



Common writing challenges in academic English among Chinese nursing undergraduates

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ABSTRACT

The study examines the most common writing challenges in Academic English faced by Chinese undergraduate nursing students. Despite meeting the general English proficiency benchmark of College English Test Band 4, many students struggle with the academic writing conventions necessary for success in university and professional nursing contexts. The analysis was based on writing samples taken throughout the term from 38 second-year nursing students from a university in Northwest China. The mistakes were categorised according to Ferris' taxonomy of errors (1995, 2002, 2012). Results show that surface-level errors, including punctuation, spelling, and mechanics, were the most common, accounting for more than one-third of all errors. However, more profound grammatical issues, particularly errors in verb form, collocation mistakes, and article omissions, had a greater impact on clarity and academic tone. The findings suggest that many errors stem from interference with the first language (L1). This study emphasises the importance of instructional strategies that focus on verb use, sentence structure, and genre-appropriate vocabulary. The article discusses practical approaches to English for Academic Purposes (EAP) instruction.

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Introduction

Recent years have seen a global rise in English language proficiency among medical and nursing professionals. As global healthcare systems become more interconnected, the ability to not only read and write but also to speak and listen effectively in English becomes a necessity. Increasingly often Chinese nursing majors are required to demonstrate proficiency in Academic English (Li & Wang, 2023). Wang et al. (2024) states that there is a growing number of both foreign patients and international academic exchanges that require nurses in China to communicate in English.

Despite years of compulsory general English education, many nursing students and nurses report a gap between their knowledge and real-world requirements (Zhang et al., 2023; Chen et al., 2023). Wang et al. (2024) report that the overall level of English among nurses remains inadequate, negatively impacting foreign-related nursing work and further professional development. According to Olson (2012), many Chinese nurses struggle with understanding instructions given to them by their foreign supervisors. Nursing students' limited writing proficiency has a negative impact on their academic learning and career development. The challenge of creating coherent academic writing is especially evident in final assessments, where students are required to apply academic writing conventions under timed conditions.

While every college student in China is required to demonstrate a particular proficiency in English by passing the College English Test Band 4 (CET-4), nursing students may find this standard insufficient for their needs. CET-4 is equivalent to B1/B2 on the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages scale. However, this refers to general English ability, not English for Academic Purposes (EAP), which is more relevant to nursing contexts.

This article aims to identify and analyse the most common English writing errors made by nursing undergraduates at a Chinese university during a semester-long Academic English Writing course. The goal of this article is to provide English for Academic Purposes (EAP) instructors with practical insight into errors made by undergraduate nursing students. Numerous studies have underscored the importance of English proficiency for Chinese nurses in clinical, academic, and international settings (Zhang et al., 2023; Chen et al., 2023). However, relatively few discuss the specific challenges that nursing students face in producing academic writing in English. This study addresses this gap by identifying and analysing the most common errors in the academic writing of Chinese undergraduate nursing students to support more targeted and effective teaching practices.

Method

Data for this paper came from the written work of 38 sophomore nursing students who participated in an Academic Writing course at a prominent university in Northwest China. The course was compulsory and lasted 18 weeks, comprising 27 sessions, each session lasting 90 minutes. The students were second-year university students aged between 20 and 23, with ten males and twenty-eight females. All the students were enrolled in a four-year undergraduate nursing program. The proficiency level of the students' general English was at B1/B2 according to the CEFR scale. The level was assessed using the CET-4 exam. The students had no prior exposure to writing in an Academic English context. While the CET-4 exam includes a writing component, it is limited to a 120-180-word opinion, argumentative essay on a general topic, a letter, a proposal, a notice, or an expansion of an already outlined essay. The writing section accounts for 15% of the total score during the exam, the same amount as the translation part, and less than the reading and listening components, which make up 35% of the total score each. The English Academic Writing course's goal was to introduce students to English Academic writing conventions and help them to master writing using a five-paragraph essay model.

Throughout the course, students practised writing at paragraph and essay levels. The teaching model included a theoretical introduction, in-class assignments assessed by peers and the teacher, and concluded with a summative assignment. Assignments were submitted online, using a university-approved LMS, individually checked for plagiarism and use of AI. In cases where AI was used, students were asked to resubmit their work. The summative assignments included a focused introduction, body paragraph, conclusion, a mid-term exam, and a full five-paragraph essay for their final exam. The final exam was written during a separate session, under timed conditions, without the use of electronic devices. The writing samples used as a source of data for this study included three assignments, namely an introduction, a body paragraph, a conclusion, and a full essay from the final exam. In total, four writing samples were taken from every student. Final exam essays and individual assignments were anonymised, with all identifying details removed, and analyzed to identify common writing issues.

