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ПОКРАЩЕННЯ НАВИЧОК КРИТИЧНОГО МИСЛЕННЯ В АНГЛІЙСЬКОМУ АКАДЕМІЧНОМУ ПИСЬМІ

У статті досліджується роль академічного письма у розвитку навичок критичного мислення та надається опис стратегій критичного мислення, які можна розвинути за допомогою академічного письма. Академічне письмо не просто передає ідеї; воно вимагає від студентів об'єктивного аналізу інформації, оцінює її на предмет достовірності, релевантності та упередженості. Критичне мислення включає аналіз та синтез інформації, а також представлення оригінальних ідей, що є важливим для академічного письма.

Автори досліджують, як критичні навички перевірки та аналізу інформації, а також аргументативні стратегії використовуються в написанні академічних есе. Академічне есе вважається найпоширенішим жанром академічного письма, що значною мірою сприяє розвитку інтелектуального судження та критичного мислення. У статті наведено приклади тем академічних есе з чітким описом того, як цілеспрямована робота над стратегіями критичного мислення сприяє кращому розумінню теми, допомагає оцінювати інформацію та сприяє структурованому міркуванню.

У статті розглядаються критичні навички добору інформації та її аналізу, які включають аналіз процесу, з'ясування подібностей та відмінностей у межах предмета, поділ предметів на менші елементи, класифікацію об'єктів за спільними якостями або характеристиками, встановлення причинно-наслідкових зв'язків. У статті детально розглядаються нюанси причинно-наслідкових зв'язків, пояснюється різниця між необхідними та достатніми, головними та другорядними, безпосередніми та віддаленими причинами, а також послідовністю та причиною. Ще однією цінною навичкою критичного мислення, яка практикується під час написання есе, є навичка аргументації. В академічних есе індуктивне та дедуктивне мислення можуть використовуватися для підтвердження аргументу або доповнення одне одного. Стаття містить план есе на тему ролі університетської освіти в побудові кар'єри. План демонструє, як навички індуктивне та дедуктивне мислення можна поєднати в одному есе, причому індукція використовується для виявлення закономірностей, а дедукція – для застосування принципів.

Підсумовуючи, у статті висвітлено критичне мислення як фундаментальну складову ефективного спілкування та вирішення проблем, що покращує здатність студентів глибше розуміти смисл та чітко й послідовно висловлювати ідеї в академічному та інших контекстах.

Ключові слова: академічне письмо, академічне есе, навички критичного мислення, причинно-наслідкові зв'язки, навички аргументації, індуктивне та дедуктивне мислення, теми есе.

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ENHANCING CRITICAL THINKING SKILLS IN ENGLISH ACADEMIC WRITING

The article explores the role of academic writing in enhancing critical thinking skills and provides the description of critical thinking strategies that can be developed with the help of academic writing. Academic writing does not just communicate ideas; it requires students to analyze information objectively, evaluating it for credibility, relevance and bias. Critical thinking involves analyzing and synthesizing information, as well as presenting original insights, essential for academic writing.

The authors examine how critical skills of inspecting and analyzing information and argumentative strategies are used in writing academic essays. The academic essay is recognized as the most widespread genre of academic writing, contributing significantly to the development of intellectual judgment and critical thinking. The paper includes examples of academic essay topics with clear description how the focused work on the critical thinking strategies promotes better understanding of the topic, helps to evaluate information and contributes to structured reasoning.

The paper addresses the critical skills of inspecting and analyzing which include process analysis, clarifying similarities and differences within a subject, dividing subjects into smaller elements, classifying objects by common qualities or characteristics, establishing cause-and-effect relationships. The article elaborates on the nuances of cause and effect relationships, explaining the differences between necessary versus sufficient, main versus secondary, immediate versus remote clauses and sequence versus cause. Another valuable critical thinking skill that is practiced through writing essays is argumentation skill. In academic essays, inductive and deductive reasoning may be used to support an argument or complement each other. The article includes the outline of an essay on the topic of university education in building a career. The outline demonstrates how inductive and deductive reasoning can be blended in one essay, with induction used to discover patterns and deduction working to apply principles.

