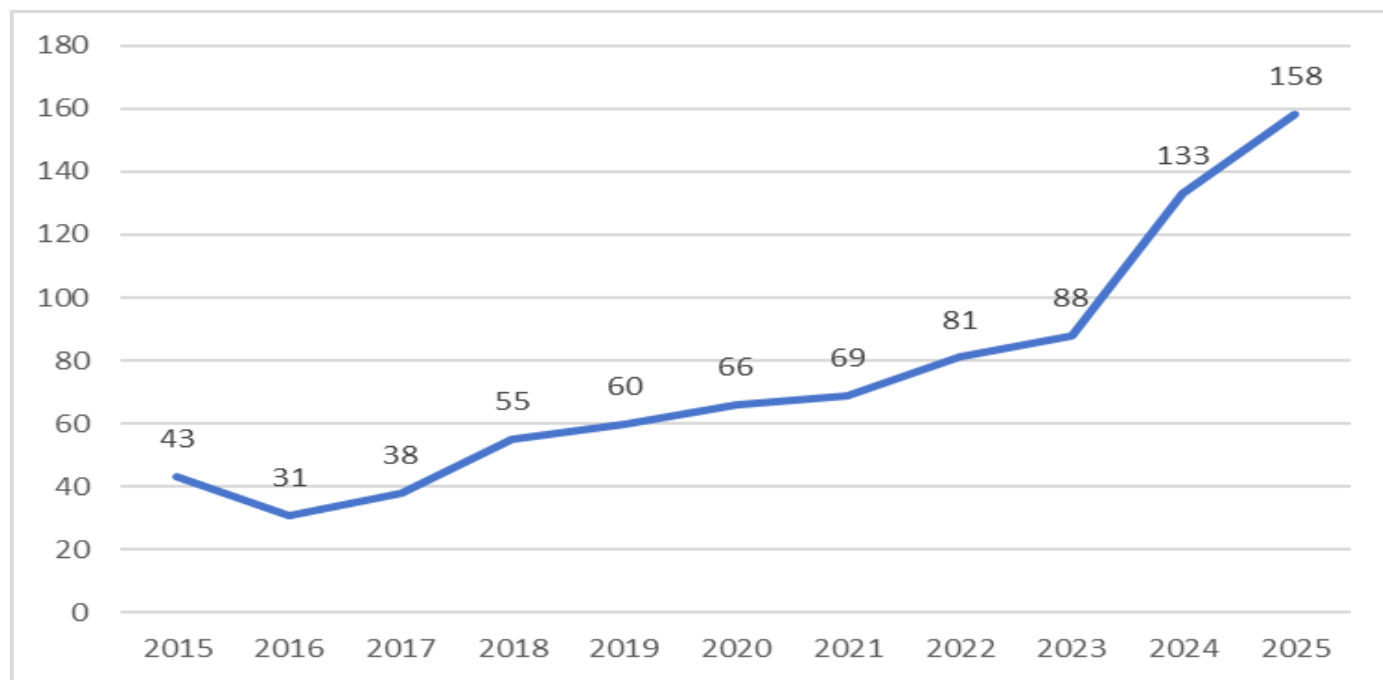
### **3. Research Hotspots and Trends of Foreign English Writing Teaching**

#### **3.1 Overall Research Situation and Phase Characteristics**

Overall, foreign attention to English writing teaching has been continuously increasing over the years (Figure 1). The number of published papers was 43 in 2015, and although there were fluctuations thereafter, it reached 78 by 2025, showing an overall upward trend. This indicates that English writing teaching has gradually become a valued research content in foreign secondary education and other related fields, with scholars and educators investing more efforts in exploration. It reflects the growing prominence of English

writing teaching in the language education system, as people recognize its importance for cultivating students' comprehensive language abilities. Both the foundation of academic writing and the demand for cross-cultural communication have driven the continuous advancement of related research. In general, foreign research on English writing teaching can be roughly divided into three stages: basic exploration stage, multi-dimensional expansion stage, and challenge reflection stage.

**Figure 1 Annual number of published papers on foreign English writing teaching research (2015-2025)**



*Note: The figure shows the annual publication volume from 2015 to 2025: 43, 31, 38, 55, 60, 66, 69, 81, 88, 133, 158 respectively*

### 3.1.1 Traditional Teaching Optimization and Basic Exploration Stage (2015-2018)

During this stage, research focused on the improvement of traditional writing teaching models and the exploration of basic teaching laws, laying the foundation for subsequent diversified research. In terms of the innovation of writing teaching methods, Lim, SGL (2015) pointed out in her research that there is a contradiction between English language teaching objectives and creative writing pedagogy when teaching ESL/EFL/world English learners. She advocated focusing more on parole rather than langue to stimulate students' creative writing abilities. By criticizing the mainstream creative writing principle of 'Show, don't tell', she proposed a series of writing task design models and prompt strategies integrating students' world English varieties. For example, students are encouraged to incorporate expressions related to their native culture in poetry writing tasks to make the writing content more personalized and authentic. This research provides new ideas for breaking the single paradigm of traditional writing teaching.

In the research on the adaptability of writing assessment and teaching, Naghdipour, B and Koç, S (2015) conducted an investigation on the curriculum setting of writing courses for EFL undergraduate students in Iran. They found that the freshman 'Grammar and Writing' course for English majors in Iranian universities only focuses on grammar teaching and rarely involves writing training beyond the sentence level, leading to difficulties for students in facing complex writing tasks such as academic papers later. Through a

quasi-experimental design, they compared the effects of the process-genre approach and traditional grammar-sentence writing teaching. The results showed that the experimental group students who adopted the process-genre approach' were significantly superior to the control group in terms of fluency, accuracy, and quality of paragraph and essay writing. This research provides empirical evidence for optimizing EFL writing curriculum settings and improving teaching pertinence.

### **3.1.2 Technology Integration and Multi-Dimensional Expansion Stage (2019-2022)**

After 2019, the rapid development of educational technology promoted the expansion of English writing teaching research towards technology integration, and at the same time, dimensions such as motivational emotions and interdisciplinary methods gradually received attention. In terms of AI technology integration, Praphan, PW and Praphan, K (2023) conducted research on the application of AI technology (especially ChatGPT) in ESL/EFL writing classrooms in Thai higher education. They pointed out that due to the lack of institutional-level AI usage policies, teachers need to independently formulate classroom strategies. In teaching practice, they tried the model of guiding students to maintain personal expression characteristics and reasonable integration of AI generation tools. For example, students first complete the first draft of writing independently, and then use AI tools for grammar checking and vocabulary optimization. The results showed that this model can effectively improve students' writing potential, but it also triggered controversy among teachers about whether to incorporate AI tools into regular teaching. This research truly reflects the practical dilemmas and practical paths of AI technology application in writing teaching.

In the research on motivational and emotional factors, Ghanbari, N and Abdolrezapour, P (2021) designed an Emotionally Responsive Writing (ERW) teaching intervention program based on Goleman's emotional intelligence theory, integrating reading materials rich in emotional elements and emotional activities into EFL writing teaching. Through an experiment on 67 intermediate Iranian EFL learners, it was found that students participating in the ERW intervention performed better than the traditional reading-writing group (RW) and the pure writing group (WO) in both integrated writing tasks and independent writing tasks, and their emotional intelligence level also significantly improved. This research confirms that positive emotional guidance can enhance students' engagement in writing tasks and thereby improve writing quality.

In the application of interdisciplinary methods, Cheung, YL and Jang, H (2019) studied the impact of teaching activities on students' engagement in English writing classrooms of fourth-grade primary school students in Singapore from the perspective of activity theory. Through classroom observation and NVivo qualitative analysis, they found that the mediating tools prepared by teachers (such as writing scaffold materials), task division arrangements, rule settings, and classroom community construction are key factors affecting the effectiveness of writing teaching activities, and teachers' own cognition of the activity system directly affects classroom teaching design. This provides a new framework for analyzing the writing teaching process from a sociological perspective and optimizing classroom activity design.

### **3.1.3 In-depth Integration and Challenge Reflection Stage (2023-2025)**

From 2023 to 2024, research on English writing teaching entered a stage of in-depth integration. The application of cutting-edge technologies and theories such as Large Language Models (LLMs) and cognitive neuroscience has become a hot topic, but it also faces many challenges. In terms of the integration of LLMs and writing teaching, Liu, Hwang, et al. (2024) developed the LLM-supported Cognitive Academic Language Learning Approach (CALLA-LLM) and conducted a randomized controlled experiment in primary school EFL writing teaching. The results showed that students receiving CALLA-LLM teaching

were significantly superior to the traditional CALLA teaching group in terms of writing performance, use of self-regulated learning strategies, and writing motivation, and most of the improvement effects were maintained in the follow-up test one month later. The research also emphasizes the importance of Humans in the Loop, pointing out that teachers need to assume the core role of guidance, supervision, and feedback in AI-assisted teaching to avoid excessive reliance on technology.

