

DEVELOPING ACADEMIC WRITING COMPETENCE IN ENGLISH

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Annotation. This article examines the conceptual and terminological framework of the present study, it should be noted that scholarly literature frequently employs two concepts that may mistakenly be treated as synonymous: “writing” and “written speech”, and the paper deals with the analysis of proficiency level from A1 to C2, specific descriptors. Differentiating between these concepts is essential for specifying the objectives of contemporary foreign language education, since their apparent similarity conceals fundamentally different types of cognitive and communicative activity.

Keywords: writing, written speech, communicative activity, assessment of written performance.

Introduction. The contemporary stage of development, encompassing the period from the early 2000s onwards, firmly established the status of writing within the methodology of foreign language teaching. With regard to approaches to teaching writing, two major orientations can be distinguished. The first is a product-oriented approach, which focuses on the final written product and involves producing a text according to a prescribed model and within a relatively rigid structural framework. The second is a process-oriented approach, which places emphasis on the strategies involved in generating written discourse, including drafting, revising, editing, and reflecting on each stage of the writing process.

A significant milestone in this evolutionary process was the publication of the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) in 2001. The CEFR formally consolidated the status of writing as an essential component of foreign language proficiency and introduced a detailed system of descriptors for assessing written performance across all levels of language proficiency. Within the CEFR, writing is conceptualized as a multidimensional competence encompassing several forms of written language activity, including overall written production—such as personal letters, formal correspondence, essays, reports, and other text types—and written interaction, which involves correspondence, notes, messages, and form completion.

For each proficiency level from A1 to C2, specific descriptors are provided to indicate the types of texts learners are expected to produce, the degree of coherence and cohesion they should demonstrate, the range of topics they can address, and the genre-specific and stylistic conventions they are expected to observe. At the A1 level, for example, learners are expected to produce simple phrases and sentences; at B1, they should be capable of producing connected texts on familiar topics; and at C1, they are expected to construct complex, well-structured texts on issues requiring discussion, supported by the writer's own arguments and conclusions. Thus, the CEFR established writing as a legitimate and independent objective of foreign language education, comparable in significance to other forms of communicative language activity, while simultaneously providing teachers and materials developers with a universal framework for the assessment of written performance.

Literature review. Writing, in the narrower sense, is understood primarily as a technical skill comprising calligraphic, orthographic, and punctuation-related operations. The content of writing instruction involves encoding speech sounds into graphic symbols, i.e., letters; producing words in a graphically appropriate form; observing spelling conventions; and using punctuation correctly. The principal objective of writing at this level is the accurate graphic representation of linguistic

material, while the activity itself is predominantly reproductive and, to a considerable extent, mechanical in nature. Its outcome is a graphically and orthographically correct word, phrase, or sentence. Within the system of foreign language education, writing in this sense functions primarily as an instructional tool for reinforcing vocabulary and grammatical structures and for conducting written tests, exercises, and dictations. Within the previously discussed models of foreign language communicative competence, this aspect of writing may therefore be attributed primarily to language or linguistic competence.

Written speech, by contrast, constitutes a productive form of communicative language activity and presupposes the learner's conscious ability to generate coherent and meaningful discourse in written form. In terms of content, written speech involves the construction of new meanings, the organization and structuring of ideas, and the selection of appropriate linguistic resources in accordance with the intended recipient, genre, communicative purpose, and situation of communication.

The objective of teaching written speech is therefore to enable learners to produce messages or texts that fulfil a particular pragmatic and communicative purpose, whether to convey information, persuade the reader, formulate a request, or express emotions and attitudes. The nature of this activity is productive and creative and consequently involves a comparatively high degree of learner engagement and motivation. Its outcome is a complete and coherent written text—such as a personal letter, essay, article, questionnaire, or other written genre—characterized by semantic integrity and structural completeness.

Within the system of foreign language education, written speech is associated with communicative, discourse, sociocultural, and compensatory competences, since its successful realization requires learners to develop the ability to establish coherent relationships between events, ideas, and phenomena; construct a logical progression of thought; take into consideration the sociocultural conventions of the target language; anticipate the potential response of the recipient to a written message; and observe the formal, linguistic, stylistic, and genre-specific conventions governing written communication.