To sum up, the article highlights critical thinking as fundamental for effective communication and problem-solving, enhancing students' ability to understand nuanced meanings and express ideas clearly and consistently in academic contexts and beyond.

Key words: academic writing, academic essay, critical thinking skills, cause-and-effect relationships, argumentation skill, inductive and deductive reasoning, essay topics.

The problem statement. Writing is an integral part of foreign language learning. Historically, writing is a secondary type of speech activity in relation to oral speech [6, p. 13], but in the modern world, written texts often serve as the main source of information. The ability to competently, logically and effectively express one's thoughts, convey the message to the reader and achieve a communicative goal is a crucial skill of a successful person.

Writing incorporates all other types of speech activity: reading (since the person who writes constantly rereads what is written, looking for the best means of expressing their thoughts), speaking, and listening (the person who writes pronounces the text mentally or aloud). O. Tarnapolskyi and S. Kozhushko call writing the most conscious form of speech [6, p. 14]. In a written text, speakers are able to express their thoughts in a condensed form, demonstrate their knowledge and skills, and thoughtfully select language resources to succeed in communication.

Writing in an academic context does not just communicate ideas; it actively shapes how these ideas are framed, questioned and refined. Academic writing requires students to analyze information objectively rather than accept it at face value. Writers must evaluate sources for credibility, relevance, and bias. Writing forces students to question assumptions and explore multiple perspectives.

Academic writing is a basic skill of modern education. The need to integrate into the globalized scientific space requires more emphasis on acquiring academic writing skills. Though a number of scientific works are devoted to the study of rhetorical skills and technologies for teaching academic writing, this field of study is open for investigation and there is a constant need of practical ideas how to implement academic writing and academic literacy into high school and university curricula.

Critical thinking has long been a goal of higher education, but the need for critical thinking has become more pressing in modern times due to a number of factors: globalization, information revolution, technology and connectivity of the modern world [10, p. 4]. Critical thinking is one of the 21-century skills, which must permeate various classroom activities and students' autonomous learning. There is deep connection between critical thinking and academic writing. Academic writing demands a logical organization of arguments, which mirrors critical thinking processes, helping students learn to build well-reasoned conclusions [10, p. 4].

Analysis of recent research and publications. Academic literacies encompass skills such as critical analysis, effective database searching, understanding and applying scholarly conventions like referencing, using a formal style of language, and adapting to different academic genres. These genres, by their nature, place limits on how ideas can be shaped and communicated [21]. A number of manuals target at developing skills in writing scientific texts of various genres in English [25; 2; 4]. The work of S. Catterall and C. Ireland experimentally proves close connection between effective critical thinking skills and academic literacy [9]. There have been attempts to explore the acquisition of academic literacy skills [21] and the

development of interdisciplinary compositional and rhetorical skills [23]. K. Larsson elaborated an example of design and enactment of critical thinking lessons using the variation theory of teaching and learning [18]. The works of L. Li, T. Moore, M. Korn, K. Wilson, H. Yeh, S. Yang [19; 22; 17; 26; 27; 28] focus on different aspects of teaching creative thinking in the classroom and beyond it. Cambridge University Press launched several projects to implement critical thinking in teaching English for academic purposes [10; 11].

The aim of this paper is to describe the role of academic writing in enhancing critical thinking skills and highlight critical thinking strategies that can be developed with the help of academic writing.

Presentation of the main research material. In his paper "Using Essay Responses as a Basis for Teaching Critical Thinking – a Variation Theory Approach" K. Larsson calls critical thinking "an elusive phenomenon, almost impossible to capture" [18, p. 23]. The scholars working in this field debate whether critical thinking is a generic or a subject-specific ability. We may find a number of definitions of critical thinking – "skillful, responsible thinking that facilitates good judgement" [20], "the educational cognate of rationality", and a critical thinker as "the individual who is appropriately moved by reasons" [24].