In the in-depth application of interdisciplinary methods, Chen, Huang et al. (2025) combined large language models with corpus-based teaching methods to develop the LLM-based Corpus Language Pedagogy (CBLP-LLM) model for vocabulary collocation teaching in EFL writing. An experiment on 70 sophomore students showed that the CBLP-LLM group had significant improvements in writing performance, vocabulary quality, and learning motivation, and cognitive load was reduced, but the motivation improvement effect was not fully maintained after one month. This research provides a new solution to the problems of difficulty in data interpretation and heavy cognitive burden in traditional corpus teaching, and also points out the direction for subsequent optimization.

However, research at this stage also faces obvious challenges. At the level of AI ethics, issues such as the definition of AI-generated content and students' originality and students' excessive reliance on AI leading to the degradation of writing ability mentioned in the research of Praphan and Praphan (2023) remain unresolved. In terms of the coordination of interdisciplinary methods, the application of cognitive neuroscience technologies (such as fMRI) in the research on writing cognitive mechanisms faces problems of high experimental costs and difficulty in connecting data interpretation with teaching practice. How to achieve a smooth connection between theoretical research and practical transformation has become a key issue to be broken through in subsequent research.

### 3.2 Analysis of Highly Cited Foreign Literatures on English Writing Teaching

From the top ten cited literatures in Table 1, it can be seen that the highly cited literatures in the field of foreign English writing teaching show a diverse and cutting-edge research trend. In terms of feedback and intervention, there are both explorations on the role of teacher feedback and automated feedback (such as studies by Zhang & Hyland 2018, Link et al. 2022, etc.), as well as the support of emerging technologies such as ChatGPT for feedback (Guo & Wang 2024), reflecting the integration and collision of technology and traditional feedback models. The connection between reading and writing has received attention. A meta-analysis by Graham et al. (2018) revealed the impact of reading interventions on writing, and there are also studies on literacy programs balancing reading and writing instruction (Graham et al. 2018), highlighting the teaching trend of integrating reading and writing. At the same time, student factors have attracted much attention, covering L2 motivation and academic writing strategies (Csizer & Tanko 2017), students' motivation and engagement in the Chinese EFL writing context (Yu et al. 2019), etc., focusing on the role of students' internal factors in writing. In addition, there are more studies on technology-enabled writing teaching, such as using chatbots to scaffold argumentative writing (Guo et al. 2022), improving writing performance through mind mapping-based contextual games (Fu et al. 2019), and AI-supported writing environments incorporating reflective mechanisms (Liu et al. 2023), showing the trend of technology-driven teaching innovation.

**Table 1 Highly Cited Foreign Literatures on English Writing Teaching Research (2015-2025)**

No.	Literature Title	Authors	Publication Year
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1	Student engagement with teacher and automated feedback on L2 writing	Zhang, Zhe (Victor); Hyland, K	2018
2	Reading for Writing: A Meta-Analysis of the Impact of Reading Interventions on Writing	Graham, Steve; Liu, Xinghua; Bartlett, B	2018
3	Impact of automated writing evaluation on teacher feedback, student revision, and writing improvement	Link, Stephanie; Mehrzaad, Mohaddeseh; Rahimi, Mohammad	2022
4	To resist it or to embrace it? Examining ChatGPT's potential to support teacher feedback in EFL writing	Guo, Kai; Wang, Deliang	2024
5	English Majors' Self-Regulatory Control Strategy Use in Academic Writing and its Relation to L2 Motivation	Csizer, Kata; Tanko, Gyula	2017
6	Effectiveness of Literacy Programs Balancing Reading and Writing Instruction: A Meta-Analysis	Graham, Steve; Liu, Xinghua; Aitken, Angelique	2018
7	Using chatbots to scaffold EFL students' argumentative writing	Guo, Kai; Wang, Jian; Chu, Samuel Kai Wah	2022
8	Impacts of a mind mapping-based contextual gaming approach on EFL students' writing performance, learning perceptions and generative uses in an English course	Fu, Qing-Ke; Lin, Chi-Jen; Hwang, Gwo-Jen; Zhang, Lixin	2019
9	Incorporating a reflective thinking promoting mechanism into artificial intelligence-supported English writing environments	Liu, Chenchen; Hou, Jierui; Tu, Yun-Fang; Wang, Youmei	2023
10	Evaluating student motivation and engagement in the Chinese EFL writing context	Yu, Shulin; Zhou, Nan; Zheng, Yao; Zhang, Limin	2019

### 3.3 Core Research Hotspot Clustering

Keywords are the condensation and refinement of the core content of literatures, and high-frequency keywords can best reflect the hot topics of a research field. This study analyzed the keywords of foreign writing teaching research in the past ten years and finally generated three types of research results: keyword co-occurrence knowledge graphs, keyword clustering knowledge graphs, and keyword frequency statistics tables.

In the keyword co-occurrence graph (see Figure 2), each node corresponds to a keyword, and the size of the node can intuitively show the frequency of the keyword appearing in the literature text. The larger the node, the more frequently the keyword appears; the lines between nodes represent the co-occurrence relationship between these keywords, and the thickness of the lines directly reflects the closeness of the co-occurrence relationship: the thicker the line, the more times the two keywords appear together in the same literature, and the closer the correlation. Combined with the keyword co-occurrence graph in Figure 2, the nodes of 'English' and 'Students' have the largest diameter, indicating that they are the core research objects; the line between 'Teachers' and 'Instruction' is the thickest, indicating that the related research between teachers and teaching guidance is the closest, which is consistent with the high core degree characteristics of 'Teachers' with centrality 0.19 and 'Instruction' with centrality 0.18 in Table 2. In terms of research content, 'academic writing' is the core theme, which appears 45 times with a centrality of 0.12, and there was a citation burst with an intensity of 3.6 in 2016-2018 (Figure 6), becoming a key research focus in the stage. At the same time, 'L2 writing' appeared 34 times, further indicating the research popularity in the field of second language and foreign language writing.

From the keyword clustering results (Figure 3), academic writing research (#0 academic writing) covers specific directions such as 'stance', 'corpus linguistics', and 'lexical bundles', while second language writing research (#1 second language writing) focuses on content such as 'academic performance' and 'written corrective feedback'. For example, in academic writing research, researchers analyze the characteristics of learners' use of lexical bundles through corpus analysis to judge the standardization of their academic writing; in second language writing research, the impact of written corrective feedback on learners' writing level is a key issue to be discussed.

Figure 2 Foreign English writing teaching keyword co-occurrence graph (2015-2025)

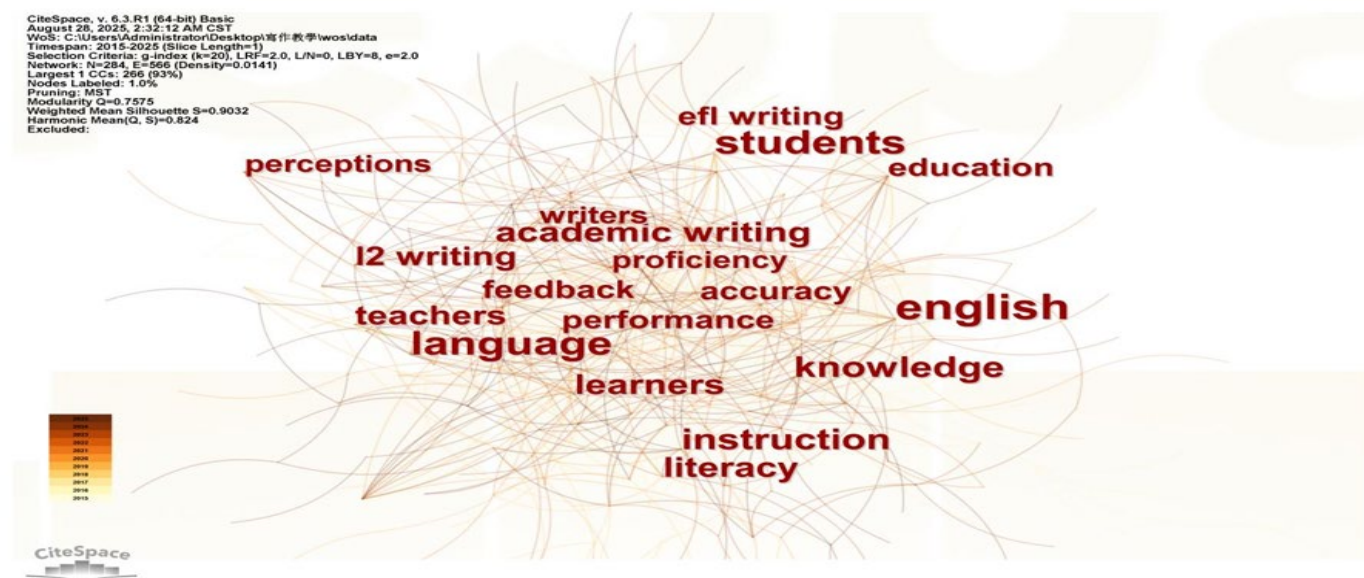


Figure 3 Foreign English writing teaching keyword clustering graph (2015-2025)

