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The Effect of Theme-Based Lexical Approach on English Writing Fluency and Accuracy Among Students in Chinese Vocational and Technical College

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ABSTRACT

Lexical chunks have garnered increasing attention in second language acquisition, and their essential role in enhancing high school students' writing competency has been well-documented. However, the relationship between a theme-based lexical approach and English writing fluency and accuracy among vocational and technical college students remains underexplored. Addressing this gap, the present study investigated the effects of integrating a theme-based lexical approach on the English writing fluency and accuracy of first-year English-major students at a Chinese vocational and technical college. Specifically, the study aimed to evaluate the impact of the theme-based lexical approach on students' writing fluency and accuracy, as well as their confidence and motivation in writing, resulting from the intervention. Two parallel classes, each comprising 55 students, were selected as experimental and control groups using a random sampling method. Over a two-month experimental period, the experimental group received instruction through the theme-based lexical approach, while the control group followed the standard curriculum without additional treatment. Both groups participated in a writing test and completed a questionnaire before and after the experiment. The results revealed that the experimental group significantly outperformed the control group in writing, showing notable improvements in both accuracy and fluency. Furthermore, students in the experimental group reported a dramatic increase in writing confidence and motivation, highlighting the effectiveness of the theme-based lexical approach in fostering enhanced writing outcomes.

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1. Introduction

The Notice on the Implementation Plan for National Vocational Education Reform, issued by China's State Council in January 2019, explicitly states that the overarching goal is to align with international advanced standards, elevate the prominence of vocational education within broader education reform and innovation, and enhance educational and teaching standards in vocational and technical colleges^[1]. Against this backdrop, the English proficiency of Chinese vocational and technical students becomes increasingly important, as it plays a vital role in cultivating internationally oriented, high-skilled human resources. In the context of economic globalization, China requires a significant number of highly qualified professionals with foreign language proficiency, strong communication skills, and an international outlook^[2, 3]. Writing ability, as a direct indicator of students' cognitive and English language competencies, holds particular significance in this regard^[4]. Consequently, developing students' writing skills has become a key focus of Vocational and Technical Education (VTE) reform in China^[5, 6].

Vocabulary is a fundamental component of writing ability, a fact well-supported by academic research. Coxhead and Byrd^[7] have emphasized that to meet the demands of accurate, fluent, and effective writing, students must acquire a robust vocabulary and a repertoire of sentence patterns to enable flexible language use and coherent discourse construction. Chen^[8] and Tang^[9] have highlighted that insufficient vocabulary often leads to issues in English writing, such as poor content development, lack of meaning and context, and repetitive sentence patterns. As a result, writing instruction should prioritize enhancing students' vocabulary usage skills. Lexical resources are crucial for improving writing performance, as they help minimize negative language transfer, strengthen expression ability, and deepen understanding of lexical collocations. Mumford and Dikilitaş^[10] introduced the "Lexical Approach," emphasizing that lexis—words and word combinations—forms the core foundation of language communication. They argued that vocabulary, rather than functions, terms, syntax, or other units of teaching and plan-

ning, should take precedence in language learning and teaching.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Related Studies about Theme-Based Lexical Chunks

The term "chunks" was first introduced in psychology by Miller^[11], who described chunking as the process of grouping smaller units into larger, meaningful ones stored in the brain to enhance memory capacity. Initially studied in memory research, the concept later influenced linguistics, where scholars such as Becker^[12], Howarth^[13], Lewis^[14], and Wray^[15] explored lexical chunks from diverse perspectives, including their role in language acquisition, comprehension, and use. Lewis^[14] defined "lexical chunks" as fixed or semi-fixed, conventionalized multi-word expressions frequently used in communication, which learners process as single units to facilitate retrieval and use.

The lexical approach, as described by Lewis^[14], is based on the idea that the fundamental building blocks of language learning and communication are not grammar, functions, or notions but rather lexis—that is, individual words and word combinations^[15]. Similarly, Irons^[16] emphasized that teaching lexical phrases helps learners achieve fluency by providing pre-fabricated language patterns for easier and more natural communication. This view is supported by Fu^[17], who argued that lexical patterns underpin much of natural language use, and Shirazizadeh and Amirfazlian^[18], who noted that the ability to produce idiomatic and formulaic expressions is a hallmark of native-like fluency.

