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**THE IMPORTANCE OF ACADEMIC WRITING IN THE RUSSIAN  
HIGHER EDUCATION SYSTEM**

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**Abstract**

This article discusses the content of Russian academic traditions in higher education in Russia at the present time. Explanations of methodological studies in the field of academic writing and the study of its theoretical foundations are given, the objective reason for the limited awareness of the Russian scientific community about academic writing and its conceptual foundations is explained. Russian higher education has a huge resource (territorial, demographic, geopolitical, technical, technological) and scientific creative and intellectual potential (scientists, professors, academicians) for further prospective development and modernization of higher education in the Russian Federation. The basic principles and issues of which the educational paradigm of higher education in Russia is built and transformed are described, the problems of Bologna process are analyzed on the basis of conducted and published studies of scientists from Russia and other countries. It also reports on the observations of the author of the article on the process of the Russian Federation higher education integration into the European system, explains the most important presentation of studies that explore changes in the implementation of many higher education programs of the Bologna process in educational institutions of foreign countries and specifically in Russia.

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*Keywords:* Academic writing, academic written speech, Bologna Union, higher education



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## **1. Introduction**

These days, full-scale integration processes are taking place in the European education area in order to eliminate the barriers that still exist between the educational systems of the countries worldwide. Scientific communities are actively involved in ongoing processes for the development of the world globalization concept in all fields: science, politics, economics, art, the media, communication, etc.

The 21st century can be considered the beginning of an important stage in globalization, modernization and the joint process in the voluntary cooperation of European countries in creating an updated (in many respects) system of modern higher education.

The main values of European academic culture are: social and moral responsibility, intellectual freedom, the independence of scientists and researchers for the processes and results of studies and research, the right to freely express one's opinion on the scientific work of other scientists, the right to interact, mutual trust, support, etc. (Dover et al., 2016).

## **2. Problem Statement**

Despite the existence of some issues in the development of higher education in our country, Russia ranks 32nd out of one hundred eighty-nine countries of the world in terms of the Education Level Index (our rating Education Index for April 23, 2019 is 0.832). In Russia, higher education has long been structured by a set of certain specialties and remained “mono-level”, but with the onset of significant changes, the introduction of a “multi-level” structure has matured.

Many Russian scientists studied the issues of professional pedagogical competence, self-education programs functioning, independent work of students from various universities and educational process impact on formation and development of a person. Scientists of the world conducted a large number of studies on global issues of the development of modern higher education. Many significant scientific papers on this subject have been written (Altbach, 2016; Engberg et al., 2016).

### **2.1. Problems of higher education**

The problem of the vocational qualification structure of graduates has become historically significant for higher education. In postgraduate vocational education, there remained graduate school with the same structure and term of study, regardless of the chosen scientific specialty and the already mastered main educational professional program.

For a long time higher education in Russia has long been structured by a set of particular specialties and remained “mono-level”, but with the onset of significant changes, the introduction of a “multi-level” structure has matured.

Changes in the structure of higher professional education are also taking place for external reasons (the Bologna Union): a bachelor's program in different fields has been introduced; the educational category that had an independent status in higher professional education was abolished; significant aspects of the higher education activities were affected.

The next evolutionary stage of the European educational space started long before the signing and launching of the Bologna Declaration. At that time, very important integration processes in the field of education took place in Europe (Magna Charta Universitatum universal charter of universities – 1988; Convention on the Recognition of Qualifications concerning Higher Education in the European Region – 1997; Sorbonne Declaration of France, Great Britain, Italy and Germany on harmonization of the architecture of the European higher education system – 1998, Paris). These legal documents became important steps for the further rapprochement of different national education systems of European countries and for the development of close cooperation between them in the educational aspect. The way for introduction of the Bologna process was provided and paved.

## **2.2. Objectives of the Bologna process**

So, the Bologna process at the level of European states was founded in Bologna in 1999 on June 19 and was signed by 29 education ministers of the governments of different countries. The document was named the Bologna Declaration. Its fundamental goal is to establish global international cooperation in all areas of higher education (Yakhina et al., 2016).

Thus, it is indisputable that the Bologna Declaration is logically expressed by the six fundamental principles of the elements creating and forming the European system of higher education:

- the introduction of two levels of higher education;
- the introduction of credit units system, the so-called loans;
- ensuring and guaranteeing the high quality of higher education;
- expansion and intensification of the mobility of teachers and students;
- support and cooperation in matters of student employment, as well as in increasing the efficiency and competitive ability of European professional higher education (to issue uniform diploma supplements to the European Commission, Council of Europe and UNESCO – Diploma Supplement);
- the formation and establishment of a European approach to the development of higher education in Europe.

After joining the Bologna process (2003), Russia received a new impetus to modernize higher professional education.

