



## Research Article

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# Incorporating Writing Skills in ESP Classes. Challenges Albanian ESP Students Encounter and Writing Skills Solutions: A Study Case of Polytechnic University of Tirana

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## Abstract

*In this paper, we want to highlight the importance of writing skills in English classes to a student learning English for specific purposes, who can easily develop writing skills by taking advantage of the professional vocabulary acquired in ESP classes. The study concerns students from the Polytechnic University of Tirana, who are taught Engineering English. Writing perception and current situation are observed from two different perspectives, the viewpoint of lecturers and that of the students themselves. Two questionnaires are conducted for both categories to help us reach the results and discussions for this paper. Students and textbooks are mainly driven towards speaking and listening skills. Contrary to their required routine activities with writing being one of the main and demanding four skills they are assessed in when undertaking international language exams or when asked to write a thesis, research papers or reports. In the age of the Internet and AI, it has become way easier for students to have access to ready-made examples or Internet-assisted writing tasks. However, it is crucial to teach them autonomous writing, select the right models and not depend on technology. It is our responsibility to equip learners with skills that serve them well in their upcoming careers and one such skill is writing. Writing in English might be one of the responsibilities they could have in their daily routine, thus fostering such skills before graduation, is a distinguishing feature and a huge advantage for them.*

**Keywords:** Writing skills, ESP, challenges, approaches

## 1. Introduction

Students need to be guided on how to write in a foreign language, they need to be taught the strategies and techniques required for written assignments, crucial to them not only during their studies but for their future either professional or academic careers in which they might have to do research papers, exchange written materials with colleagues etc. The advantage of ESP students is that during their studies they are taught discipline-specific terminology, thus along with learning the writing techniques, they are well-equipped with the terminology needed to do writing tasks in English and voice their ideas properly. Writing necessitates a lexicon that can adequately support sharing. Often, even the most proficient English learners struggle to select the language they need to convey their point (D'Argenio Linda 2022). Students are taught some general skills in writing, thus combining these skills with the field-related terminology makes writing even more comprehensive to the specialists and more adequate.

Similar to oral communication, writing should be effective for the writer to fully and appropriately transmit the message. It is one form of voicing, introducing, exchanging, and debating ideas. On the other hand, unlike oral communication, in which one might easily express one's idea employing not only the right choice of words but also intonation or the possibility to ask and answer questions, in writing one should be very careful and precise because of many reasons such as the limited number of words, (concision), appropriate register, correct use of words/terms, sentence fluency etc.

Writing is art. People can be very fluent in speaking but lack writing skills. It is a strenuous process that demands pre-thinking, good organization of ideas, and mastered grammatical and syntax structures, which despite the gifted people who have a natural flair, it can be easily taught and fully acquired by learners with the help of the right approaches and techniques applied by the lecturers. Writing is a process. Students are sometimes tagged as being reluctant to do writing tasks because they require more time to be completed. Writing is a structured way of expressing thoughts. One of the techniques applied by lecturers is the process approach. Oblaqualova (2024) emphasizes the actual process of writing rather than the final product. Based on the results of her experiment with students on writing, the ones following this teaching technique had an increased and better level of writing skills compared to the others. Writing as a process is a demanding one and one should be properly taught and trained from an early age on how to compose a written assignment. Apart from the knowledge about it, it always requires more time to be fully completed, especially if we take into consideration the first drafts of a written assignment.

The diagram below given by Raimes (1983) portrays all the necessary components needed for a proper and effective piece of writing. It also lists the processes a writer undergoes, which has been later on supported by many other scholars.



Figure 1. Producing a Piece of Writing

Some of the components, especially syntax, grammar, and mechanics are 'tools' all general language learners possess. Enesi, M and Trifoni, A. (2023) in their analysis of English writing errors in Freshmen students' essays state that the most common errors students make are mechanical and grammar errors. What makes ESP learners more prompt to concluding a high-level piece of writing is the 'sack of terms' they have a good command of which constitutes two important parts of writing that is content and word choice. In ESP, teachers do not simply teach writing to students but particular kinds of writing applied by the learners in academic or professional contexts. As put by Hyland (2013) not all writing is the same since it is used by people to accomplish particular purposes and as a result, the students are encouraged to respond to various genres, contexts and practices.

