

## **English - Language Academic Writing in the Context of Academic Mobility**

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**Abstract:** The article deals with the role and aspects of studying English-language academic writing in the context of academic mobility. The international cooperation in higher education in the Lower Danube Euroregion is detailed on the basis of Izmail State University of Humanities. Various methodological approaches to teaching academic writing in higher education are analyzed. The study shows that applying an integrated approach is most effective for building an academic writing competency.

**Keywords:** academic writing; academic mobility; a product-based approach; a process-based approach; an integrated approach

International cooperation based on the principle of academic mobility becomes the primary focus in the activities of higher educational institutions in the context of the formation of a single world educational space.

In the modern world, the driving force of academic mobility has been cooperation in higher education, known as the Bologna process, which entered into force in 1999 and aims to harmonize higher education in Europe. Academic mobility is understood as the transfer of students or teachers to another educational institution (within their own country or abroad) for a certain period (from one term to a year) for study, practice, teaching or research, after which students, teachers or researchers return to their primary school (Platkova, 2014). Academic freedom, according to the parameters of the Bologna process, is the right to self-determination in the content of education, the choice of both basic and additional disciplines, forms of training; the right to create a creative learning environment for students, lecturers, and the use of the latest teaching and learning methods. As a result, today through academic

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mobility students have the opportunity to replenish their knowledge in other countries or in other universities.

The purpose of this article is to consider the significant role of studying academic writing in order to expand the educational exchange of students, lecturers, researchers and university administrators, as one of the effective means to enhance the competitiveness of national education systems; identify the main approaches to the study of communication in writing.

Academic mobility can be external and internal. External academic mobility implies teaching students, conducting research and the work of lecturers and staff of domestic educational establishments in universities and research institutions abroad. Internal academic mobility stands for teaching students, conducting research, and the work of university teachers and staff at leading domestic universities and research centers (possibly with the involvement of foreign professors) (Platkova, 2014).

The motivation factors for moving students and lecturers to other universities are different. For example, students can travel to foreign universities to gain knowledge, expand education, improve language skills, look for work, etc. University teachers can encourage their students to enrich their professional potential for participating in student exchange programs. In this regard, large prestigious universities are trying to internationalize their programs, introduce new courses to facilitate international research in the modern competitive world.

Within the framework of expanding international cooperation in the Lower Danube Euroregion, Izmail State University for the Humanities occupies one of the leading positions. It is the only state educational institution with the wide network of international contacts and reliable reputation of the internal and foreign scientific and cultural establishment, the leading center of education, science and culture of the Ukrainian Danube region. (ISHU site: Izmail State University of Humanities site). The border region of Izmail University opens the opportunities for the productive cooperation with educational institutions of the Danube basin countries (Romania, Moldova, Bulgaria, Germany). These are significant resources and enrichment of cross-border cooperation, and intensification of youth mobility, internships and student exchanges, organization of students' joint public activities and practical implementation of youth initiatives that promote the values of European integration. These activities were put into action within the framework of bilateral agreements on cooperation with Ismail State University of Humanities

(Ukraine) and Galati “The Lower Danube” State University (Romania), Comrat State University (The Republic of Moldova), The Braille Museum of King I (Romania), The Bogdan Petriceicu Hasdeu State University (Republic of Moldova), Danubius University (Romania), etc.

The necessary prerequisite for international cooperation in education is the knowledge of English. Scientific and educational communication between different countries has been carried out with the help of academic writing for the last few decades. Quite often participation in international exchange programs and grant projects requires students to have English language proficiency in academic writing. That is, the ability to write in English competently, while formulating their thoughts clearly, logically, coherently and convincingly to argue them is valued in both academic and professional environments. Written speech is an indicator of a high level of education and culture and becomes an image characteristic of a competitive specialist.

Accordingly, in the context of the globalization of education and the increase in international academic mobility, it is necessary to take into account the students’ needs for the acquisition of functional knowledge and skills that provide competitive advantages in the academic and professional environment. To address the contradiction between the need for academic mobility and the low level of language proficiency, various language training courses are being set up in educational institutions.