In our paper, we will follow the definition of Robert Ennis who interprets critical thinking as "reasonable reflective thinking focused on deciding what to believe or do" [13]. In his subsequent papers, R. Ennis elaborates on critical thinking and describes it as a person's ability to do some or most of the following: judge the credibility of a source; identify conclusions, reasons, and assumptions; judge the quality of an argument, including the acceptability of its reasons, assumptions, and evidence; develop and defend a position on an issue; ask appropriate clarifying questions; plan experiments and judge experimental designs; define terms in a way appropriate for the context; be open-minded; try to be well informed; draw conclusions when warranted, but with caution [13, p. 180].

Critical thinking is a disciplined intellectual process involving conceptualizing, applying, analyzing, synthesizing, and evaluating information from various sources to guide beliefs and actions [27]. G. Hillocks emphasized that critical thinking involves evaluating sources, synthesizing information, and presenting original insights, essential for academic writing [15]. This skill helps create intellectually engaging and persuasive essays by organizing thoughts, addressing counterarguments, and providing compelling evidence [12]. M. Yamin also highlighted critical thinking as fundamental for effective communication and problem-solving, enhancing students' ability to understand nuanced meanings and express ideas clearly and persuasively in language learning [27].

Human ideas only take shape when they are communicated – whether through speech, writing, or other expressive forms like visuals or bodily gestures. Within academic contexts, these modes of communication are primarily realized through the

spoken and written formats that define university learning [11, p. 14]. The academic essay is recognized as the most widespread genre of academic writing, contributing significantly to the development of intellectual judgment and critical thinking [11, p. 16]. An academic essay is a formal piece of writing used in higher education to present, analyze, and defend ideas [16, p. 4]. It follows a structured format, relies on evidence-based arguments, and is written for an academic audience. The main mission and goal of the essay is the student's independent vision of the problem, question, topic based on the processed material and arguments, in accordance with the chosen approach, style, etc. [5, p. 122].

Essays come in different types, which are defined by their purpose. Writers can: 1) express themselves to others about their feelings, thoughts and experiences;

2) report information; 3) analyze or explain subjects for greater understanding; 4) convince others that they should believe or act in some new way; 5) criticize and evaluate the nature or merit of works of art, music, film or literature; 6) persuade others by means that are not limited to perfect rationality or logic; 7) combine several aims in a piece of writing for greater complexity and richness [16, p. 7].

A clear understanding of the structure of an academic essay by a student is the key to writing it well. It is obvious that the structure of an academic statement obeys the general principles of rhetoric. The art of organizing any message is called disposition and consists of two parts: the presentation of the subject (topic) and the argumentation of it [3, p. 110].

The typical academic essay consists of five paragraphs. The first paragraph of this essay is an introduction, the last is a conclusion. The three paragraphs of the main part (the body of an essay) correspond to the three aspects or arguments on which the line of reasoning is based – from the thesis formulated in the introduction to the main conclusion. The structure of an academic essay is a kind of basic algorithm for working on an essay, but the purpose of writing an academic essay should not be limited to studying the structure alone. Researcher O. Gladka notes that “despite the regulated structure of a descriptive essay (introduction, main part, conclusions), it is necessary to determine the main features of a descriptive essay, which include free composition, original approach, subjective view of the problem, subject, event being described, use of artistic means of language (metaphors, allegorical images, symbols, comparisons, juxtapositions, etc.)” [1, p. 6].

Depending on the purpose and topic of an essay, the body may be organized in different ways. Researchers A. Shyshko and G. Lukanska rightly emphasize the mandatory adherence to the logic of presentation in an academic essay [7, p. 259].

In our paper, we will outline the critical thinking strategies which work as ways of opening subjects to investigation. We will address the critical skills of inspecting and analyzing, as well as argumentative strategies.

When we inspect a subject to gain better understanding, we find ourselves asking questions and seeking answers. When we inspect or explain how things work, or happen, or can be made to happen, we

use process analysis. With process analysis we examine the step-by-step unfolding of an action, distinguish between stages or phases. We can describe processes from our perspective as observers, analyzing how things take place (e.g., how the job market changes, how beautiful early summer morning is) or we can describe them as instructors, explaining how to carry our actions (e.g., how to withdraw money from ATM, how to install a mobile application). We can use process analysis as part of the essay or as a way of organizing most of the essay's body.

