

IMPROVING WRITTEN ARGUMENTATIVE COMPETENCE OF THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE STUDENTS

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Annotation. This study investigates strategies to improve written argumentative competence among English language students. Using a mixed-method approach, the research examines the effectiveness of structured instruction, model essays, and peer feedback in enhancing students' ability to construct coherent and persuasive arguments. Results indicate significant improvement in argument development, coherence, and overall writing performance, highlighting the importance of integrating explicit teaching, critical thinking, and collaborative learning in language education. The study offers practical implications for educators seeking to strengthen academic writing skills in English learners.

Keywords: Argumentative writing, English language learners, writing competence, academic writing, peer feedback, instructional strategies, critical thinking.

Annotatsiya. Ushbu tadqiqot ingliz tili o'rganuvchi talabalarining yozma argumentativ kompetensiyasini rivojlantirish strategiyalarini o'rganadi. Aralash (miqdoriy va sifat) yondashuv asosida olib borilgan tadqiqotda tuzilmaviy o'qitish, namunaviy matnlar (model essays) va tengdoshlar fikr-mulohazasi (peer feedback) usullarining samaradorligi tahlil qilindi. Natijalar talabalar yozma ishlarida argumentni rivojlantirish, mantiqiy izchillik va umumiy yozish sifati sezilarli darajada yaxshilanganini ko'rsatdi. Tadqiqot ingliz tili o'qituvchilari uchun akademik yozuv ko'nikmalarini rivojlantirishda integratsiyalashgan yondashuv muhimligini ta'kidlaydi.

Kalit so'zlar: Argumentativ yozuv, ingliz tili o'rganuvchilari, yozma kompetensiya, akademik yozuv, tengdoshlar fikr-mulohazasi, o'qitish strategiyalari, tanqidiy fikrlash.

Аннотация. Данное исследование рассматривает стратегии развития письменной аргументативной компетенции у студентов, изучающих английский язык. На основе смешанного (количественного и качественного) подхода анализируется эффективность структурированного обучения, использования образцов текстов (model essays) и взаимного оценивания (peer feedback) в процессе формирования навыков аргументации. Результаты показывают значительное улучшение у студентов в развитии аргументов, логической связности и общего качества письменной речи.

Исследование подчеркивает важность интегрированного подхода к обучению академическому письму в преподавании английского языка.

Ключевые слова: Аргументативное письмо, изучающие английский язык, письменная компетенция, академическое письмо, взаимное оценивание, стратегии обучения, критическое мышление.

Introduction

The development of written argumentative competence among English language students has become one of the central goals of modern language education. In academic and professional contexts, the ability to construct coherent, logical, and persuasive arguments in written form is

essential for effective communication. However, many English language learners face difficulties in organizing ideas, using appropriate argumentative structures, and applying linguistic resources that enhance clarity and persuasion. These challenges often stem from limited exposure to academic writing conventions, insufficient practice in critical thinking, and a lack of explicit instruction in argumentation strategies. Improving argumentative writing skills therefore requires a systematic pedagogical approach that integrates language development with cognitive and rhetorical training. This article examines methods for enhancing students' written argumentative competence, focusing on instructional strategies, writing frameworks, and feedback practices that support the development of academic writing proficiency in English language learners.

Literature review

Recent research in applied linguistics and second language writing has emphasized the importance of explicit instruction in argumentative writing as a means of improving students' academic performance. Hyland (2019) argues that argumentative writing is not merely a linguistic skill but a socially situated practice that requires awareness of audience, purpose, and genre conventions. Similarly, Silva and Matsuda (2018) highlight that second language writers often struggle with rhetorical organization due to differences between their first language writing systems and English academic discourse norms. This suggests the need for contrastive rhetorical awareness in teaching practice.

Studies by Graham and Perin (2016) demonstrate that structured writing instruction, including the use of graphic organizers and model essays, significantly improves students' ability to construct coherent arguments. They emphasize that writing development is most effective when combined with strategy instruction such as planning, drafting, and revising. In addition, Wingate (2015) stresses the importance of teaching argumentation as a critical thinking process rather than a formulaic structure, encouraging students to evaluate evidence and develop claims logically.

Research by Coffin and Donohue (2014) further explores the role of academic discourse socialization, showing that students benefit from guided exposure to disciplinary texts. This helps them internalize patterns of reasoning and textual organization typical of academic argumentation. Likewise, Lee (2017) focuses on feedback practices, noting that formative feedback is essential in helping learners refine their argumentative stance and improve coherence.