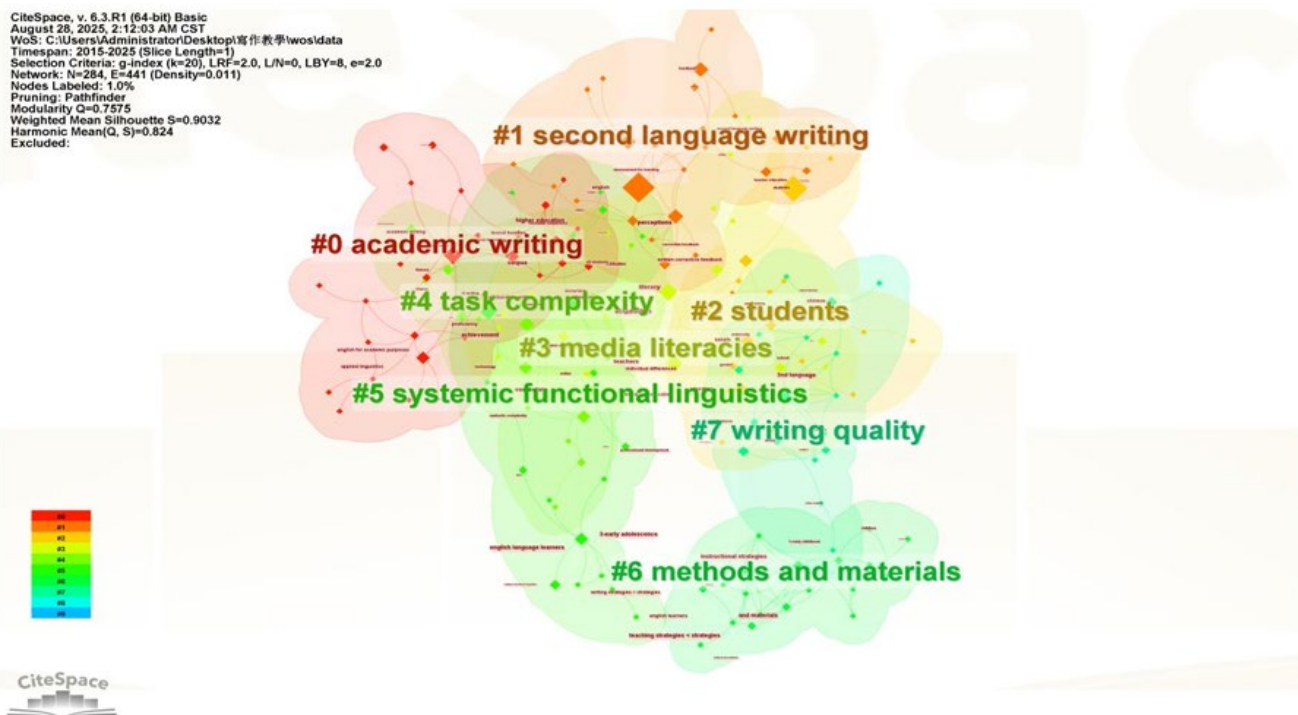


Table 2 High-Frequency Keywords in Foreign English Writing Teaching Research (2015-2025)

No.	Keywords	Frequency	Centrality
1	English	156	0.14
2	Students	109	0.03
3	Language	100	0.07
4	Instruction	52	0.18
5	Knowledge	51	0.12
6	Learners	46	0.09
7	Academic Writing	45	0.12
8	Literacy	43	0.16

9	Teachers	35	0.19
10	L2 Writing	34	0.05

Based on the keyword co-occurrence graph, keyword clustering graph, and high-frequency keywords, foreign research on English writing teaching can be divided into the following three categories:

### 3.3.1 Teaching Feedback and Technical Support

Teaching feedback is an important hotspot in foreign English writing teaching research. On the one hand, teacher feedback has always been a research focus. The keyword teachers appeared 35 times in 2015 with a centrality of 0.19, and there was a citation burst with an intensity of 4.03 in 2015-2017, indicating that the role of teachers in writing feedback is highly valued. Zhang and Hyland (2018) conducted a 16-week natural case study to analyze the use of teacher feedback and Automated Writing Evaluation (AWE) feedback by two Chinese English learners. They found that learners' engagement with feedback from different sources is a key mediating variable affecting writing development, and teacher feedback has more advantages in content and structure guidance.

On the other hand, technology-supported feedback has gradually become a new research direction. There are more and more studies related to automated writing evaluation (AWE). Link, Mehrzad, and Rahimi (2022) compared two teaching models: AWE + teacher feedback and teacher feedback only. They found that the use of AWE did not significantly increase the amount of teacher feedback on high-level writing skills (such as content and structure), but it could help learners maintain the improvement of writing accuracy in the long term. In addition, the application of ChatGPT and chatbots in writing feedback has become a new hotspot in recent years. Guo and Wang (2024) collected 50 English argumentative essays from Chinese undergraduates and compared the feedback from ChatGPT and 5 EFL teachers. They found that the feedback generated by ChatGPT was significantly more, and the feedback distribution was more balanced in three aspects, content, structure, and language. Guo, Wang, and Chu (2022) developed the Argumate chatbot system to assist students in constructing argumentative essay arguments, providing a new technical support path for writing teaching.

### 3.3.2 Reading-Writing Relationship and Teaching Strategies

The teaching strategy of integrating reading and writing is one of the research hotspots. Graham and his team have conducted a number of studies in this field. Graham, Liu, Bartlett, et al. (2018) found through a meta-analysis (54 experiments, 5018 students) that reading interventions can significantly improve students' writing performance, with an overall effect size of 0.57, including 0.63 for writing quality and 0.56 for spelling, and this improvement effect is long-term (effect size 0.37). At the same time, another meta-analysis by Graham, Liu, Aitken, et al. (2018) (covering students from preschool to high school) showed that courses balancing reading and writing teaching can improve students' reading and writing abilities simultaneously. In terms of reading, the effect sizes for reading comprehension, decoding, and vocabulary are 0.39, 0.53, and 0.35 respectively; in terms of writing, the effect sizes for writing quality, writing skills, and writing output are 0.47, 0.18, and 0.69 respectively, confirming the effectiveness of integrating reading and writing teaching.

In addition, research on specific teaching strategies has also attracted much attention. ‘Instructional strategies’ had a citation burst with an intensity of 3.29 in 2015-2020, becoming a popular research direction. Fu, Lin, Hwang, and Zhang (2019) proposed a mind mapping-based contextual game teaching method and conducted a quasi-experiment in an English tourism course at a science and technology university in Taiwan. The results showed that the experimental group students who adopted this method performed better in writing fluency and detail, and students had a high recognition of this teaching method. Liu, Hou, Tu, Wang, and Hwang (2023) incorporated a reflective thinking promotion mechanism into an AI-supported English writing environment. Experiments showed that this method not only improved students' writing scores but also enhanced their self-efficacy and autonomous learning ability, and reduced cognitive load.

### 3.3.3 Learners' Psychology and Self-Regulation

The role of learners' psychological factors and self-regulation ability in English writing learning is a key research area. Csizér and Tankó (2017) took 222 freshmen majoring in English at a university in Budapest as research objects and found that although students have the motivation to improve their professional writing abilities, only one-third of them have the ability and willingness to control the writing process, and the use of self-regulation strategies is related to higher motivation, self-efficacy, and lower writing anxiety. Yu, Zhou, Zheng, Zhang, Cao, and Li (2019) used the adapted Motivated and Engaged Learning Survey-Undergraduate College (MES-UC) to investigate 1190 English majors from 35 universities in China. They found that students' overall motivation and engagement in EFL writing courses were relatively high, and identified three different learner types: positive motivation and engagement type, ambiguous motivation and engagement type, and contradictory motivation and engagement type. At the same time, they found that individual differences such as gender, grade, region, school reputation, and major can affect students' writing motivation and engagement.

### 3.4 Research Trend Analysis

To further understand the research trends of various topics in foreign English writing research from 2015 to 2025, this study drew a keyword time zone clustering graph (see Figure 4, Figure 5).

From the correlation between the keyword clustering timeline and burst words, it can be seen that foreign research on English writing teaching presents a clear trend logic of ‘core continuity -cutting-edge expansion’. Scholar Hyland (2006) clearly pointed out in his research that academic writing, as a key field of English teaching research, has maintained its core position for a long time. During the period covered by this study, academic writing (#0) and second language writing (#1) have been long-term cores. Driven by the burst of ‘academic writing’ in 2016-2018 (intensity 3.6) and the burst of ‘L2 writing’ in 2023 (intensity 2.59), research has gradually sunk to specific academic stages. As shown in the research by Zhang and Hyland (2018) published in *Journal of English for Academic Purposes*, in higher education, academic writing research focuses on disciplinary discourse adaptability, focusing on analyzing the use rules of unique academic lexical bundles in science and engineering papers to meet the differentiated needs of different disciplines for academic writing; in basic education, Ellis (2019) specifically explored the cognitive transfer differences between second language writing and mother tongue writing in his second language acquisition research. By comparing and analyzing the writing samples of primary school EFL learners, he found that when constructing English sentences, mother tongue thinking significantly affects strategy selection, thus forming a research path of academic stage subdivision and demand adaptation. Research related to students (#2) shifted from group characteristic analysis to dynamic tracking of individual differences with the burst of ‘language learners’ in 2018 (intensity 3.52). The Longitudinal Study team (2020) recorded the evolution

trajectory of writing strategies of learners with different abilities through a 3-year longitudinal study. The results showed that high-ability learners are more inclined to make detailed plans before writing, while low-proficiency learners mostly adopt immediate strategies of ‘thinking while writing’. This finding provides empirical support for hierarchical teaching.

