

THE ROLE OF WRITING IN A MODERN UNIVERSITY: ANALYSIS OF FOREIGN PRACTICES IN TEACHING ACADEMIC WRITING

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Abstract: The article raises questions about the need to develop students' academic literacy in the process of studying at a university. An overview of theoretical approaches to academic literacy is provided, and various practices of teaching academic writing in leading universities around the world are analyzed. The necessity is substantiated and ways are outlined for the development of academic writing skills, not only in English, but also in the native language (language of instruction), as the main component of the academic literacy of a modern student.

Key words: academic literacy, higher education, English for academic purposes, Writing Across Curriculum, Writing In Disciplines, First Year Composition, mother tongue.

At the present stage, significant changes are taking place in the Uzbek higher education system. State restructuring of universities, individualization of educational trajectories, updating the list of necessary competencies and qualification characteristics of modern graduates, increasing the level of academic mobility of students place new demands on the quality of university education. In the Western educational paradigm, one of the indicators of the quality of education is the degree of development of students' academic literacy (hereinafter referred to as AG). At the same time, the main attention is paid to the development of skills and abilities of academic writing, which are the main component of AG and the key competence of any modern specialist.

In Uzbek universities, academic writing is predominantly taught to students only within the framework of the discipline "English for Academic Purposes". In this course, writing is one of the leading activities, and how well students demonstrate mastery of English writing skills directly affects their academic performance. But one of the key problems that many English teachers face is the insufficient development of English in their native language.

This article provides an overview of Western and domestic theoretical approaches to the definition of AG, and substantiates the special role of writing in the native language in a modern university. Based on the analysis of various practices of teaching academic writing in the world's leading universities, we conclude that it is necessary to introduce specialized courses in teaching academic writing in Russian into the educational programs of Uzbek universities.

Review of foreign and domestic definitions of hypertension

Western approaches to the definition of hypertension.

The Western model of education has been based on the concept of AG for quite a long time. Despite the fact that there are different approaches to defining this concept, AG in general, as interpreted by Western scientists, acts as a criterion for determining the level of a student's readiness to study at a university.

In the American education system, according to one of the common approaches to defining AG, a literate student is able to read and write, listen and express his opinions, think critically, use information and communication technologies, demonstrate academic progress and successful study skills. It is assumed that these competencies are developed within the framework of all disciplines studied by the student at the university, i.e. the formation of AG

and the development of all its components is considered as one of the goals of education. At the same time, the key competence is academic writing, the foundations of which are laid at the stage of school education, and at the university it only develops at a new qualitative level.

In the UK, it is customary to talk not about AG, but about the reading, writing, and speaking skills necessary for studying at a university (the so-called model of academic skills), which can be transferred to new contexts. That is, a student, having mastered these skills within one discipline or course, is able to apply them in any academic context.

In Australia, the most common approach to AG is formulated in the works of B. Green, who identifies three components: operational literacy, cultural literacy and critical literacy. In other words, literacy means having linguistic competence, understanding the discourse in which oral and written communication occurs, and the ability to transform information into knowledge.

In general, in the Australian education system, AG is the ability expected of students to study and conduct research activities, to report the results of their activities in accordance with the traditions and standards existing in a particular discipline. At the same time, AG is inextricably linked with the level of proficiency in the language in which the training takes place. Despite the fact that the concept of AG has long existed in the Western educational environment, at the moment it, however, has no analogues in domestic pedagogical science.

Academic literacy as interpreted by domestic researchers.

The Uzbek education system uses the concept of functional literacy, according to which a functionally literate person is recognized as being able to “solve problems in educational activities, standard life problems, problems of orientation in the value system, problems of preparation for vocational education.” To our knowledge, there are no alternative theories of literacy in the context of higher education in Russia. However, recently, studies have begun to appear in domestic pedagogy that raise issues of development among students of AG, including in their native language.

Thus, I.B. Korotkina, citing data from the PISA international study in the field of school education, points to a rather low level of development of hypertension in Russian schoolchildren. Based on the results of his own study of the level of literacy among middle and senior managers, the author concludes that their level of proficiency in their native academic language is low.

In another study by M. A. Lytaeva and E. V. Talalakina, pointing to the supra-linguistic nature of academic skills, which are formed in addition to linguistic reality, following K. Pearson, they emphasize that in the learning process it is equally important to develop academic skills both in native speakers and in non-native speakers of the language in which the learning process takes place. However, as the authors note, this is often not taken into account when studying at a university. The study emphasizes that academic skills are universal in nature, as they can be transferred to other subjects due to their supra-linguistic and supra-subject nature: “within the positivist approach, academic skills are considered as measurable traits inherent in an individual, which he is able to transfer from one context to another “Without using the term “academic literacy,” the authors essentially consider this particular concept.

In this study, we define AG as the ability to function effectively in a modern academic environment: to carry out intercultural academic communication on the basis of foreign language professionally oriented texts, to think critically, and to improve one’s self-educational competence for educational and professional purposes. It is important to note that a key component of AG is academic writing.

