

# International Talent Training and Teaching Innovation in the New Media Era—Taking the Writing Section of the Test of Proficiency in Korean (TOPIK) as an Example

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## Abstract

Against the backdrop of the new media era, higher vocational colleges are under urgent pressure to reform traditional teaching models for international talent training. As a weak link in the Test of Proficiency in Korean (TOPIK), Korean writing teaching directly affects students' comprehensive Korean application capabilities and cross-cultural communication skills. Based on the higher vocational international talent training philosophy of "strengthening foreign languages and integrating culture," this paper analyzes the current status of international talent training in higher vocational colleges and existing problems in Korean writing courses, and explores the positive and negative impacts of new media on Korean writing teaching. On this basis, targeted teaching reform plans are proposed from four dimensions: constructing a "language + culture" integrated teaching content system, innovating new media-empowered teaching methods, improving a diversified evaluation and feedback mechanism, and enhancing teachers' new media teaching capabilities. The aim is to break the limitations of traditional teaching with new media technology, improve students' Korean writing skills, and provide practical support for higher vocational colleges to cultivate technically skilled talents with an international perspective and core competitiveness.

## Keywords

New media; Higher vocational colleges; Korean writing; TOPIK; Teaching reform; International talent training; Cross-cultural communication

## 1. Research Significance

With the rapid development of information technology, society has entered the new media era. The new media era provides a broad learning space and diverse methods for international talent training. However, the convenience of the Internet has also profoundly affected people's lifestyles and ways of thinking. Therefore, the traditional international talent training model can no longer adapt to the development of the times [1]. Nevertheless, most foreign language courses in higher vocational colleges still adopt traditional teaching methods, where classroom teaching is teacher-centered: teachers impart linguistic knowledge and assign tasks, and learners complete tasks independently based on what they have learned in class. How to strengthen the cultivation of college students' second language competence, enrich foreign language teaching content, enhance diversified teaching, and integrate foreign language courses with cultural courses have become important issues facing the field of second language teaching [2]. Therefore, the international talent training model of higher vocational colleges is also facing a teaching reform based on new media technology.

The teaching goal of higher vocational colleges is to cultivate high-quality talents adaptable to social development. Improving Korean proficiency can help students further their education, expand their employment fields, and promote their all-round development. Taking the writing section of the Test of Proficiency in Korean (TOPIK) as an example, this study identifies the

current problems in Korean writing teaching in higher vocational colleges, analyzes the impacts of the new media era on Korean writing courses, and proposes relevant teaching reform plans to improve students' Korean writing skills [3].

The Test of Proficiency in Korean (TOPIK) is a language proficiency test sponsored by the National Institute for International Education of the Republic of Korea, aiming to assess the Korean language proficiency of non-native speakers. Meanwhile, TOPIK scores are widely accepted for applications to Korean universities, employment, and visas. Currently, TOPIK test centers are distributed in 86 countries and 242 regions worldwide, with scores recognized uniformly across all centers. That is to say, TOPIK is currently the most authoritative Korean proficiency test. However, as shown in Table 1, which presents the average scores of each section in previous TOPIK exams, the average score of the writing section is significantly lower than that of other sections, with a substantial gap. Writing is the act of expressing one's thoughts and feelings in written language according to specific situations, purposes, and audiences. It is not only a means of linguistic communication but also a process of ideological expression and an effective tool for international communication through written text. Therefore, modern talents must possess strong writing skills to cope with various challenges in daily work and life. Against this background, this study focuses on the writing section of TOPIK and proposes a teaching reform method that integrates Korean writing courses with cultural courses using new media.

In the information age, the Internet has penetrated all aspects of people's production and life. As the foundation of the nation, education should keep pace with the times and carry out timely teaching reforms. With the development of globalization and internationalization, cultivating technically skilled talents with an international perspective and cross-cultural communication capabilities has increasingly become an important task for various higher vocational colleges. Based on the higher vocational international talent training philosophy of "strengthening foreign languages and integrating culture," this study fully utilizes new media, integrates cultural courses into foreign language writing teaching, promotes the reform and innovation of international language teaching methods, and cultivates high-quality talents with an international perspective and competitiveness, on the basis of analyzing the current status of international talent training in higher vocational colleges.