More recent studies also highlight the role of digital tools and collaborative writing. For example, Storch (2020) found that peer collaboration in writing tasks enhances argumentative depth by exposing learners to alternative perspectives. This aligns with Lundstrom and Baker (2019), who suggest that peer feedback promotes metacognitive awareness and improves revision quality.

Overall, the literature indicates that improving argumentative writing competence requires an integrated approach combining explicit instruction, genre awareness, feedback, and collaborative learning. Despite progress in pedagogical strategies, challenges remain in adapting these approaches to diverse classroom contexts and varying proficiency levels.

Materials and Methodology

This study adopts a qualitative-quantitative mixed-method approach to examine strategies for improving written argumentative competence among English language students. The participants included 60 undergraduate students enrolled in English language programs at an

intermediate proficiency level. The study was conducted over a 10-week instructional period focused on argumentative essay writing.

The instructional intervention included structured teaching of argumentative essay components such as thesis statement development, paragraph organization, use of evidence, and counterargument construction. Students were exposed to model essays and engaged in guided analysis of argumentative structures. In addition, they participated in peer review sessions to encourage collaborative learning and critical evaluation of written texts.

Data collection involved pre- and post-writing tests in which students produced argumentative essays on assigned topics. These essays were evaluated using a standardized rubric assessing coherence, cohesion, lexical resource, grammatical accuracy, and argument development. Supplementary data were collected through student questionnaires and classroom observations to capture attitudes toward the instructional methods.

The analysis combined statistical comparison of pre- and post-test scores with thematic analysis of qualitative feedback. Improvements in writing performance were measured to determine the effectiveness of the instructional approach. Ethical considerations were observed, including informed consent and confidentiality of participant data.

Results

The results of the study indicate a significant improvement in students' written argumentative competence after the instructional intervention. The average pre-test score across all rubric categories was 62%, while the post-test average increased to 78%, demonstrating notable progress in overall writing performance. The most substantial improvements were observed in the areas of argument development and text coherence, suggesting that structured instruction had a strong impact on students' ability to organize and support claims effectively.

Lexical resource and grammatical accuracy also showed moderate improvement, though these areas developed at a slower rate compared to argumentative structure. Questionnaire responses revealed that 85% of students found model essays and graphic organizers particularly helpful in understanding argumentative structure. Additionally, 78% reported that peer feedback sessions contributed positively to their writing development by allowing them to see alternative perspectives and correct their own errors.

Classroom observations supported these findings, showing increased student engagement and participation during collaborative tasks. Students demonstrated greater confidence in expressing opinions and constructing counterarguments over time. Overall, the results suggest that a combination of explicit instruction, modeling, and peer interaction is effective in improving written argumentative competence in English language learners.

Discussion

The findings of this study align with previous research emphasizing the importance of explicit instruction and structured practice in developing argumentative writing skills. The improvement in students' performance confirms Hyland's view that genre-based teaching helps learners internalize the conventions of academic writing. The significant gains in argument development and coherence suggest that students benefited from clear frameworks that guided them in organizing their ideas logically.

The role of peer feedback proved particularly important, supporting Storch's findings that collaborative writing environments enhance critical thinking and textual awareness. Through peer interaction, students were able to identify weaknesses in their arguments and refine their reasoning processes.

However, the slower progress in grammatical accuracy indicates that linguistic development may require longer-term intervention beyond structural writing instruction.

One limitation of the study is its relatively short duration, which may not fully capture long-term development in writing competence. Additionally, the sample size was limited to a specific academic context, which may affect the generalizability of the results. Despite these limitations, the study highlights the effectiveness of integrating multiple instructional strategies, including modeling, guided practice, and feedback, in improving argumentative writing skills.

Future research should explore the impact of digital writing platforms and automated feedback tools on argumentative competence development.

Conclusion

This study demonstrates that improving written argumentative competence among English language students requires a multifaceted instructional approach. The integration of explicit teaching, model analysis, structured writing tasks, and peer feedback significantly enhances students' ability to construct coherent and persuasive arguments. The findings confirm that students benefit most when writing instruction combines both cognitive and linguistic development, allowing them to understand not only how to write but also how to think critically within an academic framework.

The improvement in post-test scores and positive student feedback indicate that structured intervention strategies are effective in developing essential academic writing skills.

However, sustained practice and longer instructional periods are necessary to achieve higher levels of grammatical and lexical accuracy. Educators should therefore continue to refine teaching methods that support both immediate writing performance and long-term competence development.

Overall, strengthening argumentative writing skills is essential for preparing students for academic success and professional communication in English. The study underscores the importance of integrating genre awareness, critical thinking, and collaborative learning in language education curricula.

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