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RESEARCH ON THE OUTCOMES OF THE ACADEMIC ENGLISH LANGUAGE PROGRAM/ON THE EXAMPLE OF STUDENTS ENROLLED IN THE LAW PROGRAM/

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Abstract: The purpose of this study is to identify the changes in learners' knowledge, skills, and level of application within the framework of Academic English instruction, and to evaluate the effectiveness of the training. To achieve this, the study aims to examine learners' self-assessment, perceptions of the quality of instruction, challenges encountered, and future needs. In doing so, the research is significant in providing an objective evaluation of the quality of Academic English instruction, supporting the implementation of an outcome-based education approach, and contributing to the improvement of language policy in higher education institutions.

Keywords: Academic English, course learning outcome, English skills, critical thinking, academic vocabulary.

Introduction

In today's era of globalization, digital transformation, and rapidly expanding international academic collaboration, English has become not only a means of communication but also one of the principal languages for creating, disseminating, and exchanging knowledge. Particularly in higher education, proficiency in Academic English has become a key factor directly associated with students' academic achievement, research capacity, and competitiveness at the international level. Under these circumstances, the need to scientifically evaluate the quality of Academic English instruction and its impact on learning outcomes has become increasingly important.

Academic English differs significantly from everyday communicative English, as it encompasses higher-order cognitive and linguistic skills such as reading research articles, developing critical thinking, producing academic writing, and delivering professional presentations within specialized fields. Therefore, the objective of Academic English courses extends beyond teaching grammar and vocabulary; it is aimed at equipping learners with the

competencies necessary to participate effectively in academic environments.

According to John Flowerdew and Matthew Peacock (2001), Academic English is defined as a form of language intended to support learners in their studies and research activities.¹

According to Andy Gillett and Liz Wray (2006), the role of teachers who teach Academic English is to identify learners' needs within academic contexts and assist them in achieving better academic performance. They further regarded Academic English as a practical branch of English language teaching methodology.² However, the actual effectiveness of instruction depends on multiple factors, including the curriculum content, teaching methodology, assessment system, and the level of learner participation.

Learning outcomes refer to the changes demonstrated in learners' knowledge, skills, attitudes, and practical application abilities following a particular course or educational program. In evaluating the quality of education, learning outcomes are regarded as one of the most important indicators, as they provide the basis for determining whether the objectives of a course or program have been successfully achieved. Therefore, systematically examining students' actual progress, self-assessment, and perceptions regarding the effectiveness of Academic English instruction is of significant importance for educational quality assurance.

Although Academic English instruction has been expanding within higher education institutions in Mongolia, studies evaluating its effectiveness remain relatively limited. In most cases, assessment is primarily based on language proficiency tests and scores, while qualitative indicators such as learners' experiences, attitudes, and practical language application skills are insufficiently reflected. This limits the ability to comprehensively determine the actual outcomes of instruction.

Accordingly, studying the evaluation of Academic English learning outcomes possesses both theoretical and practical significance. From a theoretical perspective, it provides an opportunity to connect the concept of learning outcome assessment with Academic English instruction. From a practical perspective, it offers foundational information for improving curricula, teaching methodologies, and assessment systems, while also supporting the development of learner-centered educational policies.

Furthermore, Academic English instruction enables students to develop the ability to read, comprehend, compare, and critically evaluate international academic articles, judicial

¹ Flowerdew, J and Peacock, M (2001). *Research Perspectives on English for Academic Purposes*. Cambridge University Press

² Hyland, K. (2006). *English for Academic Purposes: An Advanced Resource Book*.

decisions, and legal sources. Through the development of critical thinking, students become capable not merely of passively receiving information, but of conducting evidence-based analysis, explaining issues logically, and expressing their own viewpoints in an academic manner. This positively contributes to essential professional competencies such as resolving legal disputes, conducting case analysis, and carrying out legal research.

Therefore, it can be concluded that Academic English programs designed for law students are important not only for developing language proficiency, but also for fostering critical thinking, research methodology, and professional communication skills.

The purpose of this study is to identify the changes in learners' knowledge, skills, and practical application abilities within the framework of Academic English instruction and to evaluate the effectiveness of the training program. To achieve this objective, the study aims to examine learners' self-assessment, perceptions of instructional quality, challenges encountered during the learning process, and their future academic needs.

Through this research, it is expected that a more objective evaluation of the quality of Academic English instruction can be achieved, contributing to the implementation of an outcomes-based education approach and to the further improvement of language policies in higher education institutions.

For Shihihutug University, the necessity of implementing an Academic English program may be understood within the framework of several state policy documents. For instance, the "Human Development" and "Education" sections of Vision-2050 emphasize the goal of developing Mongolian citizens who are competitive at the international level, advancing foreign language education in line with developments in international relations, science, and technology, and preparing human resources proficient in English and other widely used foreign languages.

Similarly, Sustainable Development Concept-2030 highlights the importance of training professionals with English language proficiency and supporting human resources capable of working in international business and innovation environments. Furthermore, the Law on Higher Education provides for the implementation of international joint programs, the conduct of education and research in English, the promotion of international accreditation and academic mobility, and the expansion of English language usage in order to elevate research outputs and academic programs to the international level.