Another useful way of thinking and writing is to look for clear similarities and differences within a subject. Any time we analyze or explain with comparison or contrast, we follow a similar line of thought – looking for a common basis and for meaningful similarities and differences. In comparison and contrast, we may want either to stress important similarities or differences, or to balance our analysis.

Another typical way to examine information is to divide it into parts or to classify it according to distinct categories. We divide subjects into smaller elements or components (e.g. the parts of an engine); we classify objects by common qualities or characteristics (e.g. genres of literature). Whether we are dividing or classifying, or using a combination of the two, our purpose is to point out valuable distinctions between parts or classes, so it is especially necessary to avoid blurring or overlapping them. Here arises the need to keep categories separate from one another and be consistent in classifying them [16, p. 121].

Crucial strategy in analysis and explanation is looking for cause-and-effect relationships. When we study cause and effect, we must address the following questions: *Why did something happen in the way it did? What brought it about? What effects does one thing have on another?*

Cause and effect relationships are usually complex and it is important not to oversimplify them or jump to conclusions. Here are a few issues writers must be aware of:

1. Necessary versus sufficient clauses. A necessary clause is always needed to produce a particular effect, but it may not be able to do so on its own. For example, oxygen is a necessary cause for fire. Without oxygen, fire cannot exist. However, oxygen alone does not guarantee fire – you also need fuel and heat.

A sufficient cause, however, can produce the effects without other, contributing causes being present. Striking a match in the presence of oxygen and fuel is a sufficient cause for fire. Once all the conditions are met (oxygen, fuel, and heat from the match), fire will definitely occur.

2. Main versus secondary causes. Main causes are the most important ones, and should receive greatest emphasis in the writer's explanation. For example, a car accident caused by a driver running a red light. Secondary or contributing causes are less important and should receive less emphasis. The secondary cause for the abovementioned example is poor road lighting at the intersection. While the accident happened because the driver ran the red light, the lack of proper lighting contributed to the situation by making it harder to see the traffic signal.

3. Immediate versus remote causes. Immediate causes are close in time or distance to their effects, while remote causes are further away in time and distance and sometimes harder to pinpoint. A person slips on a wet floor and breaks their arm. We make a conclusion that the wet floor is the immediate cause of the fall. The remote cause is a leaking pipe in the ceiling that caused water to drip onto the floor. The leak is the remote cause, because it created the condition that eventually led to the accident.

4. Sequence versus cause. Causes always come before effects, but one thing preceding another does not automatically make it a cause. Events may follow others but be unrelated to them. For example, the sun rises, then people wake up. These events happen in sequence, but the sunrise does not directly cause every person to wake up (some may wake earlier, some later). An alarm clock ringing causes a person to wake up. Here, the ringing is the cause, and waking up is the effect.

In order to develop students' critical thinking skills, we suggest including the following essay topics into university course of academic literacy: *"The Process of Applying to University: From Choosing a Major to Receiving Admission"*, *"Comparing Public and Private Universities: Opportunities, Costs, and Student Experience"*, *"Types of University Students: The Achiever, the Explorer, and the Survivor"*, *"The Impact of University Education on Career Opportunities and Social Mobility"*. All of the topics center around university life and curriculum, each of the suggested topics focuses on a particular type of critical thinking skills.

The first essay topic *"The Process of Applying to University: From Choosing a Major to Receiving Admission"* is an example of process analysis. The topic implies breaking down the process into steps (researching programs, preparing applications, writing essays, submitting documents, waiting for results). The intended product is an essay demonstrating how each stage contributes to the overall outcome.

To practice the critical thinking skill of finding similarities and differences, students can be offered to write an essay on the topic *"Comparing Public and Private Universities: Opportunities, Costs, and Student Experience"*. In their essays, students could highlight similarities (academic goals, student communities, etc.) and differences (tuition fees, funding, facilities, cultural environment, etc.) in public and private universities.

The topic *"Types of University Students: The Achiever, the Explorer, and the Survivor"* is targeted at enhancing the skill of classifying students into categories based on study habits, motivations, and campus involvement.

