**EFFECTIVE TECHNIQUES IN IMPROVING STUDENT WRITING**

*Handurdy Hojatov*

*(DOVLETMAMMET AZADI TURKMEN NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF WORLD LANGUAGES)*

**Abstract**

This paper is mainly about the concept of academic writing or techniques in improving student writing at the university level. This paper will discuss the importance of academic writing; give some definitions, types and classifications. It will also discuss the use of these techniques in academic writing among English language learners and the role of these techniques in promoting the process of language learning. Over the time, progress of techniques in improving student writing is developed and they are explored precisely in this paper. The paper will also provide information on the obstacles that university students may face while they write assignments for their academic courses which will lead researchers to better understanding and to guide them to the righteous way when making research in this filed. At the end, this paper defines the notion of Good Academic Writer explaining the relationship between Good Academic Writer and effective techniques in improving academic writing at universities.

Key words:, academic writing, research, skills, curriculum.

As this paper is from the author’s ongoing research on designing Academic writing course for the third year university students, it has several contributions to the field. Importance of the study has come out in three main points. 1) There is no research available in improving student writing in our country. 2) It is the first study on designing a course on academic writing. 3) As it is the first study in respecting area, all the practical data is being collected from the first hand.

This paper has several Research questions. How the techniques are important in improving academic writing skills? What is the relevance of academic writing course components with the writing a research or academic papers?

Objectives of the study will try to answer the research questions. Useful and various techniques have great contribution in improving academic writing skills of university students. A properly designed course in academic writing results in quality academic papers.

Author used several Hypotheses in this study. They are as below:

* University students have better writing skills when they taught through well-organized syllabus
* University students who had several writing courses write their graduation thesis better than those who did not.
* University students write better essays and other academic papers if they are guided with various techniques effectively.

Research methods

The study used a case study perspective striving to understand the issue under the observation in its natural setting with a particular attention to contextual conditions and experience of the participants (Lacono, Brown, & Holtham, 2009). To such an end, the selection of the research site was made according not only to the suitability of the case for the research aim, but also to the typicality hence the significance of TNIWL as the only higher educational institution specialized in language education in Turkmenistan. Undeniably, TNIWL prepares future language teachers, and the most diversified in terms of possibilities of academic options in the country, it is essential for students to learn academic writing not only for their university assignments, but also for their future careers.

Materials and methods

This study is being conducted at the Turkmen National Institute of World Languages, with undergraduate students. In order to carry out the research productively the author availed qualitative and the quantitative methods. Several research materials were also utilized while conducting questionnaires, classroom observation. The author benefited from several resource books while adapting the techniques in improving academic writing.

Research gap

Academic writing is one of the essential courses at the university level as “Most international students need to write essays and reports for exams and coursework. Yet writing good academic English is one of the most demanding tasks students face” (Bailey, 2011, p.i). Academic writing is also seen as one of the important skills in student success. Unfortunately, any of the existing studies or research within teaching writing at university level is not specific to our institution. Moreover, materials and methods for teaching writing is outdated and in need of new/updated research.

***Key words:*** *Academic writing, effective techniques, university students*

**Introduction**

Writing is one of the four communicative skills and it is one of the core courses in English language teaching departments at almost all universities around the world. However it is one most difficult course as the writing is seen as a “torture instrument” (Whitaker, 2009, p.2) by most of the students.

Writing in university has been regarded as one of the complex English skills that require thoroughly ways in order to produce a highly rich piece of writing. Writing is also one important skill for academic success. It therefore, needs a lot of efforts on making the students write better. These efforts will be potential when they go to the right target. However, most of the effort is aimed at skill building and grammar instruction. Writing in university is not only about producing a grammatically correct piece of writing, but the writing should show a well communicative writing that can deliver what the writer intended to convey. More development on writing teaching approaches have been growing in the recent decade, such as “portfolio assessment, peer evaluation, conferencing with instructors, communicative approaches, computer writing software, mail exchange, etc.” (Lee, 2003, p.112). Those approaches have been underpinned by researches that show their effectiveness on teaching and learning. Yet, most writing instructors still cannot give up conservative grammatical error correction and cannot successfully apply the new approaches mentioned above. The gap between research findings and the practice in real classrooms never seems to be filled. Accordingly, the cause of students’ writing difficulties has not yet been discovered.

A number of researches on English as Foreign Language (EFL) writing have been conducted. Those researches view EFL writing as a complex and continuing process that need some remedies to overcome. In this case, students not only deal with writing techniques but more serious than that. This is what we call writing apprehension or anxiety where students have problems with their negative affective domain toward writing. This term was coined by Daly and Miller (1975) but later the most common researcher on this field is Lee (2003) and Krashen (2002). Apprehension can be triggered by several factors; namely, students’ traumatic past experiences in writing, lower expectations and negative responses from teachers, and the lack of writing competence (Daly, 1979 & 1985; Daly & Wilson, 1983; Duke, 1980; Harvley-Felder, 1978; Miller, 1975 as cited in Lee, 2003). It can be assumed that those factors are from learning and teaching experience the students get. Teacher should know that the learning experience that the students will have will eventually determine the success of students in learning. Continuous and extreme grammar correction will undeniably influences students affective in learning which later contribute to the students’ competent performance. Ineffective teaching is also related to this issue.

**References**

Bailey, S. (2011). Academic Writing: A Handbook for International Students (3rd ed.). Routledge: Taylor & Francis Group. London.

Burnett, L. (2008). How to improve your academic writing. Learning and Teaching Unit. University of Essex Printing Services.

Daly, J. A., & Miller, M. D.(1975). Further studies on writing apprehension: SAT scores, success expectations, willingness to take advanced courses and sex difference. Research in the Teaching of English, 9, pp. 250-256