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Developing a Competence-Based Framework for Fostering Advanced EFL Learners' Academic Writing Proficiency

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Abstract

This study developed and evaluated a competence-based framework (CBF) for teaching academic writing to advanced English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learners. The framework uniquely integrated Byram's intercultural competence theory and Lei's sociocultural strategies to address learners' multifaceted challenges. Initial interviews with 30 advanced Iranian learners identified major difficulties: grammar/syntax (83.33%), vocabulary limitations (73.33%), unfamiliarity with English academic conventions (80%), limited practice (86.67%), and psychological factors (70%). Guided by these insights, the developed CBM was tested using a quasi-experimental design. Sixty learners were divided into experimental and control groups. The experimental group received CBF instruction, while the control group followed standard methods. Pre- and post-intervention argumentative essays were assessed using Jacobs' rubric. Statistical analysis showed the experimental group achieved statistically significant improvements across all writing components (Grammar, Vocabulary, Organization, Content, Style), with a large effect size ($\eta^2 = 0.548$) and high observed power (0.999). Post-intervention interviews revealed participants perceived increased writing confidence, better intercultural interaction, and enhanced cultural awareness. However, implementation challenges, such as learner resistance, insufficient educator training, and resource constraints, were noted. The study concludes that a CBF explicitly integrating intercultural and sociocultural dimensions effectively enhances the academic writing skills of advanced EFL learners, promoting both learner autonomy and intercultural competence. Successful adoption, however, necessitates addressing the identified practical barriers of teacher preparation and resource availability.

1. INTRODUCTION

Academic writing constitutes a critical competency essential for the success of students within higher education, particularly in contexts where English is learned as a foreign language (EFL) (Yolande & Ngwa, 2024). As global demand for higher education escalates, EFL students

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encounter considerable obstacles in cultivating the linguistic, rhetorical, and strategic skills requisite for producing high-quality academic discourse (Saint, 2021). Despite the increasing acknowledgment of this significance, a notable deficiency persists in the establishment of pedagogical frameworks that effectively assist advanced EFL learners in attaining proficiency. The prevailing condition of EFL academic writing instruction is frequently marked by a lack of coherence and consistency, with numerous courses predominantly emphasizing technical dimensions, such as grammar and sentence construction, while neglecting to equip students with the metacognitive, strategic, and sociocultural competencies essential for addressing the intricate demands of academic writing (Ghadessy, 2001; Hirvela, 2004).

There is a pressing need for a pedagogical model that transcends these technical limitations to address the cognitive, metacognitive, and social dimensions of writing (Yolande & Ngwa, 2024). Academic writing is a complex, multifaceted skill requiring students to draw on a vast array of resources to produce effective texts. Yet, in the existing literature, while various studies have addressed isolated linguistic or cognitive aspects, there remains a scarcity of comprehensive, implementable structures that integrate intercultural and sociocultural dimensions into a cohesive instructional design (Moradi Koochi et al., 2022). Current frameworks often fail to bridge the gap between theoretical competence models and the practical realities of the EFL classroom.

To address this gap, the present study proposes a Competence-Based Framework. Defined herein as an implementable structure that organizes and connects theoretical principles, instructional strategies, and assessment techniques, a framework provides the practical architecture necessary for curriculum design and classroom delivery (Moradi Koochi et al., 2022). Unlike a purely theoretical model, which offers a conceptual representation, the proposed framework is designed to be flexible and adaptable to various EFL contexts, facilitating the development of the skills and knowledge necessary for academic success.

Specifically, the purpose of this study is to investigate the challenges faced by advanced English language learners in academic writing within the context of an English-medium major. Furthermore, the study aims to explore how Byram's theory of Intercultural Communicative Competence and Lei's sociocultural strategies can be integrated into this Competence-Based Framework to enhance learners' writing skills. Additionally, this research seeks to assess the extent to which the implementation of this framework results in statistically significant improvements in academic writing proficiency, while identifying the potential benefits and challenges associated with its execution. Consequently, the following research questions are posed:

Q1. What are the key challenges faced by advanced English language learners in academic writing within the context of an English-medium major?

Q2. How can Byram's theory of Intercultural Communicative Competence and Lei's sociocultural strategies be integrated into a Competence-Based Framework to enhance the advanced EFL learners' academic writing skills?

Q3. To what extent has the implementation of the Competence-Based Framework shown any statistically significant improvement in the academic writing skills of advanced EFL learners?

The significance of this study is multifaceted, benefiting curriculum designers who require structured, theoretically grounded approaches to advanced writing instruction and EFL instructors seeking practical strategies to enhance student engagement. Ultimately, this research offers advanced EFL learners a pedagogical pathway that addresses not only linguistic accuracy but also the cultural and strategic competencies necessary for success in global academic discourse.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Challenges in Academic Writing for EFL Learners

Academic writing is consistently recognized as one of the most demanding domains for EFL learners, particularly at advanced levels. This difficulty is evident in various contexts; for instance, Al Fadda (2012) highlights that postgraduate students at King Saud University struggle with coherence, appropriate style, and argumentation, despite their high proficiency levels. These challenges are pervasive, as confirmed by Al-Khairy (2013) and Al Mubarak (2017), who note persistent problems with grammar, vocabulary, and genre-specific conventions among students in Saudi and Sudanese contexts. The interplay of linguistic, cognitive, and affective factors significantly hinders academic writing performance. Central to these linguistic barriers is grammar; Afkhami Nia and Nassirzadeh (2022) emphasize that without a solid grasp of grammatical structures, learners struggle to construct accurate and coherent academic prose. These documented challenges underscore the critical need for targeted pedagogical interventions to develop academic writing proficiency.

Competence-Based Approaches to Writing Instruction

In response to these persistent challenges, researchers have advocated for competence-based approaches as a promising pedagogical shift. While Auerbach (1986) posed early critical questions about competency-based education (CBE) in English as a Second Language (ESL), cautioning against overly narrow skill training, more recent studies demonstrate that well-designed competence-based models can foster broader academic capabilities. Scholars such as Boboyorov (2024) and Djabbarova (2021) argue that competence-oriented instruction emphasizes integrating knowledge, attitudes, and skills necessary for real-world communication. This approach is particularly relevant for academic writing, as it moves beyond isolated skills. Amidyevna (2022) highlights the importance of distinguishing sub-competencies, such as grammatical, sociolinguistic, and discourse competencies, in designing effective curricula. Begibaeva (2020) specifically explores how a competence-based approach can enhance students' abilities in the key stages of writing: planning, drafting, revising, and reflecting. Collectively, this body of work suggests that a structured competence-based framework holds significant potential for systematically addressing the multifaceted nature of advanced academic writing.

Integrating Intercultural and Digital Competence

For advanced EFL learners, modern academic writing competence must extend beyond core linguistic and genre-specific skills to include intercultural and digital dimensions. Byram's (1997) influential work on Intercultural Communicative Competence (ICC) is pivotal here; it argues that advanced learners must navigate diverse cultural perspectives embedded in academic discourse. This is supported by Ahmed (2022) and Berardo & Deardorff (2012), who stress that fostering intercultural awareness prepares students to participate in global academic communities. Furthermore, contemporary competence frameworks increasingly acknowledge digital literacy; for example, Cambridge English (2023) highlights the role of mediation skills relevant for collaborative academic tasks. Therefore, a comprehensive framework for academic writing proficiency must integrate these dimensions to prepare learners for the demands of international scholarly communication. Collectively, these perspectives underscore that intercultural competence is not merely an optional add-on but a fundamental requirement for effective communication in the globalized landscape of modern academia.

