



## THE PERSPECTIVES OF FUTURE PROFESSIONALS ON IMPROVING THEIR RESEARCH SKILLS THROUGH ACADEMIC WRITING

*Musoyeva A.B.*

*Samarkand state institute of foreign languages, PhD, docent*

**Tayanch soʻzlar:** koʻnikma, tadqiqot kompetensiyasi, akademik yozish, pedagogik kompetensiya, ilmiy yozuv kompetensiyasi.

**Ключевые слова:** компетентность, исследовательская компетентность, академическое письмо, навыки, педагогическая компетентность, компетентность научного письма.

**Keywords:** competency, research competence, academic writing, skills, pedagogical competence, scientific writing competency.

### **Резюме:**

Maʼlumki, hozirgi taʼlim jarayonida shaxsni tarbiyalashda ilmiy yozuv hamda tadqiqot kompetensiyasining ahamiyati beqiyosdir. Sababi, aynan tadqiqot kompetensiyasiga ega boʻlish ilm-fan rivojiga hissa qoʻshishga intiladigan boʻlajak mutaxassislarning koʻpayishiga zamin yaratadi. Ushbu tadqiqotning maqsadi boʻlajak oʻqituvchilarning tadqiqot kompetensiyasi va akademik yozish koʻnikmalari darajasini oʻrganish hisoblanadi. Shu maqsadda, 397 nafar boʻlajak oʻqituvchilarga Google Forms yordamida koʻp tanlovli soʻrovnoma yuborildi hamda unga asosan statistik tahlil qilindi. Tadqiqot natijalari shuni koʻrsatdiki, boʻlajak oʻqituvchilarning katta qismi tadqiqot kompetensiyasi va akademik yozish boʻyicha yetarli bilim va tushunchaga ega.

### **Резюме:**

Как мы знаем, научное письмо является важнейшим компонентом в образовании людей в рамках текущей образовательной структуры. Это исследование направлено на оценку исследовательской компетентности и навыков академического письма будущих преподавателей. Пересмотренная анкета с множественным выбором была распространена среди 397 потенциальных преподавателей через Google Forms, онлайн-инструмент для опросов. Данные опроса прошли статистическую оценку через Google Forms, что облегчает применение описательной статистики. Результаты исследования показывают, что значительная часть потенциальных преподавателей обладает знаниями и пониманием исследовательской компетентности и академического письма.

### **Summary:**

As we know that scientific writing is a crucial component in the education of individuals within the current educational framework. This study seeks to evaluate the research competence and academic writing skills of future educators. A revised multiple-choice questionnaire was distributed to 397 potential instructors via Google Forms, an online survey tool. The survey data underwent statistical evaluation through Google Forms, facilitating the application of descriptive statistics.



The findings of the study indicate that a considerable proportion of prospective educators possess knowledge and understanding of research proficiency and academic writing.

**Introduction.** Many individuals have dedicated considerable time to researching various topics globally. This has endured since ancient times and possesses profound historical roots. Ancient Greek scientists and philosophers originating from Central Asia achieved significant breakthroughs through their relentless quest for knowledge. The findings were obtained from multiple sources, encompassing thorough research, careful analysis, and significant study. Recent research has expanded its focus to encompass various advancements and attributes that enhance the effectiveness and accuracy of scientific inquiry. As a result, a significant number of individuals are engaged in research on a global scale.

Developing research proficiency in prospective teachers, particularly in the area of ESL, poses a significant challenge. In our country, English is frequently taught as a second or foreign language, and due to significant progress in this area, many young individuals achieve English proficiency from an early age. In higher education, students are equipped with enhanced knowledge and skills. In certain instances, this may prove insufficient for enhancing their proficiency in academic writing and research skills. It is crucial for Uzbekistan's education system to focus on the enhancement of higher education curriculum that emphasizes the significance of academic writing skills and research competence.

**Literature review.** As we know that scientific research involves the systematic and methodical clarification, interpretation, and enhancement of data within the scientific domain. Scientific research is an objective, systematic, and multi-stage process based on established facts aimed at advancing knowledge that is not present in existing literature [1]. As a result, it can be stated that during the process of scientific research, each researcher initially prepares and contributes to the field by systematically and clearly analyzing the resulting data. Research involves seeking answers to questions, requiring a well-thought-out plan for implementation, a concept that applies to all forms of exploration in our daily lives.

In the context of our dissertation, both research and competence are essential terms that require clear definitions. K. Riskulova defines "competence" as the laws, principles, regulations, norms, responsibilities, tasks, and obligations essential for an individual in a specific field. Competence relates to an individual's practical involvement, characterized as the ability to demonstrate competency standards in professional experience, motivated by creativity in



alignment with societal needs. The primary criteria are defined by successful performance and the development of competitive talent [2].

