

ESSAY WRITING PROBLEMS AND SOLUTIONS FOR ESP LEARNERS

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Abstract: *Essay writing is a fundamental academic skill for English for Specific Purposes (ESP) learners; however, many students encounter persistent linguistic, cognitive, and organizational challenges. This article examines common essay writing problems faced by ESP learners and explores pedagogical solutions based on previous research. Using a literature review methodology, the study synthesizes findings from recent empirical studies and discusses their implications for improving ESP writing instruction, particularly within the Uzbek higher education context.*

Key words: *ESP learners; essay writing; writing difficulties; academic writing; EFL context; pedagogical solutions*

Introduction

Essay writing plays a crucial role in ESP education, as it enables learners to demonstrate disciplinary knowledge, critical thinking, and professional communication skills in English. For ESP learners, essay writing is not only a linguistic task but also a cognitively demanding activity that requires mastering genre conventions, academic style, and subject-specific discourse. Despite its importance, many ESP learners struggle to produce coherent and well-structured essays.

Previous research indicates that essay writing difficulties among EFL and ESP learners stem from multiple factors, including limited language proficiency, weak organization skills, insufficient vocabulary, and lack of familiarity with academic writing conventions (Bulqiyah et al., 2021; Rahmi et al., 2022). These difficulties are often intensified in ESP contexts, where students must integrate technical content with appropriate academic language.

Furthermore, students' attitudes toward essay writing and instructional methods significantly influence writing outcomes. Studies show that ineffective teaching strategies, limited feedback, and low student engagement contribute to poor writing performance (Seyoum et al., 2022; Rohayati & Rustandi, 2021). Therefore, identifying common problems and effective solutions is essential for improving ESP essay writing instruction.

Methodology

This study is based on a qualitative **literature review** of recent national and international research examining essay writing problems and instructional solutions among EFL and ESP learners. Peer-reviewed journal articles and academic book chapters published

between 2021 and 2024 were analyzed to identify recurring themes, correlations, and pedagogical implications relevant to ESP contexts.

Results

The reviewed studies reveal a strong correlation between limited linguistic competence and difficulties in essay writing. Many learners struggle with grammar accuracy, sentence construction, and appropriate use of academic vocabulary, which negatively affects essay clarity and coherence (Alfaruqy et al., 2022; Nenotek et al., 2022). These issues are consistently reported across different educational settings.

Another recurring problem is weak essay organization. Students often experience difficulties in developing thesis statements, structuring paragraphs, and maintaining logical flow between ideas (Bulqiyah et al., 2021). This problem is closely linked to insufficient understanding of essay genres and rhetorical structures.

Several studies highlight challenges in idea development and critical thinking. Learners frequently struggle to generate arguments, provide supporting evidence, and elaborate ideas in a coherent manner, especially in argumentative essays (Rahmi et al., 2022; Seyoum et al., 2022). This indicates a correlation between writing problems and limited exposure to analytical writing tasks.

A lack of writing practice and feedback also emerges as a significant factor. Research shows that students who receive minimal formative feedback tend to repeat the same mistakes and demonstrate low writing improvement (Rohayati & Rustandi, 2021). This suggests a strong relationship between instructional practices and writing performance.

Motivational and affective factors further influence essay writing outcomes. Negative attitudes toward writing, anxiety, and low confidence often hinder students’ ability to express ideas effectively (Seyoum et al., 2022). These factors are closely connected to learners’ previous writing experiences.

Technological and instructional contexts also affect writing performance. Online academic writing environments present both opportunities and challenges, as students may struggle with self-regulation and independent learning (Rohayati & Rustandi, 2021). This correlates with the need for structured guidance in ESP writing courses.

Finally, studies on innovative pedagogical approaches reveal positive correlations between problem-based learning and improved writing achievement. Shafamarwa et al. (2024) demonstrate that engaging students in real-world problem-solving tasks enhances argumentative writing skills, suggesting practical solutions for ESP instruction.

Discussion

The findings of this literature review have important implications for ESP education in Uzbekistan. Similar to other EFL contexts, Uzbek ESP learners often face linguistic limitations and limited exposure to academic essay writing, particularly in English-medium instruction programs. Addressing these challenges can significantly enhance students’ academic and professional readiness.

Implementing learner-centered and problem-based instructional approaches could improve essay writing outcomes in Uzbek universities. As shown by Shafamarwa et al. (2024),

contextualized writing tasks related to students’ fields of study can increase motivation and promote deeper engagement with writing.

Moreover, improving teacher training and feedback practices is essential. Systematic formative feedback and explicit instruction in essay structure and academic conventions can help Uzbek ESP learners overcome common writing difficulties, aligning local practices with international standards (Bacon, 2023).

Conclusion

This study highlights that essay writing problems among ESP learners are multidimensional, involving linguistic, cognitive, instructional, and affective factors. The reviewed literature demonstrates strong correlations between these challenges and students’ writing performance across diverse contexts.

To address these issues effectively, ESP programs should adopt interactive, problem-based, and discipline-specific writing instruction supported by continuous feedback. Such approaches can significantly improve essay writing competence, particularly within the evolving higher education system of Uzbekistan.

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