Research has highlighted the critical role of lexical chunks in both first and second language acquisition. For instance, Mumford and Dikilitaş^[10] showed that formulaic expressions are vital for developing pragmatically appropriate language use. In the context of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) education, especially in China, the significance of lexical chunks remains a topic of inquiry. Studies have demonstrated that incorporating lexical chunks into

language instruction can significantly enhance learners' writing skills. For example, research by Wang, Wang^[19] and Yao and Suwanthep^[20] found that teaching lexical chunks improved college students' writing fluency and accuracy in China. Additionally, Coxhead and Byrd^[7] argued that lexical chunks simplify academic writing tasks, as learners can use ready-made expressions instead of constructing sentences word by word. This view aligns with findings by Friend, Cook^[21] and Šišková^[22], who reported that teaching lexical bundles fosters better recall, reduces cognitive load, and enhances overall writing proficiency. This growing body of evidence underscores the importance of lexical chunks as a core element in EFL teaching and learning, particularly for developing writing skills and achieving greater fluency and accuracy in English communication.

2.2. Current Situation of Vocational and Technical College

Many students in vocational and technical colleges generally have limited English proficiency, with English writing posing a particularly significant challenge in their language learning process^[6, 23]. Cun^[5] noted that survey findings reveal a common deficiency in students' vocabulary, which negatively impacts their writing competency. A limited vocabulary often leads to template-based writing, characterized by simplistic structures, limited variety, and a lack of coherence. Zhang^[24] highlighted that many Chinese students rely on rote memorization to learn vocabulary, resulting in a lack of sufficient and authentic word knowledge for use in compositions. Furthermore, these students often struggle to express their opinions clearly and logically. Some resort to directly translating their ideas from Chinese to English, which can result in errors. Tang^[9] and Teng^[25] observed that such compositions frequently contain mother-tongue interference, including misuse of lexical meanings, redundant expressions, or direct, sentence-by-sentence translations. For instance, students may incorrectly render "read a newspaper" as "see a newspaper," reflecting the influence of Chinese language structures. Lexical resources, however, are critical for overcoming such issues. They can reduce negative language transfer, improve expression, enhance knowledge of lexical collocations, and lead to better writing performance^[20, 26]. To achieve more natural and authentic English writing, Chinese EFL learners need exposure to prefabricated, fixed lan-

guage materials in an appropriate language environment, a key principle of the lexical approach.

Students in China's vocational and technical colleges also face systemic challenges that exacerbate their difficulties in English writing. These institutions typically enroll students with lower scores under China's Entrance Examination system, and societal biases often suggest that vocational graduates are less likely to secure desirable jobs. This has historically relegated VTE to a lower status within higher education^[1, 6, 27]. As a result, English writing in these colleges remains predominantly examination-focused, failing to address its essential purpose as a tool for expression and communication^[28]. Additionally, the lack of achievement or positive feedback in English writing often leads students to disengage, contributing to writing anxiety or even a complete loss of interest^[6]. Given these challenges, there is a clear need for writing instruction that is tailored to the specific proficiency levels and learning needs of vocational and technical college students. Addressing these issues through more practical, adaptive teaching methods could significantly improve both their writing skills and confidence.

2.3. Relation between Theme-Based Lexical Approach and Writing Accuracy and Fluency

The lexical approach has been widely validated as essential for improving multiple aspects of students' language proficiency, including vocabulary awareness, writing accuracy, syntactic complexity, and discourse coherence^[29]. Shirazideh and Amirfazlian^[18] explored the impact of lexical chunks on the fluency of 120 Saudi EFL learners in paragraph writing, revealing that training in lexical chunks significantly enhanced the performance of the experimental group. Similarly, Saeedakhtar, Bagerin^[30] highlighted the importance of mastering multi-word strings, or ready-made chunks, in improving English fluency. These findings align with the assertion that formulaic language plays a crucial role in achieving native-like fluency and coherence^[31]. Additionally, Coxhead and Byrd^[7] noted that lexical chunk instruction fosters better recall and reduces cognitive load during writing tasks, further demonstrating its effectiveness in language learning.