Previous Research on the Related Frameworks

A review of previous research conducted within influential frameworks provides critical insights for model development. Studies utilizing Byram's theory (1997) demonstrate its applicability to writing instruction. For instance, Noviyanti (2024) investigated an ICC-based learning framework for EFL in Islamic higher education that integrates values, intercultural awareness, and communication skills. This aligns with the need to view writing as a culturally situated practice. Complementing this, the socio-cultural perspective on writing strategies, as advanced by Lei (2016) and Lei and Pan (2019) offers a vital lens.

Noviyanti (2024) investigated the feasibility of creating a learning model centered on ICC for EFL instruction within Islamic higher education institutions. Utilizing a review of existing scholarship in EFL pedagogy, intercultural communication, and Islamic education, the research proposes a conceptual framework for this model. The framework underscores the necessity of integrating Islamic values and principles with EFL teaching to enhance students' intercultural awareness, respectful communication abilities, and critical thinking skills. Through an examination of pertinent literature, the study delineates essential components and educational activities that may be integrated into the ICC-based framework. These components encompass strategies for enhancing self-awareness, cultivating intercultural understanding, and refining practical communication skills within an EFL context. This conceptual inquiry advances the discipline by establishing a foundational basis for a more holistic ICC-based learning framework specifically designed for Islamic higher education institutions.

In light of the criticism over the cognitive approach to L2 writing strategies, the socio-cultural perspective is increasingly called for. The socio-cultural theory provides a new perspective to understand the relationship between human beings and the cultural, historical, and educational backgrounds where we live (Li, 2014). Unlike the traditional writing strategies research focusing on internal cognitive mechanisms, this socio-cultural approach emphasizes the dialectical relationship between cognition and socio-cultural context and the mediating role of resources in strategy use (Lei & Pan, 2019).

The socio-cultural perspective on L2 writing strategy holds that there is a dialectical relationship between cognition and environment (Vygotsky, 1978). The traditional cognitive approach highlights cognition, but a person-in-context perspective is better able to unveil the relationship between cognitive development and social environment (Lei, 2016). As Lei argues, the inclusion of the macro, meso, and micro factors could offer a holistic picture of the use of writing strategies.

This approach moves beyond a purely cognitive focus to emphasize the dialectical relationship between the writer’s cognition and their socio-cultural context, including macro, meso, and micro factors. It highlights the mediating role of resources in strategy use, which is essential for designing a holistic pedagogical framework. Together, these related frameworks underscore that fostering advanced writing proficiency requires attention not only to individual competencies but also to the contextual and intercultural dynamics of academic communication.

3. METHODOLOGY

Research Design

This study employed a sequential explanatory mixed-methods design, integrating quantitative and qualitative approaches. The primary phase used a quasi-experimental pre-test/post-test design to statistically measure the impact of a pedagogical intervention on academic writing. The subsequent

qualitative phase utilized semi-structured interviews to provide explanatory depth to the quantitative results and gather participant feedback.

Participants

Two cohorts of advanced EFL learners (N=90) were recruited from a private language institute in Tehran, Iran. The first cohort (n=30) participated in initial needs-analysis interviews. A second cohort (n=60) was randomly assigned to either an experimental group (n=30), which received the competence-based writing intervention, or a control group (n=30), which received traditional instruction. These participants, comprising both male and female learners aged 24-45 Years old, enrolled in advanced academic writing courses and were pursuing either master's or doctoral degrees.

Instruments and Materials

Four primary instruments were utilized to ensure methodological rigor and comprehensive data collection.

Oxford Quick Placement Test (OQPT): A standardized 60-item test assessing grammar, vocabulary, and reading was administered as a screening tool. It confirmed all participants possessed a comparable advanced proficiency level (C1/C2 on the CEFR), establishing a homogeneous baseline and controlling for initial language ability as a confounding variable in the experimental comparison. The reliability of the OQPT has been well established in previous research, with studies reporting high internal consistency and test-retest reliability (e.g., Allan, 2004; Geranpayeh & Taylor, 2013).

Semi-structured Interview Protocols: The purpose of the interview was to investigate the primary challenges encountered by advanced EFL learners in the realm of academic writing, specifically within English-medium disciplines. This qualitative study involved all 60 participants, yielding valuable insights into the obstacles they faced in the production of academic texts. The interview protocol was developed based on an extensive review of the literature regarding EFL writing difficulties (e.g., Al Fadda, 2012) and the theoretical components of the competence-based framework. The questions were designed to elicit responses regarding six core areas identified in the literature: language proficiency, cultural conventions, writing practice, feedback mechanisms, organizational skills, and psychological factors. The semi-structured format of the interview facilitated a degree of flexibility in participant responses while ensuring that essential areas of concern were systematically addressed (see Appendix A for the full interview protocol). To ensure the validity and trustworthiness of the findings, data saturation was monitored throughout the interview process. Interviews were conducted and transcribed iteratively; data collection continued until no new themes or codes emerged from the data, indicating that saturation had been reached and a comprehensive understanding of the challenges had been achieved.

Two distinct protocols guided qualitative data collection. The first, administered to the initial cohort, served as a needs analysis, exploring challenges in areas such as argument development, source integration, cultural influences, and feedback efficacy. The second protocol, administered post-intervention to the experimental group, evaluated perceptions of the model’s effectiveness, its impact on confidence and organization, and specific areas for improvement. Both protocols allowed for probing follow-up questions.

Academic Writing Task: This performance-based instrument required participants to compose a 500–600-word argumentative essay on a discipline-relevant topic (e.g., technology in education). The task was structured to mirror authentic academic processes, incorporating

dedicated planning, drafting, and revising phases. It served as the core pre-test and post-test measure to capture tangible changes in writing proficiency.

Jacobs' Analytical Scoring Rubric: This validated rubric provided the framework for the objective, criterion-referenced evaluation of all writing tasks. It enabled precise scoring across five key dimensions of academic writing: grammar (accuracy and complexity), vocabulary (range and precision), organization (coherence and structure), content (relevance and development), and style (tone and fluency). Each criterion was scored on a detailed 5-point scale, generating reliable quantitative data for statistical analysis. Ensuring inter-rater reliability was rigorously established before the main scoring process.

Procedure

The study followed a rigorous, multi-stage procedure to ensure the validity and replicability of the research.

1. Participant Recruitment and Proficiency Screening

Initially, a convenience sample of advanced EFL learners was recruited from a private language institute in Tehran, Iran. To ensure homogeneity and control for initial language ability, the Oxford Quick Placement Test (OQPT) was administered as the first step. Only participants scoring at the C1/C2 level on the CEFR were selected for the study. Before participation, all individuals were provided with an informed consent form detailing the study's aims and their rights. Strict confidentiality protocols were established; participants were assigned unique identification codes (e.g., S1, S2) to anonymize all data, and audio recordings were stored securely on password-protected devices.

