



The Concept Of Academic Literacy In Foreign Language Teaching At Universities And The Importance Of Written Speech In Its Structure

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Abstract: Academic literacy in foreign language teaching encompasses various crucial elements, with written speech occupying a prominent position within its framework. The significance of written communication cannot be overstated, as it serves as a fundamental pillar of academic discourse. Proficiency in writing effectively in a foreign language is an indispensable competence that university students must possess. This article aims to delve into the realm of academic literacy in foreign language teaching within the university context, shedding light on the pivotal role of written speech in its overall structure.

Keywords: linguistic misunderstanding, academic community, academic literacy, academic discourse, identity, genre, socio-historical factors.

Introduction. Academic literacy plays a vital role in foreign language education at universities, as it ensures that students can effectively communicate and comprehend complex academic texts in a second language. It encompasses various skills and competencies, such as reading, writing, and understanding academic texts, as well as engaging in academic discussions and debates. This proficiency is essential for students enrolled in foreign language programs, as it enables them to access and actively participate in the academic discourse within their chosen field of study. The concept of academic literacy in foreign language teaching at universities encompasses a wide range of abilities. These include the capacity to comprehend and analyze intricate academic texts, the ability to produce clear and coherent essays and reports, and active involvement in academic discussions and debates. Additionally, it involves the development of critical thinking and analytical skills necessary to engage with academic material, as well as the mastery of appropriate academic language and style. In foreign language programs at universities, academic literacy is often taught as a distinct course or as part of a larger language proficiency program. Students are introduced to the specific language skills and competencies required for academic communication and are provided with opportunities to practice and enhance these skills through various activities and assignments. These may include reading and analyzing academic texts, writing essays and reports, and participating in discussions and debates on academic topics.

Literature review. The term academic literacy is commonly used by both domestic and foreign researchers. However, the definition of this concept is often unclear, as it is either presented within a narrow disciplinary context or used as a well-established but non-explanatory term. To gain a better understanding of academic literacy, it is necessary to consider its historical evolution, examine the existing definitions proposed by various approaches, and study the models that currently exist. In 1965, Pierre Bourdieu published a work in French titled "Academic Discourse: Linguistic misunderstanding and professorial power," which was later translated into English after 30 years [1]. This work sheds light on the fundamental aspects of academic literacy for the first time, including the presence of a distinct academic discourse in higher education, the occurrence of "linguistic misunderstanding" between teachers and students, and the existence of the teacher's authority over students [1].

The study highlights the unique characteristics of studying at a university, where the expectations of teachers often differ from the abilities of students. The effective utilization of scientific terms and language is closely linked to the existing knowledge and experience of the student



[1]. Many students struggle to meet the requirements of using the scientific language set by the academic community, lacking proficiency in terminology both when comprehending and producing scientific texts. Scholars have referred to this situation as a "linguistic misunderstanding" between teachers and students [1]. Proficiency in scientific language is intricately connected to the process of socialization, wherein students seek recognition from a specific disciplinary community [2].

The occurrence of "linguistic misunderstanding" is also attributed to the fact that higher education encompasses not only the acquisition of knowledge but also the mastery of a specialized code for transmitting this knowledge, known as academic discourse [1]. During their university education, students acquire discourse skills as they familiarize themselves with the culture and social practices of their disciplinary community. Consequently, successful university education relies not solely on the transfer of a vast amount of information within a limited timeframe, but on instructing students in information perception and the code of transmission, i.e., discourse. This research has spurred the development of various approaches to comprehending the essence of academic literacy and its definitions. Scholars from both Western and domestic contexts view literacy as an outcome of higher education [3].

The complexity of defining academic literacy is primarily attributed to the diverse range of historically established traditions. Australian researchers, such as Bill Green (1999), often focus on his work, which identifies three key components of academic literacy: operational (executive), cultural, and critical. A specialist is considered competent in academic literacy if they possess the following abilities: 1) understanding literacy, 2) carrying out meaningful and effective activities in specific situations and circumstances, and 3) recognizing the close relationship between social practices and the dominant influence of discourse. In the United States, definitions of academic literacy are based on the strong connection between language and thinking, as well as the significant role of writing in education (Sage 1992). African researchers have developed a definition of literacy that serves as the foundation for higher education among diverse segments of the population, taking into account the specificities of the local educational context. In the UK, literacy researchers work within the interdisciplinary research area known as "New Literature Studies," which views academic literacy as a collection of social practices within an educational context, specifically focusing on academic literature practices. Domestic researchers in the field of higher education employ various concepts when discussing the components of academic literacy, including academic work and the formation of "holistic human education", academic literacy, academic writing as a means of teaching research skills, and academic skills. The discussions among researchers often revolve around approaches to teaching writing as a crucial element of academic literacy and the development of research competence.

One of the challenges in defining the concept being studied is the presence of various approaches to the development of literacy in higher education. These approaches can be categorized into three main models: 1) the study skills model, which focuses on developing educational skills, 2) the academic socialization model, which emphasizes the acquisition of educational skills through the process of academic socialization, and 3) the academic literacies model, which centers on the formation of academic literacy [4].

The first approach, based on behavioral theory, asserts that students need to acquire a set of learning skills to become academically literate. Its primary objective is to assist students in adapting to university studies and the existing academic environment [4]. However, this approach has faced criticism due to its teacher-centered nature, where the teacher controls the entire learning process and the student plays a passive role. Additionally, the formation of skills in this approach disregards the social context [4]. In other words, students are not taught to adhere to the speech norms of specific discourses, comprehend their value orientations, or develop their identity characteristics. Despite these criticisms, this approach has gained widespread popularity worldwide.