Writing in ESP is specifically defined as purpose driven-writing. Depending on the field of study, ESP students are more oriented to genre approach writing as their writing tasks are different. The case of Engineering students is the one in which they are not usually required to write essays but instead focus on other writing formats including reports, manuals, technical emails, memos, calculation summaries, research papers etc. The numerous types of writing need to be taught to the learners in a way in which purpose should be the main thing to be kept in mind while thinking of the content.

Writing activities in the textbooks are oriented towards authentic materials, simulating real-world situations and responses, which is very helpful to the learner, who directly puts oneself in a real-life position and tries to give the best at it. For those scholars supporting the genre approach later elaborated in the article, teachers grounding their courses in the texts that students will need to write in occupational, academic, or social contexts, will indeed help guide learners to participate effectively in the world outside the ESL classroom (Hyland 2007).

## 2. Study Objective

This article aims to first encourage more writing activities in English classes in order for our students to better acquire and master writing skills in English. The first reason that pushes us, lecturers into elaborating more on writing is because students will find such skills very vital in their academic career and future profession. Secondly, our ESP learners, apart from possessing general language knowledge, are well-equipped with branch-related vocabulary.

Another objective of this study is to propose some useful strategies and techniques lecturers of ESP can use to teach writing to ESP students and overcome any difficulties learners face. The

proposals are based on the actual situation and on the results of a survey carried out to PUT students who have an upper intermediate level of English language. In this study, we will focus on the main writing approaches used, suitable to our students' needs.

### 3. Methodology

A questionnaire is conducted on the current situation and the needs of the learners and lecturers. The students surveyed belong to the Faculty of Information Technology, respectively, Freshmen of Information Technology Engineering, Electronics Engineering, and Telecommunication Engineering. The questionnaire was done during the first semester of the 2024-2025 academic year, the time when the English language is covered in this Faculty. A total number of 150 students participated. The reason for choosing those target students are two: First, their upper-intermediate level of English, and second, our experience throughout the years teaching English in these branches. A questionnaire was done with the lecturers of the Foreign Language Centre, all of whom teach language for specific purposes and have relatively long experience in the field. Data collection is achieved via: student questionnaire /lecturer questionnaire + observation as lecturers ourselves for over 10 years. Data analysis was done using a combination of quantitative and qualitative methods. The comparative method is used throughout the paper to reach conclusions obtained via the two questionnaires and our observations. (Research Questions Appendix A & B)

### 4. Literature Review

Writing is a form of communication, the official one, when considering information exchange among specialists. As any other form of communication, it should be effective, clearly convey ideas, share information, and exchange messages in order to fulfil one's mission.

Writing is a fundamental feature to students as it is to institutions. Hyland (2013) describes writing as 'the central activity of institutions' because many activities depend on it. From the viewpoint of the lecturer, he highlights that 'teachers do not teach writing' but particular kinds of writing valued and expected by the professionals in academic and professional contexts.

Luu Trong Tuan (2011) states that in the genre-based approach, the teacher's role in guidance is inevitable as he/she is the expert in the classroom, providing students with systematic guidance and careful support through various activities.

Escribano, P.D (1999) pinpoints the importance of writing to engineering students when stating: that it is necessary for the students (future engineers) not only when consulting bibliography but also when asked to write to institutions or take part in international congresses.

Writing is crucial to be done from an early age as it helps students express their ideas and imagination, keep in touch with family members, narrate a story etc. According to an analysis by Graham et al. (2012) writing activities helped students better comprehend text when they were asked to write about it.

Writing is a tool to support learning as it is used by students to recall, organize, analyze and build knowledge about content. Through writing students consolidate their learning and demonstrate their understanding of the subjects. (Graham, McKeown & Rouse 2012).