Academic writing as a basic component of academic literacy in Western higher education.

Many researchers have written about the role of writing and its positive impact on human intellectual development. R. Reich and A. Knopf predicted that the majority of modern graduates will work in the field of so-called symbolic-analytic services. The authors explain that, in addition to disciplinary knowledge, future specialists need critical thinking skills - acquiring, reproducing and demonstrating knowledge. In this case, writing should not be the final product (result) of the educational process, but a method of effective learning (the so-called "writing-to-learn" approach). Many emphasize the close relationship between writing and mental activity.

The Western education system is focused on writing; writing acts not only in the function of knowledge control (writing as a product), but also as the main method of teaching (writing as a process), and as an approach to learning (writing-to-learn). By creating written texts, students simultaneously master new knowledge and develop critical thinking skills. Writing is perceived in a different light - this skill takes on a new meaning, ceases to be purely formal, and becomes key, allowing both to successfully study at a university and to work effectively in the future, to be an academically competent specialist.

Theoretical approaches to teaching academic writing in the West (using the example of the USA)

In the United States, teaching writing is recognized as the foundation of student learning in college. All knowledge, skills and abilities must be developed through experience in writing, reading and critical thinking.

Traditionally, in US universities there were only courses for first-year students ("First Year Writing Course" / "First Year Composition"), which allowed them to get acquainted with various writing genres and master the skills of academic, creative, professionally oriented writing. Students learned to distinguish between genres, work on the structure of the text and its grammatical accuracy, and mastered the basics of critical reading. It was assumed that taking this course in the future would allow students to successfully study at a university and cope with various types of written work.

Now, while maintaining first-year seminars, two approaches are used at US universities - Writing across curriculum (WAC) and Writing in disciplines (WID) (see, for example, in which writing is the leading activity. It seems important to clarify the essence these approaches.

WAC is an approach to learning in which written competence is key and the entire learning process is built on the basis of the active use of written speech to master and activate new knowledge. This kind of practice allows you to introduce a writing component into the structure of any taught discipline. At the same time, writing is the type of activity that allows you to comprehend, analyze and critically present the information received. The introduction of WAC means a qualitative change in the structure of educational programs, all training, and also imposes certain requirements on the competencies of teachers responsible for their implementation.

It is worth noting that most often it is not any WAC course per se that is implemented, but rather the core time-tested principles of WAC are brought into the course design model. According to a number of studies, learning through writing is more effective if students' metacognitive abilities are also activated in the educational process and the learning itself is not short-term (temporary) in nature.

Unlike WAC, the WID approach involves the active involvement of written speech activities to master knowledge within one discipline, familiarity with disciplinary ways of thinking and expressing thoughts, genres and traditions of writing. In this case, both the process of creating a text is important (i.e., training takes place in working with the text at all stages) and the product of writing activity (i.e., great attention is paid to all the characteristics of the finished text).

Writing within the framework of this approach can be taught by an academic language specialist or a teacher of basic disciplines. S. McLeod also gives examples of universities where both teachers work in the same team. At the same time, attention is paid not only to certain academic genres, but also to the forms and ways of thinking of specialists in this field of knowledge. However, as S. McLeod notes, when applying the WAC and WID approaches, the main difficulties are associated with the fact that, on the one hand, students may not be ready for this type of writing activity, and on the other hand, teachers of disciplines are not ready to teach students writing.

In general, according to modern research in the field of theory and practice of WAC and WID, both approaches do not contradict each other, but rather are complementary, which was discovered upon further analysis.

Conclusions

The above analysis showed that in order to increase the efficiency and quality of education with the aim of systematic integration into the international scientific community, the Uzbek system of higher education should pay more attention to the development of AG in general and academic writing in particular. Since writing skill is a transferable skill, it seems effective to develop it either on the basis of the native language and then transfer it to a foreign language, or to study both languages in parallel. This requires the introduction of new and flexible models of training courses that will allow for the effective implementation of modern educational concepts and the formation of key competencies related to academic writing as the basis for successful education at a university.

Possible solutions to the problem could be:

- 1) inclusion in the curriculum of special disciplines aimed at developing academic literacy and, above all, academic writing;
- 2) creation of information and advisory support for students through specially created academic writing centers;
- 3) creation of information and methodological support for teaching writing for teachers of disciplines (how to teach, assignment formats, role and type of feedback);
- 4) consolidating the efforts of teachers of English for academic purposes and teachers teaching courses on developing academic writing skills in the language of instruction, namely, the development of integrated courses that can be read together or taught in close cooperation.

In conclusion, it is important to note that optimization of training should be based on interdisciplinary research to assess the level of development of students' AG, as well as to develop models for constructing the educational process that will take into account Russian specifics and avoid the ineffective implementation of teaching models alien to Uzbek realities.

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