

STUDENT PERCEPTIONS OF DIFFICULTIES IN ACADEMIC WRITING COURSES

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ABSTRACT

This article is dedicated to the development of academic literacy, especially writing among students. It is based on the need to develop academic skills based on teaching reading and writing. In the process of developing academic literacy skills in English, the need for students to develop academic literacy in their mother tongue was emphasized. When learning a language, everyone faces challenges on different fronts. It is not always successful when learning English. It is obvious that it is extremely difficult to achieve an academic degree. In particular, in this article I would like to dwell on academic writing.

KEYWORDS: academic writing, academic literacy of students, academic reading, English for Academic Purposes (EAP), students' perceptions of difficulty, teacher development.

INTRODUCTION

In modern conditions, English is predominant in the scientific community. To successfully study and build a scientific career, students and scholars from all over the world need to be well versed in the specifics of academic speech in English. In this regard, it is necessary to form academic literacy within the framework of English language courses for academic purposes. In foreign scientific literature, the term "academic literacy" has been discussed in the works of I. Leki, J. Brain, B. Green, K. Hiland and L. Hump-Lyon. However, foreign scholars say that the main indicators of students' ability to read at university and their indicators of academic success are mastery in the accumulation of reading and writing skills. The development of academic literacy of students in almost all foreign universities is part of special university courses, in which the academic writing course is given a central place. Monitoring of students' knowledge and skills is mainly done in the written form of an academic essay. Among other types of writing activities, it is given a central place because "if it is possible to write [or read] an essay, it is possible to write [or read] everything ..." However, the culture of writing is Anglo, it is very difficult for students from China, India, Korea, Russia, for example, who are different from the Saxons to do written work. All this requires the creation of an effective methodology for teaching students academic writing. It has long been known that the interrelated teaching of reading and writing in modern Western universities is already an axiom, moreover, teaching reading is ahead of teaching writing. M.A. Litayeva, O.M. Demidova, E.V. Talalakina, distinguish 3 skills that should be formed in the teaching of academic reading in students. The first group includes the ability to identify the main idea, the main arguments of the text. The second group includes the ability to identify logical connections between text components, the ability to recognize its structure, i.e. the strategy of reading unfamiliar text. At this stage, students learn the principles of paragraph construction, logical connection from the text, finding elements that serve as a link between parts of the text, the genre features of the essay. The third group of skills includes the ability to interpret graphic data - charts, graphs, tables. As academic reading skills develop, students strive to create their own academic texts in writing. All this leads to the conclusion that it is necessary to create an effective methodology of teaching academic writing in a modern university. In a study on the theoretical foundations of teaching English for academic purposes, I. Bruce identifies 3 stages in the development of academic writing, which allows creating the foundation for a successful academic or professional career:

- 1) basic competencies of information comprehension in the subject studied;
- 2) the development of the author's "I" in the scientific community, which aims to be themselves.
- 3) develop critical competence, giving the academic community the ability to challenge and reshape the field of speech and information. The development of academic writing skills in universities covers only the first stage, but it is this that serves as the basis for the development of other competencies.

