

English Writing Autonomy and Literacy among Chinese College Students

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Abstract: The purpose of this study is to examine the current situation of English writing autonomy and literacy among Chinese college students, to analyze their performance, scale, and distribution as well as influencing factors, and to explore the correlation between English writing autonomy and literacy. This study will provide an in-depth analysis of the current situation of Chinese college students' English writing autonomy and literacy, reveal the scale, distribution, and influencing factors, as well as put forward strategies to enhance them, so as to provide a reference for the reform and development of college English education.

Keywords: Chinese college students; English writing autonomy; Literacy; Status quo; Influencing factors; Enhancement strategies

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1. Introduction

With the acceleration of globalization and informatization, English is becoming increasingly important as a global lingua franca. Therefore, learning and mastering English literacy is especially important for Chinese college students. However, some problems exist, namely the need for more autonomy and literacy in English writing among Chinese college students. Studies have shown that Chinese college students generally face issues such as a lack of independence in English writing, poor reading and comprehension of English literature, and low writing proficiency ^[1]. These problems affect college students' academic performance and employment prospects and restrict their competitiveness in the era of globalization.

China's Ministry of Education has made a series of policy adjustments to English teaching in recent years, emphasizing the development of students' comprehensive language application skills, including English literacy. However, from a practical point of view, these policies still need improvement to achieve the expected results. For example, according to recent research, the overall level of English literacy among Chinese college students has improved. However, more effort is needed to meet the current social demand for English writing skills ^[2]. Therefore, conducting in-depth research on Chinese college students' English writing autonomy and literacy is necessary to guide English teaching practices better.

According to Lian ^[3], Chinese college students' English writing autonomy and literacy still need help with scale and distribution. Specifically, on the one hand, the development of college students' English writing autonomy varies across schools and regions. He also argued that certain high-level universities will utilize their unique teaching mode and resource environment to cultivate more English writing talents with autonomous learning skills. On the other hand, the cultivation of English literacy has a process from quantitative to qualitative change. Even if English writing has a certain degree of autonomy, it may be due to the students' insufficient reading skills, leading to their inability to understand and utilize the information in the article.

In addition, Cheng ^[4] believed that the school's education and evaluation systems also affect students' English writing autonomy and literacy. The current education and evaluation systems are overly utilitarian, overemphasizing the input of knowledge and test scores and neglecting the cultivation and evaluation of students' independent learning abilities and literacy.

Chinese college students' autonomy in English learning refers to their ability to think and learn independently, self-assess, and self-improve in English learning. This autonomy is essential for improving college students' English proficiency and cultivating their comprehensive quality. However, many Chinese college students exhibit a strong dependence on teachers and textbooks for English learning, hindering their autonomy and independent thinking abilities. They tend to passively accept knowledge and skills, lacking more awareness and capacity for active learning and self-assessment. This situation may limit their English proficiency and self-development potential.

Many Chinese college students face particular problems in English literacy, including grammatical errors, insufficient vocabulary, weak reading comprehension, and lack of writing expression. These problems may be related to the teaching method of English and the student's abilities.

The current situation and problems of Chinese college students' English writing autonomy and literacy have attracted widespread attention. Existing studies have shown that Chinese college students generally lack independence in English writing and tend to rely too much on their teachers and textbooks. They need a sense of independent thinking, creativity, and separate learning styles and strategies. This phenomenon may constrain the improvement of students' English writing skills and the further optimization and reform of university English education ^[5]. Therefore, cultivating and improving college students' English writing autonomy and literacy is significant for enhancing their English proficiency and comprehensive quality and is one of the essential directions for promoting the reform and development of English education. There is a close relationship between Chinese college students' English writing autonomy and literacy, which is related to the quality and effect of English education, the cultivation of students' comprehensive quality and internationalized talents, and the reform and innovation of Chinese education.

On top of that, studying the current situation of English writing autonomy and literacy can provide a comprehensive understanding of Chinese college students' performance and level in terms of English writing autonomy and literacy, which is an essential reference value for promoting the reform and development of English education for Chinese college students. Still, another factor is that studying the scale and distribution of English writing autonomy and literacy can reveal the universality and differences of the problem. Analyzing the differences in English writing autonomy and literacy among students in different regions, schools, and grades, the influencing factors can be studied to guide English education in other areas and phases ^[6].