Table 1 presents a comparative analysis of the concepts of “writing” and “written speech” within the context of foreign language teaching methodology.

Table 1.

Comparison of the Concepts of “Writing” and “Written Communication”

Criterion	Writing as a Skill	Writing as a Communicative Activity
Nature of the activity	Reproductive	Productive
Instructional objective	Encoding speech sounds into graphic symbols; developing handwriting, spelling, and punctuation skills	Generating meaning, structuring ideas, and expressing them coherently in written form
Psychophysiological basis of the activity	Fine motor skills of the hand and visual memory	Verbal reasoning, internal speech, logical thinking, and imagination
Tasks performed	Completing instructional tasks accurately and avoiding linguistic and mechanical errors	Conveying or requesting information, expressing personal opinions, and influencing the recipient through written communication
Expected outcome	An accurately written individual word, phrase, or sentence	A coherent and logically structured written message or text characterized by semantic completeness
Relationship to the components of foreign language communicative competence	Primarily associated with linguistic competence, including knowledge of the language system and the rules governing its use	Associated with communicative, discourse, and sociocultural competences,

including the ability to communicate effectively in written form

Control and regulation External control: the teacher identifies and corrects errors S e l f - regulation and self-monitoring: the writer independently manages meaning construction and revises the written message

The conflation of these two concepts may lead to serious methodological consequences when a teacher claims to be developing learners' written communication competence, while in practice foreign language classes are largely limited to dictation exercises at the expense of creative writing activities. In such a case, the teacher focuses primarily on developing learners' basic writing skills rather than their competence in written communication. According to the principles of the communicative approach, the teaching of written communication should be conducted at a qualitatively different level.

When teaching writing as a technical skill, the teacher demonstrates how words should be written correctly and develops learners' fundamental writing skills, which is particularly characteristic of primary education. By contrast, when teaching written communication, the teacher explains why a particular text is produced, for whom it is intended, and which strategies can be employed to influence the recipient and ensure an appropriate interpretation of the message. It is specifically through the teaching of written communication that learners develop discourse skills, i.e., the ability to construct coherent and well-structured texts sociocultural skills related to observing norms of etiquette and conventions of argumentation in the target-language culture [6], as well as compensatory skills associated with planning an utterance and revising written output. Consequently, contemporary approaches to foreign language teaching, particularly at the upper-secondary and higher education levels, are gradually shifting their emphasis from the teaching of "mechanical" writing towards the development of written communication as an effective channel of interaction.

An analysis of textbooks and methodological manuals on foreign language teaching [7] reveals how their authors differentiate between these concepts. The status of writing is interpreted from two perspectives; however, these perspectives are not mutually exclusive but rather complement one another organically. On the one hand, writing is regarded as a final product and an independent learning objective. On the other hand, writing functions as an essential instructional tool, that is, as a means of accomplishing supplementary learning tasks. These may include recording keywords, preparing outlines or notes while listening or reading, completing lexical and grammatical exercises in written form, and facilitating a deeper understanding and retention of learning material. The authors emphasize that effective mastery of writing as a productive skill is impossible without its regular use as a means of learning.

According to methodological literature, the content of written communication instruction should be oriented towards the formation of communicative strategies and the development of skills that enable learners to become active participants in written communication. Thus, at the initial stage, the instructional process involves the development of basic technical writing skills, including handwriting, spelling, and punctuation, while at subsequent stages it should focus on developing communicative writing skills.

In the latest version of the CEFR, writing is represented through two categories: written production and written interaction. This terminological distinction reflects the need to differentiate between these concepts in recognition of the fact that producing a text and engaging in written dialogue with an interlocutor require fundamentally different cognitive and communicative strategies.

Written production constitutes a monologic act of communication. Essentially, written

production involves the creation of a complete, coherent, and generally pre-planned text addressed to a passive recipient who does not participate in the communicative process in real time. The primary emphasis is placed on textual structure, stylistic accuracy, and depth of content. Within this category, the CEFR identifies such formats as creative writing (stories, descriptions, reviews, poems, etc.) and academic/professional writing (essays, reports, articles, etc.). Progress is measured from the ability to construct simple phrases about oneself at the A1 level to the production of complex, stylistically sophisticated, and logically coherent texts at the C2 level. The quality of the final written product should therefore be regarded as a key criterion of successful written production.