However, developing English writing competency remains a complex and demanding task, particularly for voca-

tional and technical college students. Most existing studies have focused on learners in general EFL or academic contexts, often neglecting vocational students' unique linguistic needs. Moreover, limited research has examined the influence of thematic lexical chunks tailored to specific contexts, a gap that is critical for addressing practical language use in vocational education. Chinese second-language learners face particular challenges, including negative transfer of vocabulary, frequent spelling errors, and an over-reliance on direct translation from their mother tongue^[17, 25]. As noted by Lewis^[14], inadequate vocabulary knowledge often results in poor writing quality, including limited variety and coherence. For vocational and technical college students, these issues can be exacerbated by the additional stress and workload associated with rote learning of chunks^[5, 6].

Addressing these challenges, thematic chunking offers a promising solution. By integrating lexical chunks into thematic contexts relevant to learners' specific needs, students can more effectively acquire, retain, and apply these expressions in real-life communication. Research by Shirazizadeh and Amirfazlian^[18] supports this approach, emphasizing that contextualized learning enhances both comprehension and practical usage. Additionally, Richards and Rodgers^[32] argued that thematic chunks not only enrich language learning resources but also make acquisition more accessible and enjoyable for learners. By providing opportunities for interaction and practical application within meaningful contexts, thematic chunking optimizes the effectiveness of the lexical approach in improving writing fluency, coherence, and accuracy.

2.4. Research Questions

What has been discussed above has led the current study to answer the following questions:

- (1) To what extent does the theme-based lexical approach affect students' writing proficiency, especially fluency and accuracy?
- (2) What is the effect of the theme-based lexical approach

on students' attitudes toward English writing?

3. Methodology

3.1. Design of the Study

This study employs a quasi-experimental design to evaluate the effects of a theme-based lexical approach on students' writing fluency, accuracy, motivation, and confidence. Two groups were established: an experimental group and a control group. Using a random sampling technique, two parallel classes, each comprising 55 students, were selected to minimize selection bias and ensure comparability between the groups. The intervention spans two months, during which both groups receive regular instruction three times a week, with each session lasting one hour and thirty minutes. The experimental group receives additional instruction incorporating specialized lexical chunks organized by thematic classification. In contrast, the control group follows the standard curriculum without the added lexical focus. To assess the intervention's impact, both groups participate in two writing tests and complete two questionnaires administered before and after the experimental period. This design ensures a structured evaluation of the theme-based lexical approach on multiple aspects of students' writing performance and attitudes.

3.2. Participants

The participants in this study are freshmen majoring in Hotel English at a vocational college in China. The experimental group consists of 55 students aged 17 to 20 who received the theme-based lexical approach over an eight-week period, while the control group includes 55 students aged 16 to 19 (refer to **Table 1**). Both groups share similar English learning experiences and educational backgrounds. After 10 years of English instruction from elementary to high school, the participants are familiar with basic English knowledge, including a foundational vocabulary, basic sentence construction rules, and some ability in English writing.

Table 1. Participants' Demographic Information

	Age	Number	Time for Learning English	Courses Length
Experimental group	17–20	55	10 years	8 weeks
Control group	16–19	55	10 years	8 weeks

3.3. Instruments

This study employed two primary instruments: questionnaires and writing tests. All participants in the experimental and control groups completed the questionnaires, pre-test, and post-test simultaneously. The questionnaires were adapted from existing ones with modifications to suit the study's context. The writing tests were selected from the College English Test Band Four (CET-4), a nationally recognized examination for non-English major students in China. Widely accepted by institutions and employers, CET-4 serves as a key measure of English proficiency and is often used as a recruitment criterion^[20]. The tests were administered at the start and end of the intervention, following CET-4 standards outlined in the Guidelines for College English Teaching^[33]. The CET-4's validity and reliability, confirmed in prior studies^[34, 35], make it a suitable tool for assessing participants' English writing skills.

At the beginning of the experiment, participants completed a pre-questionnaire to assess their perceptions, confidence, and motivation regarding English writing. The pre-questionnaire included 14 closed-ended questions across three dimensions: writing cognition, confidence, and motivation. A pre-test was also administered to evaluate baseline writing fluency and accuracy.

Between the pre-test and post-test, the experimental group received a theme-based lexical intervention, while the control group followed the standard curriculum without additional instruction. During the intervention, the experimental group was introduced to lexical chunks organized by themes. Teaching began with chunk recognition, where students identified, classified, and organized lexical chunks from provided study materials^[22]. They were then guided to incorporate these chunks into their writing.