2. Needs Analysis Interviews (Qualitative Phase)

Following the screening, the first cohort (n=30) participated in semi-structured interviews designed to conduct a needs analysis. These interviews investigated the primary challenges learners face in academic writing within English-medium disciplines. The interviews were audio-recorded with permission, transcribed verbatim, and subjected to thematic analysis. The insights gained from this phase directly informed the development of the Competence-Based Framework.

3. Random Assignment and Pre-test Administration

A second cohort of learners (n=60), who met the same proficiency criteria, was recruited for the quasi-experimental phase. These participants were randomly assigned to either an experimental group (n=30) or a control group (n=30). Subsequently, a pre-test was administered to both groups. This consisted of a standardized academic writing task requiring participants to compose a 500–600-word argumentative essay. The essays were collected and scored using Jacobs' Analytical Scoring Rubric to establish a baseline for comparison.

4. Instructional Intervention

The treatment phase involved distinct instructional approaches for each group throughout the semester. The experimental group received instruction based on the newly developed Competence-Based Framework, which integrated linguistic, intercultural, and sociocultural strategies. Simultaneously, the control group received traditional instruction, focusing primarily on grammar rules and standard writing mechanics without the integrated framework components.

5. Post-test Administration

At the conclusion of the instructional period, a post-test was administered to both groups. This involved a second argumentative writing task comparable in difficulty and topic to the pre-test. The essays were again scored using Jacobs' Rubric to measure any changes in writing proficiency.

6. Post-intervention Interviews

After the post-test, semi-structured interviews were conducted specifically with the experimental group. These interviews sought to evaluate participants' perceptions of the Competence-Based Framework, its impact on their confidence and writing strategies, and any challenges they faced during the implementation.

7. Integrated Data Analysis

In the final stage, the data were analyzed to answer the research questions. The quantitative data from the pre-tests and post-tests were analyzed using statistical tests (MANCOVA and ANOVA tests) to determine the significance of the intervention. Concurrently, qualitative data from the interview transcripts were analyzed thematically. These two datasets were then integrated to provide a comprehensive explanation of the framework's effectiveness.

4. RESULTS

Result of the First Research Questions

To address the first research question, a thematic analysis was conducted based on interviews with 30 advanced EFL learners. The analysis identified six main themes and several subthemes describing the specific challenges these learners face. To ensure a rigorous thematic analysis, clear coding procedures were established. Following transcription, interview data were systematically reviewed to identify initial codes. These codes were then grouped into potential themes and subthemes. To establish coder reliability, a second researcher independently coded a 30% sample of the data. Discrepancies were discussed until consensus was reached. The final thematic structure, including the six main themes, was derived through this iterative, collaborative analytical process. The frequency and percentage of participants who mentioned each subtheme are presented in Table 1.

Table 1: Themes and Subthemes on Challenges of Advanced EFL Learners in Academic Writing

Themes	Subthemes	Frequency	Percentage
Language Proficiency	Vocabulary limitations	22	73.33%
	Grammar and syntax difficulties	25	83.33%
	Challenges in expressing ideas effectively	20	66.67%
Cultural Differences	Unfamiliarity with academic writing conventions in English-medium contexts	24	80.00%
	Difficulty in adapting to different writing styles and expectations	21	70.00%
Lack of Writing Practice	Insufficient opportunities to practice academic writing skills	26	86.67%
	Limited exposure to various academic writing genres	23	76.67%
Limited Feedback and Guidance	Inadequate feedback from instructors on writing assignments	20	66.67%
	Lack of clear guidelines and expectations for academic writing tasks	18	60.00%
Time Management and Organizational Skills	Difficulty in managing time effectively for writing assignments	19	63.33%
	Challenges in organizing ideas and structuring academic papers	22	73.33%
Psychological and Motivational Factors	Anxiety and lack of confidence in academic writing abilities	21	70.00%
	Difficulty in maintaining motivation and engagement in the writing process	17	56.67%

Figure 1 shows the column chart of themes and subthemes on challenges.

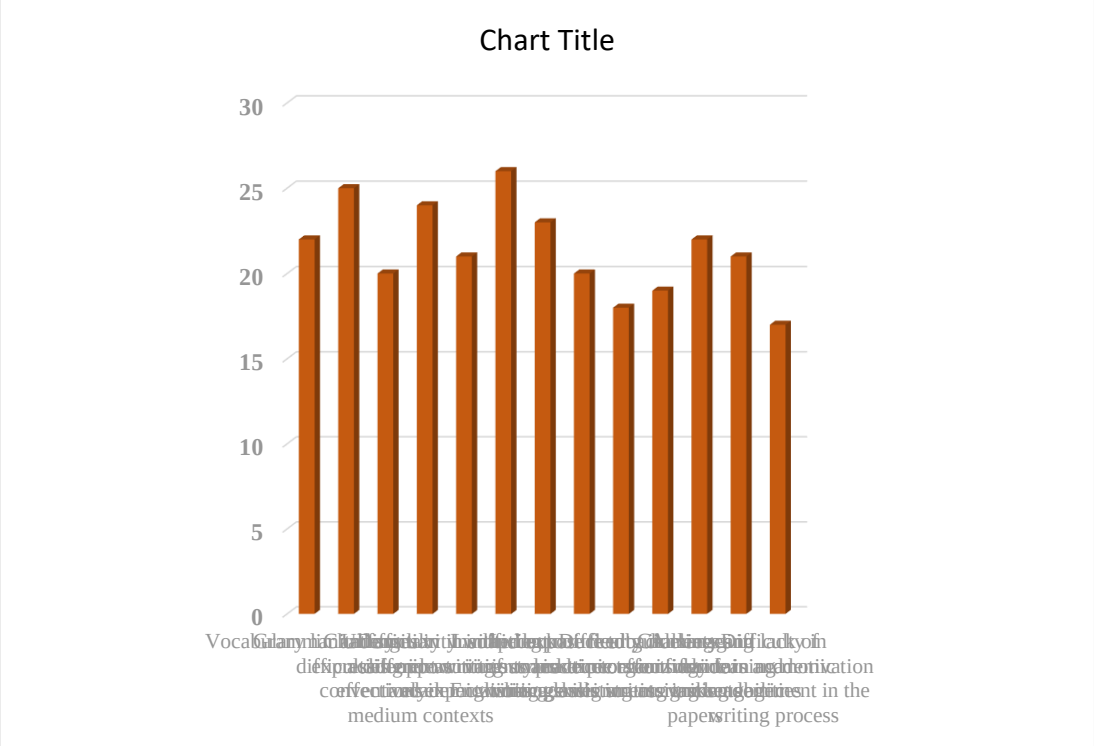


Figure 1: Column Chart of Themes and Subthemes on Challenges

The findings from the 30 interviews reveal that advanced English language learners face a range of challenges in academic writing within English-medium majors. The most significant issues relate to language proficiency, including grammar and syntax difficulties (83.33%) and vocabulary limitations (73.33%). Cultural differences are also a major challenge, with 80% of participants unfamiliar with English academic writing conventions. Lack of writing practice, cited by 86.67%, highlights insufficient opportunities and limited exposure to various academic genres. Additionally, 66.67% of learners expressed dissatisfaction with inadequate feedback and unclear guidelines from instructors. Time management and organizational skills pose difficulties for 63.33% of participants, impacting their ability to structure and complete assignments effectively. Psychological factors, such as anxiety and lack of confidence (70%), further hinder motivation and engagement. Addressing these interconnected challenges through targeted support, feedback, and practice is essential to enhancing learners' academic writing proficiency in English-medium contexts.