Mistakes were analysed and organised according to Ferris' (1995, 2002, 2012) taxonomy. Ferris's taxonomy was chosen as it offers a well-structured framework consistent with the study's goal of identifying the most frequent academic writing errors among Chinese nursing undergraduates. Ferris (1995, 2002, 2012) categorises errors in second language writing into treatable and untreatable categories, providing detailed subcategories for analysis. Treatable errors follow predictable linguistic rules and can be addressed with explicit instruction and correction. Untreatable errors do not follow predictable rules or patterns, making them difficult to explain or correct directly. Subcategories include verb errors, noun/articles errors, word form errors, word choice/lexical errors, sentence structure errors, and punctuation and mechanical errors. Mistakes were manually annotated and grouped across students. Only recurring patterns found in the writing of three or more students were included in the final analysis.

The data were analysed following Corder's (1974) steps of error analysis. First, each writing sample was examined word by word and sentence by sentence. Coding categories were generated following Ferris' (1995, 2002, 2012) taxonomy. Second, the number of errors was counted and converted into a percentage. Table 1 presents the error analysis. Sample mistakes from each subcategory were chosen to highlight the categories.

Findings and discussion

Sentence structure errors

Following Ferris' (1995, 2002, 2012) taxonomy, sentence structure errors were divided into run-on sentences, comma splices, word order problems, dangling modifiers and sentence fragments.

Run-on sentences

Run-on sentences are sentences in which two or more independent clauses are incorrectly connected with a conjunction or a comma. For example:

Second, make single-use plastics uses a lot of energy and resources, but single-use plastics just are thrown away after using once. It is a waste (Student 3).

This example includes multiple independent clauses. The structure of the first sentence is awkward and grammatically flawed. The phrase "...make single-use plastics uses..."

contains a verb form error. The repetition of “single-use plastics” reduces clarity. The first sentence can be qualified as a run-on, as it is formed by two independent clauses joined by a comma. It is considered a run-on sentence.

Possible correction:

Second, manufacturing single-use plastics uses a substantial amount of energy and resources, yet they are discarded after one use, which is a waste.

Sentence fragments

Sentence fragments are incomplete sentences. Such sentences may omit a subject, a verb, or an object, or contain an incomplete thought. They may resemble complete sentences, yet they cannot function independently and may confuse the reader. For instance:

With the development of science and technology (Student 2).

The sentence is a sentence fragment, as the prepositional phrase lacks a main clause. The sentence does not include a subject or a finite verb and expresses an incomplete thought. It introduces an idea, but fails to develop it.

Possible correction:

Thanks to the development of science and technology, social media could enter a golden era.

Comma splice

A comma splice occurs when two independent clauses are joined with a comma but without a coordinating conjunction. Example:

Besides, not everyone can pay attention to the trash separation, people may be throw them mistakenly, which is bad to trash separation (Student 21).

The independent clauses “not everyone can pay attention to the trash separation” and “people may be throw them mistakenly” are connected with just a comma, lacking a coordinating conjunction. Additionally, the sentence contains errors in verb forms and word choice.

Possible correction:

Besides, not everyone pays attention to separating trash. People may accidentally put trash in the wrong bin, harming the separation process.

Word order issues

Sentences in English should follow a subject+verb+object structure, with adverbs typically placed after verbs, but before main verbs. Word order issues occur when words are misplaced, resulting in awkward phrasing. For example:

They usually are thrown by using shortly... (Student 5).

The sentence contains a misplaced adverb “usually”, placed before the auxiliary verb “are”. In standard English, the adverb “usually” should be placed after the auxiliary verb. Furthermore, the verb “throwed” is an incorrect past participle form of the verb “throw”, and the phrase “by using shortly” is unclear.

Possible correction:

They are usually thrown away shortly after use...

Dangling modifiers

A dangling modifier occurs when a modifier does not logically or refer to a word in the clause, which often leads to confusion. For instance: With the development of artificial intelligence, it can take on more and more jobs. For example:

With the development of artificial intelligence, it can take on more and more jobs (Student 1).