Based on these considerations, this study also examines the relationship between English writing autonomy and literacy among Chinese college students; furthermore, it aims to determine whether these two variables differed significantly when grouped by leadership levels. The results of this study will provide concrete and feasible references for teachers and students to improve English writing autonomy and literacy and promote the

optimization and development of English education.

2. Literature review

2.1. English writing autonomy

With the development of globalization and the improvement of China's international status, English learning is becoming increasingly crucial for Chinese college students. Among them, English writing, as one of the core skills of English learning, plays a pivotal role in improving students' comprehensive English skills and practical application. The relationship between Chinese college students' English writing autonomy and literacy has also become a research topic of great concern.

In recent years, research on Chinese college students' English writing autonomy and literacy has attracted extensive attention from scholars. Some scholars agree that improving students' English writing autonomy can effectively promote their literacy^[7]. However, English writing autonomy is a relatively complex and multilevel concept with different coverage and connotations.

In general, as far as the existing research is concerned, it is of great significance to study the literacy of Chinese college students by taking the autonomy of English writing as an entry point. However, some things could still be improved in the research on this topic. Firstly, from the research design perspective, existing studies pay more attention to the conceptual definition and connotation of English writing autonomy and less to the specific situation and methods of improving English literacy among Chinese college students. Secondly, from the perspective of data analysis methods, existing studies mostly use questionnaires and empirical studies and less often use qualitative research methods to dig deeper into students' needs and problems. Thirdly, from the perspective of argumentation, existing studies rely more on the description of surface phenomena and lack in-depth analysis and argumentation when exploring the relationship between autonomy and literacy in English writing.

The performance of autonomy in English writing can be observed and assessed from several perspectives. Firstly, autonomy manifests in students' ability to think independently and creatively in writing. In the writing process, students can think independently according to their understanding and ideas and use creative ways and methods in their expression^[8]. Secondly, autonomy manifests in students' ability to use vocabulary and grammar in writing skillfully. Students with high autonomy can proactively use vocabulary and grammatical structures to make their writing more expressive and informative. In addition, autonomy is demonstrated by students' ability to independently choose appropriate writing structures and formats based on the writing requirements. Students with autonomy can use different writing structures and formats flexibly to make their writing more accurate and logical according to the purpose of writing and the readers' needs. Furthermore, autonomy is reflected in students' ability to self-evaluate and revise their writing during the writing process.

The performance of autonomy in English writing focuses on students' ability to think and innovate on their own, to use vocabulary and grammar, to choose writing structure and format, and to self-evaluate and revise. These performances reflect English writing skills and a meaningful way to cultivate students' comprehensive language application skills. Therefore, improving students' autonomy in English writing is of great significance in developing students' English literacy^[9].

The study demonstrated that English writing autonomy is a complex concept with different scopes and connotations. Improving students' autonomy in English writing can promote the enhancement of their English reading and writing skills. However, existing studies have paid less attention to the specific situations and methods of improving English literacy among Chinese college students and need more in-depth analysis and argumentation. Therefore, improving students' autonomy in English writing is crucial to the development of students' English

literacy.

Lastly, from an argumentative point of view, some studies have focused more on the relationship between interest and academic performance and less on the impact of interest on learning strategies and motivation. However, as an essential affective factor, interest in learning English will likely play an important role in forming students' learning strategies and motivation. Therefore, more research is needed to explore how interest in learning English interacts with factors such as learning strategies, motivation, and academic achievement to better understand students' English learning process.

2.2. English literacy

Emotions are physiological responses and psychological experiences that individuals have in response to certain stimuli in a given context. The development of emotions has gone through several stages, in which early studies focused on the basic components and characteristics of emotions, such as several basic emotion theories proposed. As research progressed, the complexity and diversity of emotions began to receive more attention, with researchers noting that emotions are closely related to an individual's psychological and social functioning. In the field of education, the role and influence of emotions in the learning process have also become one of the focal points of research.

Existing studies can be broadly categorized as follows: the first group of studies focuses on the types and characteristics of students' English literacy emotions. For example, students often experience anxiety during English reading, which may negatively affect their comprehension and learning outcomes. Students' emotional experiences such as excitement, tension, and satisfaction during English writing have also been explored.

The second type of research focuses on the factors influencing English literacy emotions. Researchers focus on the influence of factors such as individual characteristics, the learning environment, and the nature of the task on students' English literacy emotions. For example, it is found that factors such as students' personality traits, English proficiency, and reading skills have an impact on their literacy emotions. The supportive and challenging nature of the learning environment has been found to play an important role in students' emotion regulation.