The first organizational Bologna political forum was held in 2009 (Leuven, Belgium), which was attended by all forty-six members of the Bologna Union and representatives of other countries. There raised questions on economic crisis, “brain drain”, “brain exchange” (exchange between countries with students, teachers and researchers). The Russian public accepted the period of joining the Bologna Union with indignation and mixed reaction to future changes and certain reforms outlined in the educational policy and the activities of educational bodies.

After a complex and multifaceted process of joining the Bologna Union, Russia expected to receive a stormy impulse to all integration processes in the development of higher education (2011). But expectations were not satisfied, and nothing happened in a prompt manner (Gretchenko, 2013). The tasks

of the development of education are still relevant and painful: equipment and technologies are intensively upgraded, developed; continuous change takes place in the conditions and quality of activities in society; people master competencies and acquire new professional skills, which imminently leads to an increase in the level of qualification of teachers.

In Russia, there are centuries-old traditions of higher education, or rather, the training of students in various universities of the country. Today, foreign students can come to more than 750 universities in our country and get acquainted with Russian academic traditions: the democracy of the university community; focus on serving the Fatherland and society as a whole; freethinking, without which there is no development of science; close interaction of students and teachers; inextricable connection of any problems of the country and society; “Retriinnovation”.

Currently, a new type of teacher is put at the forefront, which can combine the traditional principles of academic culture (acquired over the years of work) with modern innovations, defined as entrepreneurial activities. The academic revolution intensifies competition in the domestic and international market for scientific and educational services in the form of academic programs; research results and their application in social and commercial areas; charging a tuition fee for graduates who have become highly qualified personnel, etc. (Yepaneshnikov, et al., 2017). Higher education, even with slow steps, should come to a new level of its development and not lag behind the level of leading foreign countries.

### **3. Research Questions**

This part reveals the main meaning of the article, describes the provisions and explanations of the importance of studying academic writing by students, as well as future and current scientists of our country.

#### **3.1. The importance of academic writing**

In the second half of the XX century, and especially at the beginning of the XXI century, mankind entered the “information society”, which works in the area of production, storage, processing and implementation of information accumulated in the world, especially knowledge (Ermakov et al., 2019).

Educational projects should be “lively” and effective, bringing scientifically significant dividends to science (RozaNov et al., 2018). A professional must be an academic intellectual, and therefore must have knowledge of academic writing, regardless of his position in the scientific hierarchy.

The beginning of the modern science of academic writing was laid back in the 1930s of the XX century. The most important characteristic of academic writing determines its goals and content, being a social function, since the theory of this discipline is composed of three disciplines: academic discourse, social constructivism and numerous studies in the field of human literacy (Korotkina, 2013; Smirnova, 2015).

The impressive part of academic writing is composed of metalinguistic competence, covering three important aspects of composition and rhetoric: focus, organization and mechanics (modality, syntactic relations and vocabulary). In rhetoric (the art of persuasion) two principles are combined – language and scientific thought. Language is an important means in achieving the goal of communication (to convey the content); it cannot become the dominant factor for scientific argumentation (Taskov & Mitreva, 2015).

### **3.2. The formation of academic writing in Russia**

Academic writing in Russia has already begun its formation as an academic discipline: programs are being developed for relevant courses and training centers, specialists are being trained for this transdisciplinary important science. Scientists, teachers, scientific publications staff, and supporters of scientific internationalization are progressively and unanimously disposed to introduce the compulsory teaching of academic writing in order to open higher education and Russian science to the entire world community (Bakin, 2013; Bogolepova, 2016). Science must use common scientific language.

It should be noted that in the process of studying a certain course of academic writing, students will get certain knowledge:

- the ability to fundamentally distinguish between scientific, literary and social-political texts;
- knowledge of current international requirements for scientific texts;
- avoiding copyright plagiarism;
- to evaluate and summarize the cited base of scientific evidence of research objectively, to select a variety of information sources competently;
- the skill of the correct construction of texts based on certain existing models;
- skills to use quoting and exposition(paraphrase);
- the ability to fix complex syntactic and logical errors in the text and many others.

Fresh-students who begin to learn English pass through the stage of studying academic writing and the development of professional competencies, experiencing certain difficulties (confuse the styles and registers of speech), since the academic language is different from every day. Confidence in good knowledge of the language, often cannot guarantee success automatically professionally master the skill in creating an academically correct text. To avoid these problems, language teachers develop special programs.

In the process of serious and deep learning at the university, students acquire the necessary functional and research skills for conducting scientific research to carry out their term papers, abstracts and final qualification works, as well as other scientific projects. The practice of teaching academic writing shows that in Russia it is supposed to modify and adapt the development of classical study courses to Russian realities (Dugarsuren, 2016).

## **4. Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of the study was to analyze the status of implementation of academic writing traditions into the higher education, methodological research in the field of academic writing and its theoretical foundations studies, to identify some objective reasons for the limited awareness of the Russian scientific community of academic writing and its conceptual foundations, as well as its disappearance from sight of scientists and teachers. Teachers of English at the practical level (international exams, tests, manuals, etc.) were the first to learn about academic writing in Russia, and then scientific, theoretical, methodological studies and the study of academic writing began. The scientific text is a public product that is subject to

discussion with students, colleagues, potential readers. Thus, the possession of academic writing is a complex and multifaceted set of skills of an academic specialist (a professor, a teacher, a student, a graduate student, etc.).