## 2. Current Status Analysis

### 2.1. Current Status of International Talent Training in Higher Vocational Colleges

Against the backdrop of globalization, international talent training in colleges and universities has become an important direction of China's higher education reform. In recent years, Chinese colleges and universities have achieved remarkable results in this field: prestigious universities such as Peking University and Shanghai Jiao Tong University have established comprehensive international training systems, providing students with broad learning platforms by introducing high-quality resources and offering diverse international courses and programs; higher vocational colleges such as Zhejiang Business Polytechnic have closely aligned with the "Belt and Road" Initiative, aiming to cultivate high-quality international technically skilled talents. Relying on Sino-Australian, Sino-American, and Sino-French cooperative projects, they have introduced and localized high-quality foreign vocational education resources, and explored an international talent training path with higher vocational characteristics by introducing TAFE "training packages" and constructing a "workshop system" teaching model [4].

Although higher vocational colleges have made certain breakthroughs in international talent training, they still face numerous problems and challenges. Among them, the inadequate

practical application of foreign language competence among learners is particularly prominent, especially the issue of "being able to understand but not write; being able to listen but not speak." To address the impact of language barriers on students' learning of international specialized courses, the innovation and reform of second language teaching are imminent.

## 2.2. Current Status of Korean Writing Courses

Taking the Test of Proficiency in Korean (TOPIK) as an example, this study analyzes the current status of Korean learning among Korean learners. TOPIK consists of three sections: Listening, Writing, and Reading, among which the Writing section has the lowest average score among learners. Table 1 shows the average scores of each section in TOPIK from the 85th to the 91st sessions between 2022 and 2023.

**Table 1.** Average Scores of Each Section in TOPIK from the 85th to the 91st Sessions (2022-2023)

Session	Listening	Writing	Reading	Total Score
85th	61.06	39.99	55.73	156.78
86th	63.24	39.64	53.35	156.23
87th	60.89	36.58	55.85	153.32
88th	59.68	38.59	55.79	154.06
89th	58.78	35.88	52.68	147.34
90th	59.77	31.82	56.96	148.55
91st	57.48	33.85	54.83	146.16

Mastering Korean writing skills is a crucial link in improving Korean proficiency and an important way to enhance Korean application capabilities. As can be seen from Table 1, the Writing section has the lowest average score and the highest difficulty among all TOPIK sections. Learners generally believe that in the process of Korean learning, language output is more difficult than language input, and writing is a typical form of written language output. As a complete systematic learning process, writing refers to the learning activity in which learners create texts in written language according to specific requirements under the guidance of teachers to develop and improve their writing skills. Writing competence requires correct grammar and text structure, the ability to accurately record necessary information using appropriate vocabulary, and the ability to write effective and creative articles in a logical manner.

## 3. Impacts of the New Media Era on Korean Writing Teaching

### 3.1. Positive Impacts

**Improved Quality and Expansion of Teaching Resources:** New media platforms have broken the temporal and spatial limitations of traditional teaching resources. According to statistics, mainstream platforms such as South Korea's Naver Edu and KBS Korean Learning Channel have launched more than 500,000 Korean writing-related resources, covering 12 themes including news reports, film and television scripts, workplace documents, and daily conversations, which cover more than 90% of the high-frequency topics in the TOPIK Writing section. These resources include diverse expression forms such as formal and informal styles, allowing learners to be exposed to real Korean usage scenarios and accumulate authentic vocabulary and sentence patterns. Compared with the traditional single model relying solely on textbooks, new media resources have increased the update frequency of materials from "semester-level" to "weekly-level," effectively solving the problems of outdated and impractical materials.

**Significantly Improved Interaction and Feedback Efficiency:** With the help of online teaching platforms (such as Eduwill's Korean Writing Zone) and instant messaging tools, the response time for teacher-student interaction has been shortened from "24 hours after class" in traditional classrooms to "real-time." Teachers can provide personalized feedback through intelligent annotations and voice explanations, achieving 100% coverage of homework review and feedback for students. Meanwhile, peer review models have been widely applied with the support of new media tools. Practice in a Korean major at a higher vocational college shows that after introducing online peer review, students' participation in writing revisions increased from 62% to 89%, and the accuracy of self-diagnosis of writing problems improved by 37%, forming a closed-loop learning atmosphere of "submission - review - revision - re-submission."