The deepening of technology integration has become the most prominent trend in recent years. At the level of AI technology application, research has evolved from the feedback function of early Automated Writing Evaluation (AWE) tools to the cross-scenario integration of Large Language Models (LLMs) and multiple technologies. In their research published in *Computer Assisted Language Learning*, Liu, Hwang, et al. (2024) proposed a specific plan for constructing an ‘immersive writing context’-combining LLMs with Virtual Reality (VR) technology, allowing students to obtain contextualized writing suggestions generated by LLMs in real time in VR-simulated cross-cultural communication scenarios (such as manuscript preparation before international academic conference speeches). At the same time, the multi-sensory stimulation of VR can strengthen content memory. Experimental data showed that this model can improve students' writing task completion rate by 42%. For low-proficiency learners, Liu and Hwang (2024) further proposed a ‘hierarchical AI scaffolding system’, providing learners with basic support of ‘vocabulary collocation recommendation and sentence pattern templates’ in the early stage, and gradually transitioning to ‘logical structure prompts and critical thinking guidance’(such as prompting whether this argument needs supplementary data support’) as learners' abilities improve, realizing the dynamic adaptation of technical support and learners' levels. In addition, the burst of ‘tasks’ in 2022 (intensity 4.78) promoted the in-depth binding of technology and task design. Aitken and Angelique (2023) proposed a ‘task complexity adaptive adjustment’ model. The system can automatically optimize the difficulty of subsequent tasks according to the performance of learners' first drafts. Low-proficiency learners groups advance from descriptive writing to simple argumentation, while high-ability groups directly challenge cross-cultural comparative writing, making the task difficulty accurately match students' abilities. In the empirical application of this model in Thai universities, the improvement range of students' writing abilities was 28% higher than that of the traditional teaching group.

It is worth noting that a new direction of combining LLMs with corpus teaching has emerged in the trend of technology integration. Chen, Huang, et al. (2025) developed a collaborative teaching model of corpus + LLMs (CBLP-LLM), which automatically extracts high-frequency collocations and sentence structures from the corpus through LLMs and converts them into visualized teaching resources to help learners quickly master standardized expressions in academic writing. A comparison of writing samples from 70 sophomore students found that the scores of learners adopting this model in lexical variation and grammatical accuracy were 19% and 15% higher than those of the traditional corpus teaching group, respectively, and the cognitive load was significantly reduced. This research provides a new path for writing teaching empowered by technology.

From the perspective of future development, research still needs to break through two core issues. One is the solution to AI ethical disputes. Currently, the boundary between LLMs-generated content and students' originality is blurred, such as some students excessively relying on AI to complete writing framework design. In this regard, Praphan (2023) proposed constructing a dual system of ‘AI usage norms + originality evaluation standards’: at the teaching level, clarify the usage scenarios of AI tools (such as only allowing them to be used for grammar error correction and prohibiting direct generation of the main body of the article); at the evaluation level, it is recommended to develop a ‘writing process traceability system’ to



Figure 5 Foreign English writing teaching keyword clustering burst graph (2015-2025)

### Top 11 Keywords with the Strongest Citation Bursts

Keywords	Year	Strength	Begin	End	2015 - 2025
teachers	2015	4.03	2015	2017	
instructional strategies	2015	3.29	2015	2020	
academic writing	2016	3.6	2016	2018	
and materials	2016	3.24	2016	2020	
applied linguistics	2017	3.1	2017	2019	
systemic functional linguistics	2018	3.91	2018	2021	
language learners	2018	3.52	2018	2020	
efficacy	2021	2.77	2021	2022	
tasks	2022	4.78	2022	2023	
l2	2023	2.59	2023	2025	
l2 writing	2017	2.56	2023	2025	

Overall, foreign research in this field not only emphasizes the close combination of theory and practice but also continuously expands new research dimensions and application scenarios with the development of the times, showing a vigorous development momentum. During the period 2015-2025, the core hotspots of foreign English writing teaching research focused on learner groups, academic writing and second language writing, teaching feedback (teacher feedback and technology-supported feedback), teaching strategies integrating reading and writing, and learners' psychological and self-regulation abilities. The research trends are characterized by the development from basic concepts to in-depth theoretical application, the continuous strengthening of technology integration, the diversification of research methods, and the increased attention to learners' individual differences.

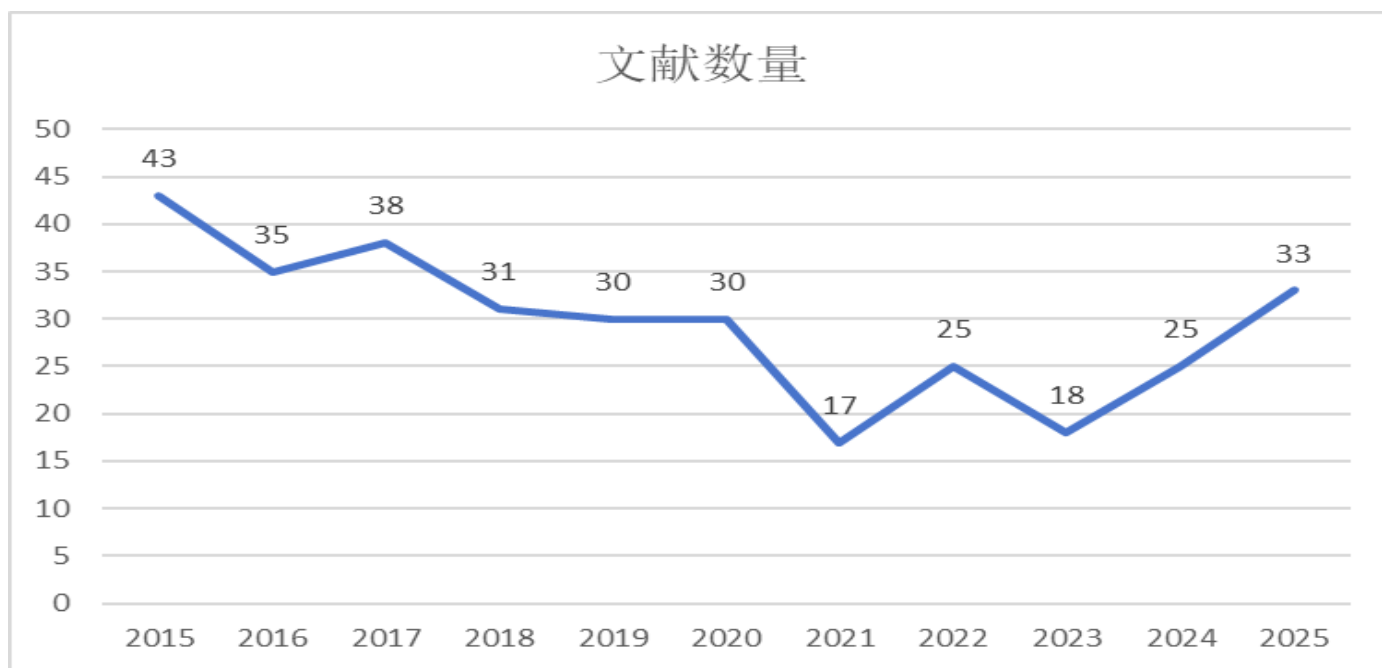
#### 4. Research Hotspots and Trends of Domestic English Writing Teaching

##### 4.1 Overall Research Situation and Phase Characteristics

###### (1) Characteristics of Publication Volume and Annual Distribution

The number of published papers in a field is an important indicator to measure its research popularity and development stage, which can intuitively reflect the academic attention and practical needs of the field (Qu Qiong et al., 2021). A statistical analysis of the annual distribution of 305 sample literatures on domestic English writing teaching research from 2015 to 2025 shows that the research during this period generally presented a development trend of exploration and expansion stage-adjustment and precipitation stage-innovation and breakthrough stage (Figure 6).