The pronoun "it" appears to be modified by the introductory phrase "With the development of artificial intelligence"; however, it is unclear what "it" refers to, making the sentence confusing.

Possible correction:

With the development of artificial intelligence, AI can take on more and more jobs.

Word choice errors

Ferris (1995, 2002, 2012) divided lexical errors into several categories, including confused words, collocation errors, incorrect prepositions, and literal translations.

Collocation errors

Collocation errors occur when words are combined in a way that is grammatically correct but not naturally used by native speakers. Such errors may not impede comprehension but can reduce the fluency and naturalness of academic writing. Example:

...decomposed difficultly by microorganisms... (Student 22).

While grammatically possible, "decomposed difficultly" is not a standard collocation used in English. The adverb "difficultly" is rarely used in this context. A more idiomatic and natural expression would be "difficult to decompose."

Possible correction:

...are difficult to decompose by microorganisms...

Literal translation

Literal translation errors occur when language users directly transfer lexical or syntactic patterns from their first language (L1) into English. These errors often reflect L1 interference and may result in expressions that are grammatically correct yet semantically or stylistically unnatural in English. Example:

Banning plastics will make them caused a lot of economic pressure (Student 7).

This sentence reflects a direct transfer from a common Chinese syntactic pattern, "make [someone]...cause [something]," which does not correspond to natural English usage. The expression combines two causative structures, resulting in redundancy and grammatical inaccuracy.

Possible correction:

Banning plastics will cause much economic pressure for them.

Wrong preposition

Prepositional errors occur when a language user chooses a preposition that does not appropriately collocate with the surrounding words, resulting in an awkward or incorrect expression. These types of errors often occur among L2 learners because prepositional usage differs across languages. For example:

...discussions can help students to have a better understanding on knowledge (Student 15).

The preposition "on" does not naturally collocate with "understanding" in this context. In academic English, the standard collocation is "understanding of." Additionally, the infinitive marker "to have" may be omitted to enhance fluency and conciseness.

Possible correction:

...discussions can help students gain a better understanding of knowledge.

Verb errors

According to Ferris (1995, 2002, 2012), verb errors are among the most frequent and should be prioritised for correction as they obscure meaning and are teachable. In this study, verb errors were divided into three categories: subject-verb agreement errors, verb-form errors, and auxiliary-verb omissions.

Subject-verb agreement errors

Subject-verb agreement errors occur when the verb does not agree in number or person with its subject. These errors can impair a sentence's grammatical accuracy and are often noticeable to readers. For instance:

It affect people's psychology (Student 12).

The singular subject "it" requires a singular verb form. However, the verb "affect" is in its plural form, which violates agreement rules.

Possible correction:

It affects people's psychology.

Verb form errors

Ferris (2002) identifies verb form errors as mistakes in the morphological construction of verbs, including incorrect use of participles and confusion between gerunds and infinitives. These errors are common among L2 writers and can distort the intended meaning. Example:

...social media has became a key part of people's daily life (Student 18).

The present perfect tense requires the past participle form of the main verb. In this case, "became" should be replaced by "become" to form a grammatically correct verb phrase.

Possible correction:

...social media has become a key part of people's daily life.

Omission of auxiliary verbs

Omission of auxiliary verbs occurs when essential auxiliary elements such as *be*, *have*, or *do* are omitted from a clause. These errors are particularly common among Chinese learners of English, as Mandarin Chinese does not employ auxiliaries in the same way English does. For example:

Online classes do not as effective as tradition in-person learning (Student 11).

The comparative structure 'do not as effective as' is incorrect as "effective" is an adjective, thus requiring a linking verb "are". Additionally, the phrase contains a spelling error ("leaming") and a word choice issue ("tradition").

Possible correction:

Online classes are not as effective as traditional in-person learning.

Noun/article errors

According to Ferris (1995, 2002, 2012), noun/article errors are mistakes related to noun forms and the use of nouns, including the use of articles and pluralisation. These mistakes may not obstruct the meaning, but they affect the grammatical accuracy and fluency of writing.

Plural/singular noun errors

Plural and singular noun errors occur when writers incorrectly apply number marking to nouns, such as omitting plural endings, using plural forms for uncountable nouns, or misapplying singular and plural distinctions. Example:

...many teenage are addicted (Student 12).

The determiner "many" must be followed by a plural countable noun. The noun "teenage" is both misspelled and incorrectly formed, lacking the required plural suffix.