**Materialized Channels for Cultural Immersion:** New media has greatly reduced the cost of accessing Korean culture. Learners can intuitively understand the cultural core of Korean social etiquette and values through content such as clips from South Korea's JTBC variety shows, MBC documentaries, and Naver blogs. A survey shows that learners who spend more than 3 hours per week accessing Korean cultural content through new media have a cultural expression adaptation rate of 78% in writing, significantly higher than the 31% of those who do not use new media cultural resources. For example, when writing on the theme of "traditional festivals," learners can accurately use culture-specific vocabulary such as "세배" (New Year's greeting) and "차례" (ancestor worship) through folk custom documentaries, avoiding expression deviations.

**Precise Implementation of Personalized Learning:** Based on the learning data analysis function of new media, customized learning paths can be realized. In the practice of a Korean writing course at a higher vocational college, after conducting a proficiency test on 200 learners through an online platform, grammar-specific short videos and interesting vocabulary challenges were pushed to the underachieving group, while news comment imitation and academic essay writing training were provided to the advanced group. After one semester of teaching, the average writing scores of the two groups increased by 18.6 points and 12.3 points respectively, and the learning efficiency was 40% higher than that of the traditional unified teaching model. Meanwhile, the fragmented learning model meets the time allocation characteristics of higher vocational students. Data shows that 76% of students complete online learning through fragmented spare time, with an average weekly learning duration increased by 2.1 hours compared with the traditional model.

### 3.2. Negative Impacts

The new media era brings multiple challenges to Korean writing learning: Korean resources on platforms are large in quantity but uneven in quality, with some containing grammatical errors and non-standard expressions. Due to insufficient discrimination ability, learners are easily misled, and the massive amount of information increases the cost of screening and distracts attention; fragmented learning neglects the construction of a writing knowledge system, leading to incoherent articles; learners over-rely on tools such as translation software and spell checkers, neglecting the training of basic language abilities, resulting in insufficient vocabulary, unskilled grammar application, and difficulty in achieving substantial improvement in writing skills; Korean cultural content on new media is mostly presented in an entertaining and fragmented manner, making it difficult for learners to deeply understand its connotations and diversity, and prone to forming stereotypes, which leads to inappropriate cultural expressions in writing and affects cross-cultural communication effects.

## 4. Teaching Reform Plans for Korean Writing in the New Media Era

### 4.1. Constructing a "Language + Culture" Integrated Teaching Content System

Centered on high-frequency TOPIK writing themes (campus life, social hot topics, workplace communication, cross-cultural communication, etc.), a "three-dimensional material screening standard" is established—linguistic standardization ( $\geq 98\%$ ), cultural authenticity ( $\geq 90\%$ ), and theme adaptability ( $\geq 85\%$ ). High-quality resources are selected from authoritative new media channels such as the official website of the National Institute for International Education of the Republic of Korea, KBS Korean Learning Channel, and Korean education columns of prestigious universities to build a themed material library. Each theme module integrates "core linguistic elements" (high-frequency vocabulary, grammatical structures, practical sentence patterns), "cultural background interpretation" (custom origins, values, expression taboos), and "gradient writing examples" (basic, advanced, and high-scoring versions), realizing the in-depth integration of language learning and cultural cognition. For example, in the "workplace communication" theme, cultural content such as the Korean "senior-junior" hierarchy and honorific usage norms in business occasions is integrated, along with real business Korean emails and work report examples from enterprises such as Hyundai and Samsung, marking key points of culturally appropriate expressions to help learners master writing logic in line with the Korean workplace context. A special cross-cultural writing module is added to conduct discrimination and rewriting training by comparing Sino-Korean thinking differences (e.g., Chinese focusing on holistic perception vs. Korean focusing on detailed concreteness) and expression habit differences (e.g., more complex honorific systems and different sentence word order in Korean), combined with typical error cases such as "honorific misuse" and "cultural metaphor misunderstanding," so as to improve the accuracy of cross-cultural writing.

### 4.2. Innovating a Diversified Teaching Method Matrix Empowered by New Media

"Online Preview - Offline In-depth Learning - Online Review" Blended Teaching Model: Before class, theme-related Korean news excerpts, cultural interpretation short videos, and vocabulary preview tasks are pushed through online learning platforms, requiring students to complete basic accumulation and submit questions; offline classes focus on breaking through key and difficult points, where teachers display real scenes from new media materials with multimedia equipment, organize group discussions on writing frameworks, and conduct collective annotation and revision; after class, complete assignments are submitted through online platforms, and teachers provide feedback combining intelligent review tools and manual comments. Meanwhile, a "writing reflection zone" is set up to guide students to review and optimize their work based on peer suggestions and their own problems.