So, on the basis of ISUH the project “Strengthening Academic Integrity in Ukraine Project – SAIUP” is being successfully realized. It is implemented by the American Councils for International Education, jointly with the Ministry of Education and Science and with the support of the United States Embassy in Ukraine. Within the framework of this project the Center for Academic Writing has been created. It promotes the culture of academic integrity and academic writing, contributes to the development of students’ critical thinking, activates socio-cultural and educational initiatives in ISUH.

From this perspective, teaching written speech in general and academic writing in particular today becomes especially relevant and is the subject of scientific research of many teaching methods specialists. Fundamental studies in this area are the scientific works related to the methodology of teaching writing in English in general, and those which specify the objectives, determine the formation stages, provide a system of exercises, characterize the means of forming and controlling the level of a

foreign language competence in writing, that is considered by foreign scientists as the ability to implement communication in written form (Hedge 2005, Harmer, 2015). Domestic scientists specify that this ability is based on the complex and dynamic interaction of relevant abilities, knowledge and communicative skills of the individual (Skliarenko & Ustyenko, 2013). A great number of investigations are devoted to the methods of studying academic writing, particularly the system of teaching essay writing has been grounded (Yusupova, 2015), the factors influencing the formation of an academic writing competence are studied, digital technologies that can be used for this are considered (Strobl C., Ailhaud E., et.al., 2019). In the context of our study, the scientific interest present the works, which highlight the features of approaches to teaching foreign written academic speech, their advantages and disadvantages (Johnson, 2016). However, despite the increased attention of scientists to the problem of forming competence in foreign language writing, in our opinion, the question of the feasibility of integrating different approaches to teaching academic writing remains out of researchers' attention.

The analysis of scientific literature allowed to clarify the essence of the concept of academic writing as a creative productive speech activity to form specialized professional scientific or educational texts that perform purely academic functions (plans, translations, annotations, abstracts, reports, theses, reviews, articles, projects, stories, essays) (Karpenko & Smelianska, 2019, p. 21).

In modern methods of teaching foreign languages there are two main approaches to the development of skills to create a written text: a product-based and a processed-based approach. A product-based approach is considered traditional in teaching writing. Proponents of this approach focus on the final product, which is a coherent text designed without grammatical, lexical and stylistic errors, which is the result of analysis, imitation and transformation of the sample text proposed by the teacher. Within this approach, researchers distinguish four stages. During the first one there is an acquaintance with the sample text, which serves as a kind of link between two qualitative levels of mastery of written speech: reproductive and productive. Under the guidance of the teacher, students read the proposed text and do exercises aimed at testing the level of understanding its content. At the same stage there is an analysis of linguistic and extralinguistic means of the text; highlighting the structure of the text and studying the features of the selected genre functioning. The exercises aimed at teaching stylistically appropriate lexical and grammatical design of written utterance are performed in the second stage. The third stage is devoted to the work on the development of the ability to logically and consistently formulate ideas in

writing in accordance with the requirements of the genre. The final stage of teaching to write involves making their own works similar to the sample text, working on which students are to demonstrate mastery of grammatical structures and vocabulary, as well as to show the knowledge of compositional features of the chosen genre (Hasan & Akhand, 1970). Since the main indicator of success in this approach is the correct use of grammatical structures, variety and appropriateness of the use of proper lexical items, the absence of spelling errors and compliance with the structure of the written utterance characteristics of the genre, the teacher's response is focused on the form and not on the content of the written statement (Sakoda). The popularity of a product-based approach is due to the fact that it aims to create a product for students, i.e. the text, which is the main object of control during exams often completing various academic courses aimed at teaching written speech and international exams.

However, on the other hand, it is the emphasis on the final product that is considered a significant drawback of this approach, as the process of writing the work itself is overlooked. Among other shortcomings, scientists also point to the lack of conditions for the development of students' creative potential; inconsistency of the sample text with their real needs and interests; shifting the emphasis towards writing as a means of training and controlling the level of foreign grammatical and lexical skills formation, rather than as a means of expressing one's own opinion.