Hyland (2013) adds that in particular, ESP writing has nothing to do with topping up generic writing skills that learners have failed to master at school, but it involves developing new kinds of literacy: equipping learners with the communicative skills to participate in particular academic and professional cultures. One reason pushing teachers to teach writing skills is the belief that during this process, students learn more about various fields, practice real-life situations, master their organizational skills, deepen communication skills, have more knowledge of grammar structures, they put into practice their lexicon, learn to see things from various viewpoints etc.

Mastering writing skills poses a new window to students in their upcoming careers, distinguishing them from the rest who might be very good at their profession but lack skills in

expressing their ideas in a written form.

ESP writing is purpose-driven. Writing in ESP is always done by taking into consideration the purpose why you are writing. Whether you are writing to inform, give instructions, persuade or describe a process/product. Depending on what we want to achieve and who we are writing to, we select the respective tone.

Written communication in ESP can take place in an environment characterized by different cultures, and engineers from various places working towards the same goals in international projects. Awareness of cultural differences is another important element that should always be considered while teaching writing and the writing process in order to avoid misinterpretations and misunderstandings. Cultural element is considered a prominent characteristic of ESP in which the majority of cases, interactions take place among people of different nationalities using English as an international language for communication" (Kavalir, 2013).

## 5. Analysis and Discussion

The seventh question of the questionnaire (see Appendix A) 'Does knowledge of your field of study terminology help you in writing tasks?' is considered twice within a semester timeline. By the beginning of the semester, the time the questionnaire was conducted, the students when asked about the acknowledgement of the terminology, a high percentage of them answered it was of great importance to them to know the respective terminology and use terms correctly in writing since they did not know much about the field related words in neither English nor Albanian constituting 90 % of the answers.

This aligned with the findings of Jabborova's research paper (2024) on the challenges faced by ESP students in regard to vocabulary and technical jargon which most students reported facing difficulties in correctly using them. Oblaqulova (2024) points out limited vocabulary resources as one of the main concerns and one of the weak points in her student's writing referring to the simple way of expressing ideas rather than using complex words. However, by the end of the semester, the same question was asked again (only this one). The results were completely different, with many students answering that terminology was no longer an issue as they had learnt it during the course. This highlights the importance of ESP to the students. At this point, such results constitute a big gap when compared to EFL students, to whom lexicon becomes a big issue. A high percentage of our students by the end of the semester felt confident in using the terminology learned during English classes. Prior knowledge of terminology is fundamental in better and more concisely expressing ideas in writing, consequently avoiding misunderstanding and misinterpretation by the recipient.

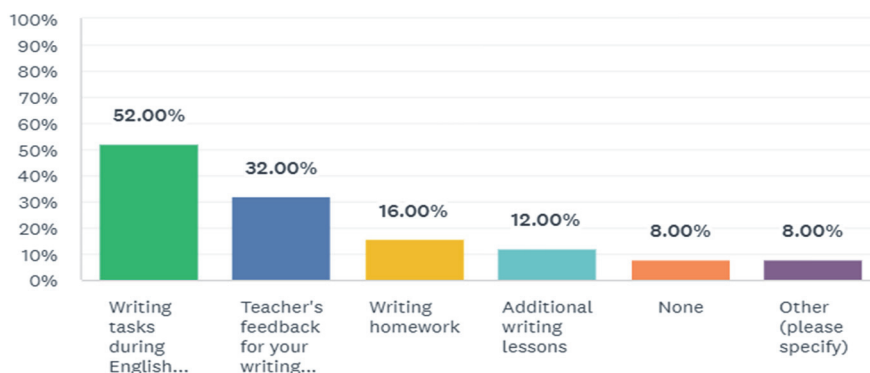


Figure 2. Activities that help students learn how to write in English.