Consequently, it can be said that competency is essential for every future expert and will facilitate efficient performance throughout their career. In this context, since our focus is on future experts, namely educators, the significance of pedagogical competency and professional competence within them is unparalleled. Research competence primarily drives the future expert towards self-improvement and personal growth, enabling contributions to science, while professional competence facilitates the accurate transmission of gained information.

The textbook "General Pedagogy," authored by N. Atayeva, M. Salayeva, and S. Hasanov, defines pedagogical competence as a skill, portraying it as a refined and adept individual in the field. A teacher-educator is characterized by a comprehensive understanding of their subject matter, the ability to analyze related disciplines effectively, and a command of educational techniques [3].

We believe that the terms professional competence and pedagogical competencies may be used interchangeably.

Professional competence refers to the capacity of prospective educators to comprehend the subject matter, maintain its relevance, and apply it appropriately in instructional contexts. In the professional realm, knowledge, credentials, and abilities are essential; yet, the development of personal attributes and successful societal engagement is paramount [4]. Consequently, in the cultivation of professional competence, it is essential to provide many chances for the prospective teacher to develop personal attributes and establish their role in society.

The notion of professional competence is an element of pedagogical ability or professionalism that ensures the efficacy of educational endeavors, whereby professional competence serves as a metric of professionalism, and the effectiveness and success of professional activities are its determinants [5]. Consequently, professional competence is crucial in the educational endeavors of an aspiring teacher, serving as a measure of their proficiency and a criterion for favorable outcomes.

The professional growth of a foreign language educator starts with the instruction of a foreign language as a second language. The rationale is that, as an integrated system of language acquisition, instruction, and evaluation, each phase should be grounded on continuous communicative learning [6]. Consequently, it can be said that the future expert will enhance their professional competencies after years of education. During these courses, they enhance



their research proficiency and actively participates in scientific endeavors. This exemplifies not their scientific endeavors aimed at acquiring a certain degree, but rather their pedagogical research, publishing of scholarly publications, and inquiry conducted during instruction.

UNESCO publications describe “competence” as a methodical amalgamation of values, attitudes, knowledge, and skills encountered daily. It asserts that the paramount competencies of the 21st century encompass:

- √ Continuous learning (curiosity, critical analysis, ongoing inquiry);
- √ Independence (entrepreneurship, accountability, self-worth, innovation, resilience);
- √ Interaction with others (respect, openness, empathy, collaboration, camaraderie, leadership);
- √ Interaction with the world (environmental stewardship, global awareness);
- √ Interaction with diverse tools and resources (creative, rational, ethical, and sustainable utilization of technology and available assets);
- √ Transdisciplinary (systemic thinking, establishing connections, devising solutions to global challenges);
- √ Multiliteracy (intercultural competence, health literacy, scientific literacy, data literacy, financial literacy, numeracy, general literacy) [7].

The competencies endorsed by UNESCO, including Continuous Learning and Multiliteracies, are intrinsically linked to research competence and are crucial for the professional development of future specialists.

In some contexts, research competency is referred to as “scientific competence.” For instance, from several global organizations such as the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) and the Program for International Student Assessment (PISA), as well as from international scholars such Beghetto [8], Bybee [9], Chun-Yen [10], Cohen, Manion, Morrison [11], Kind and Osborne [12], Krell et al. [13], Lijnse and Klaassen [14], Schwartz et al. [15], and Sadler and Zeidler [16] did study on scientific competence. Consequently, the previously stated study conducted by scholars is significant for understanding scientific capability.

**Research Methodology.** The research involved 397 prospective educators from four institutions: Uzbekistan State University of World Languages, National University of Uzbekistan after Mirzo Ulugbek, Bukhara State University, Jizzakh State Pedagogical University, and Samarkand State Institute of Foreign Languages.

This study employs a 20-item Multiple Choice Questionnaire, organized into four distinct sections. The survey was carried out with prospective educators



from five universities in Uzbekistan, employing an online Google Forms software application. The survey consists of three sections. The initial section gathers demographic information and learning profiles of the participants. The second part assesses their emotions, convictions, and drive regarding L2 writing. The third part evaluates the competencies in digital literacy of both pre-service and in-service teachers. Finally, the fourth component assesses the frequency of obtaining feedback and making revisions.