At the end of the intervention, both groups took a post-test, writing an essay on the same topic as in the pre-test within 30 minutes. The post-test assessed improvements in writing scores using the same grading criteria as the pre-test. Essays were evaluated using www.pigai.org and reviewed by a college English teacher with ten years of experience in English writing instruction. Additionally, the tests were analyzed to determine whether the theme-based lexical approach improved students' lexical resources, providing evidence of

enhanced writing fluency and accuracy. Following the post-test, participants completed a post-questionnaire. This questionnaire repeated the 14 items from the pre-questionnaire to evaluate changes in motivation and confidence and included eight additional questions about the impact of the theme-based lexical approach.

3.4. Data Collection and Data Analysis

The original marking rubrics of the CET-4 were used in the study to quantify students' general writing proficiency^[34], involving two examiners. Before the study, a pilot study was conducted with the examiners, who achieved a high level of inter-rater reliability (Cohen Kappa = 0.92). To address Research Question I, overall writing scores from the pre-test and post-test were analyzed. Final scores were calculated as the average of grades provided by www.pigai.org and experienced examiners, both adhering to CET-4 grading criteria. Two rounds of text analysis (pre-test and post-test) were conducted. More specifically, regarding writing fluency and accuracy, Chen^[36] proposed that language fluency can be measured by the number of productive words per minute (W/M), while the ratio of errors to total words (E/W) serves as an indicator of writing accuracy. Cai^[37] further validated these metrics as reliable measures for assessing fluency and accuracy in English writing. Accordingly, this study adopted the following measures:

- Writing Fluency: Measured by the number of words produced per minute (W/M), where higher values indicate greater fluency.
- Writing Accuracy: Measured by the ratio of language errors to total words (E/W), with lower ratios indicating greater accuracy.

Statistical analysis was performed using SPSS 22.0. Independent-samples T-tests were used to compare differences between the experimental and control groups, while paired-samples T-tests assessed changes within each group over time. Prior to these analyses, the normality of data was checked, which ensured the use of these parametric tests. These analyses determined whether the theme-based lexical approach produced significant improvements in writing fluency and accuracy.

4. Results

The data from the pre-test and post-test writing were analyzed to address the first research question: To what extent does the theme-based lexical approach affect students' writing proficiency, especially fluency and accuracy? The two questionnaires provided insights to answer the second research question: What is the effect of the theme-based lexical approach on students' attitudes toward English writing?

4.1. Effect of the Theme-Based Lexical Approach on Students' Writing Fluency and Accuracy

For the first research question, the data on writing scores, accuracy, and fluency collected from the pre-test and post-test for both the experimental and control groups are presented below.

4.1.1. Results from Writing Scores in Pre-Test and Post-Test

As shown in **Table 2**, the mean score of the experimental group is 78.5, while that of the control group is 79.4, indicating minimal differences between the two groups before the experiment. The standard deviation for the experimental group is 4.61, compared to 5.33 for the control group. Statistical analysis confirms that there is no significant difference between the groups ($p > 0.05$).

According to **Table 3**, the T value is 4.676, and the

corresponding significance level (sig.) is 0.000, which is below the threshold of 0.05, indicating statistical significance. This result suggests that after implementing the theme-based lexical approach in the experimental group, there was a significant difference in writing scores between the two classes. Furthermore, the mean score for the experimental group is 83.61, which is notably higher than the control group's mean score of 79.74. In other words, students in the experimental group made substantial progress in English writing after the two-month study utilizing the theme-based lexical approach.

To further investigate the difference in writing scores within the experimental group, paired T-test analysis was conducted on the pre-test and post-test scores using SPSS, with the results presented in **Table 4**. The T distribution for the paired T-test is 7.848, with a corresponding significance level (sig.) of 0.000, which is below 0.05, indicating statistical significance. The findings show a significant difference in writing scores between the two tests within the experimental group after the theme-based lexical approach was implemented. The mean score increased notably, from 78.51 in the pre-test to 83.61 in the post-test. These results confirm that the theme-based lexical approach played a significant role in enhancing English writing skills. Additionally, the post-test mean scores of the experimental group were significantly higher than their pre-test scores. Furthermore, the experimental group outperformed the control group in the post-test, demonstrating a distinct difference in final scores between the two groups after the intervention.