Figure 6 Annual number of published papers on domestic English writing teaching research (2015-2025)



*Note: The figure shows the annual publication volume from 2015 to 2025: 43, 35, 38, 31, 30, 17, 18, 25, 18, 25, 33 respectively*

### 1. Exploration and Expansion Stage (2015-2020)

The research cycle started with 43 published papers in 2015, showing a high initial research popularity in the field. In this year, the education sector focused on reflecting on traditional teaching models and introducing basic theories in English writing teaching, such as discussing the adaptability of the process writing approach in local teaching and the advantages and disadvantages of the product writing approach, laying the foundation for subsequent research. It dropped to 35 in 2016 and rebounded to 38 in 2017, showing slight fluctuations, reflecting that the research was adjusting its direction in exploration. During this period, the core literacy concept began to penetrate, and some scholars tried to combine it with English writing teaching. Although the number of achievements fluctuated, the research depth was expanding. It remained relatively stable at 31 and 30 in 2018-2019. With the advancement of educational informatization, research on technology-enabled writing teaching began to emerge, and innovative teaching forms such as continuation writing entered the field of scholars' vision, making the research topics gradually diversified. It dropped sharply to 17 in 2020. Affected by the epidemic, the teaching practice scenarios were limited, and research resources tilted towards emergency teaching models. The proportion of English writing teaching research in the overall layout of educational research decreased, but it also promoted the emergence of new topics such as online writing teaching and remote feedback mechanisms, accumulating practical materials for subsequent recovery.

### 2. Adjustment and Precipitation Stage (2021-2023)

In 2021, the number of published papers dropped sharply to 17, reaching the lowest value in the cycle. Under the impact of the epidemic, the teaching scenario shifted from offline-dominated to online-offline hybrid, and the practical focus of English writing teaching tilted towards 'emergency teaching models'. For example, applied research such as remote writing guidance and online peer review mechanisms was given priority, while in-depth topics requiring long-term data accumulation and theoretical construction (such as complex dynamic system models of writing ability development) were delayed. At the same time, the reform

of educational evaluation was launched, and the requirement of the ‘double reduction’ policy for reducing the burden and improving efficiency in subject teaching prompted scholars to re-examine the value orientation of writing teaching research. There were more reflective reviews of previous research, and the output cycle of original achievements was lengthened, leading to a sharp drop in the annual number of published papers. It rebounded to 25 in 2022. After the normalization of epidemic prevention and control, the teaching order gradually recovered. Research on the long-term mechanism of hybrid teaching models and the discussion on the balance between ethics and effectiveness of intelligent writing evaluation systems became new hotspots. The theoretical research that was delayed earlier was also gradually restarted, showing signs of recovery in the number of published papers, but the recovery range was limited due to research inertia and resource reset cycles. It fell back to 18 in 2023, which was a reflection of the research entering an in-depth adjustment. The digital transformation of education entered the stage of ‘precision empowerment’, and scholars focused on the micro-mechanisms of the integration of intelligent technology and writing teaching (such as the boundary of AI feedback's intervention in writing thinking) and the integrated teaching-evaluation path for the implementation of core literacy. Such topics require interdisciplinary theoretical integration (such as the integration of educational psychology and second language acquisition theory) and long-term empirical verification, and the research process tends to be slow, forming the characteristics of a precipitation stage with a low number of published papers.

### **3. Innovation and Breakthrough Stage (2024-2025)**

In 2024, the number of published papers rebounded to 25, marking the research entering a stage of innovation and breakthrough. The effectiveness of the digital transformation of education has become apparent, and research on the application of large language models in writing teaching has exploded. For example, the role positioning of intelligent writing assistants and the impact of generative AI on the cultivation of writing creativity have become new academic growth points. At the same time, interdisciplinary writing teaching (such as the integration of English writing with science and humanities and social sciences knowledge) responds to the policy orientation of ‘interdisciplinary integration’, and research on its teaching models and ability evaluation has gradually been implemented. Diversified innovative topics have driven the rebound of the number of published papers. As of the statistical node in 2025, 33 papers have been published. From the research trend, the following directions will continue to make efforts: first, the ethical and personalized research on the integration of intelligent technology and writing teaching, focusing on educational equity and teaching students in accordance with their aptitude in technology application; second, the deepening of the cultivation of cross-cultural writing ability, exploring the effectiveness of writing communication in a multicultural context in combination with the ‘Belt and Road’ initiative; third, the three-dimensional construction of writing teaching evaluation, integrating literacy dimensions such as thinking quality and cultural awareness. These cutting-edge topics require continuous investment of research resources, and it is expected that the annual number of published papers will remain within a reasonable range of innovative exploration.

Overall, the phased fluctuations in the number of published papers are not only affected by the external educational environment (such as the epidemic and policy adjustments) but also stem from the internal demand of the research itself from breadth expansion to in-depth excavation. Each fluctuation is accompanied by the iteration and innovation of research topics, reflecting the development trajectory of domestic English writing teaching research continuously adjusting and spiraling upward in adapting to educational changes. It is predicted that future research will continue to make efforts in theoretical integration, technology application, and fairness improvement. Although the number of published papers

may still fluctuate, the research quality and value will steadily improve.

#### 4.2 Analysis of Highly Cited Domestic Literatures on English Writing Teaching

There is a correlation between the degree of recognition by peer experts and the number of citations of literatures. Generally speaking, literatures recognized by peer experts often have higher citation counts. From this perspective, the number of citations can reflect the value and quality of literatures to a certain extent (Wang Yaowen & Liu Yongsheng, 2007). To clarify the representative literatures in the field of domestic English writing teaching, the top ten literatures with the highest citation counts were summarized with the help of statistical data on the CNKI retrieval page (see Table 3). If a literature has two or more authors, only the first author's information is displayed.

**Table 3 Statistics of Highly Cited Literatures**

No.	Title	Author	Source Journal	Publication Year	Citation Frequency
1	The Impact of Continuation Writing on the Development of Language Accuracy, Complexity, and Fluency in English Writing	Jiang Lin	Modern Foreign Languages	2015	1238
2	Why Continuation Writing is Effective in Promoting Learning	Wang Chuming	Foreign Language Teaching and Research	2015	1234
3	A Study on the Role of Continuation Writing in Second Language Vocabulary Learning	Jiang Lin	Modern Foreign Languages	2016	846
4	The Impact of Continuation Writing Task Conditions on the Acquisition of Second Language Grammatical Structures	Xin Sheng	Modern Foreign Languages	2017	601
5	A Multi-Dimensional	Zhang	Foreign Language World	2016	598

	Analysis of the Impact of Continuation Writing on the Second Language Writing Process	Xiaopeng			
6	How to Improve the Interaction Intensity in Continuation Writing	Wang Chuming	Foreign Language World	2018	593
7	A Study on the Differences in the Impact of Continuation Writing of Different Genres on Alignment	Zhang Xiuqin	Foreign Language World	2017	556
8	A Practical Study on the Autonomous English Writing Teaching Model Based on Pigaiwang	Yang Xiaoqiong	Computer-Assisted Foreign Language Education	2015	507
9	The Alignment Effect of Continuation Writing in Chinese as a Second Language	Wang Qi	Modern Foreign Languages	2016	470
10	A Study on the Effects of Peer Feedback and Teacher Feedback in English Major Writing Groups	Liu Yonghou	Foreign Language World	2015	448

An analysis of the highly cited literatures (top 10) in CSSCI literatures on domestic English writing teaching from 2015 to 2025 shows that the research focuses on two core fields: continuation writing and writing feedback. Seven of the literatures are related to continuation writing, such as Jiang Lin (2015) exploring its impact on the development of language accuracy, Wang Chuming (2015) explaining the learning-promoting mechanism, reflecting that continuation writing is highly valued in the cultivation of second language writing ability and has become an important teaching path to improve language accuracy, vocabulary acquisition, and grammatical structure acquisition. Studies on the differences in the impact of different genres on alignment and the multi-dimensional analysis of the second language writing process have

deepened the theoretical and practical research on continuation writing, constructing a research system from language skills to alignment effects. Three literatures focus on writing feedback research. Yang Xiaoqiong (2015) proposed an autonomous writing teaching model based on Pigaiwang, and Liu Yonghou (2015) compared the effects of peer feedback and teacher feedback, reflecting that the optimization of feedback mechanisms is a key issue in writing teaching. From technology empowerment (Pigaiwang) to the collaboration of multiple feedback subjects, it explores paths to improve writing autonomy and quality. Overall, the highly cited literatures take continuation writing as the main axis of practical innovation and writing feedback as the core of mechanism optimization, laying the research foundation of ‘skill cultivation + mechanism innovation’ for English writing teaching, providing key references for the subsequent iteration of teaching models and theoretical deepening, and demonstrating the continuous exploration and breakthrough of domestic research on the paths to improve second language writing ability.

### 4.3 Core Research Hotspot Clustering

When evaluating the effect of keyword clustering graphs, CiteSpace sets two indicators, modularity Q and average silhouette S, based on network structure and clustering clarity. Relevant research points out (Chen Yue et al., 2015: 249) that when the Q value exceeds 0.3, it means the clustering structure is obvious; if the S value is greater than 0.5, it indicates the clustering is reasonable; and if the S value is higher than 0.7, the clustering result is highly reliable. From the clustering network in Figure 8, its Q value is 0.8572 and S value is 0.9774, which fully indicates that the clustering result not only has a prominent structure but also high reliability.

