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IMPROVING ACADEMIC WRITING SKILLS OF EFL LEARNERS: CHALLENGES AND EFFECTIVE LEARNING STRATEGIES

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Annotation. Academic writing is one of the most challenging skills for learners of English as a foreign language (EFL). The study reviews existing literature on writing difficulties and highlights pedagogical approaches that can support students in developing clearer and more organized written communication. The findings suggest that careful planning, systematic practice, analysis of model essays, and constructive feedback from instructors play a significant role in improving students' writing performance. By implementing structured learning strategies and increasing exposure to academic texts, learners can gradually develop confidence and competence in writing. The article emphasizes the importance of integrating effective writing instruction into language learning programs to support students' academic success.

Keywords: academic writing, EFL learners, writing difficulties, writing strategies, language learning, grammar, vocabulary development.

XORIJIY TIL SIFATIDA INGLIZ TILINI O'RGANUVCHILARNING AKADEMIK YOZUV KO'NIKMALARINI RIVOJLANTIRISH: QIYINCHILIKLAR VA SAMARALI O'RGANISH STRATEGIYALARI

Annotatsiya. Akademik yozuv xorijiy til sifatida ingliz tilini (EFL) o'rganayotgan talabalar uchun eng murakkab ko'nikmalardan biri hisoblanadi. Mazkur tadqiqot yozish jarayonida uchraydigan qiyinchiliklar bo'yicha mavjud ilmiy adabiyotlarni tahlil qiladi hamda talabalarning yozma nutqini aniq va tizimli rivojlantirishga yordam beruvchi pedagogik yondashuvlarni yoritadi. Natijalar shuni ko'rsatadiki, puxta rejalashtirish, muntazam mashq qilish, namunaviy insholarni tahlil qilish va o'qituvchilarning konstruktiv

fikr-mulohazalari talabalar yozma nutqini yaxshilashda muhim ahamiyat kasb etadi. Tuzilmali o'rganish strategiyalarini qo'llash va akademik matnlarga ko'proq murojaat qilish orqali talabalar yozish jarayonida asta-sekin ishonch va malaka hosil qiladilar. Maqolada til o'rganish dasturlariga samarali yozuv ko'nikmalarini integratsiya qilish talabalarning akademik muvaffaqiyatini ta'minlashda muhim omil ekani ta'kidlanadi.

Kalit so'zlar: akademik yozuv, EFL o'rganuvchilar, yozishdagi qiyinchiliklar, yozish strategiyalari, til o'rganish, grammatika, lug'at boyligi

РАЗВИТИЕ НАВЫКОВ АКАДЕМИЧЕСКОГО ПИСЬМА У ИЗУЧАЮЩИХ АНГЛИЙСКИЙ ЯЗЫК КАК ИНОСТРАННЫЙ: ТРУДНОСТИ И ЭФФЕКТИВНЫЕ СТРАТЕГИИ ОБУЧЕНИЯ

Аннотация. Академическое письмо является одним из самых сложных навыков для изучающих английский язык как иностранный (EFL). В данной работе рассматриваются существующие исследования трудностей письма и выделяются педагогические подходы, способствующие развитию более чёткой и структурированной письменной речи студентов. Результаты показывают, что тщательное планирование, систематическая практика, анализ образцовых эссе и конструктивная обратная связь преподавателей играют важную роль в улучшении письменных навыков обучающихся. Применение структурированных стратегий обучения и расширение доступа к академическим текстам способствует постепенному формированию уверенности и компетентности в письме. В статье подчёркивается важность интеграции эффективного обучения академическому письму в программы изучения языка для обеспечения академического успеха студентов.

Ключевые слова: академическое письмо, изучающие английский язык, трудности письма, стратегии письма, изучение языка, грамматика, развитие словарного запаса

Introduction.

Writing is widely recognized as one of the most complex language skills in second language learning. Unlike speaking, writing requires careful planning, accurate use of grammar, appropriate vocabulary selection, and logical organization of ideas. In academic contexts, writing plays a crucial role because it enables students to express their thoughts clearly, demonstrate their understanding of specific topics, and present arguments in a structured and coherent manner. For learners of English as a foreign language (EFL), writing often presents significant challenges. Students are expected to produce texts that meet academic standards while simultaneously managing various linguistic and cognitive demands. These demands include generating relevant ideas, organizing arguments logically, using correct grammatical structures, and applying appropriate vocabulary. As a result, many learners struggle to express their ideas effectively in written English.