The proficiency-level criteria for assessing written texts in the context of creative writing can be presented as follows:

Pre-A1: providing personal information (name, address, etc.) in writing with the assistance of a dictionary;

A1: writing simple phrases and sentences about oneself, one's family, immediate environment, interests, hobbies, etc.;

A2: producing simple descriptions of facts, phenomena, or events; describing past experiences; and creating short narratives using simple conjunctions such as *and*, *but*, and *because*;

B1: clearly establishing chronological sequence in a narrative and describing feelings and reactions in a simple, coherent text;

B2: producing detailed descriptions of real or imagined events, observing genre conventions, developing arguments, and synthesizing information from several sources;

C1: producing detailed, well-structured texts in a natural style, including the appropriate use of idiomatic expressions and humour, and providing extended support for viewpoints through relevant examples;

C2: producing engaging narratives and descriptions in a style appropriate to the genre and confidently employing idiomatic language and humour to enhance the impact on the reader.

In contrast to written production, foreign-language written interaction constitutes a dialogic act involving the exchange of written messages in real time. Foreign-language written interaction is spontaneous and interactive and presupposes the presence of a specific interlocutor who can immediately respond to a written message, request clarification, ask questions, or ask the writer to reformulate an idea. Accordingly, the language used in such interaction is considerably closer to spoken discourse, while grammatical accuracy may sometimes be subordinated to the speed and effectiveness with which meaning is communicated.

This category of written communication encompasses two principal formats: personal and formal correspondence, including letters and emails, and short utilitarian forms such as notes and forms. For comparison with written production, the proficiency-level criteria for foreign-language written interaction may be summarized as follows:

Pre-A1: writing short phrases to communicate basic information, such as one's name and address, in a fixed form or note with the assistance of a dictionary;

A1: writing simple sentences to provide or request personal information, such as a name or address;

A2: requesting or providing personal information in writing and constructing short sentences describing ongoing events or situations;

B1: communicating information and ideas on both abstract and concrete topics in writing, checking information, and explaining problems with sufficient justification;

B2: effectively expressing views and communicating news in writing, as well as engaging

with the opinions expressed by other participants in communication;

C1: expressing ideas clearly and precisely while flexibly adapting written communication to the addressee;

C2: expressing oneself in an appropriate tone and style in virtually any form of formal or informal written interaction.

In the latest version of the CEFR, foreign-language written interaction is presented as a distinct type of communicative language activity encompassing both written and online interaction, including synchronous and asynchronous forms of written communication. In particular, Web 2.0 services, social networking platforms, and videoconferencing technologies became widespread and developed into major instruments for organizing the educational process under conditions of social distancing [5]. Among the most widely used platforms were Zoom, Microsoft Teams, Google Classroom, and various instant-messaging applications. These technologies made it possible to conduct classes online, exchange educational materials instantaneously, provide consultations, and respond promptly to learners' questions. Researchers have noted that the interactive nature of online learning became a key factor positively influencing learners' intention to continue studying in this format and their overall level of satisfaction. The emphasis shifted from the acoustic to the visual dimension of communication, which, in turn, necessitated a reconsideration of established teaching methodologies. Nevertheless, online learning has become firmly embedded in language education, occupying a distinct place within blended learning models and continuing to be widely used.

Foreign-language written online interaction has been investigated by numerous scholars who have identified its distinctive characteristics as a specific channel of communication mediated by information and communication technologies and synchronous online communication tools [1]. An analysis of the relevant studies reveals the following tendency. At the initial level of foreign language proficiency, foreign-language written online interaction tends to be reactive in nature; that is, it is largely determined by externally imposed communicative conditions. At this stage, the learner functions primarily as a guided participant because written utterances are generally tied to specific communicative tasks, such as formulating a question, transmitting information, responding to an interlocutor's message, and performing similar communicative actions.

At more advanced proficiency levels, written interaction gradually develops into proactive communicative activity, in which learners are capable of assuming an active role in communication. They can independently initiate discussions, introduce new topics, clarify the positions of other participants, and manage the dynamics of collaborative interaction even when several messages are received simultaneously.