Theme 1: Language Proficiency

Advanced English language learners face significant challenges related to language proficiency, which can hinder their ability to produce high-quality academic writing. These challenges primarily revolve around vocabulary limitations, grammar and syntax difficulties, and challenges in expressing ideas effectively. The following subthemes and quotations provide a deeper understanding of these issues, supported by statistical data from the 30 interviews conducted.

Subtheme 1.1: Vocabulary Limitations

Vocabulary limitations were a prevalent issue among the participants, with 22 out of 30 (73.33%) reporting difficulties in finding the right words to express their ideas. This limitation often resulted in simplified and less precise writing, affecting the clarity and depth of their academic work.

- Participant 7: "I know the simple word, but for academic writing, I need a more sophisticated synonym. I spend too much time just searching for one perfect word."
- Participant 12: "My ideas are complex, but my vocabulary is simple. This makes my writing look weak and unconvincing, even if my argument is good."
- Participant 23: "Sometimes I have to completely change my sentence because I don't know the specific term, which can distort my original point."

Subtheme 1.2: Grammar and Syntax Difficulties

Grammar and syntax difficulties were another significant challenge, with 25 out of 30 (83.33%) participants reporting issues with sentence structure, tense usage, and punctuation. These errors often made their writing less coherent and harder to understand.

- Participant 4: "I am never completely sure about my articles (the, *a*, an) or my prepositions. I worry my sentences are technically wrong."
- Participant 18: "Writing long, complex sentences is very risky for me. I often create run-on sentences or fragments when I try to sound more academic."
- Participant 29: "The feedback always mentions verb tense consistency. I struggle to maintain the correct tense throughout a whole paragraph."

Subtheme 1.3: Challenges in Expressing Ideas Effectively

Expressing ideas effectively was a common challenge, with 20 out of 30 (66.67%) participants reporting difficulties in articulating their thoughts clearly and coherently. This challenge was often compounded by vocabulary and grammar issues, leading to frustration and a sense of inadequacy in their writing.

- Participant 9: "My thinking is clear in my mind, but when I write in English, the logical flow gets lost. The connections between my ideas disappear."
- Participant 15: "It feels like I am translating my thoughts from my first language, and the nuance and depth get lost in the process."
- Participant 26: "I can explain my point orally, but writing it down in a structured, formal way is a completely different skill. The ideas become jumbled."

Subtheme 2.1: Unfamiliarity with Academic Writing Conventions

Unfamiliarity with academic writing conventions was a common issue, with 24 out of 30 (80%) participants reporting difficulties in understanding and adhering to the specific norms and standards of academic writing in English. This lack of familiarity often led to confusion and errors in formatting, citation, and overall structure.

- Participant 6: "The concept of 'rhetorical moves' in an introduction was entirely new. In my previous education, we simply stated the topic directly without this strategic framing."
- Participant 11: "I received feedback that my writing was too 'personal' and needed to be more 'objective.' I didn't fully understand what that meant in a practical sense for my arguments."
- Participant 21: "Citation systems like APA are a constant source of stress. The rules feel arbitrary and differ completely from the conventions I learned in my native language."

Subtheme 2.2: Difficulty in Adapting to Different Writing Styles and Expectations

Difficulty in adapting to different writing styles and expectations was another significant challenge, with 21 out of 30 (70%) participants reporting struggles in adjusting to the diverse requirements of various academic disciplines. This challenge often led to inconsistencies in their writing and a lack of confidence in meeting the specific needs of different courses and assignments.

- Participant 8: "What my literature professor praises as 'analytical' is criticized by my sociology professor as 'overly descriptive.' I feel like I am learning a new language for each subject."
- Participant 14: "In science, we learn to be concise and direct. When I took a philosophy course, I was told my writing lacked the necessary 'exploration of nuance' and was too blunt."
- Participant 27: "The expectation of 'critical analysis' is interpreted differently across departments. I struggle to recalibrate my approach and voice for each new discipline."

Theme 3: Lack of Writing Practice

The lack of writing practice is a significant challenge for advanced English learners, particularly in English-medium majors. This theme includes insufficient opportunities to practice academic writing skills and limited exposure to various academic writing genres. The following subthemes and quotations provide a deeper understanding of these issues, supported by statistical data from the 30 interviews conducted.

Subtheme 3.1: Insufficient Opportunities to Practice Academic Writing Skills

Insufficient opportunities to practice academic writing skills were a common issue, with 26 out of 30 (86.67%) participants reporting the lack of structured, frequent writing assignments. This lack of practice often led to a decline in writing proficiency and a reduced ability to apply learned skills consistently.

- Participant 2: "Our courses are often lecture-heavy with only one major paper per semester. There is no chance to practice and improve through smaller, regular assignments."
- Participant 17: "We learn about writing in theory, but without consistent, graded practice, I do not feel my skills are actually developing. It is like learning to drive by only reading a manual."
- Participant 28: "I wish we had more low-stakes writing tasks to build confidence. Every assignment feels like a high-stakes exam, which is discouraging."

Subtheme 3.2: Limited Exposure to Various Academic Writing Genres

Limited exposure to various academic writing genres was another significant challenge, with 16 out of 30 (53.3%) participants reporting a lack of experience with different types of academic writing. This limited exposure often made it difficult for learners to adapt to the specific requirements of different genres and to develop a versatile writing skill set.

- Participant 3: "I can write a lab report, but when asked for a literature review or a critical analysis essay, I feel lost. The structure and purpose are completely different."
- Participant 13: "My previous training focused only on argumentative essays. Now in my graduate program, I need to write research proposals and abstracts, which I have no experience with."

- Participant 22: "I have only been exposed to essays. Genres like case studies or reflective writing are unfamiliar territory, and I do not know where to start."

Theme 4: Limited Feedback and Guidance

Limited feedback and guidance pose significant challenges for advanced English language learners in academic writing, particularly in the context of English-medium majors. This theme includes inadequate feedback from instructors on writing assignments and a lack of clear guidelines and expectations. The following subthemes and quotations provide a deeper understanding of these issues, supported by statistical data from the 30 interviews conducted.

Subtheme 4.1: Inadequate Feedback from Instructors

Inadequate feedback from instructors was a common issue, with 20 out of 30 (66.67%) participants reporting that the feedback they received was either insufficient or not constructive enough to help them improve their writing. This lack of meaningful feedback often left learners feeling uncertain about their performance and unsure of how to make necessary improvements.

- Participant 5: "The feedback is often just a final grade or comments like 'awkward phrasing' without any explanation or suggestion for how to fix it. I don't know what to do differently next time."
- Participant 16: "Sometimes I receive contradictory feedback from different markers on the same issue, which is confusing and makes me doubt which approach is correct."
- Participant 25: "The turnaround time for feedback is very long, often after we've moved on to a new topic. By then, I've already repeated the same mistakes in subsequent assignments."

Subtheme 4.2: Lack of Clear Guidelines and Expectations

Lack of clear guidelines and expectations was another significant challenge, with 18 out of 30 (60%) participants reporting difficulties in understanding the specific requirements and criteria for their writing assignments. This ambiguity often led to confusion and a lack of confidence in meeting the expectations of their instructors.

