

CHALLENGES FACED BY UZBEK STUDENTS IN ENGLISH ACADEMIC WRITING

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Abstract: *This article investigates the major challenges that Uzbek university students face in English academic writing. Despite years of formal English instruction, many students struggle with producing coherent, grammatically accurate, and logically structured academic texts. The paper explores linguistic, cognitive, cultural, and pedagogical factors that hinder students' writing development. The study is based on a mixed-methods approach, including a survey of 40 undergraduate students and semi-structured interviews with 5 English language instructors. The findings reveal that limited exposure to academic genres, lack of vocabulary, weak grammar foundations, and translation from L1 (Uzbek or Russian) significantly affect writing quality. Furthermore, the research underscores the need for reforming writing instruction by incorporating process writing, genre-based approaches, and academic integrity training.*

Keywords: *English academic writing, Uzbek students, writing challenges, second language acquisition, plagiarism, paraphrasing, process writing, vocabulary development, EFL teaching, academic integrity.*

Annotatsiya: *Ushbu maqolada O'zbekiston universitetlari talabalari ingliz tilida akademik yozishda duch keladigan asosiy qiyinchiliklar o'rganiladi. Ko'p yillik ingliz tili ta'limiga qaramay, ko'plab talabalar izchil, grammatik jihatdan to'g'ri va mantiqan tuzilgan akademik matnlar yozishda qiynalishadi. Maqolada talabalar yozuv malakasining rivojlanishiga to'sqinlik qiluvchi lingvistik, kognitiv, madaniy va pedagogik omillar tahlil qilinadi. Tadqiqot aralash usullar asosida olib borilgan bo'lib, 40 nafar bakalavriat talabalari o'rtasida so'rovnoma va 5 nafar ingliz tili o'qituvchisi bilan yarim tuzilgan suhbatlarni o'z ichiga oladi. Natijalar shuni ko'rsatadiki, akademik janrlarga cheklangan darajada duch kelish, lug'at boyligining yetishmasligi, grammatik asoslarning zaifligi hamda birinchi til (o'zbek yoki rus tili)dan tarjima qilish odati yozuv sifatiga sezilarli darajada ta'sir qiladi. Bundan tashqari, tadqiqot yozish ta'limini isloh qilish zaruratini, xususan, jarayonli yozish, janrga asoslangan yondashuvlar va akademik halollik bo'yicha treninglarni joriy etish muhimligini ta'kidlaydi.*

Kalit so'zlar: *Ingliz tilidagi akademik yozuv, o'zbek talabalar, yozuvdagi qiyinchiliklar, ikkinchi tilni o'zlashtirish, plagiat, parafrazlash, jarayonli yozuv, lug'at boyligini rivojlantirish, ingliz tilini o'qitish, akademik halollik.*

Аннотация: В данной статье изучаются основные трудности, с которыми сталкиваются студенты узбекистанских университетов при академическом письме на английском языке. Несмотря на многолетнее обучение английскому языку, многие студенты испытывают сложности при написании последовательных, грамматически правильных и логически структурированных академических текстов. В статье анализируются лингвистические, когнитивные, культурные и педагогические факторы, препятствующие развитию навыков письма у студентов. Исследование проведено на основе смешанных методов и включает анкетирование 40 студентов бакалавриата, а также полуструктурированные интервью с 5 преподавателями английского языка.

Результаты показывают, что ограниченное знакомство с академическими жанрами, недостаточный словарный запас, слабые грамматические основы и привычка переводить с первого языка (узбекского или русского) значительно влияют на качество письменной речи. Кроме того, исследование подчеркивает необходимость реформы обучения письму, в частности внедрения процессного письма, жанрово-ориентированных подходов и тренингов по академической честности.

Ключевые слова: академическое письмо на английском языке, узбекские студенты, трудности письма, освоение второго языка, плагиат, перефразирование, процессное письмо, развитие словарного запаса, преподавание английского языка, академическая честность.