Let's take a closer look at the issues of teaching academic reading and writing in an EAP (English for academic purposes) course. As the researchers point out, mastering academic writing is a core competency of an academic writing course, as written assignments are critical at all levels of education, from undergraduate to graduate. There are many ways to teach academic writing. Writing can be taught individually, sometimes in conjunction with reading, and sometimes as part of a course that develops all academic skills. Western researchers have long proven the high effectiveness of teaching writing and reading in an interconnected way, their beneficial interactions. It is known that reading and writing are based on a single letter code. Moreover, these types of speech activities have a similar psychophysiological basis. In the process of reading a text, someone decodes the code encrypted in the graphemes and turns the word into an object, an event, an action of reality surrounding it, and in writing the phonemes are re-encoded into graphemes and the thought is encoded with the word. In Russian linguodidactics, these ideas were embodied in the works of L. V. Shcherba. He expressed the idea of the effectiveness of mastering writing skills through reading and proposed teaching written speech based on sample text, which is a source of language material, speech patterns, and clicks, thereby laying the foundations for a test approach in teaching writing. In Western science, reading and writing were seen as a means of communication in various cultural and social spheres. According to V. Loban's research, students with good reading skills also master writing skills well. This relationship becomes increasingly apparent as students grow older. Other studies confirming the effectiveness of teaching writing alongside reading show that in the process of creating a text, the author gathers knowledge in the process of reading texts created by other authors, the research topic, the rules of text editing, and the style of the text. A number of studies show that the reader understands the text and moves from understanding and comprehending someone's text to the ability to revise and change the text. So, reading later for the purpose of writing a written text becomes the first step in creating your own work. It should be noted that in modern foreign educational practice, the interdependence of writing and reading has already become an axiom. Unfortunately, however, students do not have sufficient academic competence in their native language. The main reason for this is, first of all, that the school education system does not pay enough attention to writing. In the local methodology, written speech plays the role of an auxiliary tool for teaching other types of speech activities, and the main role is given to oral speech. Learning to write is reduced to following spelling, punctuation, grammar, and lexical rules. According to IB Korotkina, one of the reasons why school graduates do not write well lies in the construction of teaching Russian on the basis of literary texts, which "does not obey the rules of scientific, academically literate text regulation." Students who enter a university and face a new academic situation face great difficulties in acquiring academic skills. This issue is especially important for students who are educated in English and practice written forms of supervision. As a result, schoolchildren and students are not able to write in accordance with the norms of written culture in English. Students' essays are characterized by disproportionate, inconsistent, insignificant aspects by teachers of foreign universities, which are poorly justified they do not have a presentation plan and references to the sources used. However, students' problems are not limited to writing. When teaching EAP, teachers point out that students' reading skills are not sufficiently developed.

In addition, the challenges apply to all three groups of academic reading skills mentioned above. A possible solution to this problem could be the introduction of special courses aimed at developing academic literacy in Russian. The practice of teaching academic writing not only to foreign students but also to native speakers is available at many foreign universities. For example, research from the University of California shows that students who complete an academic writing course at the university are more successful at writing an essay. Students are taught brainstorming and idea formation strategies, writing, editing, and original composition restoration techniques. However, at present, courses on academic literacy development are not offered or achieved in Russian universities because they are allocated few hours and academic literacy development becomes an educational goal for English teachers. In such a situation, EAP teachers need to plan the sessions taking into account what challenges students can expect while reading and developing their academic reading and writing skills. To do this, even when using EAP textbooks in teaching, they need to be supplemented with developments that develop their own materials and the necessary skills, both while working in the classroom and in the independent work of students. Thus, this article substantiates the principle of continuous teaching in reading and writing and the need to take into

account the characteristics of Russian-speaking students who need additional training in the development of reading and writing skills in the development of academic writing courses.

After all, academic writing is a special style of writing that requires a certain skill, basic notions in the particular sphere of activity and even some experience. That's why it's not surprising that sometimes people are seeking outside help with their assignments. Whether you like it or not, there are several deep reasons for them doing so, except for obvious lack of time and work overload:

1. Lexical difficulties

The problem with words is among the biggest ones a first-year student may encounter. Proper linking words and phrases is actually not that simple for many people, to say nothing of inexperienced people who have to write essays, reports, labs, etc. Each of these papers requires linking one idea argument to another and developing coherence within a paragraph. Therefore, even if people write academic papers themselves, they still may need professional proofreading and editing services.

2. Grammar and punctuation

It's not a secret that errors in grammar and punctuation are one of the main reasons why people lose their marks in academic papers. This is a great problem for ESL students who may use wrong words, confuse prepositions and conjunctions, miss auxiliary verb or simply are not familiar with punctuation rules. In such a case, hiring a professional proofreader can solve lots of problems indeed.

3. Plagiarism

While some students find it hard to get their thoughts and ideas down on paper, others just don't know how to properly incorporate quotations into sentences. Trying to do the assignment, they simply borrow passages from articles, books and even websites without identifying them; hence the problem of plagiarism. Professional academic writing services can help such students by showing them how a well-written non-plagiarized paper should look like.

4. Text structure

Whether it comes to a thesis, essay or article – each of them has a certain structure. Typically, they all are based on three main components: introduction, main body and conclusion. You may be surprised, but many students have problems with structuring their works for a variety of reasons, the main of which is the inability to draw up every single part considering the singularity of all other. To ask for professional paper help in such a case is reasonable and even necessary for obvious reasons.

These academic problems are quite common among nowadays' students. So what is the way out? The first one is improving the knowledge, supplementing the vocabulary and practicing the language. The second is to order academic writing services or to hire a professional tutor. As practice shows, both of them can lead to the desired result.

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