Almost all of the respondents considered mastering writing skills of critical importance. They strongly believe that writing skills will definitely help them in their current studies with any written assignment asked to be completed, including diploma thesis. Such knowledge will provide them with distinguishing skills for their future careers which might involve writing activities starting with the very first stages of looking for a job in which motivation letters, cover letters, resumes etc. are requested by the employers, to later be proceeded with tasks such as report writing, manuals, informative emails etc. The results fully correspond to the lecturers' belief of the writing skills importance, adequately reflecting the main purpose of this article, that of mastering such skills.

Among the list of activities listed for the students to pick and choose one they believe might help them in better-acquiring writing skills, is writing tasks during foreign language classes as an indeed useful tool to advance in writing, constituting approximately 52 percent of the interviewees. (see Figure 2.) From experience, it is better to do these tasks in class in the presence of the teacher, who might assist them during the process rather than simply having the final product assessed. In addition to this, surprisingly enough, it is sometimes easier for them to concentrate in class and put all of their efforts into writing, to make sure it is done properly. Furthermore, if the competition element is added, it pushes them even more to give their best. From the lecturer's viewpoint, doing writing tasks in class, under the teacher's surveillance, assures the latter that AI was not used. If working in pairs or groups, brainstorming and the various perspectives provided, are mainly done by the students themselves rather than by technology, the piece of writing is more original and creative. Pair-work is widely applicable by lecturers and strongly supported by learners in a classroom setting. Working in groups or pairs apart from being applied in physical classrooms, was highly recommended and effective even in online classes as shown in the study of Montaner-Villalba, S (2021) in which students produced a shorter piece of writing of high quality and had a positive attitude towards group work and collaborative writing while practicing ESP writing skills through the flipped-learning approach in the online context during Covid-19. Figures above also show that only 16 % supported homework writing.

According to the survey, learners have identified themselves as possessing good writing skills in Albanian and English contrary to what we as lecturers have witnessed in our work and contrary to the survey results with 75 % of the lecturers assessing their students' writing skills) in English as average.

When inquired about the importance of prior knowledge of writing skills in Albanian to help them better write in English, approximately 70% replied positively to it, with only 20 % not being sure about it and nearly 10% believing it is not important. We as lecturers strongly believe that writing skills should first be taught in the native language. Prior writing experience (Vula et al. 2024) is listed as one of the other aspects that affect students' writing skills in a second language due to their exposure to writing practice and instructions. It is easier for the students to apply all these previously learned writing skills when learning a second language. From our observation throughout the years, students lack general writing skills in Albanian. Some study programs provide optional writing subjects in Albanian such as Academic Writing and it depends on the students whether to choose that subject. Nevertheless, good writing command in the native language paves a good path for writing in a foreign language. Sometimes the same writing techniques and strategies apply in both languages, however, it must be highlighted that it always depends on the target language level. To produce well-elaborated written material in English learners must have an upper-intermediate level of the language in terms of grammar and vocabulary. Bearing in mind the lack of general writing skills in Albanian, the English lecturer's duty of teaching students how to write in English becomes a bit more challenging. However, with the right approaches and a lot of practice by the students, very positive results are achieved.

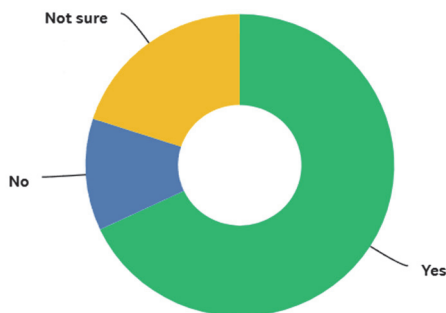


**Figure 3.** Importance of prior knowledge of writing skills in Albanian language to help them better write in English

On the other hand, there are scholars (Kaplan 1966) who strongly support the idea that languages use various written patterns to express ideas, due to the different thought patterns speakers of the language have. Writing conventions indeed differ from one language to another, English is regarded as being straightforward and in this case, when considering the formulaic structure of written text used in the engineering context in Albanian, we would say that the style is approximately the same.