Introduction: In the global academic world, writing in English is a fundamental skill that enables students to participate in international research, scholarship, and academic discourse. In Uzbekistan, the demand for English academic writing has grown due to increased mobility, online learning, and the influence of global education standards. However, many students in philology and language teaching faculties still experience significant difficulty in expressing their ideas in written English, especially in academic formats. Academic writing is not only about grammar or vocabulary — it requires critical thinking, coherence, evidence-based reasoning, and the ability to follow disciplinary conventions.

This paper aims to: a) identify the core challenges Uzbek students face in English academic writing; b) analyze contributing factors to those difficulties;

Offer practical suggestions for improving writing instruction in Uzbek universities.

Literature Review: Academic writing in a second language is often described as the most demanding of the four skills (Hamp-Lyons & Heasley, 2006). Research has shown that EFL learners commonly face difficulties with cohesion, argumentation, and lexical appropriacy (Hyland, 2003). In contexts like Uzbekistan, where English is

taught as a foreign language rather than a second language, the exposure to authentic academic English is often limited.

Moreover, Uzbek students may carry over rhetorical patterns from their native language into English. For instance, directness and explicit thesis statements — typical in English academic writing — may feel unnatural or unfamiliar. According to Karimova (2020), students often rely on memorized templates or internet sources, which leads to a lack of originality and problems with academic integrity.

Common issues identified in previous research include:

- Misuse of linking devices;
- Difficulty in constructing topic sentences and thesis statements;
- Confusion between formal and informal registers;

Improper referencing and citation practices.

Methodology. The study employed a mixed-methods design to collect both quantitative and qualitative data. Participants: 40 undergraduate students from two Uzbek universities (Year 2 and Year 3) studying English Philology or English Language Teaching.

Tools: 1) Online questionnaire with multiple-choice and open-ended questions about writing habits and difficulties; 2) Semi-structured interviews with 5 experienced university English teachers;

Analysis: Thematic analysis for qualitative data and descriptive statistics for the survey.

Results and Discussion: 1) Common Difficulties Reported by Students. 2) Vocabulary and grammar: Over 75% of students stated they lacked sufficient academic vocabulary and struggled with grammar consistency, particularly tenses and sentence structure.

Organization:

- 68% had trouble organizing essays logically. Many did not clearly distinguish between introduction, body, and conclusion.
- Plagiarism and paraphrasing: 60% admitted to copying from online sources because they did not know how to paraphrase effectively.
- Time management and anxiety: Many students reported spending too much time rewriting sentences due to fear of making mistakes.

Teachers' Observations:

- Students rarely revise their drafts or reflect on feedback;
- Weak understanding of genre conventions (e.g., argumentative vs descriptive writing);
- Over-dependence on native language thinking leads to awkward sentence structures in English.

Cultural and Educational Factors:

- Uzbek education traditionally emphasizes memorization over critical writing;

- Essay writing is not consistently integrated across subjects, reducing writing practice;
- Limited access to academic databases or model texts in English.

Recommendations: To overcome these challenges, the following strategies are suggested:

Process Writing Approach. Encourage drafting, revising, peer reviewing, and editing stages to improve writing fluency.

Academic Writing Courses. Offer specialized courses or modules focused only on academic writing, preferably starting in the first year.

Genre-Based Instruction. Teach different types of academic writing (e.g., essays, reports, reviews) with examples and scaffolding.

Digital Tools. Introduce platforms like Grammarly, QuillBot, and Google Scholar to support grammar checks, paraphrasing, and exposure to academic language.

Feedback Culture. Create a feedback-rich environment where students can reflect on corrections and improve over time.

Conclusion. In conclusion, Uzbek students face numerous challenges in mastering English academic writing, many of which stem from linguistic, cultural, and pedagogical factors. Addressing these challenges requires a shift from traditional grammar-based instruction to more communicative, process-oriented, and genre-sensitive teaching. With adequate support, exposure, and consistent practice, students can become competent academic writers capable of engaging with global academic communities.

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