**Results and Discussions.** In order to assess their writing proficiency, the participants were queried about their level of writing expertise. In the table below, you can see the preliminary results of the survey of future specialists (see table 1):

**Table 1**

**Results of a survey conducted among students**

Universities	UzSUWL		UzNU		BuxSu		SamSIFL		JSPU	
	EG	CG	EG	CG	EG	CG	EG	CG	EG	CG
Questions										
State your level of English:										
P r e - intermediate	4	5	4	5	6	5	6	5	5	6
Intermediate	15	14	14	15	14	15	17	16	13	14
U p p e r intermediate	17	18	16	14	15	14	14	15	14	14
Advanced	5	5	4	5	5	6	6	5	4	3
How would you describe your level of Writing Proficiency?										
Advanced	4	5	4	5	4	5	5	4	4	5
Very good	13	13	12	13	14	13	15	16	13	13
Good	18	17	16	16	16	15	17	15	14	15
Weak	6	7	6	5	6	7	6	6	5	4
How well do you know about research competence?										
I am familiar or very familiar with it	15	15	12	14	16	13	15	14	13	14
I know the main idea	20	21	19	18	19	20	21	22	18	18
I only have a vague idea	4	3	4	3	3	4	3	2	3	2



I have never heard of it	2	3	3	4	2	3	4	3	2	3
In general, you find writing assignments in English:										
Easy	6	7	8	9	6	8	8	9	6	7
Difficult	15	14	13	12	15	14	15	14	10	11
Very difficult	12	12	10	10	10	10	13	10	14	12
Neither difficult nor easy	8	9	7	8	9	8	7	8	6	7
The references you mostly use:										
Books	15	16	14	16	15	15	16	17	14	13
Journals	8	9	10	11	12	11	14	13	13	11
Both	18	17	14	12	13	14	13	11	10	13
Put a tick next to the weaknesses or difficulties in your academic writing:										
Paraphrasing/Summarizing	2	3	2	1	2	2	3	2	1	2
Language use (spelling, punctuation, grammar and vocabulary)	3	3	4	2	2	3	2	3	2	2
Finding relevant references/resources	5	6	5	7	7	6	7	7	6	5
Referencing and citation	6	5	4	6	7	6	6	6	7	6
Coherence and cohesion	6	6	5	6	7	6	7	6	5	6
Choosing a significant topic	3	3	4	2	2	3	2	3	2	2
Presenting data on statistical style	3	4	3	2	3	2	4	3	3	4
Writing the paragraph into suitable order	3	3	3	3	3	2	3	3	2	2



Writing literature review	6	6	5	7	5	7	5	5	6	5
Writing introductions/ conclusions	4	3	3	3	2	3	4	3	2	2
What kinds of internal factors are contributing to your difficulties in academic writing?										
Lack of confidence	14	14	11	11	13	11	11	12	13	14
Self-motivation	11	10	8	9	10	10	11	9	6	7
Lack of knowledge & ideas	14	15	16	17	15	16	17	17	13	14
Feeling of under-pressure	2	3	3	2	2	3	4	3	4	2
What kinds of external factors are contributing to your difficulties in academic writing?										
Teacher's teaching style	9	9	10	11	10	12	9	9	10	11
Classroom atmosphere	7	8	6	7	6	5	7	6	4	5
Materials	10	10	9	10	11	12	13	13	9	10
Lack of corrective feedback by the teacher/supervisor	8	8	6	6	7	6	8	7	9	6
Unresponsive teacher	7	7	7	5	6	5	6	6	4	5
What kinds of digital tools do you use in academic writing?										
Grammarly	5	6	4	5	4	5	6	7	4	3
Quill bot	3	2	2	1	2	2	2	1	1	1
Turnitin	0	1	1	0	1	1	0	1	0	0
Mendeley, Zotero	1	2	1	2	1	2	2	1	1	1
Google	6	7	8	9	7	8	8	8	6	7
Google dictionary	5	6	5	6	6	7	7	7	6	7



O n l i n e websites	6	5	5	6	8	7	6	5	4	4
G o o g l e translator	6	5	6	5	5	4	5	5	6	5
Y o u T u b e videos	4	3	3	2	3	2	4	3	4	4
Anti plag.uz	5	5	3	3	2	2	3	3	4	5
If you use above digital tools, how often do you use them?										
Never	4	5	4	5	3	5	4	3	5	4
Rarely	9	8	9	9	8	6	9	8	6	7
Frequently	20	21	19	18	20	21	22	23	17	18
V e r y frequently	8	8	6	7	9	8	8	7	8	8
For what purposes do you use above digital tools?										
To have c o r r e c t spellings/ punctuations	6	7	5	6	4	5	8	7	4	4
To minimize grammatical errors	6	5	7	8	5	6	4	5	6	7
To have accurate word choices	5	6	4	5	7	8	6	4	4	5
To write well-crafted sentences	6	7	5	6	4	5	7	8	6	7
To organize my writing ideas	8	9	10	9	11	12	10	10	8	7
To have c o r r e c t referencing	4	3	2	2	3	2	3	3	2	3
To verify papers for plagiarism	6	5	5	4	6	6	5	4	6	4