- Participant 10: "Assignment prompts can be very vague—just a title and a word count. Without clear guidelines on structure, argumentation, or source use, I'm left guessing what the instructor really wants."
- Participant 19: "Terms like 'critical analysis' or 'strong thesis' are used but rarely broken down into specific, actionable criteria. I feel like I'm aiming for a target I cannot see."
- Participant 30: "There's often an implicit expectation of a certain writing style or argument structure that is never explicitly taught, leading to marks being deducted for reasons that were never made clear beforehand."

Theme 5: Time Management and Organizational Skills

Time management and organizational skills are significant challenges for advanced English language learners in academic writing, particularly in the context of English-medium majors. This theme includes difficulties in managing time effectively for writing assignments and challenges in organizing ideas and structuring academic papers. The following subthemes and quotations provide a deeper understanding of these issues, supported by statistical data from the 30 interviews conducted.

Subtheme 5.1: Difficulty in Managing Time Effectively for Writing Assignments

Difficulty in managing time effectively for writing assignments was a common issue, with 19 out of 30 (63.33%) participants reporting struggles with balancing their writing tasks with other academic and personal responsibilities. This time management challenge often led to rushed and less polished writing, as well as increased stress and anxiety.

- Participant 1: "I find it hard to start writing until the deadline is very close. Then I have to rush, and I know the quality suffers because there's no time for proper revision."
- Participant 11: "Breaking down a large research paper into stages is difficult. I often spend too much time researching and leave insufficient time for the actual writing and editing phases."
- Participant 24: "Balancing multiple writing assignments for different courses at the same time is overwhelming. It's hard to allocate time effectively, so something always gets rushed."

Subtheme 5.2: Challenges in Organizing Ideas and Structuring Academic Papers

Challenges in organizing ideas and structuring academic papers were another significant issue, with 22 out of 30 (73.33%) participants reporting difficulties in creating a coherent and well-organized piece of writing. This challenge often led to disjointed and less effective academic papers, affecting the clarity and impact of their arguments.

- Participant 4: "I have many ideas and sources, but I struggle to fit them into a logical flow. My first draft often feels like a collection of separate points, not a unified argument."
- Participant 18: "Creating a clear outline is a major hurdle. Without it, I write in circles, and my paragraphs don't connect well to support a central thesis."
- Participant 29: "I know what each section should do, like the introduction or literature review, but making smooth transitions between them to guide the reader is very challenging for me."

Theme 6: Psychological and Motivational Factors

Psychological and motivational factors pose significant challenges for advanced English language learners in academic writing, particularly in the context of English-medium majors. This theme includes anxiety and lack of confidence in academic writing abilities, as well as difficulty in maintaining motivation and engagement in the writing process. The following subthemes and quotations provide a deeper understanding of these issues, supported by statistical data from the 30 interviews conducted.

Subtheme 6.1: Anxiety and Lack of Confidence in Academic Writing Abilities

Anxiety and lack of confidence in academic writing abilities were common issues, with 21 out of 30 (70.0%) participants reporting feelings of nervousness and self-doubt when approaching writing tasks. This anxiety often led to avoidance behaviors and a reluctance to engage fully in the writing process.

- Participant 6: "I experience a sort of mental block before starting every major paper. I feel my English will never be good enough, and this fear makes the first page very difficult to write."
- Participant 14: "I often compare my writing to published works or native-speaking peers, which instantly makes me feel inadequate and erodes my confidence before I even begin."

- Participant 26: "After receiving critical feedback in the past, I now approach every new assignment with apprehension, worrying more about making mistakes than developing my ideas."

Subtheme 6.2: Difficulty in Maintaining Motivation and Engagement in the Writing Process

Difficulty in maintaining motivation and engagement in the writing process was another significant challenge, with 17 out of 30 (56.67%) participants reporting struggles with staying motivated and engaged throughout the writing process. This lack of motivation often led to a decrease in the quality and quantity of their writing.

- Participant 8: "The writing process feels isolating and monotonous. It's easy to lose momentum in the middle of a long project, especially when progress feels slow."
- Participant 20: "When I feel my writing is not improving despite effort, or the task seems too large, my motivation plummets. It's hard to see the purpose in continuing."
- Participant 30: "For assignments that feel disconnected from my real interests or future goals, it is very challenging to maintain the energy and focus required for high-quality work."

The qualitative analysis conducted through thematic analysis of interview responses from 30 advanced English language learners has provided a comprehensive understanding of the challenges faced in academic writing.

Result of the Second Research Question

Analysis of interviews with 30 advanced EFL learners identified persistent challenges in academic writing. To address these holistically, a pedagogical model integrating Michael Byram's theory of intercultural communicative competence and Lei's (presumably Vygotskian-inspired) sociocultural strategies was proposed. This integration moved beyond linguistic accuracy to foster the critical, cultural, and strategic competencies required for English-medium academic discourse. The table below synthesizes the identified learner challenges with the corresponding theoretical applications.

Table 2: Integration of Byram's Theory and Lei's Strategies

Challenges Identified in Research Question 1	Integration of Byram's Theory and Lei's Strategies in the Competence-Based Model of Writing
1. Language Proficiency	- Incorporate language-focused activities to address vocabulary, grammar, and syntax issues
	- Utilize artifact-mediated strategies (e.g., English reading materials) to improve language proficiency
2. Cultural Differences	- Include intercultural competence training to help learners understand and adapt to English-medium academic writing conventions
	- Encourage learners to explore and analyze cultural differences in writing styles and expectations
3. Lack of Writing Practice	- Provide ample opportunities for learners to practice academic writing skills through artifact-mediated strategies (e.g., writing exercises)
	- Engage learners in community-mediated strategies (e.g., peer feedback sessions) to foster writing practice
4. Limited Feedback and Guidance	- Incorporate community-mediated strategies (e.g., teacher-student conferences) to provide targeted feedback and guidance
	- Utilize rule-mediated strategies to clarify guidelines and expectations for academic writing tasks
5. Time Management and Organizational Skills	- Integrate artifact-mediated strategies (e.g., outlines) to help learners organize their ideas and structure their writing
	- Encourage learners to adopt role-mediated strategies (e.g., language learner, English major) to develop effective time management skills
6. Psychological and Motivational Factors	- Foster a supportive learning environment through community-mediated strategies to reduce anxiety and boost confidence
	- Utilize role-mediated strategies (e.g., author) to help learners develop a sense of ownership and maintain motivation in the writing process

An integrated competence-based model, synthesizing Byram's intercultural competence theory and sociocultural strategies, provides a comprehensive pedagogical solution to the multifaceted challenges in advanced EFL academic writing. This framework translates theoretical principles into direct instructional applications. Linguistic challenges are addressed through targeted language-focused activities (e.g., grammar workshops) and artifact-mediated exposure to authentic texts, building foundational proficiency. To bridge cultural gaps, the model incorporates intercultural competence training and critical discussions on rhetorical norms, fostering the necessary cultural awareness and adaptability. Strategic and procedural deficits are countered by structuring ample, scaffolded writing practice and implementing community-mediated strategies, such as peer review workshops, which develop skills through social interaction. The issues of inadequate feedback and poor organization are tackled via clear, artifact-mediated guidelines (e.g., outlines, rubrics) and structured teacher-student conferences, ensuring consistent support. Finally, psychological barriers are mitigated by cultivating a supportive learning environment and employing role-mediated strategies that build learner confidence and accountability.

