

MASTERING ACADEMIC ENGLISH: KEY FEATURES AND LEARNING CHALLENGES*Khalilova Zarnigor Muhammadjon kizi**Fergana State University,
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Abstract: This article analyzes the main features of academic English, how it differs from general English, and the key challenges faced by language learners. Academic English, used in scientific and formal contexts such as presentations, essays, and articles, is defined by complex grammar, an extensive vocabulary, and coherent, logically structured language. Learners often encounter difficulties related to formal style, terminology, passive constructions, complex sentence structures, and writing based on critical thinking. The article examines the causes of these difficulties and explores effective methods for overcoming them. Additionally, it offers recommendations for developing academic writing and speaking skills.

Keywords: academic English, formal style, written speech, passive constructions, critical thinking, terminology.

Academic English is a specific form of language used in scientific and educational contexts, and it differs from conversational or general English in several important ways. The distinctive features of this language include a formal tone, structured and coherent composition, subject-specific advanced vocabulary, and complex syntactic structures. Academic English is often precise and objective, placing great emphasis on coherence, an impersonal approach, and clarity. These characteristics are especially important when writing scientific articles, preparing presentations, and participating in academic discussions.

Academic language is not only content-rich but also demands high levels of linguistic and cognitive effort. It requires learners to process large volumes of complex information and express it in a meaningful and academically appropriate manner. Academic English is especially important for students in higher education institutions, as it serves as a primary means of communication in research and educational processes. Proficiency in this variant of English empowers international students to actively participate in academic discourse and plays a crucial role in their academic achievement. Learning academic English demands not only linguistic abilities but also the effective application of cognitive processes. The following are key characteristics of academic English that learners must understand in order to effectively acquire and use the language:

Academic English requires the use of highly precise and comprehensible subject-specific vocabulary. Technical terms are frequently used, and their correct application is a fundamental part of scientific communication. The appropriate use of vocabulary is essential for enabling learners to articulate clear and accurate ideas within their respective fields. Therefore, acquiring a wide-ranging vocabulary is a crucial factor in both understanding and producing academic texts.

Written texts in academic English are generally longer and more structurally complex than spoken language. These sentences often utilize advanced grammatical forms such as passive constructions, embedded clauses, and nominalization (converting verbs into nouns). These complex structures are often used to express abstract ideas clearly and precisely. Learners must not only be able to comprehend these structures but also apply them effectively in their own writing.

The correct use of discourse markers is also important in academic texts. Discourse markers are words and phrases used to organize arguments, connect ideas, and maintain coherence throughout the

text. Expressions such as “therefore”, “however”, “on the contrary”, and “as a result” are frequently found in academic writing. Mastery of these expressions allows learners to convey their thoughts clearly and logically.

Academic English also demands a formal and objective tone, in which personal references and informal expressions are typically avoided. This demands that students express themselves directly, clearly, and in a scholarly manner. Adapting to the formal tone is essential for the development of a suitable academic writing style, as it is a primary expectation in academic environments. Abbreviations and informal phrases are rarely used in academic texts. Academic English, particularly in scientific and philosophical writing, often centers on abstract concepts. The level of abstraction is evident in the expression of complex scientific ideas and theoretical frameworks. Furthermore, objectivity is of critical importance, and personal opinions or emotions are generally avoided except in reflective or evaluative tasks, where personal viewpoints may be introduced.

Mastering these core characteristics of academic English requires students to engage in deep analysis, maintain a high level of focus, and apply advanced cognitive abilities. This process calls for the integrated development of both language skills and critical thinking, which together contribute to academic success.

Academic English and general English are two distinct forms of the language, each with its own objectives and skill requirements for learners. General English is primarily used in everyday communication, such as ordering food, asking for directions, or making social plans. It focuses on developing basic language abilities relevant to common, real-life situations. In contrast, academic English is used in scientific and educational contexts and demands more advanced skills, including the expression of complex ideas, presentation of evidence, and participation in scholarly discussions.

Foreign language learners often face two major challenges when learning academic English. First, they must master the linguistic rules of general English, as these form the foundation for overall language competence. Second, they need to understand and adapt to the complexity of academic discourse. Since the conventions and rules of academic English differ significantly from those of everyday communication, students must be thoroughly prepared to interact successfully in academic settings.

As a result, acquiring academic English requires not only the development of general language skills, but also the ability to adapt to the norms of academic writing and speaking. Furthermore, it calls for the enhancement of complex cognitive abilities necessary for engaging in scientific discourse.

In conclusion, academic English is considerably more complex and demanding than general or conversational English. Its key features formal tone, precise and logical expression, use of scientific terminology, passive constructions, and critical thinking-based statements can present significant challenges for learners. This is particularly true for students who are learning English as a second language, as they often struggle with structuring coherent academic arguments, using the appropriate vocabulary, and constructing grammatically accurate sentences. Nevertheless, with an effective approach and sustained practice, it is possible to overcome these challenges. Regular reading of academic texts, studying word formation and collocations, and practicing both written and spoken academic expression are crucial strategies for improving academic language skills. Thus, mastering academic English is not only essential for success in scholarly activities, but also plays a key role in becoming competitive in the global academic and professional arena.

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