From a methodological perspective, this implies that at the initial stage teachers should provide learners with structured communicative scenarios and appropriate scaffolding. At advanced levels, however, instructional situations should be designed in ways that enable learners to develop greater learner autonomy and independently improve their written interaction skills. As these skills develop and communicative experience accumulates, learners become increasingly capable of maintaining an interlocutor's attention, sustaining interaction, and defending their viewpoints despite potential distractions.

Discussion. When discussing the distinctive features of online written interaction, several key aspects should be identified that define its nature and distinguish it from traditional paper-based written communication.

First, online written interaction enables participants to exchange messages both synchronously, in real time, and asynchronously, through sequential and delayed communication [4]. Asynchronous

interaction provides learners with sufficient time to prepare their responses, formulate their communicative intentions carefully, consider appropriate arguments, check spelling, and correct errors before sending a message. Synchronous interaction, by contrast, requires greater fluency in written production and a higher degree of automatization of lexical and grammatical skills. In this respect, it brings written communication closer to the conditions of spontaneous oral conversation, in which errors are inevitable and constitute a natural component of the communicative process [3].

Second, effective foreign-language online written interaction with one or more interlocutors requires the development of collaborative communication strategies. Such strategies include the ability to use markers of agreement and disagreement, paraphrase another participant's ideas in order to verify understanding, and employ turn-taking techniques in online chats. Unlike oral communication, where natural pauses facilitate turn-taking, written chat interaction often requires specific anticipatory expressions to signal an intention to take or maintain the conversational initiative. Collaborative strategies also involve a form of active listening in written communication, manifested in the ability to ask clarifying questions and encourage less active or "silent" communication partners to participate in the discussion [3].

Third, informal foreign-language online written interaction is strongly influenced by the conventions of spoken discourse. Consequently, a certain degree of linguistic inaccuracy is generally tolerated, meaning that this form of communication cannot necessarily be regarded as a model of standard linguistic correctness. Online written interaction allows phonetic and syntactic characteristics of conversational language to be transferred into written discourse, including frequent contractions, elliptical constructions, colloquial expressions, and interjections. At the same time, the limited time available for formulating ideas and preparing responses inevitably leads to the simplification of grammatical structures and the frequent use of acronyms and abbreviations.

However, because errors are visually represented and permanently recorded in written form, repeated exposure to them may contribute to their consolidation and potentially result in linguistic interference. One possible solution is to establish a clear distinction between communicative genres and explicitly specify the expected response format. In spontaneous online conversations, priority may be given to content and response speed, while minor linguistic errors can be disregarded. Where adherence to standard linguistic norms is required, asynchronous communication tools or more formal genres, such as essays and extended delayed responses, may be employed, since these formats allow for revision and editing. It is therefore important to explain to learners that online chat represents a form of written communication that shares many characteristics with spoken discourse, whereas, for example, a blog post constitutes a distinct written genre governed by substantially different linguistic, stylistic, and structural requirements.

Fourth, foreign-language online written interaction is characterized by the incorporation of specialized symbols, emojis, images, and memes into the communicative process. These elements function as specific units of cultural and contextual information and contribute additional emotional and pragmatic meaning. They also make it possible to represent certain intonational characteristics of written utterances. The absence of conventional paralinguistic resources, such as gestures, facial expressions, tone and timbre of voice, creates an informational gap that is compensated for by graphic elements indicating the intended tone of a written message. With the widespread adoption of artificial intelligence technologies and their integration into foreign-language teaching methodology, the nature of written interaction itself is undergoing significant transformation. In traditional approaches to writing instruction, as established above, writing is more frequently regarded as a product, with the final text being assessed primarily according

to criteria such as grammatical accuracy and structural organization [2]. In interaction with a chatbot, however, written production increasingly functions as a dynamic process of meaning construction.

Conclusion. Thus, foreign-language written interaction is understood as an active process of exchanging written messages with a chatbot that requires learners to take into consideration the communicative situation, the role and characteristics of the addressee, the communicative purpose of the utterance, and its sociocultural context. Acting as an interlocutor or recipient, the chatbot enables students to practise dialogic communication in written form, discuss contemporary issues, substantiate and defend their viewpoints, formulate questions, and respond appropriately to the interlocutor's contributions.

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