Table 2. Results of Independent Sample T-test From Pre-Test Writing Scores.

	Group	N	Mean Value	Standard Deviation	t	Sig.
Pre-test	experimental group	55	78.514	4.614	-1.004	0.318
	control group	55	79.473	5.328		

Table 3. Data of Post Writing Scores from Experimental and Control Group.

	Group	N	Mean Value	Standard Deviation	t	Sig.
Final Scores In post-test	experimental group	55	83.611	3.070	4.676	0.000
	control group	55	79.741	5.266		

Table 4. Results of Paired Samples T-Test from Pre-test and Post-test.

		Mean Value	N	Standard Deviation	t	Sig.
experimental group	Post-test	83.6111	54	3.070	7.848	0.000
	Pre-test	78.5139	54	4.614		

4.1.2. Results from Writing Fluency in Pre-Test and Post-test

According to **Tables 5** and **6**, the T-value is 1.733, and the significance level (sig.) is 0.086, which is greater than 0.05. This indicates that, prior to the experiment, there was no significant difference in the number of words per minute between the experimental group and the control group.

The paired sample T-test revealed a T-value of 13.522 with a significance level (sig.) of 0.000, which is below

0.05, indicating a statistically significant difference. The descriptive data analysis shows that the mean W/M (words per minute) in the experimental group increased from 5.9 in the pre-test to 7.94 in the post-test. As shown in **Tables 7** and **8**, the mean number of words per minute in the post-test was significantly higher than in the pre-test for the experimental group. This indicates a clear improvement in writing fluency, as evidenced by the increased W/M scores after the intervention. According to Chen^[8], this increase in W/M demonstrates an improvement in fluency.

Table 5. Descriptive Statistics Data of W/M from Two Groups in Pre-test.

	Group	N	Mean	Std.Deviation	Std.Error Mean
W/M in pre-test	experimental group	55	5.609	0.944	0.127
	control group	55	5.902	0.831	0.112

Table 6. Independent Sample Test of W/M from Two Classes in Pre-test.

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		T-Test for Equality of Means						95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference		Lower	Upper
W/M in pre-test	Equal variance assumed	3.747	0.056	-1.733	108	0.086	-0.294	0.170		-0.630	0.042
	Equal variance not assumed			-1.733	106.288	0.086	-0.294	0.170		-0.630	0.040

Table 7. Descriptive Statistics Data of W/M of Experimental Group in Post-test.

		Mean	N	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Experimental Group	W/M in post-test	7.941	55	1.146	0.154
	W/M in pre-test	5.902	55	0.831	0.112

Table 8. Paired Sample Test of W/M of Experimental Group in Pre-test and Post-test.

Paired Sample Test							
	Coupled Difference					t	Sig. (2-tailed)
	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference			
				Lower	Upper		
W/M in post-test W/M in pre-test	2.038	1.118	0.000	1.736	2.341	13.522	54

4.1.3. Results from Writing Accuracy in Pre-Test and Post-Test

According to **Tables 9** and **10**, the T-value is 0.323, with a significance level (sig.) of 0.747, which exceeds 0.05. This indicates that, before the experiment, there was no sig-

nificant difference in the error-to-word ratios (E/W) between the experimental and control groups.

As shown in **Tables 11** and **12**, the paired sample T-test revealed a T-value of 22.021 with a significance level (sig.) of 0.000, which is below 0.05, indicating a statistically

significant difference. The descriptive data analysis shows that the mean error ratio (E/W) decreased from 4.3% in the pre-test to 2.214% in the post-test. The post-test mean E/W ratio for the experimental group is notably lower than the pre-test ratio, demonstrating a significant improvement in

accuracy after the experiment. According to Chen^[36], this reduction in error ratio reflects an improvement in writing accuracy. From the above data, it is evident that the lexical approach significantly enhanced both the accuracy and fluency of students' English writing.

Table 9. Descriptive Statistics Data of E/W from Two Classes in Pre-test.

	Group	N	Mean	Std.Deviation	Std.Error Mean
E/W in pre-test	Control	55	0.044	0.019	0.003
	Experimental	55	0.043	0.0145	0.002

Table 10. Results of E/W from Two Classes in Pre-test.

