

Main Problems of Forming the Competence of Academic Writing in Future Foreign Language Teachers

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Abstract

The article demonstrates a relatively new direction for the Uzbek education system - academic writing. To determine the conceptual essence of the category of "academic writing", a brief analysis of some scientific works devoted to this topic was carried out; the question was raised about the importance of introducing this discipline into the educational programs of the universities of the Republic of Uzbekistan; the most difficult areas in the formation of the competence of academic writing among undergraduate and graduate students of the program "Training of Foreign Language Teachers" were identified; factors that cause difficulties in academic writing are identified and described.

Keywords: academic writing, competence, foreign language writing, scientometric databases, academic literacy, scientific text, discourse, scientific communication.

The relevance of developing academic writing skills among students of higher educational institutions is indisputable, given the growing need for the development of science and the increase in the level of recognition of universities in the international academic arena. The most popular way to achieve these goals is to publish scientific papers of students and faculty in high-ranking journals, which in turn implies the need to develop academic writing competence among authors.

In today's rapidly progressing world, communication and transmission of information, especially in the scientific community, takes place mostly in writing rather than orally: publication of scientific research results, scientific essays and articles, students' theses. In this regard, there has been a sharp increase in the need to learn how to arrange scientific and academic texts in accordance with the requirements set by international scientific journals, which in turn actualizes the teaching of academic writing.

The term of academic writing is used by foreign scientists to define all types of written scientific communication, the purpose of which is the transfer and acquisition of knowledge¹. At the same time, it is necessary to note the difference between scientific writing and academic writing. The adjective academic (academic) is used in the English-speaking environment in a very broad sense and can be applied to everything related to training and education (mostly at the university level), while scientific writing is only related to writing in the natural and exact sciences. At the same time, there are erroneous opinions that scientific writing can be used in a general sense as a letter used in the process of preparing a directly scientific text for scientific journals, which misleads many².

¹ Hyland, K., Shaw, P. The Routledge Handbook of English for Academic Purposes. - London: Routledge, 2016.

² Kolyabina, N.S. Formation of foreign language competence of academic writing of undergraduates of non-linguistic universities (English language): dis. Candidate of Pedagogical Sciences - Volgograd, 2018. - 187 p.

Since this article is devoted to the study of the problems that students of universities in Uzbekistan face when studying the discipline "Academic Writing", we will consider only academic writing.

Referring to Uzbek works, it is necessary to note the methodological guide "Academic writing: principles of structuring and writing a scientific text", where the authors define the concept of academic writing as a methodology for writing scientific texts: essays, term papers, diplomas, master's and candidate's dissertations, articles, monographs; as the ability to formulate and justify one's own thoughts, ideas and convey them to the target audience, as the skill of writing scientific texts, the ability to structure, format, select the style and language of description³.

In turn, I.B. Korotkina gives the following definition of academic writing: "a scientific and methodological branch of knowledge, a direction of scientific and pedagogical research and a discipline that studies methods and technologies for constructing an academic (educational) and scientific text" [4, p.9]. Since this article is aimed at studying the problems of introducing academic writing as a discipline in Kazakhstan, the authors of the article find the definition introduced by I.B. Korotkina to be capacious and covering all significant aspects of academic writing as a phenomenon⁴.

As for the purpose of academic writing, it must be taken into account that the ability to write academic texts is a hallmark of both students and employees of higher educational institutions, as well as scientific workers. It is very important that students can express themselves clearly and logically on topics related to their research interests. However, as noted by Hiranayagi and Takagi⁵, students whose native language is not English often find it difficult to write scientific papers that meet international academic requirements.

For the most part, the problem is not a lack of English proficiency, but that students are not familiar with international academic writing conventions. This, in turn, has negative consequences for both the student's career path and university rankings, which makes it necessary to develop academic writing competencies among university students. Thus, academic writing serves several educational purposes, such as assessing knowledge, developing critical thinking, stimulating creative thinking, and so on.

Having defined the conceptual essence of the category of academic writing and the importance of introducing it as a discipline into educational programs, it is also necessary to describe the current situation in the study of this topic in the context of the educational system of Uzbekistan in order to understand the critical relevance of this article: academic writing as a basic discipline was introduced into all master's and doctoral programs, as well as in some undergraduate programs of universities in Uzbekistan relatively recently, its duration is one semester. In addition, the bachelor's curriculum includes a discipline devoted to learning English for academic purposes, which also aims to develop the competencies necessary to improve academic literacy. Writing is the leading activity in these disciplines. However, there is a small amount of scientific research on the development of academic writing in Uzbekistan. The study showed that there are several scientific articles by A.Baigaraeva⁶ and E. Ruzieva⁷, which, to mention briefly, raised the issue of introducing academic writing into university curricula and the difficulties students face in studying this discipline. The study by G.K. Ismagulova and others⁸. The main goal of their study was to identify the level of academic writing skills of TEFL students (future

³ Ibraeva, A.G., Ippolitova T.V. Academic writing: principles of structuring and writing a scientific text. – Petropavlovsk: NKGU im. M. Kozybaeva, 2015. - 106 p.

⁴ Korotkina, I.B. Theory and practice of teaching academic writing in foreign and domestic universities: dis. Candidate of Pedagogical Sciences - Moscow, 2018. - 470 p.

⁵ Hiranayagi, Y. Writing to improve analytical and organizational skills. //The Language Teacher. - 1998.

⁶ Baigaraeva, A. Academic Writing in the context of the integration of science and education at the present stage-2017

⁷ Ruzieva, E. (Problems of implementation of the academic literacy in higher education institutions). - 2016.

⁸ Ismagulova, G. K., Poleyaya, O.N., Balgabayeva, G.Z., Kulakhmetova, M.S., Kapanova, D.E. The Formation of the Foundation of Academic Writing. //International Journal of Environmental & Science Education. - 2016.

foreign language teachers) and further contribute to the development of their academic literacy. The authors also emphasized the importance of solving the problems of academic writing that most post-Soviet countries face. Since the main goal of their study was to determine whether students needed a special course to develop academic literacy skills or not, the authors did not look into exactly what problems students face in academic writing.

Based on the results of the study, G.K. Ismagulova and O. Polevaya developed an elective course and published a teaching aid devoted to such issues as writing an essay, drawing up a plan of scientific and research work, abstracts, reports at the conference, ethics and originality of the research work (checking for plagiarism, falsification of data, forgery and manipulation of data). And last, but not least, is the work of E. Ospan, who wrote a textbook in Russian⁹. The manual briefly covers issues such as writing research papers, basic research methods, conducting data analysis, is distinguished by the presence of practical tasks on each topic, and is focused more on students of the humanities.

Thus, we can conclude that due to the numerous factors mentioned above, academic writing as a semantic category and academic discipline is quite new in Kazakhstan and represents a fertile ground for scientific research and improvement of teaching practices. In an attempt to contribute to the development of this scientific field, the authors have determined the purpose of this article to reveal and more thoroughly study the problems faced by university students in Kazakhstan.

Conclusion

This article presents a relatively new direction for the Uzbek education system - academic writing. A brief analysis of some scientific papers on this topic was carried out to determine the conceptual essence of the category of academic writing, the question was raised about the importance of introducing this discipline into the educational programs of the universities of the Republic of Uzbekistan, as well as the problems that students face in the learning process.

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⁹ Ospan, E. Akademicheskoe pis'mo [Tekst]: uchebnoe posobie dlya studentov VUZov. (Academic writing: Educational manual for university students). - Almaty: Ekonomika, 2018. 180 p.

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