

Analysis on Difficulties and Optimization Paths of Non-native Learners' Academic English Learning in Higher Education

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Abstract: This paper explores the typical difficulties that non-native English learners face in their studies at the university level and puts forward all-round optimisation strategies to address these problems. With the rapid spread of global academic exchange, learning English for academic purposes (EAP) has been widely implemented in education around the world. Non-native speakers are more likely to have significant language differences and psychological pressure when trying to participate in difficult discussions at school. Based on the above analyses, several problems have arisen in teaching basic interpersonal communication skills and achieving the aim of high academic-level cognitive language proficiency. The paper has also listed all the problems with the current teaching system in detail. To address the above urgent problems proactively, this study puts forward the following targeted optimization paths: first, strategically introduce genre-based teaching; second, explicitly teach specialized academic vocabulary; and third, intentionally cultivate highly inclusive academic socialization environments. In short, we need to build an all-encompassing, highly supportive teaching and learning system to help non-native English-speaking university students improve their studies and cultivate general academic skills.

Keywords: Academic English, Non-Native Learners, Higher Education, Learning Difficulties, Optimization Paths, Academic Literacy.

1. Introduction

The rapid internationalisation of higher education has made English an essential language for communication among scholars worldwide at the time. At present, in the environment of higher education, students need to be able to independently study difficult academic materials in English, make reasonable judgments and formulate solid arguments, and publish their own research abroad to advance in their studies or careers. As a result, a large number of international students and non-native speakers have been attracted to high-quality institutions around the world for their academic excellence and the need to learn the specific language. However, the large-scale changes in population have also revealed a serious, widespread educational problem.

Although they often have a very high level of general English proficiency, a considerable number of non-native university students still suffer from poor academic performance, severe psychological problems, and a sense of alienation. The gap between the casual language people use every day and the strict, very formal systems of academic English is too large for traditional methods of language teaching to handle well. Students learn that to succeed in higher education, it is necessary to have good grammar and also to master a set of complex rhetorical conventions, a particular way of thinking, and the entire culture of that specific discipline.

The first purpose of this all-encompassing study paper is to identify the deep-seated problems that restrict the learning of academic English for non-native speakers systematically and to put forward practical and scientifically sound remedial strategies. Section 2 investigates all kinds of language, mind and social barriers to the development of academic literacy comprehensively. Section 3 will examine the deep-seated structural deficiencies of the current institutional support

system. Section 4 actively introduces very strategic, deeply pedagogical optimisation paths specifically aimed at promoting strong academic socialisation and linguistic ability. Section 5 offers comprehensive concluding remarks on the final prospect of inclusive higher education. Based on the above detailed research on educational trends and development, this study intends to help university teachers, curriculum developers and institutional leaders systematically adjust their teaching and research methods to meet the actual demands of their students' diverse learning needs and foster all-around development of young people.

2. Linguistic and Genre-based Difficulties

The difficulties that non-native speakers face in higher education are mainly due to an unfamiliarity with the characteristics of academic language. In the past, educational psychology did not differentiate between fundamental interpersonal communication skills and cognitive academic language proficiency. Although many non-native students can converse well in the university environment, they lack the high level of cognitive academic language skills required to study difficult abstract and dense academic materials at a deep level [1]. The first area where the large-scale language deficiency is most obvious is in vocabulary learning. Academic discourse is based on a highly specialised and generally known vocabulary that seldom appears in daily life [4]. Without specific and detailed teaching of these very specialised academic word lists, non-native speakers quickly find themselves completely overwhelmed by the high density of vocabulary in their university readings, leading to serious reading comprehension problems and academic fatigue [4, 6].

Furthermore, there are many syntactical and structural difficulties in the language used at universities [5]. An abundance of corpus-based linguistic studies have

consistently shown that academic writing frequently uses very complex nominalisations, exceedingly dense prepositional phrases, and extremely heavy passive constructions that are completely out of step with spoken English [5]. When non-native speakers try to complete the writing homework under pressure, they often resort to extremely informal and highly colloquial sentence structures that immediately receive low marks from university professors [7]. The large-scale disconnect in the work has caused significant psychological stress for the students and seriously harmed their study motivation, frequently leading to a sense of "writer's block" [3].