In recent years, most higher education institutions in Mongolia have begun introducing and implementing Academic English programs within their curricula. This development has become an essential requirement in contemporary society. In fact, reports examining the future

of international education indicate that employers increasingly emphasize the following competencies among graduates:

1. Communication skills
2. Problem-solving skills
3. Innovation and creativity
4. Professional competence

These competencies are particularly emphasized in contemporary educational and employment studies. From the perspective of labor market demands and employer expectations, there is an increasing need for highly qualified professionals who are capable of speaking and writing fluently in one or more foreign languages. Moreover, with the globalization of higher education and the growing number of students pursuing studies abroad in recent years, there has emerged a strong necessity for universities to implement Academic English programs. Such programs are essential not only for equipping learners with the competencies expected by employers, but also for enabling students to achieve sufficient scores on international language proficiency examinations such as IELTS and TOEFL for overseas study opportunities.

Particularly within the field of law, professionals require not only language proficiency but also advanced academic competencies, including the ability to analyze legal phenomena and relationships, draw conclusions, conduct case analysis, formulate legal opinions and recommendations, make decisions on legal issues, and draft legal documents. Therefore, the implementation of Academic English programs has become increasingly necessary in response to the evolving demands of society and the professional requirements of the legal sector.³

Materials and Research Methodology

Since the 2018-2019 academic year, we have been implementing an Academic English program with the objective of preparing law professionals with English language proficiency. The present study was conducted with the aim of analyzing the outcomes of this program. In this research, observation, synthesis, analytical methods, and quantitative research approaches were primarily employed.

The Academic English course is offered during the first and second semesters, comprising a total of 96 instructional hours or 3 credit hours. The participants of this study consisted of 57 graduating students who had completed the Academic English course three

³ “Research on the Implementation of the Academic English Language Program.” Proceedings of the Scientific Conference of University of the Humanities, 2019, Ulaanbaatar.

years earlier. Data were collected through a questionnaire administered via Google Forms, consisting of 14 closed-ended questions and 3 open-ended questions.⁴

The findings of this study indicate that the Academic English program had a positive impact on learners' academic language proficiency, foundational research skills, and overall satisfaction with the course. The majority of respondents provided evaluations such as "good," "very good," or "strongly agree," which demonstrates the effectiveness and benefits of the program.

The survey questionnaire results may be presented in a consolidated table as follows:

Figure 1. Results of the Evaluation of the Academic English Program

Academic Skills Assessment	Good – Very Good
Ability to read and understand academic texts improved	66%
Ability to identify key ideas during seminars and discussions improved	64%
Ability to identify the main idea and author's viewpoint in reading and writing improved	60%
Ability to use academic vocabulary in speaking and writing improved	56%
Academic writing skills improved	50%
Ability to use international citation standards (APA, MLA, etc.) improved	50%
Ability to use coherence and cohesion between paragraphs improved	49%

Figure 2. Results of the Evaluation of Course Organization and the Learning Environment

Evaluation of Course Organization and Learning Environment	Strongly Agree
Assignments were effective for learning	71%
This course is necessary for future professional work	71%
The learning environment was adequate	68%
The course content met my needs	61%
The teaching methodology was effective	60%

According to the results of the academic skills assessment, the highest-rated indicator was "Improvement in the ability to read academic texts," with 66 percent of respondents providing positive evaluations of "good" or "very good." This finding suggests that learners

⁴ The research questionnaire is attached.

made measurable progress in their ability to read English-language research materials and comprehend key ideas.

In addition, the indicator “Increased confidence in expressing opinions with justification and participating in discussions during seminars” received a positive evaluation of 64 percent, indicating improvement in learners’ communication, presentation, and critical thinking skills. Furthermore, “The ability to critically analyze implicit meanings and the author’s viewpoints in reading texts” received a positive evaluation of 60 percent, while “The ability to prepare and deliver presentations in English” was evaluated positively by 58 percent of respondents, and “The ability to use academic vocabulary in spoken and written communication” received 56 percent positive responses. These findings demonstrate that learners’ academic language competencies developed to an above-average level.

However, several indicators related to academic writing skills received comparatively lower evaluations. Specifically, “The ability to write academic essays with appropriate structure” and “The ability to use international citation standards (APA, MLA) and avoid plagiarism” each received 50 percent positive evaluations, while “The ability to improve coherence and cohesion between paragraphs using connectors and transitions” received a 49 percent evaluation. These results indicate that learners still require further development in advanced academic writing skills, citation practices, and the ability to produce logically coherent written texts. Therefore, it may be necessary to strengthen instruction related to academic writing exercises, source utilization, and citation methodology in future Academic English courses.