Development of Competence-Based Framework

This competency-based writing model provides a holistic framework that transcends traditional grammar-focused instruction. By systematically integrating Byram's intercultural competence and sociocultural strategies, it addresses the multifaceted challenges of advanced EFL academic

writing. The model's tiered structure progresses from building foundational linguistic and cultural awareness to the strategic application of writing processes and collaborative learning. It emphasizes active, project-based engagement, continuous feedback, and reflective practice. Ultimately, the framework aims to develop not only technically proficient writers but also culturally aware, critically thinking communicators equipped for success in global academic and professional contexts.

Table 3: Components of Competence-Based Framework of Academic Writing

Layer	Competences	Description
Foundation Layer	Linguistic Competence	Syntax and Semantics: Advanced grammar and vocabulary workshops. Cohesion and Coherence: Training in text structuring and logical flow.
	Cultural Competence (Byram's Model)	Knowledge: Modules on cultural contexts of English-speaking countries. Skills of Interpreting and Relating: Exercises in analyzing texts from different cultural perspectives. Skills of Discovery and Interaction: Interactive sessions with diverse cultural groups. Attitudes: Reflective practices to foster openness and curiosity. Critical Cultural Awareness: Workshops on critically evaluating cultural content in writing.
Strategic Layer	Sociocultural Strategies	Description
	Artifact-Mediated Strategies	Tool Use: Training on writing software, outline tools, and reference management systems. Writing Exercise: Regular practice with feedback loops.
	Community-Mediated Strategies	Peer Review: Structured peer review sessions. Teacher Feedback: Consistent, constructive feedback mechanisms.
	Rule-Mediated Strategies	Academic Conventions: Explicit teaching of rhetoric, genre-specific writing, and exam strategies.
	Role-Mediated Strategies	Author vs. Editor Roles: Exercises where students alternate between writing and critically editing.
Application Layer	Practical Implementation	
	Writing Workshops	Thematic writing workshops focusing on different genres and cultural contexts.
	Project-Based Learning	Long-term writing projects require research, intercultural collaboration, and presentation.
	Self-Regulation Techniques	Time management workshops. Revision strategy sessions.
Assessment and Feedback Loop	Formative Assessments	Continuous assessment through writing tasks, quizzes on cultural knowledge, and peer review performance.
	Summative Assessments	End-of-term writing projects are evaluated on linguistic accuracy, cultural sensitivity, and strategic use of writing tools and techniques.
	Reflective Journals	Students maintain journals to reflect on their growth in writing and intercultural competence.
Support Systems	Mentorship Program	Pairing students with mentors for writing and cultural guidance.
	Digital Platform	Online space for resources, assignments, peer interaction, and feedback.
Continuous Improvement	Feedback Analysis	Regular analysis of student feedback to refine the model.
	Professional Development	Ongoing training for instructors in intercultural education and writing instruction.

Figure 2 shows the competency-based framework of academic writing based on Lei's (2008) sociocultural strategies and Byram's theory (1997). CBF is a comprehensive framework designed to integrate linguistic and cultural competencies with strategic writing practices.

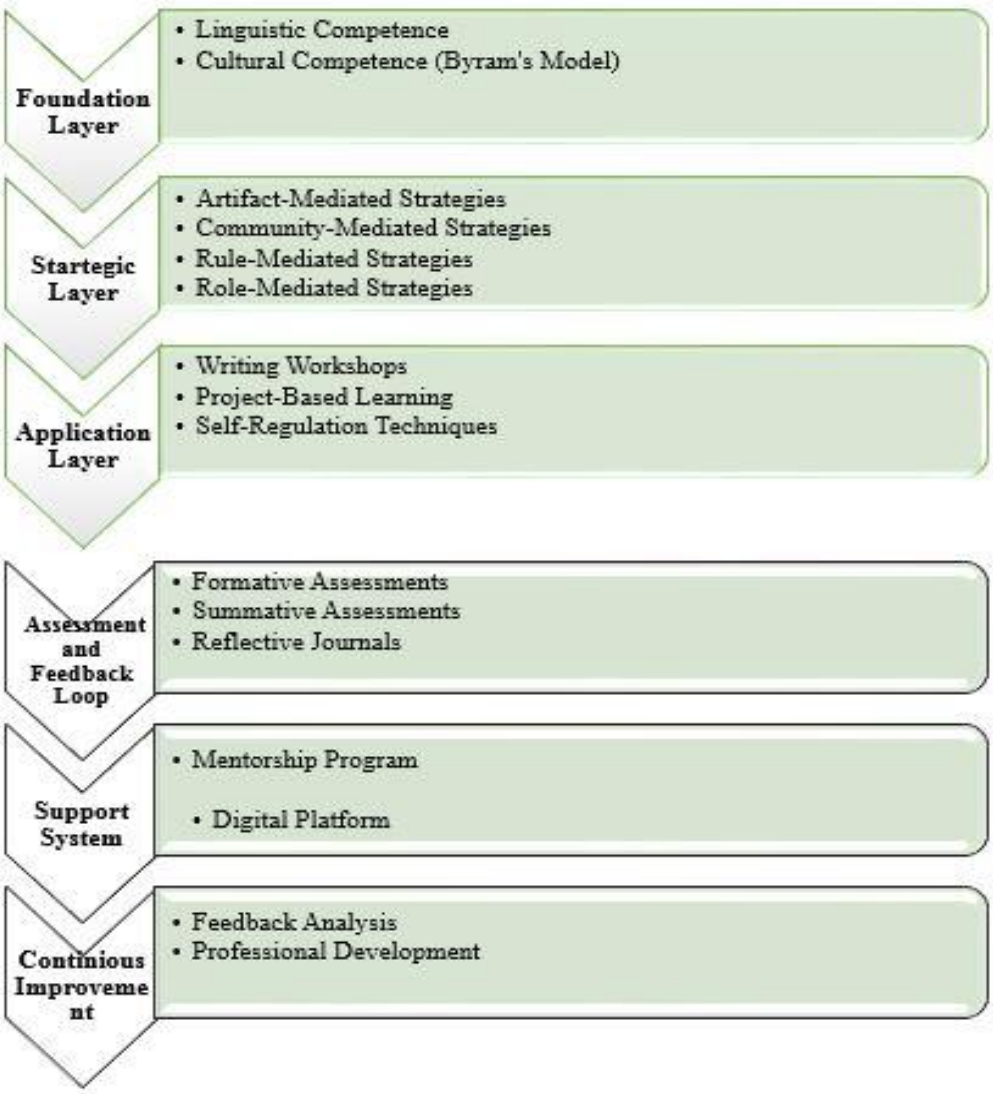


Figure 2: Competency-Based Framework of Academic Writing based on Lei's (2008) Sociocultural Strategies and Byram's Theory (1997)

Based on the identified needs of advanced EFL learners, a comprehensive CBF for academic writing was developed. This framework is structured in three progressive layers. The Foundation Layer establishes essential core competencies, integrating advanced linguistic skills (grammar, vocabulary, coherence) with intercultural competence via Byram's theory, which includes cultural knowledge, interpretive skills, and critical awareness. The Strategic Layer translates these foundations into actionable practices using Lei's sociocultural strategies. This involves artifact-mediated training with digital writing tools, community-mediated peer and instructor feedback cycles, rule-mediated instruction in academic conventions, and role-mediated exercises to build critical editorial perspectives. The Application Layer focuses on practical implementation through genre-based writing workshops, long-term intercultural research projects, and training in self-regulation strategies like time management and revision. Crucially, the model is underpinned by a dynamic Assessment and Feedback Loop, employing both formative and summative evaluations alongside reflective journals. Support Systems, including a mentorship program and a dedicated digital platform, and a commitment to Continuous Improvement through feedback analysis and

instructor training, ensure the model remains adaptive and effective. The overarching aim is to cultivate writers who are not only linguistically proficient but also culturally aware, strategically skilled, and prepared for global academic discourse.