A process-based approach to teaching written speech is focused on the author of the written work and the procedure of its creation, the main characteristics of which are planning a written utterance based on communicative intent, addressing the reader, reviewing and adjusting semantic and linguistic components of the text (Hedge, 2005). During the implementation of a process-based approach, the procedure of creating a written utterance comprises eight stages. Thus, at the initial stage, the tasks performed by students are aimed at enhancing existing life experience in order to help them focus on possible aspects of the content of future written statement. Interactive forms and methods of work are considered to be the most effective for producing ideas that can be used to reveal the topic of written work. After that, students move on to discuss the feasibility of generated ideas and their design with the help of graphic organizers: sequential, hierarchical, conceptual or comparative, which help to identify the main ideas or concepts, and logically plan the content of a written statement. The next step is to write the first version of the written work, which can be done individually, in pairs or in groups. The purpose of the mutual analysis stage is to critically evaluate the written statement and involves the

exchange of works and their reading, followed by consideration of the advantages and disadvantages. To make this stage productive, the feedback developed by the teacher in the form of questions, the answers to which will help to direct students' attention to the necessary aspects during the peer review and give appropriate recommendations for improving the written statement. This organization of writing contributes to the establishment of partnerships between students and the development of an understanding that each written work has its reader, and therefore should be clear to him/her (Harmer, 2015). After that, the students work on the improvement of their written utterances, taking into account the comments and wishes of their readers. The control stage involves checking and quantitative and qualitative assessment of written work. It is necessary to take into consideration not only the text as the final product, but also the changes made in the process of working on it. The main evaluation criteria are the content of the text, not its language design, although followers of a process-based approach emphasize the need to correct grammatical and lexical errors. The teacher's response should include not only a comment on the shortcomings of the written work, but also an analysis of its positive aspects, which should encourage the student to further study.

Investigating the advantages of a process-based approach to teaching to write, scientists point to its subordination to the development of productive (in its direction and level of necessary skills), free (in its essence), creative (in its original nature), personal (in the active role of the author and subjectivity) types of writing (Motriuk, 2014); focus on the formation of a competence not only in writing but also in other types of speech activities through the integration of speech skills and abilities; promoting social interaction of students. Among the disadvantages of a process-based approach, most practitioners call its complexity due to the significant time required to write a written statement by students and the teacher's response to it.

Thus, given all the advantages and disadvantages of a product-based approach and a process-based approach to teaching to write English-language academic papers, their integration seems appropriate, as the first one promotes the development of students' linguistic competence, without which it is impossible to realize the communicative intention of written communication, the second one teaches to comprehensively reveal the topic through the prism of various ideas and arguments, focusing on the content.

An integrated approach meets the basic requirements for the formation of a foreign language competence in writing, namely teaching writing in foreign language classes, the teacher is to give students all the necessary explanations about the format

of the text to be written, its structure, composition, components, means of expression, ensuring the unity, logical and linguistic coherence of the text; to acquaint students with different methods of production and logical structuring of ideas for creating written texts; to combine group and individual modes of work on a written statement; rationally combine elements of basic methodological approaches to teaching writing that exist in the methodology of teaching a foreign language (Tarnopolskyi, & Kozhushko, 2008). An integrated approach teaches writing foreign academic texts of different levels of complexity and creates favorable conditions for developing critical thinking students, their creative abilities; promotes their self-expression, as well as self-affirmation in the group; intensifies the educational process at a foreign language lesson.

The analysis of the advantages and disadvantages of modern methodological approaches to teaching writing has led to the conclusion that their integration is the most acceptable for the formation of an academic writing competence which is the necessary prerequisite for the development of students' academic mobility.

Ukraine's desire to integrate into the world and European community has led to an increasing role of international cooperation in the field of education. The internationalization of domestic education opens wide opportunities for Ukrainian students in terms of their mobility.

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