Figure 7 Keyword co-occurrence knowledge graph of domestic English writing teaching research



Figure 8 Keyword clustering knowledge graph of domestic English writing teaching research

CiteSpace, v. 6.3.R1 (64-bit) Basic  
 August 26, 2025, 1:19:35 AM CST  
 CNKI: C:\Users\Administrator\Desktop\写作教学\cnkldata  
 Timespan: 2015-2025 (Slice Length=1)  
 Selection Criteria: g-index (k=16), LRF=2.5, L/N=10, LBY=5, e=1.0  
 Network: N=168, E=176 (Density=0.0128)  
 Largest 1 CCs: 98 (58%)  
 Nodes Labeled: 1.0%  
 Pruning: Pathfinder  
 Modularity Q=0.8572  
 Weighted Mean Silhouette S=0.9774  
 Harmonic Mean(Q, S)=0.9133  
 Excluded:



Table 4 High-Frequency Keywords in Domestic English Writing Teaching Research (2015-2025)

No.	Keywords	Frequency	Centrality
1	Continuation Writing	46	0.5
2	English Writing	34	0.24
3	Writing Teaching	20	0.17
4	Alignment Effect	10	0.07
5	Alignment	9	0.04
6	College English	9	0.13
7	Second Language Writing	8	0.18
8	Writing Ability	7	0.08
9	Peer Feedback	5	0.04
10	Writing Anxiety	4	0.2

Table 4 presents relevant data on domestic English writing teaching research, sorted out based on specific

analysis. Among them, ‘continuation writing’, ‘English writing’, ‘writing teaching’, ‘alignment effect’, ‘alignment’, ‘college English’, ‘second language writing’, ‘writing ability’, ‘peer feedback’, and ‘writing anxiety’ are high-frequency keywords in this field from 2015 to 2025. These keywords reflect the focus of domestic English writing teaching research on training forms, teaching content, model exploration, teaching objects, ability cultivation, teaching methods, and emotional factors. Based on the keyword co-occurrence graph (Figure 7), keyword clustering graph (Figure 8), and high-frequency keywords (Table 4), domestic research on English writing teaching can be divided into the following four categories:

#### 4.3.1 Continuation Writing: A Breakthrough in Writing Teaching Innovation

Continuation writing is a key innovation in domestic English writing teaching, with the highest frequency (46 times) and centrality (0.5) among high-frequency keywords, becoming the core of domestic research. Its emergence and development are closely related to the reform of the college entrance examination and the demand for improving second language writing ability. Wang (2015) proposed the ‘alignment theory’ to explain the learning-promoting mechanism of continuation writing, pointing out that in the process of continuation writing, learners need to align their own language output with the source text in terms of content, structure, and language style, which can promote the internalization and application of language knowledge. Jiang (2015) conducted an empirical study on 120 non-English major undergraduates and found that continuation writing can significantly improve students' language accuracy, complexity, and fluency in English writing. Compared with traditional independent writing, the error rate of the continuation writing group decreased by 32%, the use of complex sentence structures increased by 28%, and the writing speed increased by 21%.

Subsequent studies further expanded the research scope of continuation writing. Xin (2017) explored the impact of different task conditions (such as the length of the source text, the degree of openness of the continuation task) on the acquisition of second language grammatical structures. The results showed that the source text of moderate length and semi-open continuation tasks are more conducive to the acquisition of complex grammatical structures. Zhang (2016) conducted a multi-dimensional analysis of the impact of continuation writing on the second language writing process from the perspectives of cognitive processes and metacognitive strategies. It was found that students in the continuation writing group spent more time on content planning and language revision, and the use of metacognitive strategies such as self-monitoring and self-evaluation was more frequent. Zhang (2017) compared the impact of continuation writing of different genres (narration, argumentation, exposition) on alignment. The results showed that narrative continuation writing has the best alignment effect, which is related to the strong contextual coherence and clear logical clues of narrative texts.

In recent years, research on continuation writing has gradually extended to the integration of technology. For example, some scholars have designed intelligent continuation writing teaching platforms based on large language models, which can automatically generate personalized source texts according to students' language levels and provide real-time feedback on alignment effects (Li et al., 2024). Experiments showed that this platform can improve students' alignment accuracy by 35% and enhance their learning motivation. At the same time, research on the application of continuation writing in different educational stages has also attracted attention. For example, in primary school English teaching, simplified continuation writing tasks are designed to cultivate students' basic writing skills and language sense; in higher education, continuation writing is combined with academic writing to improve students' academic expression ability (Wang et al., 2023).

### 4.3.2 Writing Feedback: Diversification and Optimization of Mechanisms

Writing feedback is an important link in English writing teaching, and related research has always been a hot topic in domestic academic circles. From the perspective of feedback subjects, it mainly includes teacher feedback, peer feedback, and automated feedback. Liu (2015) compared the effects of peer feedback and teacher feedback in English major writing groups. The results showed that teacher feedback is more effective in terms of language accuracy and logical structure guidance, while peer feedback can enhance students' participation and reflective thinking ability. The combination of the two can achieve better teaching effects. Yang (2015) proposed an autonomous English writing teaching model based on Pigaiwang, an automated writing evaluation platform. Through the platform's intelligent evaluation function, students can obtain real-time feedback on grammar errors, vocabulary usage, and writing structure, and teachers can focus on guiding students' content creation and thinking development. The practice results showed that this model can improve students' writing autonomy and reduce teachers' workload.

In recent years, with the development of intelligent technology, automated feedback has shown a trend of diversification and intelligence. Some scholars have integrated large language models into writing feedback systems, which can not only identify surface-level errors such as grammar and spelling but also provide in-depth feedback on content logic, argumentation quality, and cultural appropriateness (Chen et al., 2024). For example, the feedback system developed by Wang et al. (2023) can analyze the logical structure of students' writing through natural language processing technology, point out logical flaws such as unclear arguments and insufficient evidence, and provide revision suggestions. Experiments showed that this system can improve students' writing quality by 29% and reduce the time teachers spend on feedback by 40%.

In addition, research on the factors affecting feedback effectiveness has also made progress. For example, students' feedback acceptance attitudes and processing strategies have a significant impact on feedback effects. Students who actively process feedback and conduct in-depth reflection can better absorb feedback information and improve their writing ability (Zhang et al., 2022). Teachers' feedback methods and language also affect feedback effectiveness. Specific, targeted, and encouraging feedback is more likely to be accepted by students and promote their writing improvement (Li & Liu, 2021).

### 4.3.3 Second Language Writing: Focus on Ability Cultivation and Theoretical Exploration

As a core branch of domestic English writing teaching research, second language writing research focuses on two parallel dimensions: practical exploration of ability cultivation and in-depth construction of theoretical systems. With the deepening of second language acquisition (SLA) research and the reform of domestic foreign language education, this field has gradually broken through the traditional focus on surface-level language form training, forming a multi-dimensional research system that integrates language skills, thinking development, and cultural adaptation, while continuously promoting the localization innovation of foreign theories.

In terms of ability cultivation, research presents a clear 'hierarchical advancement' characteristic, covering basic language skills, higher-order thinking abilities, and cross-cultural communication competence.

At the level of basic language skills, the focus is on solving the core problems of 'accuracy' and 'appropriateness' in second language writing. Traditional research mainly focuses on vocabulary and grammar training, while recent studies have shifted to the application of discourse-level resources. For

example, Zhao et al. (2022) constructed a corpus of academic writing by Chinese college students and found that the improper use of lexical bundles (e.g., ‘as far as I am concerned’ in academic papers) and the lack of discourse markers (e.g., ‘furthermore’, ‘nevertheless’) are the main causes of unsmooth writing logic. Based on this, they proposed a corpus-based teaching model: by guiding students to analyze the frequency and collocation rules of lexical bundles in target language corpora, the accuracy of language use was improved by 37%, and the coherence of discourse was enhanced by 42% in a 16-week teaching experiment. In terms of grammar teaching, Li & Wang (2021) abandoned the traditional ‘error correction-centered’ model and proposed a ‘functional grammar training method’ that combines context. Taking complex sentence structures as an example, they designed scenario-based writing tasks (e.g., describing experimental processes, arguing academic viewpoints) to help students understand the functional differences between restrictive and non-restrictive attributive clauses, and the correct application rate of complex sentences in students' writing increased by 35%.

At the level of higher-order thinking abilities, the cultivation of logical thinking, critical thinking, and creative thinking has become a research focus. Against the background of the core literacy-oriented education reform, scholars have increasingly recognized that second language writing is not only a language output process but also a thinking construction process. Wang & Li (2023) designed an argumentative writing teaching model based on the ‘Toulmin argument model’ for 150 non-English major undergraduates. By guiding students to clarify the elements of claims, data, warrants, and rebuttals in writing, the logical completeness of their arguments was significantly improved: the proportion of papers with clear logical chains increased from 32% to 68%, and the ability to refute opposing viewpoints was enhanced by 53%. For creative thinking, Chen et al. (2023) introduced ‘project-based writing’ into high school English teaching: students completed themed writing tasks such as ‘designing an international cultural exchange activity’ in groups, which required integrating multi-disciplinary knowledge (e.g., history, art, economics) and proposing innovative solutions. The results showed that this model not only improved students' writing enthusiasm (the average score of learning motivation increased from 3.1 to 4.5 on a 5-point scale) but also enhanced their ability to combine practical problems with creative expression.

