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The University Students' Academic Writings: Conformity to Standards and Deficiencies

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Abstract

The present study aims at detecting the linguistic anomalies found in the university students' academic writing genres. Satisfying the linguistic requirements of the target academic writing genre necessitates a high linguistic competence that meets the standards set up by the community of practice. However, many students' writings signaled the existence of different linguistic impediments that minimized the quality of their academic writing performance. To investigate what sorts of linguistic impediments exist in the university students' academic writings, a qualitative study was conducted at the department of English at the faculty of arts and languages in El-Oued university during the academic year 2020/2021. A corpus Analysis of three academic writing genres was conducted. The corpus consists of 50 cause and effect essays composed by students as an assignment in the written expression module, two research proposals as well as four master theses discussed in June 2021. Results reveal that students' writings were subject to several kinds of breach of the linguistic laws and standards. Lexically, the use of attitudinal words and fillers, common words instead specialized ones was detected. Grammatically, failure to use nominal compounds to avoid long complex sentences, the overuse of personal reference, inappropriate use of tenses were detected. In addition, the lack of respect of scientific writing in research proposals and the theses was marked. Consequently, the low level of style of the language utilized has negatively affected the language precision required in academic research. The study ends up with recommendations to draw the students' attention to the importance of academic writing for the success of their university study. Suggestions were made to organize regular study days for students to clarify the academic writings' standards and norms.

Keywords: Academic Writing; Academic Genres; Linguistics Standards; Scientific Writing.