The communicative character of ESP textbooks has placed great attention to oral communication (Shehu, I, Stojani, E: 2023), as the primary means of communication among specialists. This has led to the 'shadowing' of writing skills even though, the latter as an activity is always included in the last part of every unit of the English textbooks used at PUT. Writing activities in ESP textbooks used at our University constitute approximately 11% of the total activities in a lesson, with one exercise out of 9 dedicated to Writing. The rest of the activities are Speaking-oriented, constituting approximately 33% of the unit, Listening and Vocabulary exercises occupying respectively roughly 22% and one Reading exercise, constituting 11% of the total activities within a unit. Oral forms of communication are prioritized over written ones in the development of foreign language communicative competence (Nazarova et al. 2020). However, it must be pointed out that lecturers as per additional activities done during a class require students to do extra writing tasks in the form of essays-where learners express their ideas on any of the topics covered during the lesson, or other writing activities such as sentence writing- in which the students are encouraged to use the key terms from the unit, report writing, summary of a piece of reading or listening, written instructions of a certain product assembly or listing the steps involved in a process, note-keeping either while listening or before they act out dialogues in class etc. Taking into consideration all of these writing activities, the data interpretation of the survey shows that the frequency of writing activities in class was average with 75 % of the lecturers opting for the 'sometimes' alternative, leaving only 25 % of the lecturers' response to 'always' doing such activities. It is advisable to once in a while stick to writing one whole class, to obtain the most out of it. Not only do lecturers have more time to cover writing activities step by step, but the learners too, have enough time to pre-think and think about the writing assignments.

The lecturer's feedback is considered important information for the student and the purpose is not only to assess the learner but most importantly to make one learn from it. Among the list of activities considered by the students as the one helping them in acquiring writing skills, 32% of them regarded feedback for the writing task as an indeed useful means to perfect their writing skills.

The most common feedback mode practiced by the lecturers is the oral and the text mode even though from the various modes, audio-visual and screencast (referring to the use of screencast technology to give feedback to students' assignments) lead the list. Alharbi (2022) in his study on screencast points out the efficiency of this feedback mode as being more informative, detailed and

personal, even though throughout the paper, the combination of various modes is advisable. On the other hand, Cheng, et al. (2021) regard teacher-written feedback in their paper as widely used in a second language writing context.

Mauludin, L. A et al. (2021) in their study on enhancing students' genre writing skills, conclude that feedback should be done immediately as it helped students overcome the difficulties more effectively. According to them, the dynamic approach played a significant role because it assisted students to solve problems throughout the testing activity. Feedback should be done continually and periodically rather than assessing the final product (D'Argenio: 2022).

More importantly, it is fundamental for feedback to be done correctly in order not to have the opposite effect on the learner. Learners should all the time be encouraged and motivated to keep doing their tasks regardless of the mistakes, or errors they make. Another crucial aspect to be considered when giving feedback is focusing on the content rather than grammar mistakes. Focusing on grammar or linguistic mistakes might shadow checking for coherence and cohesion.

Nazarova et al. (2021) state the importance of conducting feedback in a fair balance of content feedback and form feedback. Limiting feedback to correcting errors might lead to neglect of interest and meaning of the content.

### 5.1 *AI and Writing*

Writing is nowadays facilitated by technology. Autocorrect and other programs checking grammar and spelling mistakes along with syntax and word choice are widely available and used and to a considerable degree they have improved the final result of a written task. Many scholars nowadays encourage the use of technology and many AI applications in the classroom, believing, that they indeed help learners master all skills needed in a foreign language.

Phan Thi Ngoc Le (2023) strongly calls for the application of AI to be extensively encouraged for education in general and higher education in the near future due to AI's benefits. Students themselves have a positive attitude about AI-based applications in their writing-learning process. Most of the tasks assisted by AI are very useful to a better understanding, brainstorming and structuring of a written assignment. On the other hand, there is always the risk of using ready-made samples, which might deter learners from applying their original ideas.

What in case one is deprived of using technology and has to come up with a task on their own such as in the case of sitting international language exams? Similar to other aspects of technology having their pros and cons, technology-assisted writing makes no exemption. It is at the same time, as useful in certain contexts as it is damaging in others. Taking advantage of its good samples is superb, but being a slave of it, is a huge drawback.