Beyond the basic problems of language, the most serious difficulties are the severe deficiencies in genre awareness. All the academic disciplines are subject to a relatively rigid set of rhetorical conventions; for example, they must conform to standard formats such as an introduction, a method section, a results part and a discussion section [2], and thus organize and present knowledge in an official way. Non-native speakers are unfamiliar with the deep-seated implicit Western academic tradition, so they are unable to build an elaborate persuasive academic argument, incorporate relevant external research, or put forward their own unique scholarly opinions convincingly [3, 7]. This extremely profound genre unfamiliarity effectively functions as a large-scale invisible gatekeeper, systematically excluding very intelligent and highly capable non-native-speaking students from fully participating in the global academic discussion [6, 8].

3. Systemic Deficiencies in Current Instruction

The serious problems in education at the university level are also mainly due to the deep-seated and widespread deficiencies in the current teaching systems of universities [9]. As universities are aggressively pursuing a high-earning internationalisation plan, a large number of English-medium-instruction programs have appeared around the world at an unprecedented rate [10]. However, this extremely rapid institutional change has often occurred without any necessary supporting pedagogical scaffolding [10]. In many large-scale university settings, professors of highly specialised subjects are operating under the very wrong assumption that non-native-speaking students who have passed general language tests are already fully capable of learning in-depth academic discussions at a large scale [6]. As a result, these professors are unwilling to change their very dense style of teaching or actively provide clear, highly structured language support; they leave the extremely vulnerable non-native learners to figure out the very complex academic code entirely on their own [8, 10].

Furthermore, the traditional remedial language programmes organised by university support centres are extremely often wholly unsuitable [7]. These highly isolated language courses focus excessively on extremely general study skills and basic grammatical rules, completely failing to address the absolutely essential and highly disciplinary requirements for advanced academic literacy [6, 9]. By strictly separating the instruction of explicit language from the actual content of discipline, these heavily flawed programmes are unable to provide the highly contextualised and deeply situated linguistic support that students desperately need [9]. When a non-native-speaking engineering student is given overly general essay-writing

skills that are completely disconnected from the high-precision rhetorical requirements of an advanced engineering laboratory report, the cognitive transfer will fail entirely [2, 7].

In addition, most of the current academic assessment methods give much greater weight to significant errors in non-native speakers and fail to recognize the profound depth of their academic thoughts [3]. When professors too strongly weigh papers based on the style of native speakers, they are implicitly supporting a very harmful, highly exclusive model of academic literacy [8]. The institution has failed to build an inclusive educational model; as a result, non-native English-speaking students feel alienated and lose their motivation for learning because their diverse experiences around the world are not valued [9].

4. Optimization Paths and Academic Socialization

To effectively address the large-scale educational crisis, higher education institutions need to urgently implement all-encompassing, deeply strategic optimisation paths that actively support the complex academic socialisation of non-native speakers [8]. The most urgent need for instructional support is a strong, full-scale application of explicit genre-teaching strategies [2]. Instead of expecting students to learn the various rules of academic language by themselves through inference, university teachers should openly and intensively teach about this special type of text in class. By providing students with highly successful, heavily annotated model texts and explicitly revealing the deeply hidden rhetorical strategies of expert academic writers, instructors can fully demystify the heavily guarded secrets of academic publishing [3, 6]. All of this pedagogical transparency can help non-native speakers grasp, in greater detail, the structural construction and persuasive communication of difficult academic knowledge.

Additionally, the institution must aggressively embed highly organised and extremely stable vocabulary and syntactic scaffolding in the massive main-stream content courses [4]. Rather than placing important language support in isolated, highly ineffective remedial classes, content teachers and highly specialised language teachers need to work together to integrate deep language instruction seamlessly into the curriculum at all times [9, 10]. Through a large-scale collaboration, it has been achieved that non-native speakers can actively learn necessary disciplinary cognitive academic language proficiency perfectly at a time when it is most needed. For example, one can prepare a specific glossary based on an extensive list of academic words beforehand, distribute a relatively dense reading task, and thus significantly reduce the cognitive load to avoid serious errors in reading comprehension [4, 5].