Results of the Third Research Question

Before conducting the main analysis to answer the intended quantitative research question, preliminary analyses were run. The preliminary analysis, including inter-rater reliability and normality checks, is a prerequisite for conducting the main analysis for research question three. Table 4 represents the preliminary analyses.

Table 4: Preliminary Analyses: Inter-Rater Reliability and Normality Checks

Measure / Component	Statistic (ICC or *W*)	95% CI (Lower, Upper) or *p*-value	Conclusion
Inter-Rater Reliability (ICC)			
Grammar	0.85	[0.78, 0.90]	Excellent
Vocabulary	0.87	[0.80, 0.91]	Excellent
Organization	0.84	[0.77, 0.89]	Excellent
Content	0.86	[0.79, 0.90]	Excellent
Style	0.83	[0.76, 0.88]	Excellent
Normality (Shapiro-Wilk *W*)			
All Components (Exp. & Control)	0.92 – 0.96	*p* = .218 – .492	Assumption Met

Note. ICC = Intraclass Correlation Coefficient. All ICCs were significant (*p* < .001).

Excellent inter-rater reliability was established (ICCs > .80). Normality assumptions were fully met (ps > .05), supporting the use of MANCOVA and ANOVA for the main analysis.

Mean scores and variability are presented for the experimental and control groups across the five assessed writing components.

Table 5: Descriptive Statistics for Writing Scores by Group

Group	Grammar	Vocabulary	Organization	Content	Style
	M SD	*M SD*	*M SD*	*M SD*	*M SD*
Experimental	8.12 1.23	7.98 1.12	8.45 1.34	8.23 1.18	8.11 1.09
Control	6.89 1.45	6.76 1.39	7.02 1.51	6.95 1.42	6.83 1.37

Note. M = Mean; SD = Standard Deviation.

The experimental group demonstrated higher mean scores than the control group on all writing components, with similar variability in scores across both groups.

Results from the MANCOVA and follow-up ANOVAs test the statistical significance of the group differences observed in the descriptive data.

Table 6: Inferential Statistics: MANCOVA and Follow-up ANOVAs

Analysis / Effect	Test Statistic	*F*	*p*	Partial η²
MANCOVA (Overall Effect)				
Pillai's Trace	0.548	9.754	< .001	.548
Wilks' Lambda	0.452	9.754	< .001	.548
ANOVAs (Between-Subjects)				
Grammar		6.923	.014	.198
Vocabulary		7.234	.012	.205
Organization		8.460	.007	.230
Content		7.580	.010	.210
Style		8.050	.008	.220

Note. For the MANCOVA, Error df = 58. For the ANOVAs, df = 1 for the group effect. Observed power for the MANCOVA = .999.

Results showed a significant large overall effect (partial $\eta^2 = .55$). Follow-up tests confirmed significant, moderate effects on each writing component (ps < .05). The MANCOVA revealed a statistically significant overall effect of the instructional group on the combined writing components, Pillai's Trace = .548, F = 9.754, *p* < .001, with a large effect size (partial $\eta^2 = .548$). Follow-up univariate ANOVAs (Table 3) indicated that the competence-based model had a statistically significant positive effect on each writing component (all *p* < .05). The effect sizes for these individual components were in the moderate range (partial $\eta^2 = .198$ to .230). In conclusion, after establishing data reliability and meeting statistical assumptions, the analyses provide strong evidence that the competence-based instructional model was effective in improving the academic writing skills of advanced EFL learners, both as a holistic construct and across its specific sub-components.

5. DISCUSSION

The findings of this study provide a comprehensive understanding of the challenges, theoretical solutions, and empirical outcomes related to enhancing academic writing for advanced EFL learners in English-medium instruction. The triangulated results from qualitative and quantitative data collectively affirm the necessity of a multifaceted, competence-based pedagogical approach that addresses more than mere linguistic accuracy. The thematic analysis for the first research question confirmed that learners' difficulties are deeply interconnected, extending beyond language mechanics to encompass cultural, pedagogical, and psychological domains. The high prevalence of challenges with grammar, vocabulary, and unfamiliarity with English academic conventions aligns with established literature highlighting these as persistent hurdles (Al Fadda, 2012; Alfaki, 2015; Abdulkareem, 2013). Crucially, these linguistic and cultural struggles are exacerbated by insufficient practice, inadequate feedback, and psychological anxiety, creating a compounded barrier to writing development. This echoes research emphasizing the role of affective factors and instructional support in writing performance (Al-Khairy, 2013; Fareed & Ashraf, 2016). Therefore, an effective intervention must simultaneously build foundational skills, cultural awareness, and learner confidence through structured support. To address this complex problem, the second phase of the study proposed an integrated model synthesizing Byram's intercultural competence theory and Lei's sociocultural strategies. This integration responds directly to the identified gaps. Byram's framework provides a critical lens for developing the "skills

of discovery and interaction" and "critical cultural awareness" needed to navigate Anglophone academic norms, directly tackling the cultural unfamiliarity reported by participants. Concurrently, Lei's emphasis on artifact-mediated and community-mediated learning, through authentic materials and collaborative feedback, offers a practical pathway to increase meaningful practice and improve guidance, which are the key deficiencies noted in the qualitative findings. However, as noted in similar pedagogical innovations, the transition from theory to practice presents significant challenges, including the need for educator training and culturally sensitive assessment methods (Ankawi, 2020).

The quasi-experimental test of this model yielded strongly supportive empirical evidence. The statistically significant MANCOVA results, with a large effect size, demonstrate that the competence-based model had a substantial overall impact on holistic writing proficiency. This finding corroborates studies on the efficacy of explicit, strategy-based writing instruction. The follow-up ANOVAs further revealed significant improvements across all specific components—grammar, vocabulary, organization, content, and style—indicating the model's broad utility. The moderate effect sizes for individual components suggest a balanced enhancement across multiple writing dimensions rather than an isolated breakthrough in one area. This pattern of generalized improvement is consistent with interventions that foster overarching communicative or strategic competence, which in turn positively influences discrete sub-skills. In conclusion, this study establishes a clear continuum from problem identification to solution validation. The advanced EFL learners' academic writing challenges are systemic, rooted in an interplay of linguistic limitations, cultural distance, and instructional inadequacy. The proposed competence-based model, strategically merging intercultural and sociocultural principles, offers a coherent framework to address this interplay. The positive experimental outcomes confirm its practical effectiveness, providing an evidence-based blueprint for curriculum design. Future research should investigate the long-term retention of these gains and explore optimal methods for scaling the model's implementation across diverse institutional contexts.