The evaluation of course organization and the learning environment also demonstrated a high level of learner satisfaction. The indicators “Assignments were effective for learning” and “This course will be useful for future studies and professional work” received the highest ratings, with 71 percent of respondents selecting “strongly agree.” This suggests that both the course content and assignments possessed not only theoretical value but also practical significance. Moreover, “The learning environment was adequate” received a positive evaluation of 68 percent, “The course content met learners’ needs” received 61 percent, and “The teaching methodology was effective” received 60 percent. These findings indicate that students generally evaluated the learning environment, instructional materials, and teaching methods positively.

Overall, the findings of this study suggest that the Academic English program had a positive impact on learners’ general academic competencies. Nevertheless, several issues requiring further attention and improvement were also identified.

Conclusion

Overall, it can be concluded that the Academic English program has been effectively implemented in developing learners' language knowledge and skills. The findings of the study demonstrate that students achieved progress in academic reading, writing, listening, and presentation skills, while also improving their ability to utilize professional English-language sources, conduct research, and communicate effectively within academic settings. Furthermore, the program content, teaching methodology, and instructional materials were found to be relatively consistent with learners' needs and educational objectives, thereby enhancing the effectiveness of instruction. Accordingly, the Academic English program may be regarded as making a significant contribution to students' academic and professional development.

In other words, the Academic English program has shown measurable effectiveness in developing learners' reading, listening, presentation, and critical thinking skills. In addition, students highly evaluated the course content, methodology, and practical significance of the program, which further confirms its necessity and effectiveness. Nevertheless, the findings also indicate the need for additional support and methodological improvements in areas such as academic writing structure, citation practices, and text cohesion. More specifically, while the program positively contributed to the development of reading, debating, and presentation skills, there remains a need to further strengthen advanced academic writing skills, citation methodology, note-taking abilities, and the practical use of academic vocabulary.

Studying Academic English provides law students with opportunities to understand and analyze international legal sources, academic publications, treaties, conventions, and judicial practices in their original language. At the same time, it contributes to the development of analytical reasoning, comparative evaluation, evidence-based argumentation, and critical thinking skills. Therefore, it may be necessary to increase the number of semesters devoted to Academic English instruction in the future.

Moreover, enhancing the teaching methodology through more practice-oriented and progressively structured instruction, combined with continuous academic guidance and consultation for learners, would play an important role in improving the overall effectiveness of the program.

Issues Requiring Further Attention

First, there is a need to strengthen the teaching of academic writing by incorporating more practice-based exercises, analyzing model essays, and providing regular written feedback.

Second, listening comprehension and note-taking skills should be specifically developed through the use of authentic lectures, TED Talks, and group discussions that reflect real-life academic contexts.

Third, the methodology for consistently applying legal and research-oriented academic vocabulary in both written and spoken communication may currently be insufficient. To improve this aspect, it would be effective to adopt application-based approaches focusing on academic vocabulary usage, presentations, and discussions.

Fourth, with regard to teaching methodology, it may be necessary to increase the use of differentiated assignments based on learners' proficiency levels, as well as more interactive and learner-centered instructional approaches.

Fifth, the research findings indicate that students highly valued the practical significance of the course. The indicators "Assignments were effective for learning" and "This course will be useful for future studies and professional work" received comparatively the highest evaluations, thereby confirming the necessity and importance of the program. However, in line with these high expectations, there is a need to more systematically develop learners' practical academic writing and research skills.

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7. Vision-2050.
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Appendix

SURVEY ON THE EFFECTIVENESS OF ACADEMIC ENGLISH

This questionnaire aims to evaluate the outcomes of Academic English instruction, learners' progress in language proficiency, and the effectiveness of the course content and teaching methodology. The information you provide will be used solely for research purposes. Please evaluate the following questions on a scale of 1–5. (1 = Very Poor, 5 = Very Good)

1. My ability to read academic texts has improved. (I am now able to read English-language research materials and fully understand the main ideas.)
2. I am able to critically analyze the implicit meaning, author's perspective, and conclusions of the texts I read.
3. My academic writing skills have improved. (I can write academic essays with a logical structure consisting of an introduction, body, and conclusion.)
4. I can correctly use connectors and transitions to improve coherence between paragraphs.
5. I have improved my ability to listen to lectures and presentations in English and effectively take notes.
6. I am able to prepare and deliver presentations in English on specific topics.
7. During seminars and discussions, my confidence in expressing my opinions with justification and engaging in debate has increased.
8. I am able to use academic vocabulary appropriately in both spoken and written communication.
9. I am able to use international citation standards (APA, MLA) in academic work and avoid plagiarism.

Please evaluate the following statements on a scale of 1–5. (1 = Strongly Disagree, 5 = Strongly Agree)

1. The course content met my needs.
2. The teaching methodology was effective.
3. The assignments were effective for learning.
4. The learning environment was adequate.
(Books, learning materials, resources, etc.)
5. I believe this course will be useful for my future studies and professional work.

Please write your comments regarding how this course influenced your English language knowledge and skills, and what aspects should be improved in the future.

1. What was the most important outcome (skill or knowledge) you gained from the Academic English course?
2. What was the main difficulty you encountered during the course?
3. Please provide any suggestions for improving the program.

Thank you for taking the time to answer this questionnaire honestly and accurately.