To motivate students boost the skill of analyzing cause and effect relationship, it is worthwhile suggesting students write an essay on the following topic: *"The Impact of University Education on Career Opportunities and Social Mobility"*. Students engage in analyzing how earning a degree influences job prospects, income levels, and societal advancement. The essay implies showing direct and indirect effects of higher education on individuals and communities.

Another crucial critical thinking skill that is practiced through writing essays is argumentation skill.

An argumentative strategy can be defined as a coordinated and coherent set of strategic manoeuvres put forward in argumentative discourse to achieve dialectically as well as rhetorically the result that is aimed for [14, p. 304].

Essays with an argumentative aim always include information, analysis, or explanation, but they put theses to service in the attempt to convince. Argumentative essays go beyond informing or explaining to supporting claims or assertions with sound reasoning and evidence [16, p. 160].

Induction and deduction are two basic ways of reasoning, which are usually combined in everyday writing and speaking [16, p. 162]. In academic essays, they may be used alone to support an argument or complement each other.

Different forms of reasoning grow out of everyday experiences. Inductive reasoning reflects our natural tendency to draw general conclusions from those experiences. Whether an argument is persuasive depends on the strength of the evidence. If the information we use is accurate, trustworthy, verifiable, and sufficient to support a carefully limited conclusion, we are likely to present a convincing case or a sound generalization that can later serve as the basis for a deductive argument.

When we use deductive reasoning, we begin not with specific data but with broad principles or assumptions, and then apply them to particular cases. This type of reasoning depends on a logical structure known as the syllogism [8], which establishes how premises (the assumptions we start with), the specific situation, and the resulting conclusion are connected [11, p.19].

Induction and deduction are the two main methods of reasoning, both rooted in human experience – one moves from specific cases to general conclusions, while the other applies general principles to particular situations. These approaches complement one another, and in everyday argumentation, we often rely on both.

Inductive reasoning helps you discover and generalize; while deductive reasoning helps you to apply and prove. Together, they make academic writing more rigorous and persuasive.

Now we will consider how inductive and deductive argumentative strategies can be used in the topic *"The Role of University Education in Shaping Career Success"*.

The introduction of the essay can display deductive reasoning by starting with a general principle: *Higher education is widely considered essential for career advancement.*

The body paragraphs can be organized as a combination of inductive and deductive reasoning.

In the first body paragraph, one can present specific examples, from which it is possible to generalize that university education tends to improve career prospects. These specific examples can include a case study of graduates earning higher salaries or statistics showing lower unemployment rates among degree holders.

The second paragraph of the body can represent the deductive reasoning. Here we can start with the general principle, for example: *Education equips individuals with transferable skills such as critical thinking and communication*. Then we apply it to specific situations, such as “*Employers value these skills in leadership roles*” or “*Graduates use them to adapt in changing job markets*”.

The third paragraph of the body part can be integration of both lines of reasoning, showing how inductive reasoning (examples of exceptions) and deductive reasoning (principle of skill development) interact to create a balanced view. One can also include counterarguments (e.g. entrepreneurs without degrees).

The concluding part of the essay should highlight how induction built the general claim from evidence and how deduction reinforced it through logical application.

The suggested outline demonstrates how we can blend inductive and deductive reasoning in one essay: induction is used to discover patterns and deduction works to apply principles.

Conclusions and prospects of further research.

The article highlights the crucial role of academic writing in enhancing critical writing skills. Academic writing helps develop structured reasoning, encourages analysis and evaluation, and strengthens synthesis skills. Academic writing is both a product and a practice of critical thinking. We have demonstrated how academic writing on engaging and challenging topics boosts critical thinking strategies of inspecting and analyzing, as well as argumentative strategies. By analyzing, questioning, synthesizing information and structured inductive and deductive reasoning, students acquire skills of understanding meanings and expressing ideas clearly and convincingly. Integrating critical thinking strategies in university curriculum transforms passive learning into active intellectual engagement.

We advocate further research on exploring implementation of critical thinking strategies in writing critical reviews and research articles in academic contexts.

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