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		T-Test for Equality of Means						
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
									Lower	Upper
E/W in pre-test	Equal variance assumed	6.676	0.011	0.323	108	0.747	0.001	0.003	-0.005	0.007
	Equal variance not assumed			0.323	100.236	0.747	0.001	0.003	-0.005	0.007

Table 11. Descriptive Statistics Data of E/W of Experimental group in Post-test.

	Mean	N	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
E/W in post-test	0.021	55	0.007	0.001
E/W in pre-test	0.043	55	0.014	0.002

Table 12. Paired Sample Test of E/W of Experimental group in Pre-test and Post-test.

	Coupled Difference				t	Sig. (2-tailed)	
	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference			
				Lower	Upper		
E/W in post-test E/W in pre-test	-0.022	0.007	0.001	-0.023	-0.020	-22.021	0.000

4.2. Effects of Theme-Based Lexical Approach on Students' Attitudes

As shown in **Table 13**, students in the experimental group initially displayed low interest and confidence in English writing before the experiment. However, after the experiment, a significant shift was observed. The percentage of students selecting "disagree" and "strongly disagree" for

the top thirteen questions decreased substantially, while the percentage of those selecting "agree" and "strongly agree" increased dramatically. This change indicates that the application of the lexical approach significantly improved students' confidence and interest in English writing. They developed a more positive perception, with heightened interest and confidence, reduced anxiety, and an increased enthusiasm for attending English writing classes.

Table 13. Comparison of the Attitude (Percentage) toward Writing in Experimental Group.

Item	Before the Experiment					After the Experiment				
	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1. You think college English writing is very easy.	0	0	28.4	66.1	5.5	10.9	34.5	36.3	12.8	5.5
2. You are very interested in English writing.	0	0	43.6	30.9	25.5	1.4	42.0	29.1	25.5	2.0
3. You believe there is no difference between college and high school English writing.	0	0	31.8	55.5	12.7	9.0	18.0	32.7	31.3	9.0
4. You think your writing skills are pretty good.	0	0	13.6	55.5	30.9	3.6	9.0	40.0	40.2	7.2
5. Compared to English multiple-choice questions, reading, and cloze tests, you prefer English writing.	0	0	32.7	38.2	29.1	12.7	29.1	32.8	16.4	9.0
6. You are confident in writing a good English composition.	0	0	36.4	40.0	23.6	22.0	36.4	18.0	20.0	3.6
7. You never feel nervous about English writing.	0	0	43.6	47.2	9.2	7.2	20.0	43.7	29.1	0
8. You always know how to express yourself in English when writing.	0	0	32.7	60.1	7.2	10.9	31.0	37.9	18.2	2.0
9. You look forward to English writing class.	0	0	50.9	43.6	5.5	11.0	40.0	34.4	11.0	3.6
10. Discussing your English composition with classmates is enjoyable.	0	0	51	41.8	7.2	7.2	38.2	38.3	12.7	3.6
11. You believe that with more practice, your English writing will improve.	0	0	52.7	43.6	3.6	31.0	45.5	16.0	5.5	2.0
12. You never revise your composition before handing it in.	0	0	18.2	58.2	23.6	16.4	27.3	10.8	40.0	5.5
13. You believe your composition never contains Chinglish expressions.	0	0	15.5	62.7	21.8	11.0	16.4	12.6	38.2	21.8
14. You think that improving your English writing ability is not very important for English learning.	0	0	52.7	41.8	5.5	0	0	12.7	65.5	21.8

Table 14 presents data on the acceptance and perspectives of students in the experimental group regarding the lexical approach. The table reveals that 12.7% of students strongly believe their writing ability has improved, while 68.1% feel their English writing skills have significantly enhanced after the two-month experiment. Additionally, more than half of the students reported a greater enjoyment of English writing compared to before the intervention. Overall, 83.6% of students agreed that theme-based lexical chunks

play an essential and indispensable role in improving English writing. Furthermore, 87.3% of students expressed a positive attitude toward this teaching approach and showed enthusiasm for incorporating the theme-based lexical approach into future English writing classes. In summary, the findings demonstrate that theme-based lexical chunks are well-received by non-English major students, who also expressed strong support and interest in this teaching method.

Table 14. Attitude toward Lexical Approach in the Experimental Group.