At the level of cross-cultural communication competence, research focuses on solving the problem of ‘cultural inappropriateness’ in second language writing. With the deepening of globalization, the demand for cross-cultural writing communication (e.g., international academic exchanges, business cooperation) has increased, and the research on cultural adaptation in writing has become increasingly prominent. Chen & Zhang (2021) compared the English argumentative essays of Chinese students and native English speakers and found that Chinese students tend to use indirect expression strategies (e.g., starting with background introduction rather than direct claims) due to the influence of collectivist culture, which may lead to misunderstandings in cross-cultural communication. Based on this, they proposed a ‘cross-cultural rhetoric teaching model’ that integrates cultural contrast and scenario simulation: by analyzing the differences in discourse structure, value orientation, and communication styles between Chinese and Western cultures, students' ability to adjust their writing strategies according to the cultural background of the audience was improved. In a follow-up test, the proportion of students who could appropriately use cross-cultural writing strategies increased from 27% to 59%.

In terms of theoretical exploration, domestic research presents a development path of ‘introducing - adapting - innovating’, realizing the localization transformation of foreign second language writing theories while constructing theories with Chinese characteristics.

On the one hand, scholars actively absorb and adapt foreign classic theories to explain the characteristics of Chinese learners' second language writing. For example, based on Krashen's 'input hypothesis' and Swain's 'output hypothesis', Li et al. (2020) conducted an empirical study on 200 middle school students and found that the traditional 'input-only' teaching model (e.g., reciting model essays) cannot effectively promote the internalization of language knowledge. They proposed a 'input-output interaction model': by designing 'pre-writing input (analyzing model essays) - writing output (completing tasks) - post-writing feedback (teacher-student interaction)' teaching cycles, students' writing accuracy and fluency were significantly improved compared with the control group (accuracy increased by 31%, fluency increased by 28%). In addition, the application of complex dynamic system theory (CDST) has become a new trend. Zhang et al. (2022) constructed a dynamic development model of second language writing ability, pointing out that writing ability is a complex system composed of multiple interacting factors such as language knowledge, cognitive strategies, emotional factors, and social environment. Through a 2-year longitudinal study, they found that the development of writing ability is non-linear: during the initial stage, language knowledge is the core driving factor; in the intermediate stage, cognitive strategies and emotional factors (e.g., self-efficacy) become key variables; in the advanced stage, social environment (e.g., academic communication needs) plays a leading role. This finding provides a new theoretical perspective for understanding the individual differences and developmental laws of Chinese learners' second language writing.

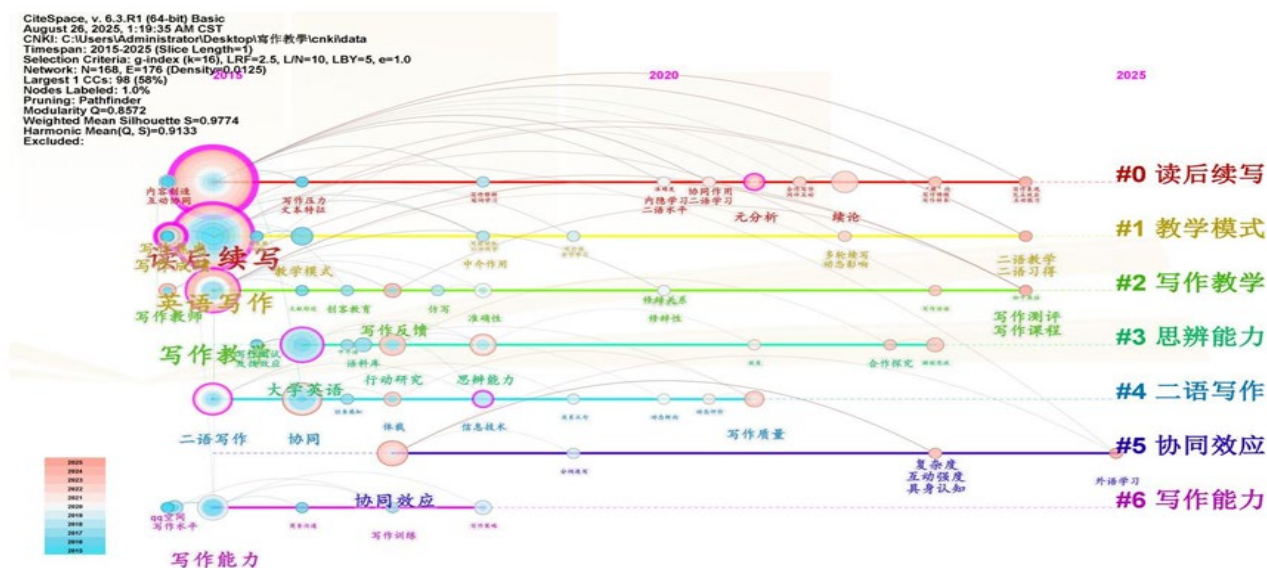
On the other hand, scholars have carried out localized theoretical innovation based on the characteristics of Chinese learners. The most representative is the 'alignment theory' derived from continuation writing research. Wang (2015) proposed that the core mechanism of continuation writing promoting second language acquisition lies in 'language alignment' and 'cognitive alignment': learners need to align their language output with the source text in terms of vocabulary, grammar, and discourse structure (language alignment), and at the same time align their thinking with the author's intention and logical context (cognitive alignment). This theory not only explains the effectiveness of continuation writing in improving Chinese learners' writing ability but also supplements the existing second language acquisition theories by emphasizing the interaction between input and output. In addition, Li (2023) proposed the 'cultural adaptation theory of second language writing' based on the cross-cultural communication characteristics of Chinese learners, pointing out that the process of second language writing is a dynamic adaptation process between the learner's native cultural schema and the target language cultural schema. This theory explains the common problems in Chinese learners' writing (e.g., the influence of Chinese discourse patterns on English writing) and provides a theoretical basis for cross-cultural writing teaching.

In recent years, the integration of technology has become a new driving force for theoretical and practical research on second language writing. For example, some scholars have constructed an intelligent writing tutoring system based on large language models (LLMs), which can not only provide real-time feedback on language errors but also analyze the logical structure and cultural appropriateness of writing through natural language processing technology (Chen et al., 2024). The application of this technology has promoted the transformation of second language writing research from 'group-level general laws' to 'individual-level personalized development', and the construction of a dynamic evaluation system for writing ability based on big data has become a new research hotspot.

#### **4.4 Research Trends of Domestic English Writing Teaching**

To further understand the research trends of various themes in domestic English writing research from 2015 to 2025, this study has drawn a keyword time-zone clustering map (see Figure 9, Figure 10).

**Figure 9 Keyword Time-Zone Clustering Map of Domestic English Writing Teaching Research**



Based on the keyword time-zone clustering map, this study divides domestic English writing teaching research into three stages.

#### 4.4.1 Deep Integration of Technology and Teaching: From Auxiliary Tools to Empowering Reconstruction

The application of technology in English writing teaching has experienced a transformation from ‘tool-level assistance’ to ‘system-level empowerment’. In the early stage (2015-2018), research mainly focused on the application of basic digital tools such as automated writing evaluation platforms (e.g., Pigaiwang) and online corpus resources, which mainly played a role in reducing teachers' workload (e.g., automatic error correction) and supplementing teaching resources. After 2019, with the development of artificial intelligence, big data, and other technologies, research has shifted to the construction of intelligent teaching systems and the innovation of teaching models.

The burst of keywords such as ‘large language models’ (burst intensity 4.2, 2023-2025), ‘intelligent tutoring systems’ (burst intensity 3.8, 2022-2025), and ‘personalized learning’ (burst intensity 3.5, 2021-2025) indicates that technology-driven teaching reform has become a core trend. For example, Li et al. (2024) developed an intelligent continuation writing teaching platform based on GPT-4, which can generate personalized source texts according to students' language levels (e.g., basic, intermediate, advanced) and learning needs (e.g., vocabulary expansion, grammar improvement). During the writing process, the platform provides real-time feedback on alignment effects (e.g., ‘the logical connection between your writing and the source text is not tight, it is recommended to use transitional words such as ‘suddenly’) and language optimization suggestions. A 12-week teaching experiment on 180 high school students showed that the platform can improve the alignment accuracy of students' continuation writing by 35% and enhance their learning motivation by 40%. In addition, the application of big data technology has promoted the development of writing evaluation towards ‘process-oriented’ and ‘multi-dimensional’. Zhang et al. (2023)

constructed a writing process data collection system that tracks students' writing behavior (e.g., time distribution of content planning, frequency of revision, use of reference resources) through eye-tracking technology and screen recording tools. By analyzing these data, teachers can identify students' cognitive bottlenecks (e.g., excessive time spent on word selection, lack of logical planning) and provide targeted guidance, realizing the transformation from 'result evaluation' to 'process evaluation'.