Possible correction:

...many teenagers are addicted.

Omission of articles

An article omission error occurs when language users omit a necessary article that English grammar requires. These types of errors are widespread among L2 students whose mother language does not require the use of articles. For instance:

It is necessity for people to undertand how to correct use it (Student 18).

The singular countable noun "necessity" requires the indefinite article "a." Additionally, the verb "undertand" is misspelled, and the phrase "correct use" should be revised to ensure grammatical and semantic accuracy.

Possible correction:

It is a necessity for people to understand how to use it correctly.

Word form errors

Word form errors occur when a writer selects an incorrect grammatical category of a word, resulting in a grammatically or semantically inappropriate expression. Ferris (2002) identifies such errors as *treatable* through explicit instruction on morphology and word function. These errors are often influenced by first-language (L1) transfer, as learners may apply morphological or syntactic patterns from their native language that do not align with English conventions.

Using an adjective instead of an adverb

This error occurs when language users use an Adjective instead of an Adverb in a context where an adverb is required. As adverbs typically modify nouns, and not verbs, this mistake may cause an ungrammatical expression. Example:

While online classes is convenient, it often lack the effectiveness of traditional in-person learning (Student 20).

The adjective "*convenient*" incorrectly modifies the verb phrase "*is*." The sentence also contains a subject–verb agreement error ("*classes is*" → "*classes are*"). The adverb "*conveniently*" should be used to describe the manner in which online classes are delivered.

Possible correction:

While online classes are delivered conveniently, they often lack the effectiveness of traditional in-person learning.

Gerund/infinitive errors

Gerund/infinitive errors occur when language users use the incorrect non-finite form of the verb after a particular verb, adjective, or preposition. Example:

...more and more people don't want to thinking... (Student 10).

The verb "*want*" should be followed by a to-infinitive rather than a gerund. The phrase "*to thinking*" is therefore ungrammatical.

Possible correction:

...more and more people do not want to think...

Punctuation/mechanics errors

Errors in punctuation and mechanics negatively affect coherence, fluency, and the overall professionalism of academic writing, even when they do not obscure meaning. Such errors include issues with commas, spelling, capitalisation, and other surface-level conventions.

Comma errors

Comma errors refer to incorrect use, overuse, or omission of commas in written English. These errors can disrupt the clarity and flow of a sentence, confusing the reader. Example:

First and foremost Eating more green, life more happiness (Student 5).

In formal written English, a comma should follow an introductory phrase such as "*First and foremost*" to separate it from the main clause. The sentence also contains grammatical and lexical inaccuracies that affect clarity.

Possible correction:

First and foremost, eating more greens leads to a happier life.

Spelling errors

Spelling errors are typically rule-based or memory-based; they do not usually affect meaning, but can significantly impact the credibility and readability of writing. For example:

Some students in order to complishing homework, all problems use AI to solve.

The word "*complishing*" appears to be a misspelling of "*accomplishing*." However, even when corrected, "*accomplishing homework*" sounds unnatural in this context. The verb "*complete*" is a more appropriate collocation with "*homework*."

Possible correction:

In order to complete homework, some students use AI to solve all problems.

The purpose of this study was to identify and analyse the most common errors in academic English writing among Chinese undergraduate nursing students enrolled in an academic writing course. The errors were categorised using Ferris's (1995, 2002, 2012) taxonomy. In the analysed samples, the most frequent category was punctuation and mechanics errors, accounting for 37.7% of all identified cases. These surface-level errors included issues such as capitalisation, spelling, punctuation, and formatting. Although they did not hinder comprehension, they negatively affected the overall readability and professionalism of the students' writing. The second most common category was verb errors, accounting for 17.6% of all errors. Such errors directly influenced grammatical accuracy and clarity, making them a high priority for targeted feedback and instruction (Ferris, 2002). Among these, verb-form errors were the most prevalent, accounting for 7.3% of the total. Furthermore, less frequent word choice and word-form errors contributed to non-native-like expressions, resulting in reduced clarity and fluency in the students' writing.