The importance of writing skills becomes particularly evident in international language examinations such as the International English Language Testing System (IELTS). In these

examinations, the writing section is designed to evaluate a learner's ability to communicate ideas clearly and coherently in written form. Students must respond to specific tasks by presenting arguments, explanations, or descriptions while maintaining a clear structure that includes an introduction, body paragraphs, and a conclusion. Despite the importance of writing ability, many EFL learners experience difficulties when completing writing tasks. These difficulties may arise from limited language proficiency, insufficient writing practice, or a lack of familiarity with academic writing conventions. Understanding the nature of these challenges is essential for developing effective teaching strategies that support students in improving their writing performance.

Therefore, the aim of this article is to examine the common difficulties faced by EFL learners in academic writing and to explore practical strategies that can help students develop stronger writing skills. By analyzing both theoretical perspectives and pedagogical practices, the article seeks to contribute to a better understanding of how writing instruction can be improved in language learning environments.

Literature Review and Methodology.

Academic writing has been widely studied within the field of applied linguistics. Researchers emphasize that writing is not simply a linguistic activity but also a cognitive and social process that involves planning, organizing, revising, and communicating ideas effectively. According to Hyland (2003), writing in a second language requires learners to integrate linguistic knowledge with critical thinking and rhetorical skills. Students must understand how to structure their arguments and present ideas logically in order to produce coherent academic texts. This process can be particularly challenging for learners who have limited exposure to academic writing conventions. Another linguist, Raimes (1983) highlights that writing involves several interconnected components, including grammar, vocabulary, organization, and content development. Difficulties in any of these areas can significantly affect the overall quality of written texts. For example, grammatical errors may reduce clarity, while poor organization can make it difficult for readers to follow the writer's arguments.

Research on EFL learners consistently indicates that writing difficulties often stem from limited vocabulary and insufficient grammatical knowledge. Nugraheni and Basya (2018) found that many students struggle to express complex ideas because they lack the necessary lexical resources. As a result, their writing may rely on simple sentence structures and repetitive vocabulary. One of the common issue in EFL writing is the lack of coherence and cohesion. Coherence refers to the logical organization of ideas, while cohesion involves the use of linguistic devices that connect sentences and paragraphs. Without these elements, written texts may appear fragmented and difficult to understand.

Furthermore, Aldabbus and Almansouri (2022) note that many students have difficulty generating ideas for writing tasks. When learners are unfamiliar with a topic or lack sufficient background knowledge, they may find it challenging to develop arguments or provide supporting examples. Previous studies also emphasize the importance of instructional support in developing writing skills. Riadil (2021) suggests that effective writing instruction should

include explicit guidance on essay structure, opportunities for regular writing practice, and constructive feedback from teachers.

Overall, the literature indicates that improving writing skills requires a combination of linguistic development, strategic learning approaches, and supportive teaching practices.

Methodology.

This article adopts a qualitative analytical approach based on a review of existing research on academic writing difficulties among EFL learners. The study examines scholarly publications, journal articles, and academic textbooks that discuss common challenges in writing and effective strategies for improving writing skills. The selected sources include studies focusing on second language writing, EFL learner difficulties, and pedagogical approaches to writing instruction. By synthesizing findings from these sources, the article aims to identify key factors that influence writing performance and to highlight practical strategies that can support learners in developing stronger writing abilities.

The analysis focuses on three main areas: common writing difficulties, effective learning strategies, and pedagogical implications for language instruction.

Results and Discussion.

The analysis of previous studies reveals several recurring difficulties that EFL learners experience in academic writing. One of the most frequently reported challenges is grammatical inaccuracy. Many students struggle with verb tense usage, subject-verb agreement, article placement, and sentence structure. These errors often arise because learners attempt to translate ideas directly from their native language into English. There are some difficulty in limited vocabulary. Students with a restricted lexical range may find it difficult to express complex ideas or present detailed arguments. As a result, their writing may rely on basic vocabulary and repetitive expressions.

Difficulty Type	Description	Causes	Impact on Writing Quality	Example
Grammatical Errors	Incorrect use of tenses, articles, and sentence structures	Limited grammar knowledge, L1 interference	Reduces clarity and accuracy	<i>He go to university yesterday</i>
Limited Vocabulary	Inability to express complex ideas due to lack of lexical resources	Insufficient exposure to academic texts	Leads to repetition and simple sentences	Use of basic words like <i>good, bad</i>

Lack of Coherence	Lack of logical connection	Ideas are not logically connected	Poor planning, lack of linking devices	Make texts difficult to follow	Paragraphs without clear flow
Weak Idea Development	Weak arguments	Arguments are not supported with examples	Lack of critical thinking skills	Results in superficial writing	No explanation after main idea
Organizational Problems	Poor organization	Poor essay structure (no intro/body/conclusion)	Lack of knowledge of academic format	Reduced readability	Mixed paragraphs
Spelling & Punctuation Errors	Frequent mistakes	Frequent mistakes in writing mechanics	Carelessness, lack of practice	Affects professionalism	Be <i>couse, dont</i>

Table 1. Major Academic Writing Difficulties of EFL Learners

The analysis presented in Table 1 demonstrates that EFL learners face multiple interconnected challenges in academic writing. These difficulties are not limited to linguistic problems but also include cognitive and structural issues. For instance, grammatical errors often arise due to interference from the learner’s first language, while limited vocabulary restricts the ability to express complex ideas effectively.