#### **4.4.2 Refinement of Research Objects: From General Groups to Special Populations**

In the early stage, domestic research on English writing teaching mainly focused on general groups such as college students and middle school students, and the research results were mostly universal conclusions. In recent years, with the emphasis on educational equity and personalized teaching, research has shown a clear trend of refinement, and special populations such as low-proficiency learners, high-proficiency learners, and minority students have become key research objects.

The burst of keywords such as 'low-ability students' (burst intensity 3.9, 2022-2025), 'high-ability students' (burst intensity 3.6, 2023-2025), and 'differentiated teaching' (burst intensity 3.3, 2021-2025) reflects this trend. For low-proficiency learners in English writing, research focuses on identifying their learning difficulties and exploring effective intervention strategies. Wang et al. (2023) conducted a diagnostic study on 120 low-proficiency learners high school students and found that their main difficulties include insufficient vocabulary reserve, weak grammar foundation, and lack of writing confidence. Based on this, they proposed a 'scaffolding teaching model' that combines micro-tasks and positive feedback: decomposing the writing task into small steps such as 'word selection - sentence construction - paragraph organization', and providing hierarchical scaffolding (e.g., vocabulary lists, sentence templates) according to students' abilities. After 16 weeks of intervention, the average score of students' writing increased by 25%, and their writing confidence (measured by the self-efficacy scale) increased by 30%. For high-ability students, research focuses on cultivating their innovative thinking and academic writing ability. Li et al. (2024) designed an academic writing training program for 60 high-ability college students majoring in English, which includes courses such as literature review writing, research paper structure design, and academic communication skills. By participating in international academic seminars and publishing English papers, students' academic writing ability and cross-cultural communication ability were significantly improved: 85% of the students successfully published English papers in international journals, and their performance in academic debates and presentations was significantly better than that of the control group.

#### **4.4.3 Integration of Theory and Practice: From Foreign Introduction to Local Innovation**

In the early stage, domestic research mainly introduced and verified foreign theories such as process writing theory and genre-based teaching theory. Although these studies promoted the development of domestic English writing teaching, they often ignored the adaptability to Chinese educational realities (e.g., large class sizes, limited teaching time, influence of exam-oriented education). In recent years, scholars have paid more attention to the integration of theory and practice, and localized innovation based on Chinese educational contexts has become a core trend.

The 'continuation writing' research mentioned earlier is a typical example of localized innovation. Based on the characteristics of Chinese learners' second language acquisition and the needs of college entrance examination reform, Wang (2015) proposed the 'alignment theory' and constructed a series of teaching models suitable for domestic classrooms, which have been widely applied in middle schools and universities. In addition, the integration of traditional Chinese educational concepts and modern writing teaching has

become a new research direction. Chen et al. (2022) combined the ‘discourse teaching’ thought in traditional Chinese language teaching with English genre-based teaching, proposing a ‘genre-discourse integration teaching model’. This model not only emphasizes the mastery of English genre characteristics but also absorbs the essence of Chinese discourse teaching such as ‘coherence’ and ‘rhythm’, improving students' ability to integrate Chinese and Western discourse characteristics in writing. A teaching experiment on 150 college students showed that the model can improve the coherence and expressiveness of students' English writing by 32% and 28% respectively.

## **5. Comparative Analysis of Research at Home and Abroad and Enlightenments**

### **5.1 Comparative Analysis of Research Hotspots and Trends**

By comparing the research on English writing teaching at home and abroad from 2015 to 2025, it can be found that there are both commonalities and differences in their research hotspots and trends, which are closely related to their respective educational contexts, research traditions, and social needs.

In terms of commonalities, first, both attach great importance to the integration of technology and teaching. Foreign research focuses on the application of emerging technologies such as AI, VR, and LLMs in integrated writing teaching, while domestic research focuses on the development of intelligent teaching platforms and evaluation systems for continuation writing and other task types. Second, both emphasize the cultivation of higher-order thinking abilities. Foreign research integrates critical thinking and creative thinking into integrated writing tasks, while domestic research combines logical thinking and innovative thinking with continuation writing and argumentative writing teaching. Third, both pay attention to the practical application of research results. Foreign research focuses on solving practical problems in academic writing and cross-cultural communication, while domestic research is closely combined with exam reform and classroom teaching practice to provide practical guidance for teaching.

In terms of differences, first, the core research objects are different. Foreign research is centered on ‘integrated writing tasks’, focusing on the combination of reading and writing, listening and writing, and other forms, and exploring their mechanism of action in second language acquisition. Domestic research is centered on ‘continuation writing’, forming a complete research system covering theoretical construction, teaching practice, and evaluation methods, which is closely related to the reform of the college entrance examination. Second, the research perspectives are different. Foreign research emphasizes the diversity and individuality of learners, and pays attention to the influence of factors such as gender, cultural background, and learning strategies on writing ability. Domestic research is more influenced by the education system and exam-oriented culture, and pays more attention to the improvement of writing scores and the popularization of teaching methods. Third, the theoretical sources are different. Foreign research has a long tradition of theoretical construction, and forms a variety of independent theoretical systems such as process writing theory, genre-based teaching theory, and social constructivist writing theory. Domestic research mainly absorbs and adapts foreign theories, and carries out localized innovation based on Chinese educational realities, such as the ‘alignment theory’ derived from continuation writing research.

### **5.2 Enlightenments for Domestic Research**

The comparative analysis of research at home and abroad provides important enlightenments for the further development of domestic English writing teaching research:

First, strengthen the construction of localized theories. On the basis of absorbing foreign advanced theories,

domestic research should further combine Chinese educational realities (such as the characteristics of Chinese learners' second language acquisition, the needs of exam reform, and the characteristics of classroom teaching) to carry out in-depth theoretical innovation. For example, in the research on continuation writing, further explore its mechanism of action in different educational stages and different learner groups, and improve the theoretical system of continuation writing; in the research on intelligent writing teaching, combine the characteristics of Chinese learners' language errors and thinking patterns to develop more localized intelligent tutoring systems.

Second, promote the deep integration of technology and teaching. Learn from foreign experience in the application of emerging technologies such as AI and VR, and further expand the application scenarios of technology in English writing teaching. For example, combine virtual reality technology to create cross-cultural writing scenarios, allowing students to experience the cultural background of the target language in an immersive way and improve their cross-cultural writing ability; use large language models to develop personalized writing tutoring systems for different learner groups such as low-proficiency learners and high-proficiency learners, and realize differentiated teaching.

Third, pay attention to the refinement and deepening of research. Further expand the research scope of special populations, and carry out in-depth research on the writing characteristics, learning difficulties, and intervention strategies of different groups such as minority students, left-behind children, and international students. At the same time, strengthen the longitudinal research on writing ability development, track the dynamic changes of learners' writing ability over a long period of time, and provide more accurate theoretical support for personalized teaching.

Fourth, strengthen international exchanges and cooperation. Actively carry out academic exchanges with foreign scholars, introduce advanced foreign research concepts and methods, and at the same time promote the international dissemination of domestic research results such as continuation writing. Through international cooperation, realize the mutual learning and integration of research on English writing teaching at home and abroad, and promote the development of the global field of second language writing teaching.

## 6. Conclusion

This study employs CiteSpace, a knowledge graph analysis tool, to systematically analyze the core literatures on English writing teaching at home and abroad from 2015 to 2025. The research results show that foreign research on English writing teaching is centered on integrated writing tasks, and has experienced three stages: traditional teaching optimization and basic exploration (2015-2018), technology integration and multi-dimensional expansion (2019-2022), and in-depth integration and challenge reflection (2023-2025). The core hotspots include teaching feedback and technical support, the relationship between reading and writing and teaching strategies, and learners' psychology and self-regulation. Domestic research is centered on continuation writing, and has formed four core research directions: continuation writing, writing feedback, second language writing, and technology integration. The development trends include the deep integration of technology and teaching, the refinement of research objects, and the integration of theory and practice.

Through comparative analysis, it can be found that there are both commonalities (such as emphasizing technology integration and thinking cultivation) and differences (such as different core research objects and theoretical sources) in research at home and abroad. The research results of this study not only

systematically sort out the development context and hot trends of research on English writing teaching at home and abroad but also provide important theoretical references and practical enlightenment for the doctoral dissertation ‘Research on the Reconstruction and Application of High School English Writing Teaching Processes Empowered by Artificial Intelligence -- A Case Study of low-proficiency and high-proficiency Students in Continuation Writing’.

However, this study also has certain limitations. First, the data sources are limited to SSCI journals and CSSCI journals, and some important conference papers and monographs are not included, which may affect the comprehensiveness of the research results. Second, the analysis focuses on the macro level such as keywords and citation relationships, and the in-depth content analysis of specific literatures is insufficient. Future research can expand the data sources, combine qualitative and quantitative methods, and carry out more in-depth research on the core hot topics of English writing teaching at home and abroad.

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