Item	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1. I believe my English writing skills have improved.	12.7	61.8	18.2	7.3	0
2. I like writing English compositions more than before.	10.9	50.9	34.5	3.7	0
3. Theme-based lexical chunks play a significant role in English writing.	30.9	52.7	12.7	0	3.7
4. Theme-based lexical approach can enhance the richness of expression in writing.	29.1	56.4	12.7	0	1.8
5. Theme-based lexical approach can reduce brainstorming time and clarify writing structure.	32.7	45.5	18.2	3.6	0
6. Theme-based lexical approach can improve the coherence of language use in writing.	36.4	47.3	12.7	3.6	0
7. I accept and enjoy the teacher's use of theme-based lexical chunks for writing instruction.	34.5	52.8	12.7	0	0
8. I feel more comfortable and confident writing essays on topics that match learned lexical chunks.	25.5	52.7	18.2	3.6	0

5. Discussion

The application of the theme-based lexical approach in English writing instruction at Chinese vocational and technical colleges has yielded significant results, particularly in enhancing students' writing fluency and accuracy. Writing fluency, measured by the number of words produced per minute, showed marked improvement. The average word count per composition increased from 5.9 to 7.9, illustrating the effectiveness of this approach in enabling students to acquire and deploy relevant vocabulary more efficiently, thereby facilitating the continuous flow of ideas during writing. Writing accuracy also improved significantly, as grammatical error rates decreased from 0.43% to 0.21%. These improvements align with findings by Shirazizadeh and Amirfazlian^[18], who emphasized the importance of integrating thematic lexical instruction to improve learners' fluency and reduce cognitive load during composition.

The observed gains can be attributed to the structured focus on thematic vocabulary, which provided a clear framework for understanding and applying accurate language forms. Similar results have been noted by Mumford and Dikilitaş^[10], who reported that repeated exposure to topic-specific lexical chunks enhances learners' linguistic accuracy and fosters automaticity in language production. This study adds to their findings by showing that vocational and technical students, who often exhibit lower baseline proficiency compared to traditional college students, particularly benefit from such structured lexical interventions. Furthermore, the practice of embedding vocabulary instruction within meaningful contexts, as supported by Shirazizadeh and Amirfazlian^[18], enhances language awareness and reduces interfer-

ence from the first language, contributing to improvements in grammar, spelling, and coherence.

While prior studies have examined the impact of lexical approaches in various educational contexts, this research uniquely focuses on vocational and technical colleges, where students face distinct challenges, such as less exposure to authentic language input and a more practical learning orientation. Studies by Chen^[8], Teng^[25], and Yang and Cui^[38] on middle school students, and Jiao^[39] and Wang and Ma^[40] on non-English major college students, primarily highlight general lexical strategies. However, they do not address the specialized needs of vocational and technical learners, such as the necessity for applied language skills in professional settings^[41]. This study bridges that gap, emphasizing how the theme-based lexical approach can address these learners' specific requirements.

Additionally, this research isolates the effects of the theme-based lexical approach on writing fluency and accuracy, rather than general writing competency. This focus is critical, as general evaluations often obscure the nuanced benefits of targeted instructional methods. By honing in on these aspects, the study builds on earlier work by Omidian and Siyanova-Chanturia^[42], who emphasized the role of productive vocabulary in procedural writing, and Song^[39], who highlighted the value of lexical instruction for improving both accuracy and fluency. The findings of this study thus reinforce the broader literature while providing localized insights into EFL pedagogy for vocational and technical colleges in China. In vocational and technical colleges, where practical application is often prioritized over theoretical learning, the theme-based lexical approach offers a practical and adaptable framework. By providing learners with ready-

made, contextually relevant lexical resources, this approach reduces language production anxiety, increases motivation, and fosters better engagement with writing tasks. These findings echo conclusions by Wang, Wang^[19], who stressed that vocabulary size and lexical quality are critical predictors of writing success.

Author Contributions

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Institutional Review Board Statement

This study was conducted in accordance with the guidelines of the Declaration of Helsinki and approved by the Institutional Review Board of Nanchong Vocational and Technical College. All procedures involving human participants adhered to the ethical standards of the institutional research committee.

Informed Consent Statement

Informed written consent was obtained from all participants of the study.

Data Availability Statement

The data used for the study are available from the correspondence author upon reasonable request.

Conflicts of Interest

The authors declared no conflicts of interest.

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