The findings align with prior studies indicating that Chinese nursing students often struggle to transfer general English knowledge to the specific requirements of academic writing (Zhang et al., 2023; Chen et al., 2023). The commonality of verb form errors aligns with previous findings by Hinkel (2004), Chan (2010), and Wang and Wen (2002), which underscore the prevalence of such errors among Chinese learners of English. The occurrence of word-form and word-choice errors may indicate that Chinese students rely on L1 transfer. This reliance may be due to limited exposure to idiomatic Academic English and a lack of morphological inflexion in Chinese. A study by Severino and Prim (2015) suggests that approximately one-fifth of word-choice errors stem from literal translations from Chinese. In the present study, we can see the influence of Chinese in sentences like: "Here are some of my views about AI's influence as follows", which is a word-for-word translation of *以下是我的几点看法*; "As a as praes say, every coins have has its two sides", which attempts to include two Chinese phrases: *每个硬币都有两面* and *正如谚语所说*; "With the development of artificial intelligence, it can take on more and

more jobs.”, which, although not incorrect, follows a common Chinese essay opening structure *随着.....的发展*, which translation sounds formulaic in English.

Despite the issues with word forms and word choices, many students were able to incorporate proper Medical English vocabulary into their exam essays. Among properly used phrases, we can see ‘obesity’, ‘nutritious options’, ‘balanced diets’, ‘mental well-being’, ‘immune system’, ‘bacterium’ and ‘potential risks to human health’. Instances of choosing more major-related vocabulary occurred mostly in essays with fewer mistakes. In the exam essays, literal translation mistakes occurred multiple times in connection with verb form errors; for example, “...help students open brain...” is a literal translation and could be corrected to “...help students open their minds...”

The most common co-occurring error pair was spelling errors with comma errors, accounting for 13.1% of all errors. This common co-occurrence may indicate that, during high-pressure conditions such as the final exam or a summative assignment, students were more focused on generating ideas, using correct grammar and proper word choice, than on surface-level proofreading. Another notable co-occurring error type was verb-form errors combined with literal translation, indicating direct L1 transfer, as Mandarin Chinese does not employ verb morphology in the same way English does. For a similar reason, article omission and plural noun errors frequently co-occurred, most likely because Mandarin Chinese lacks inflection for definiteness and number.

The results highlight the need to incorporate targeted instructional strategies in Academic English writing courses for nursing students. The most common errors in the analysed texts involved punctuation, spelling, and general mechanics. Hinkel (2004) suggests that these surface-level errors may result from L1 interference. While these surface-level errors may not significantly hinder the content as much as verb form or noun errors, they do reduce the author’s credibility (Ferris, 2002; Hyland, 2006). To address these challenges, especially at the CET-4 level and below, instructors can provide scaffolded feedback focused on mechanics. Practical strategies may include the use of bilingual editing checklists or peer review rubrics that highlight punctuation and spelling (Bitchener & Ferris, 2012). Frequent low-stakes writing tasks that allow revisions based on instructor and peer feedback can strengthen students’ editing skills and build their metalinguistic awareness (Evans et al., 2011). Furthermore, exercises using authentic student writing, such as comma placement, may help students improve their surface-level skills while minimizing anxiety.

The second most common error category was verb-related errors. Verb errors include incorrect tense, missing auxiliary, or misuse of verb forms. Difficulties with verb forms can be partially attributed to L1 transfer. Verbs in Chinese do not conjugate for tense or agreement; thus, numerous students may overlook morphological endings in English (Ferris, 2002; Hinkel, 2004). Inaccurate use of verbs often hinders comprehensibility. To address these issues, instructors should provide regular, focused instruction on verb tenses relevant to academic writing, especially the present simple, present perfect, and past perfect. Using real examples from students’ writing can raise awareness of common verb errors and reinforce correct verb patterns.

Furthermore, guided correction activities can help students identify errors in verb usage. Studies overtaken by Bitchener and Ferris (2012) and Ellis (2009) suggest that combining metalinguistic feedback with revisions can improve students’ long-term

accuracy. Additionally, when instructing students at lower proficiency levels, such as CET-4, activities should include controlled-variation tasks to build students' flexibility and confidence.

Article omission and plural/singular mismatches made up 4.5% and 3.8% of all errors. Previous studies, including Hinkel (2004), found that article omission is prevalent among Chinese students. These difficulties stem from L1 interference, as Chinese does not mark nouns for definiteness or number in the same way English does. These types of errors can impact the clarity of students' writing, particularly in academic contexts. To address these errors, instructors should not only explicitly teach the semantic function of articles but also reinforce pluralisation rules with academic vocabulary commonly used in the nursing context. Practical activities could include editing anonymized student texts, contrastive examples that show how articles influence meaning, or sentence-combining tasks that require correct article and number agreement. According to Bitchener and Ferris (2012) and Ellis (2009), incorporating visual cues, such as underlining and marginal comments, may help students identify and revise these errors.