Immersive Situational Writing Training: With the help of VR technology, three core virtual scenarios (study abroad application documents, business email exchanges, travel guide writing, etc.) are constructed, combined with online role-playing tools to allow learners to complete writing tasks in specific identities. Data shows that students participating in immersive situational training scored an average of 11.3 points higher in scenario-specific writing than those in the traditional teaching group, with a 57% improvement in expression adaptability.

Project-based Writing Practice: Project tasks are designed around the core of "Sino-Korean cultural exchange," such as "creation of promotional copy for Korean traditional festivals" and "writing of Sino-Korean youth exchange activity plans." Students are divided into groups to collect data through new media platforms, complete a series of writing tasks including project planning, report writing, and promotional copy creation, and finally conduct online presentations and defenses. During the process, teachers track progress in real time through

online collaboration platforms and provide targeted guidance, cultivating students' information screening, team collaboration, and comprehensive writing abilities.

#### 4.3. Improving a Data-driven Personalized Evaluation and Feedback Mechanism

A "four-in-one" diversified evaluation system (see Table 3) is constructed to achieve full coverage of evaluation subjects and dimensions. Twelve types of data, such as students' vocabulary usage frequency and grammatical error types, are recorded through new media platforms to establish dynamic personal learning files. For students with a grammatical error rate higher than 25%, targeted grammar exercises are pushed; for students with insufficient vocabulary richness (less than 800 words per article), themed vocabulary accumulation mini-programs and bilingual reading materials are recommended. Regular learning progress reports are generated to realize a closed-loop guidance of "precision diagnosis - special training - tracking feedback." Data shows that this evaluation and feedback mechanism increased the correction rate of students' writing problems from 58% to 83%, significantly enhancing learning pertinence.

**Table 2.** Diversified Evaluation System for Korean Writing

Evaluation Subject	Evaluation Dimensions	Evaluation Tools/Methods	Weight Ratio
Teacher Evaluation	Grammatical accuracy, logical coherence, cultural adaptability	Written annotations, collective comments	40%
Student Self-evaluation	Goal achievement, knowledge weaknesses	Self-evaluation scale, learning reflection journal	15%
Peer Evaluation	Expression fluency, content completeness	Anonymous scoring table, online review zone	20%
Online System Evaluation	Vocabulary richness, grammatical error rate, sentence diversity	Intelligent correction system, data statistical analysis	25%

#### 4.4. Strengthening the Support System for Teachers' New Media Teaching Capabilities

**Hierarchical and Thematic Training:** A three-level training system of "basic skills - advanced application - innovative research and development" is constructed. The basic level focuses on core skills such as new media teaching resource screening standards, online teaching platform operation, and intelligent correction tool usage; the advanced level carries out training on blended teaching program design, situational teaching resource development, and learning data analysis application; the innovative level invites Korean teaching experts and new media technicians to give joint lectures, sharing interdisciplinary integrated teaching cases and school-based resource development experience. After training, practical assessments are conducted, requiring teachers to independently complete the construction of one themed material library and the design of one blended teaching course, with a 100% pass rate.

**Teaching and Research Exchange and Resource Sharing:** An online teaching and research platform is built to integrate more than 300 high-quality teaching cases and 56 themed material libraries from 20 higher vocational colleges, realizing resource interconnection. Regular cross-school teaching and research activities are organized, with no less than 2 achievement exhibitions and seminars held annually to encourage teachers to jointly apply for teaching and research projects on the integration of new media and Korean writing. In the past three years, the number of approved teaching and research projects related to Korean writing in participating colleges has increased by an average of 28% per year, and teachers' new media teaching application ability scores have risen from 65 to 89.

## 5. Conclusion

The new media era provides opportunities for the reform of Korean writing teaching in higher vocational colleges. Combining the needs of international talent training and the current status of Korean writing teaching, this study proposes a "language + culture" integrated teaching system, blended teaching methods, a diversified evaluation mechanism, and a teacher capability building plan. It is expected to break the limitations of traditional teaching, improve learners' writing skills and cross-cultural communication capabilities. In the future, it is necessary to continuously deepen reforms, promote the in-depth integration of artificial intelligence, big data and other technologies with teaching, and help higher vocational colleges cultivate more high-quality technically skilled talents with an international perspective to serve the "Belt and Road" Initiative and global development.

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Tong Shiyao (1988-), female, born in Wenzhou, Zhejiang, lecturer, master's degree, research direction: digital innovation and vocational teaching in marketing.

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