## **5. Research Methods**

In the process of work, the author of the article applied such research methods as: empirical (observation, survey, expert assessment, testing, analysis of student activities, etc.); theoretical (study of various scientific literature on the topic under study and its analysis, generalization and experiments on the study of pedagogical experience, analysis and evaluation of its results); statistical (survey and its mathematical calculation with interpretation of the results of the survey during the study), etc.

## **6. Findings**

The primary specific feature in the management of modern Russian education is the problems that can be solved both at the level of the existing educational system and at the component level of the state educational policy. It is important for the state that education be endowed with a universal character, which allows us to form a new generation with an extensive level of cultural traditions, classical intelligence and high education.

Today, academic writing is a traditional linguistic form of competence, new relevant, rapidly developing in the current conditions of ongoing information and innovation processes, academic educational contacts, international scientific exchanges of the world community (Korotkina, 2013). After carrying out of brief survey of students, it turned out that several genres of academic writing are in demand in Russia:

- for correspondence in academic communication;
- for a request upon receipt of grants;
- for professional compilation of publication summeries;
- for the purposes of compiling a review of the text.

The given types of text genres help to realize goals for professional and constructive communication at the international level.

In a survey on academic writing conducted in 11 full-time academic groups of students of the Don State Technical University of the “Department of document management and language communication”, 268 people took part. The survey was conducted in the disciplines of “Russian language and culture of speech”, “Culture of oral and written speech”, “Culture of speech and business communication”, “Business communication”. The purpose of the survey was to identify students' attitudes toward academic writing, the assessment of educational materials used in the course, etc. Students were offered 3 answers: Yes, No, Difficult to answer. The survey results are presented in the Table 01.

**Table 1.** The results of a survey of students

No. p/p	Questions	Answers (%)		
		Yes	No	Difficult to answer
1.	Is knowledge of academic writing necessary for writing a high-quality scientific text?	83	12	5
2.	Do you think that every educated person should own an academic letter?	72	26	2
3.	Should a person with research competence be able to write texts of scientific papers syntactically consistent, logically accurate, coherent and clear?	91	6	3
4.	Is knowledge of the English language important in the process of learning a particular academic writing course?	54	25	21
5.	Is classical academic writing different from ordinary literate writing?	68	15	17

Today, everyone understands that in higher education in Russia, academic writing is successfully approved as a necessary factor in successful education, professional development, recognition of institutionality and academic competence in the preparation of future and current scientists of the country. Each scientist should own a traditional academic genre: primary (dissertation, scientific article, scientific review, monograph) and secondary (author's abstract, abstract and thesis, encyclopedic article, discussion of scientists, etc.).

Note that the modernization of higher education, carried out within the framework of the Bologna Union, made the faculty members of universities ambivalently rethink their constellations (by coincidence) of a dynamic approach to revitalizing their activities (Asmolov & Guseltseva, 2019a). It pushed them to the necessity of more efficient use of modern teaching technologies, which, ultimately, will bring the existing and currently existing educational process to a whole new stage (Asmolov & Guseltseva, 2019b).

It is implicit, that each teacher should clearly know and understand in what way the discipline he teaches at the university forms the competencies of future graduates. An analysis carried out in our universities to verify the activities of the teaching staff showed that the dominant system in education to this day has long exhausted (in terms of teaching methods and content) its reserves to improve the model of “knowledge-skills-competencies”. Today its alternative is a competency-based approach, the innovative development of which has been going on for many years, but there is almost no improvement in the educational process. In science and modern pedagogical practice in Russia, in connection with the rethinking of the quality of education, specialists widely discuss the issue related to social competence and personal results of those who receive education. This discussion takes place under the current conditions for the implementation of the Federal State Educational Standard.

## 7. Conclusion

In conclusion, it must be said that an intellectually developed society is an inexhaustible source for modernization and the stability of the economic activity of our state and the high status of foreign policy. Improvement of the State modern education system must be considered as one of the most important and relevant tasks in Russian society. Therefore, it is necessary to accelerate the development of our own new educational programs in the leading universities of the country, coordinating them with the requirements

and standards oriented to the world developing scientific labor market (multi-level educational process; credit points; internationalization of higher education and academic mobility of students and teachers, wide exchange of experience, foreign internships; the formation and reorientation of core competencies; trans academics, etc.).

In the last decade, the educational policy of Russia is undergoing major changes: standardization is being actively implemented and the regulatory framework of universal education is being improved. The general education system in Russia today is on its way to significant changes. It is still not clear what large-scale changes may occur. But one thing is clear for sure – these changes will improve the quality of the methodological base of higher education in the educational system of Russia as a whole, taking into account national educational traditions.

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