In short, optimizing the large-scale academic English learning path still requires a profound and extraordinarily large-scale shift in the paradigm towards highly inclusive, deeply supportive academic socialization. Universities should entirely discard the highly damaging deficit model that views non-native speakers as little more than broken native speakers needing extensive linguistic correction, and instead actively adopt an all-encompassing, deeply supportive system of diversified academic literacy [7, 9]. This involves establishing a highly supportive and interactive classroom environment to promote extensive collaborative peer

conversation actively, allowing non-native speakers to explore the new learning identity of complex subjects safely and in depth [8, 10]. By extensively validating the numerous unique cultural backgrounds of these non-native students and offering them deep-structured, highly compassionate pedagogical mentorship, universities can completely transform deeply anxious and highly struggling students into incredibly confident, extremely articulate, fully empowered members of the global academic discourse community [6, 9].

Add a longer-lasting support system for universities that connects classroom teaching, writing advice, and disciplinary guidance. Academic English learning cannot be achieved through a single short remedial class because students need multiple chances to apply academic vocabulary, genre knowledge and argumentation strategies in real disciplinary tasks. Therefore, the writing centre can provide individual consultations, draft-based feedback and workshops on disciplinary writing conventions for students [7, 9]. At the same time, the organisation of peer-review activities should be meticulous to enable non-native speakers to learn how other students construct claims, use evidence, and respond to academic criticism. Such interaction can help the students gradually enter an academic discourse community and move beyond correcting only superficial errors in language [8]. Language support for students in English-medium instruction should also be integrated into content teaching. Lecturers can provide assignment rubrics, sample paragraphs, vocabulary lists, and brief feedback sessions for the main written works in advance so that students know what to expect in terms of content and language form. The two will together promote a long-term process of guided participation in academic English teaching and help non-native speakers gain self-confidence, a sense of discipline, and application ability at the university level.

Another way to improve is to redesign the assessment and feedback system for learning academic English. Many non-native speakers find it difficult to learn academic writing when the focus of assessment is solely on the final output rather than on the gradual improvement of academic skills. Therefore, the universities will introduce more formative assessments, such as staged writing tasks, portfolio evaluation, revision records and reflective learning journals. The above ways can help teachers observe changes in students' argument construction, sources for reference, vocabulary usage and academic tone over time [6, 7]. Reason why the other problems need to be addressed. Good feedback needs to explain why a certain expression, citation practice or organisational form is suitable in a particular academic genre. Thus, the students will be able to learn how different forms of language relate to specific subjects [2, 6]. A digital learning platform can also be used to save teachers' drafts and add specific comments or common errors that occur in class. Technology should serve to help teachers' work rather than replace their teaching. Formative assessment, individualised feedback and academic socialisation can be used to encourage non-native speakers to actively engage in constructing their own academic knowledge through learning activities, rather than passively receiving corrections [8, 9].

5. Conclusion

The acquisition of advanced English by non-native speakers in the current era of higher education is an exceptionally difficult problem, and it is at the forefront of pedagogy globally. As this all-encompassing and highly

systematic analysis has shown convincingly, the extremely severe problems that these extremely vulnerable students are facing go far beyond a simple lack of basic grammar. Non-native speakers are completely forced to struggle with a very dense and difficult-to-learn system of specialized academic vocabulary, extremely complicated syntactic structures, and highly implicit, deeply culturally bound rhetorical genres. The absolute failure of the current higher education institutions to proactively and openly acknowledge the need for strong structural support of this large-scale cognitive change has led to serious academic marginalisation and profound intellectual disempowerment.

To achieve the full-fledged optimisation of this indispensable learning path, the world's academic community needs to make a fundamental and all-encompassing reform of its long-standing instructional model. Over-reliance on general, deeply isolated language remediation is fundamentally and absolutely unsustainable, as well as pedagogically bankrupt. Therefore, universities should proactively and vigorously implement deeply explicit, highly focused genre-based teaching and seamlessly integrate highly targeted language support directly into the large-scale core curriculum of disciplines. Moreover, an extremely large-scale, deeply and incredibly profound institutional commitment to fully genuine inclusive academic socialisation is absolutely necessary and non-negotiable.

In the end, the absolute future vitality, extraordinary deep-seated massive innovation, and overall intellectual richness of the global academic enterprise are all heavily and entirely dependent on the incredibly high success of integrating these various highly non-native scholarly voices. Actively and thoroughly break down these exceptionally large invisible linguistic barriers, and provide highly compassionate, deeply supportive pedagogical support based on scientific evidence, thus fully achieving the original and lofty goals of higher education institutions. Thus, they will fully ensure that true massive global academic mobility is not excessively limited by rigid linguistic boundaries and enable a genuinely large-scale, deeply interconnected, incredibly brilliant global community of international scholars to thrive.

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