The third category of research focuses on the relationship between English literacy emotions and academic performance. It has been found that students' positive emotions are positively related to academic performance, while negative emotions are negatively related to academic performance. However, the effect of mood on academic performance is moderated by a variety of factors, such as task difficulty and learning motivation ^[10].

Despite the number of studies that have been conducted, there are still a number of issues that need to be further explored in depth in exploring the relationship between emotions and learning. Firstly, in terms of research design, existing studies lack a comprehensive consideration of different types of emotions, and in particular there is less coverage of more complex emotional experiences ^[11]. This shortcoming may lead to an oversimplified understanding of emotional experiences and their effects on learning environments. Therefore, future research could analyze in more detail how different types of emotions are manifested during the learning process and how they may affect learning outcomes and learning strategies.

In the early stage of research, Wang ^[12] argued that affective skills mainly include different aspects such as expression, perception, and understanding. These aspects cover students' ability to accurately express emotions, perceive others' emotions, and understand the meanings behind emotions in writing. This view emphasizes the importance of affective skills in English writing, which is not only about the expression of emotions but also includes the perception and understanding of emotions.

Additionally, Ling ^[13] expanded the concept of affective skills to include multiple dimensions such as emotion recognition, emotional expression, and emotion regulation. Emotion recognition refers to students' ability

to identify the emotional color in others' texts so as to better understand the author's emotional attitude. The emotional expression emphasizes how students themselves can skillfully express emotions in their writing in order to trigger readers' empathy. Emotion regulation, on the other hand, focuses on how students regulate and control the expression of emotion during the writing process to ensure that the emotion is consistent with the purpose of the writing.

These different perspectives enrich the understanding of affective skills and reveal the multiple dimensions of their role in writing. As the study progresses, the development of different dimensions of affective skills and how these skills affect students' performance in English writing can be further explored in the future.

The studies that have been conducted on Chinese college students' affective skills in English writing can be mainly categorized as follows. The first category of viewpoints believes that affective skills have an important influence on the development of Chinese college students' English writing. Emphasizing the role of affective skills in the writing process, it is argued that the effective use of affective material can improve students' writing. Instead, it focuses on the impact of affective skills on the ability to appreciate and critique writing.

Therefore, future research can be carried out in the following aspects: firstly, an in-depth study on how to cultivate college students' affective skills can be carried out, exploring effective teaching methods and strategies so that students can appropriately use affective expressions in writing. Secondly, focusing on the impact of emotional skills on students' motivation and self-confidence in writing to understand the role of emotional skills in the writing process more comprehensively. Lastly, the limitations of affective skills and the possible negative impacts in specific contexts are objectively explored so as to provide targeted guidance in teaching practice.

3. Recommendations

Strategies to improve students' English writing autonomy and literacy are provided as follows.

3.1. Creating a rich language environment

Students are encouraged to read various types of English articles, such as novels, news, blogs, etc., to increase their vocabulary and language sense. At the same time, students should practice writing exercises regularly, such as writing diaries, essays, impressions, and so on. An English Corner or English writing group can be established to promote communication and cooperation among students and to share writing experience and skills.

3.2. Defining goals and tasks

Specific tasks and goals are set for each writing exercise, such as writing a letter, describing a scene, arguing an idea, etc. The writing process is divided into several stages, including conception, writing the first draft, revising, polishing, etc., to help students gradually improve their work.

3.3. Providing writing guidance and feedback

Teachers need to provide writing templates and high-quality sample essays to help students understand the structure and requirements of different types of writing. Teachers should give personalized feedback on students' writing, point out specific strengths and areas for improvement, and make appropriate suggestions for revision.

3.4. Cultivating independent learning ability

Students are encouraged to record new words, phrases, and sentence patterns during learning, and review and use them regularly. Students are also guided to conduct self-evaluation, analyze their strengths and weaknesses in writing, and make improvement plans.

3.5. Strengthening reading comprehension

Intensive reading improves the depth of comprehension, while extensive reading increases the amount and breadth of reading. The combination of the two can comprehensively improve students' reading skills. Discussions, writing, and summarizations after reading help students deepen their understanding and apply what they have learned.

3.6. Increasing writing interest

Students are encouraged to choose the subject matter they are interested in to write and increase their initiative and enthusiasm in writing. Various creative writing activities, such as creating stories, writing plays, etc., are organized to stimulate students' creativity and imagination.

Disclosure statement

The author declares no conflict of interest.

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