

# THE IMPORTANCE OF ACADEMIC WRITING SKILLS COURSE AMONG UNIVERSITY STUDENTS

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## Abstract

*The study was designed to examine the perceived importance of academic writing skills course among university students. Five hundred linguistics teachers of GC University Faisalabad participated in this study. The researcher developed a questionnaire to measure the level of perceived importance of the course. The collected data was analyzed using descriptive statistics and regressions. . It was revealed that the academic writing skills (Vocabulary, unity, coherence, paraphrasing and polishing) course was perceived by the majority of the respondents as an important course for the acquisition of writing skills to tailor a good essay. The joint contribution of all of the five selected writing skills towards was sixty five percent to the variance in writing a good essay. It was recommended that university should improve the delivery of the course by ensuring that both human and material resources are adequately provided for the realization of the anticipated results.*

**Key Words:** *academic writing skills, course, students, perceived importance, sentence, paragraph, essay*

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## Introduction

**Academic writing** abilities really show the potential of writer to write an attractive essay for his readers. Here he positively displays his writing skills to influence the readers to become a popular writer in the area of his expertise. For the purpose he uses such vocabulary in text so the readers tend to jump up and excited with joy. Of course these are the words which cherish the cognitive domains of the writers or poets to support in writing a good essay or poem. So the most wanted writers and poets first of all try to select the best words/ vocabulary to be well absorbed in their text and composition. The vocabulary possessed by a writer is a core element to turn his essay more beautiful. The vocabulary being considered a core element by the researcher enables the students to choose the most beautiful/accurate words to express their thoughts in writing to impress and have the appreciation from the readers. By the beautiful and exciting words, one can win the heart of the readers so easily (Long, 2005; Allen, 1999; Long, 2005 ; Chamot, 2015; Ana, 2015). Increasing the quality of text facilitates text comprehension for many readers ( Tanveer, 2016 ) and is particularly crucial for low knowledge readers (McNamara, 2010; Khan, 2016; Long, 2005). Writing provides us an opportunity to articulate ideas and a variety of perspectives to communicate it

to the public(DeVillez, 2013). As such the ability to convey meaning proficiently in written text is critical skill for academic and professional success (Lado, 2014; Tabores, 2016; Alice, 2014).

An essay is divided into some paragraphs and each paragraph carries a particular message for the readers. The writer tries his best that these paragraphs elaborate the main topic of the essay. A paragraph is the basic unit of composition. It consists of a group of related sentences that develop one main idea. Unity is the most important characteristic of a good paragraph. It defines that all sentences in a paragraph should speak about one single idea or one main subject. That is, the topic sentence, the supporting details, and the concluding sentence should focus on only one idea. Further, paragraphs should also be coherent. Coherence demands that the ideas or sentences presented in a paragraph should flow smoothly from one to the other. Paragraphs should not only be well-developed and unified but also coherent.

Coherence means establishing a relationship between the ideas presented in a paragraph. It brings about a rationale in the arrangement of the ideas which are introduced either in the chronological order or in the order of importance. Besides, transitions that compare, contrast, illustrate, add or show cause and effect build logical bridges. The ideas, thus expressed in the paragraph, flow smoothly from one to the other in a logical sequence. This helps the reader to understand the paragraph.

Academic writing normally requires that you support your ideas and opinions with facts statistics, quotations and similar kinds of information. In paraphrasing we rewrite the information from an outside source in our own words without changing the concept. Here we express the meaning of something (written or spoken) using different words of our choice especially to achieve greater clarity. We may borrow a good idea from a source without plagiarizing, expressing it into our own words. Polishing and revising is too important to make up the overall body of an essay. Here we may easily make proofreading, polishing up our grammar and editing per according to our academic needs. Polishing should encompass content as well as format, condensing and clarifying the material included during the composition. Tailoring a concise and attractive essay, the writer must be enriched with certain writing skills in this regard. Here we can change, re-arrange, add or delete all for the best communication of your thoughts in a clearer, more effective and interesting way.

### **Statement of the Problem**

The main statement of the problem was to examine the level of perceived importance of Academic writing skills (Vocabulary, unity, coherence, paraphrasing and polishing) to write a good essay.

### **Research Questions**

**The following research questions were formulated to be answered accordingly**

1. How do the teachers perceive the importance of academic writing skills to write a good essay in English?

2. What is the joint contribution of the selected academic writing skills towards writing a good essay in English?

**Research Methodology**

Five hundred linguistics teachers of GC University Faisalabad participated in this study. The researcher developed a questionnaire to measure the level of perceived importance of the course having the FIVE academic writing skills. The collected data was analyzed using descriptive statistics and multiple regressions.

**Results**

**Research Questions 1**

How do the teachers perceive the importance of academic writing skills to tailor a good essay in English?

Table 1: Perceived Level of Importance of Academic Writing Skills

Writing Skill	Mean	Standard Deviation
Vocabulary	3.95	1.29
Unity	3.65	1.12
Coherence	3.21	0.99
Paraphrasing	2.85	1.14
Polishing	2.28	1.10
<b>Overall</b>	<b>3.19</b>	<b>1.12</b>

Table 1 shows the Mean and Standard Deviation of the FIVE academic writing skills as perceived by the teachers. All the selected writing skills were taken too important as the mean ranges from 2.28 to 3.95 (within Likert scale 1-5). Vocabulary was perceived most important writing skill followed by unity, coherence, paraphrasing and polishing.

**Research Question 2.**

What is the joint contribution of the selected academic writing skills towards tailoring a good essay in English?

Table2: Multiple Regression Analysis of the five academic writing skills with the good composing of an essay.

**Model Summary**

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.806 <sup>a</sup>	.651	.657	2.670

a. Predictors: (Constant), Vocabulary, Unity, Coherence, Paraphrasing, Polishing

Table 2 shows that all the five predictors combined together contributed 65 % ( $R^2 = .651$ ) to the variance of writing an essay. It implies that there may be factors to be investigated parallel to these research lines.

**Conclusions**

The purpose of the study examines university professors’ perceptions about the importance/applications of academic skills course for their students. Two research questions were raised to guide the study. From the results it was concluded that Academic writing skills are most important to tailor a good essay on a certain topic of our due interest. All the selected writing skills were taken too important as the mean ranges from 2.28 to 3.95 (within Likert scale 1-5). Vocabulary was perceived most important writing skill followed by unity, coherence, paraphrasing and polishing. All of the five predictors combined together contributed 65 % ( $R^2 = .651$ ) to the variance of writing an essay. It implies that there may be factors to be investigated parallel to these research lines.

These skills are of key importance to communicate our thoughts and sentiments to the readers and general public in an attractive way.

**Conclusions**

The University professor should concentrate on Academic Writing Skills to enable the students to meet their real life academic writing needs for effective communication. They should identify and prepare activities like brainstorming, drafting, revising, editing and submitting for developing academic writing skills among the students.

They should develop such an ever demanded syllabus and text books to enable the students to write well organized, unified and coherent academic texts e.g. assignments, exam answers, essays, reports, CV, letters and research articles without stimulus input. The teachers should give useful feedback to the learners on their writing. The students should also be given such an assignment like interpreting and summarizing the written text in their own words by exciting their creative potential. Writing an essay, all the paragraphs in an essay must unified, coherent, paraphrased and polished having the best of vocabulary. So the student or researcher must be enriched with these academic writing skills to make his text more attractive and valuable.

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