Limitations

Limitations of a study refer to potential weaknesses or conditions beyond the control of the researcher that may have influenced the results. The research was conducted within a specific institutional context (a private language institute in Tehran), and the findings may be influenced by the unique characteristics of the participants, the educational environment, and the curriculum. Because the sample is drawn from a particular setting, this may limit the generalizability of the findings to the broader EFL learner population or different educational systems. Additionally, external factors such as participants' prior engagement in other L2 activities or exposure to additional writing interventions outside the classroom may have influenced the study outcomes. Finally, the reliance on self-reported data in the interview phases is subject to the participants' willingness and ability to accurately reflect on their writing processes and challenges.

Delimitations

The delimitations refer to the boundaries set by the researcher to narrow the scope of the study. This study was intentionally delimited to advanced EFL learners at the graduate level (Master’s and Ph.D. students) to ensure a homogenous proficiency level. The research focused specifically on academic writing proficiency, utilizing argumentative essays as the primary instrument for assessment. The study was further delimited by the specific theoretical frameworks used: Byram’s theory of Intercultural Communicative Competence and Lei’s sociocultural strategies. Furthermore, the study utilized a sequential explanatory mixed-methods design, focusing on a

specific timeframe for the instructional intervention, which excluded a longitudinal analysis of the retention of skills over an extended period beyond the post-test.

Further Scopes for Research

Based on the findings and limitations of this study, several avenues for future research are suggested. First, further studies could compare the effectiveness of the Competence-Based Framework (CBF) in diverse educational settings, such as low-resource contexts, multilingual classrooms, or different cultural regions. This would provide insight into how contextual factors influence the framework's adaptability and success. Second, future research could focus on the training needs of educators tasked with implementing the CBF. Investigations into the most effective professional development approaches are necessary to equip instructors with the skills to integrate intercultural competence and sociocultural strategies into writing instruction successfully. Finally, future research could examine how the CBF impacts specific academic writing genres (e.g., research papers, literature reviews) or particular skills (e.g., critical thinking, citation practices). Such inquiries would provide a more nuanced understanding of the model's effectiveness in addressing varied writing demands within specific disciplines.

6. CONCLUSION

This study investigated the challenges, theoretical framework, and practical effectiveness of a pedagogical model designed to improve the academic writing of advanced EFL learners. The findings collectively affirm a central conclusion: achieving proficiency in English-medium academic writing requires a holistic, competence-based approach that integrates linguistic, intercultural, and strategic development. The research demonstrates that learner difficulties are not isolated to grammar or vocabulary but are a complex nexus of cultural unfamiliarity, insufficient practice, inadequate feedback, and motivational barriers. In response, the proposed instructional model, which synthesizes Byram's intercultural competence theory with Lei's sociocultural strategies, was empirically validated as a significantly more effective method than traditional instruction for enhancing overall writing performance.

The implications of these findings are substantial for pedagogy, curriculum design, and teacher training. Pedagogically, the results argue decisively against treating academic writing as a mere technical skill. Instructors must consciously foster intercultural awareness by explicitly teaching the conventions, rhetorical styles, and expectations of English academic discourse while validating learners' own cultural and linguistic resources. Curricular implications point toward the need for structured programs that provide sustained, genre-based writing practice embedded within collaborative, feedback-rich learning communities. Furthermore, the success of such a model hinges on institutional support for professional development, equipping educators with the skills to facilitate intercultural learning and mediate collaborative writing processes effectively.

Based on these conclusions, several key suggestions emerge. First, educational institutions should consider adopting or adapting integrated competence-based frameworks to structure their advanced writing courses, ensuring learning objectives encompass attitudes, knowledge, and skills as defined by intercultural competence theory. Second, teacher training programs must prioritize developing educators' capacity to design culturally responsive syllabi, implement collaborative learning techniques, and provide formative, process-oriented feedback. Finally, future research should focus on longitudinal studies to assess the durability of learning gains, qualitative inquiries into the learner experience within such models, and action research to refine assessment tools that equitably measure both linguistic and intercultural writing competencies. Ultimately, this study

contributes a validated pathway for empowering advanced EFL learners to become confident, capable, and culturally-aware participants in global academic discourse.

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Appendices

Appendix A: Semi-Structured Interview Protocol

Target Participants: Advanced EFL Learners (Graduate Level)

Goal: To investigate the primary challenges encountered in academic writing within English-medium disciplines.

Introduction to the Interview:

Thank you for participating in this study. The purpose of this interview is to understand your experiences and challenges regarding academic writing in your specific field of study. There are no right or wrong answers; we are interested in your personal perspective. The interview will take approximately 20–30 minutes and will be recorded for accuracy. Your responses will remain confidential.

Part 1: Demographic and Background Information

1. What is your current major/field of study?
2. What year of study are you currently in (e.g., first-year Master's, Ph.D. candidate)?
3. How many years have you been learning English?

Part 2: Language Proficiency Challenges

4. When you write academic papers in English, which aspects of the language do you find the most difficult? (e.g., grammar, vocabulary, sentence structure).
5. Can you describe a specific situation where you felt your limited vocabulary prevented you from expressing a complex idea?
6. How confident do you feel about your ability to maintain grammatical accuracy (e.g., verb tenses, articles) throughout a long academic text?

Part 3: Cultural and Rhetorical Challenges

7. Are there specific academic writing conventions in English (e.g., structure, citation styles, argumentation) that differ significantly from writing in your native language?
8. Have you ever received feedback that your writing style was "too personal" or "not objective enough"? How did you interpret this feedback?
9. Do you find it difficult to adjust your writing style when completing assignments for different disciplines (e.g., writing for a science course vs. a humanities course)?

Part 4: Writing Practice and Experience

10. How often do you engage in writing academic texts (e.g., essays, research papers) outside of mandatory graded assignments?
11. Do you feel you have sufficient opportunities to practice different genres of academic writing (e.g., proposals, literature reviews, abstracts)? Please explain.
12. Do you think the amount of writing practice you currently have is adequate for improving your skills?

Part 5: Feedback and Guidance

13. What kind of feedback do you typically receive from instructors on your writing assignments? Is it usually helpful?
14. Do you feel that the assignment guidelines provided by your instructors are clear and specific enough?
15. Have you ever experienced contradictory feedback from different instructors on similar writing issues?

Part 6: Time Management and Organization

16. How do you typically approach the process of writing a major paper? (e.g., do you outline first, write in sections, or write start to finish?)

17. Do you struggle with organizing your ideas coherently within a paragraph or across the entire text?

18. How do you manage your time when working on a large writing project? Do you often feel rushed to meet deadlines?

Part 7: Psychological and Motivational Factors

19. How do you feel emotionally when you face a new academic writing task? (e.g., anxious, confident, overwhelmed).

20. Do you ever compare your writing abilities to native speakers or published authors? How does this affect you?

21. What motivates you to improve your academic writing skills? Have you ever felt like losing motivation during a writing task?

Part 8: Additional Comments

22. Is there any other challenge or barrier regarding academic writing that we have not discussed that you would like to mention?

Thank you very much for your time and valuable insights. Your responses will greatly contribute to this research.