Furthermore, coherence and organization problems indicate that students struggle with structuring their thoughts logically. This suggests that writing is not only a language skill but also a thinking process. The presence of weak idea development highlights the need for critical thinking training in writing instruction. Overall, these challenges significantly affect the clarity, coherence, and academic quality of students’ written work. Therefore, addressing these issues requires a comprehensive approach that combines language development with strategic writing instruction.

J	Strategy	Description	How It Helps	Practical Application	Expected Outcome
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Pre-writing Planning	Creating outlines before writing	Organizes ideas logically	Mind maps, essay plans	Clear structure
Model Essay Analysis	Studying well-written texts	Improves understanding of structure	Reading academic essays	Better coherence
Regular Practice	Frequent writing activities	Develops fluency and accuracy	Writing journals, essays	Increased confidence
Vocabulary Expansion	Learning academic words	Improves expression of ideas	Word lists, reading	Rich vocabulary
Grammar Practice	Focused grammar exercises	Reduces errors	Exercises, corrections	Accuracy improvement
Feedback from Teachers	Constructive comments on writing	Identifies mistakes and improvement areas	Teacher review	Continuous improvement
Use of Digital Tools	Apps and platforms for writing	Provides independent learning	Grammarly, writing apps	Self-correction skills

Table 2. Effective Strategies for Improving Academic Writing Skills

According to Table 2 presents a range of effective strategies that can significantly enhance academic writing skills among EFL learners. These strategies address both linguistic and cognitive aspects of writing. For example, pre-writing planning helps students organize their ideas before they begin writing, which leads to more coherent texts. Similarly, analyzing model essays allows learners to understand how effective writing is structured and how arguments are developed.

Regular practice plays a crucial role in improving both fluency and confidence, while vocabulary and grammar development contribute to linguistic accuracy. In addition, feedback from instructors provides valuable guidance that helps students identify and correct their

mistakes. The use of digital tools further supports independent learning by enabling students to monitor their progress. Overall, the combination of these strategies creates a supportive learning environment that promotes continuous improvement in writing skills.

The study also highlights problems related to idea development. Some learners have difficulty generating relevant ideas or providing sufficient explanations to support their arguments. Without clear examples or supporting details, essays may appear incomplete or superficial. In addition, many students experience challenges with text organization. Academic essays typically require a structured format consisting of an introduction, body paragraphs, and a conclusion. However, some learners struggle to organize their ideas logically, which can lead to disorganized or incoherent texts.

To make a concrete, the issues related to spelling and punctuation were identified as additional obstacles that affect writing quality. Although these errors may appear minor, they can influence the reader's perception of the writer's language proficiency.

Discussion

The findings of this analysis confirm that writing difficulties among EFL learners are influenced by multiple linguistic and cognitive factors. Improving writing skills therefore requires a comprehensive approach that addresses both language development and writing strategies.

One effective strategy is careful planning before writing. Creating a short outline allows students to organize their ideas and ensure that their essays follow a logical structure. Planning also helps writers stay focused on the topic and avoid irrelevant information. This strategy involves supporting arguments with examples. Providing specific examples and explanations strengthens the writer's argument and demonstrates a deeper understanding of the topic.

Reading model essays is also beneficial for developing writing skills. By analyzing well-written texts, students can observe how ideas are structured and how cohesive devices are used to connect sentences and paragraphs. Regular writing practice is equally important. Frequent writing activities help learners improve grammatical accuracy, expand vocabulary, and develop greater confidence in expressing their ideas.

Finally, constructive feedback from instructors plays a crucial role in writing development. Feedback helps students identify their mistakes and understand how to improve their writing in future tasks.

Conclusion

Academic writing is a challenging yet essential skill for learners of English as a foreign language. Students must combine linguistic knowledge with critical thinking and organizational abilities in order to produce clear and effective written texts. This article has examined common difficulties faced by EFL learners, including grammatical errors, limited vocabulary, weak idea development, and poor text organization. The analysis also highlights several strategies that can help students improve their writing skills, such as careful planning, reading model essays, practicing regularly, and receiving constructive feedback.

Developing strong writing skills requires consistent effort and structured learning strategies. By integrating effective writing instruction into language learning programs, educators can help students become more confident and competent writers.

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