In contrast to the initial two approaches, which solely focus on developing educational skills and mastering communication norms within the university setting, proponents of the third approach view academic literacy as a form of social practice [4]. This approach is rooted in the interdisciplinary



field of literacy research known as "New Literature Studies"[5]. Within this framework, higher education is regarded as a "site of discourse power," and literacy entails the essential possession of diverse communication practices by students. These practices are well-established and shaped by socio-historical factors, enabling effective communication within an academic environment and the creation of texts across various disciplines [4]. Students are expected to learn how to navigate between different practices in different situations, utilizing a repertoire of linguistic practices and comprehending the meanings and identities constructed within these contexts [Lea, Street 1998]. Consequently, the selection of an approach becomes a crucial task for teachers to facilitate the development of literacy during the learning process.

It is important to note that literacy is a dynamic concept that manifests itself in various forms, both orally and in written language, across different societies, social contexts, and cultures [4]. The development of literacy goes beyond the acquisition of reading and writing skills; it encompasses the cultivation of cognitive processes that are suitable for specific cultural environments.

Research methodology. Academic literacy encompasses the understanding and proficiency in effectively communicating within the realm of academic discourse. It entails the mastery of a comprehensive set of knowledge, skills, and abilities, including language proficiency, cognitive methods, information processing, and knowledge translation. Moreover, it involves the consideration of the values and accepted norms of behavior within a specific academic community. Additionally, being academically literate entails conforming to a particular type of identity associated with the academic realm.

The notion of "academic literacy" is not merely a collection of individual knowledge, skills, and abilities, but rather a synergistic combination of these elements. It goes beyond a simple accumulation of separate components and instead demonstrates an enhanced outcome resulting from the interconnectedness and mutual influence among them. These components can be cultivated across various disciplines and may possess relative independence from one another. Academic literacy, as a product of education, encompasses not only cognitive and operational-technical aspects but also motivational, social, and behavioral dimensions. The development of academic literacy yields intellectual and personal components, encompassing both skills and knowledge, as well as a system of value orientations [6].

The second component of competence, which is cognitive, is reflected in the possession of the content. This component encompasses knowledge about the fundamental concepts of academic literacy, such as "academic discourse," "identity," "genre," and "values of the academic community." Additionally, it includes the ability to think critically. Critical thinking is defined as a purposeful act of cognitive activity that involves questioning judgments, examining arguments, forming one's conclusions, confirming views and beliefs, and making decisions.

The behavioral component of competence, on the other hand, pertains to the practical experience of applying competence in various situations. It involves the general academic skills required for four types of speech activity: reading, listening to oral speech, generating oral speech, and generating written speech. These skills encompass the ability to find, evaluate, and analyze information in reading, to listen to reports and lectures and extract key ideas in listening, to construct a coherent and persuasive speech in generating oral speech, and to determine the genre of a text, organize and structure one's own written text in generating written speech. These skills encompass both general skills, such as listening to lectures, and professional skills, such as creating discipline-specific texts. Furthermore, this component includes the ability to educate oneself and engage in self-reflection. These abilities form the foundation for continuous learning as they involve reflecting on one's teaching, regulating one's behavior, and possessing the general academic skills necessary for successful university study. Independence is a crucial aspect of academic literacy as it is considered one of the subjective core components of an individual. Independent work provides opportunities for students to demonstrate characteristics such as activity, reflection, awareness, initiative, and creativity.



Analysis and results. Written speech in its structure encompasses a diverse range of abilities and proficiencies. These include the capacity to organize and structure ideas logically and coherently, employ appropriate academic language and style, and develop and support arguments and opinions with evidence and examples. Additionally, it entails the skill to write with clarity and precision and utilize proper grammar, vocabulary, and punctuation. The significance of written speech in its structure becomes apparent in the academic writing tasks that students are frequently required to complete in foreign language programs at universities. These tasks may consist of essays, reports, research papers, and other forms of academic writing, all of which necessitate students to showcase their ability to effectively communicate and engage with academic material in written form.

Moreover, the ability to write proficiently in a foreign language holds importance for students as they progress in their academic pursuits. It enables them to demonstrate their comprehension of complex academic material, actively contribute to academic discussions and debates, and effectively engage with academic discourse in their chosen field of study. Furthermore, it empowers them to effectively convey their ideas and opinions, as well as present their research and findings lucidly and coherently. Furthermore, the significance of written speech in its structure extends beyond the confines of the academic realm. In today's interconnected world, the ability to write proficiently in a foreign language is a valuable skill that can unlock a plethora of opportunities for students in both their professional and personal lives. It equips them to effectively communicate and engage with individuals from diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds, and grants them access to international academic and professional networks, enabling them to actively participate and contribute on a global scale.

Conclusion. To summarize, the incorporation of academic literacy into foreign language instruction at universities plays a crucial role in equipping students with the necessary skills to proficiently comprehend and communicate intricate academic texts in a non-native language. The structural significance of written expression is a fundamental component of academic discourse, and possessing proficient writing abilities in a foreign language is indispensable for university students. This proficiency enables them to actively participate in and comprehend the academic dialogue within their chosen area of study, while effectively conveying their thoughts and viewpoints through written means.

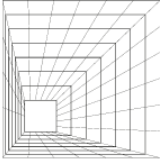
We believe that the simultaneous development of all the specified elements of academic literacy, in their interconnectedness, is imperative. By incorporating this model into the methodology of foreign language instruction, it becomes possible to acknowledge the cultivation of academic literacy as a crucial aspect of teaching a foreign language in higher education.

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