We deemed it appropriate to examine the following question for analysis. The table indicates that over 80% of participants express a preference for writing in English, with a nearly identical percentage of students favoring the review of samples prior to composing in English. Furthermore, there are participants who



respond with “Disagree” and “Not sure” to the subsequent questions, which clearly highlights the significance of the issue under investigation (refer to Table 2):

**Table 2**

Please read the statement below and mark each row to show how much you agree or disagree:											
№	Questions	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree		Not sure	
		1	%	2	%	3	%	4	%	5	%
1	I enjoy writing in English	134	33	213	54	27	7	13	3	10	2
2	I do not enjoy writing in English because it is a very difficult skill for me	50	12	68	17	117	29	142	36	20	5
3	I feel that I can be a good writer if I practice writing regularly	120	30	200	50	37	9	29	7	11	3
4	I prefer to look at a writing model before I start writing in English	114	29	187	47	41	10	36	9	19	5
5	Academic writing is not an important skill for me	25	6	43	11	203	51	118	30	8	2
6	Academic writing skills are necessary for my current graduate studies & publishing	94	24	119	30	84	21	44	11	56	14
7	Academic writing is important for your future career	109	27	138	35	50	12	35	9	65	16
8	I am a good writer in both Uzbek and English	75	19	79	20	146	37	67	17	30	7
9	I think the writing traditions in Uzbek and English are quite different	207	52	90	23	38	9	42	10	20	5
10	In terms of writing style, Uzbek and English are similar	87	22	52	13	183	46	50	12	25	6
	MEAN		25		30		23		14		6

The table below provides insights into the participants’ utilization of sources in academic writing, their awareness of plagiarism, and their engagement with platforms such as Research Gate, Academia, and Google Scholar (refer to Table 3):



**Table 3**

Please read the statement below and mark each row:							
№	Questions	Yes		No		Not sure	
		1	%	2	%	3	%
1	I can use reliable sources for my academic writing	247	62	87	22	63	16
2	I can understand which information on the Internet that I can or cannot use as references for my writing	232	58	76	19	89	22
3	I am aware of copyright or ownership of any online materials	216	54	128	32	53	13
4	I understand what is plagiarism	376	95	12	3	9	2
5	I check my article using online plagiarism checker before submission	107	27	215	54	75	19
6	I have academic social network/website/apps such as Research Gate, Academia, Google Scholar for sharing knowledge	64	16	237	60	96	24
7	I can use Google with appropriate key words to find some references	217	55	93	23	87	22
8	I can use online application that retrieves and analyzes academic citation such as Publish or Perish	37	9	256	64	104	26
9	I can use video/audio conferencing services (Zoom, Google Meet)	325	82	48	12	24	6
10	I can create online surveys (Google Forms, Survey Monkey)	98	25	193	49	106	27
	MEAN		48		34		18

The table below elucidates the role of educators in enhancing academic writing, their engagement with students, the feedback provided, and the aspects students prioritize in academic writing (refer to Table 4):

**Table 4**

Please read the statement below and mark each row to show how frequent the given statements in your studies:									
№	Savollar	Always		Sometimes		Rarely		Never	
		1	%	2	%	3	%	4	%
1	I receive an oral and written instruction about how to carry out an academic writing	73	18	120	30	196	49	8	2



2	I discuss about my academic writing with my teacher/supervisor	64	16	105	26	215	54	13	3
3	My teacher/supervisor assign a writing task and demonstrate how to plan and carry it out	57	14	158	40	163	41	19	5
4	I get feedback about how to structure my written papers	36	9	144	36	200	50	17	4
5	I go back to my writing to revise the content and make my ideas clearer	198	50	154	39	39	10	6	1
6	I go back to my writing to edit grammar, vocabulary, spelling and punctuation	200	50	150	38	40	10	7	2
7	In my assignment, in general, I pay more attention to the language (spelling, grammar) than to the content (ideas)	183	46	163	41	36	9	15	4
8	I pay more attention to the content (ideas, organization) than to the language (spelling, grammar, etc)	65	16	75	19	243	61	14	3
9	I give almost equal attention to the both content (ideas, organization) and the language (spelling, grammar, etc)	152	38	176	44	58	15	11	3
10	I discuss my work with other students to get feedback on how I can improve it	38	9	76	19	187	47	96	24
	MEAN		27		33		35		5

Conclusion. The findings of this study indicate that the participants had positive perceptions of their research competencies and academic writing abilities. Numerous respondents identify some deficiencies in their academic writing; however, they retain a substantial level of confidence in their overall writing abilities. The quantitative data gathered from respondents demonstrates their research ability, signifying their engagement in research activities to various extents, including studying, reading publications, and sometimes authoring papers. Furthermore, they exhibit digital competence in using research tools, allowing them to adeptly use digital technology in their academic endeavors and investigations.

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