Sentence structure errors were consistently observed in the writing samples, with sentence fragments occurring most often. These problems are likely a cause of differences in the organisation of Mandarin Chinese and English sentences. These errors may impede readability and academic tone, which can be detrimental in the EAP context. To better address sentence structure errors, instructors can incorporate explicit instruction on English sentence structure and use contrastive analysis to highlight how English handles subordination, coordination, and sentence-final punctuation. Practical strategies might include combining and de-combining sentence tasks, which would require students to reconstruct scrambled sentences. Incorporating peer-review sessions with a clear, structured checklist may also benefit students. Targeted instructor feedback may also reinforce self-monitoring (Bitchener & Ferris, 2012).

Word-form errors were the least common; however, their presence is especially noticeable in formal writing, as they obstruct fluency and academic tone. These errors may be caused by students' difficulty in recognising grammatical categories, as Mandarin Chinese lacks explicit morphological markers for different parts of speech. To address these issues, instructors may include activities focused on word morphology. An exercise in which students notice word families and practice converting forms in context may prove especially helpful. Additionally, gap-fill tasks, sentence transformation activities and peer-review sessions focused on word forms can increase students' awareness of correct usage (Ellis, 2006).

Literal translation and collocation errors were not as common as other errors, with both combined accounting for over 4% of all errors. These errors are widespread among Chinese learners of English (Lu, 2016). Liu and Shaw (2001) suggested that such errors often result from literal translation and frequent miscollocations. These types of errors not only obstruct meaning but also may be inappropriate in academic contexts, affecting students' credibility. To address this issue, instructors can explicitly teach collocation using discipline-specific word lists. An activity in which students analyse expert models and student writing can help raise awareness of what is acceptable in English academic writing. Studies carried out by Hinkel (2004) and Liu and Shaw (2001) suggest that corpus-informed instruction, including

collocation-building exercises, should be followed up by the teacher's feedback that focuses on correctness, appropriateness, and register.

Overlapping error patterns, such as plural noun and article omission errors, verb form errors and literal translations, highlight the need for integrated instruction that discusses the interaction among these errors rather than isolating them. A set of classroom activities combining noticing, categorising, and editing could help students identify how multiple minor issues disrupt fluency when combined. Additionally, focusing students' attention on a recurring combination may improve their awareness and revision practices in the future.

Conclusion

The study aimed to identify and examine the most common errors made by Chinese undergraduate nursing students in English academic writing. In the analysed samples, the most frequently occurring error types involved punctuation and mechanics, followed by verb-related errors and issues with word choice and word form. These results underscore the linguistic challenges that negatively influence accuracy and fluency in academic writing among students. By focusing on recurring issues, the study provides a practical guide for English for Academic Purposes (EAP) instructors seeking to address the needs of nursing undergraduates in China. The findings' implications highlight the need for combining explicit grammar instruction, guided error analysis, and feedback-based writing activities in EAP courses to improve students' linguistic competence. The study contributes to discipline-specific writing in the context of Chinese higher education, offering empirical data that can enhance curriculum design in nursing education.

Despite its valuable insights, this study is subject to several limitations. The writing samples came from 38 second-year students at one university, which limits generalizability. Furthermore, manual error identification and coding may have introduced a degree of subjectivity, despite efforts to ensure reliability. The data may not reflect the participants' overall English proficiency, as it was collected solely from the exam and written assignments. In addition, the instructional context may have influenced the results.

To address these limitations, future studies should include a larger participant pool from multiple institutions. Longitudinal studies tracking students' progress over time could help assess the effectiveness of instructional interventions in reducing error frequency. Additionally, using both qualitative and quantitative methods would deepen the understanding of learners' writing development. Ultimately, such research could help create a more effective academic English writing course tailored to the specific needs of Chinese nursing students. In conclusion, this study contributes to understanding the challenges of academic writing among Chinese nursing students and underscores the pedagogical need for targeted instruction and feedback. Incorporating these findings into teaching practice will allow EAP instructors to address students' linguistic accuracy needs and improve students' confidence, thereby helping them meet the demands of an increasingly internationalized healthcare environment.

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