According to a study by Ghufon, M.A & Rosyida, F (2018) the role of Grammarly, as one of the many AI-based applications used in classrooms, in checking written tasks is partially completed since it checks grammar and vocabulary, spelling and punctuation but not idea organization and content-which remains to be done by the teacher. However, when searching for such tasks via Open AI's ChatGPT, in this case, you can have access to several ideas generated by the program, enriching the content at the same time. Khalifa M, Albadawy M (2024) support the idea that AI can improve academic functions in six main domains with AI tools helping expand text, develop outlines and enhance writing style. All of these tools provide the student with an adequate sample to use and learn from. Once used, the grammatical structures and the language used can be implemented in the required written situations, fully equipping the learner with the necessary writing habits in the long term. Additionally, learners of a foreign language, develop the habit of editing and revising writing tasks before concluding a very important one, both via AI tools and reading the materials themselves in a more critical way.

Other scholars (Liden, A., Nilros, K: 2020) fear security and privacy when utilizing technology such as chatbots, which collect personal information from learners such as names, surnames, email addresses or academic records. Other issues concern Khalifa M and Albadawy (2024) when they

conclude in their study that there should always be a careful balance between the utilization of AI and human insight especially in idea generation and research design, making sure that human creativity and critical thinking are not overshadowed.

From the survey analysis 50 % of lecturers considered AI as a contributor to writing tasks for their students, with the rest being sceptical about its usage and none denying its contribution. Students, on the other hand, accepted using AI when doing writing tasks in English, and the answers given in a linear order from a) *never*, to b) *rarely*, c) *sometimes*, and d) *always* showed that they sometimes used AI but not always.

## 6. Writing Approaches

Wright (2024) highlights that when deciding on the approach to properly and fully cover written assignments in class one should take into consideration: language level, environment, present situation, and learners' needs. While carrying out the needs analysis, one should try to establish the high-frequency tasks that learners need to carry out in English in order to be effective in their job, purpose, and functionality. Based on the needs analysis of our students, they need to practice writing various types of writing such as letters of motivation, reports, etc. for them to familiarize themselves with all the necessary writing assignments. For this reason, a genre-based approach would be suitable and easily applicable. The genre-based approach is one very effective way of teaching writing in ESP classes.

In the Genre analysis in general ESP language is seen as a system of choice (Hyland:2022) that allows users to most effectively express their intended meanings. Through genre, ESP users identify the linguistic features that are characteristic to the texts most needed and used by them. This approach fully implements the theory of hands-on learning and real-world applications. For educators, genre-based pedagogies offer a valuable resource for assisting their students in both pre- and in-service writing instructions to produce effective and relevant texts (Hyland:2007).

Dirgeyasa (2016), in terms of linguistics, defines genre as communication that has a certain goal for its members in a certain social context. The different social contexts later led to various genres. Genre is portrayed as writing that has a particular style, specific audience and purpose.

According to Sani et al (2023), the teaching and learning process in the Genre-based approach is divided into 4 steps: 1). building knowledge of the field 2). modelling of the text 3). joint construction of the text and 4). independent construction of the text. The steps described point out the transition from guided instructions by the teacher to class collaboration and independent work by the learner. It also highlights one other crucial benefit of this approach which is learning by collaborating and exchanging ideas with other learners, eliminating as Sani et al (2023) refer to, the feeling of isolation that students usually experience when writing.

There are cases, especially with intermediate level students who while practicing writing they want it to be done progressively, thus starting with sentence writing, paragraph writing and full text writing- otherwise named process approach. This classical way of teaching learners how to do a piece of writing by asking them to divide the task into paragraphs and practice each paragraph, before moving on to the next step of linking them all together is a commonly-accepted practice.

A similar approach to this, tested by Bánhegyi and Fajt (2023), is the Process-Based Portfolio approach, which resulted efficient in improving the ESP writing skills of students as it meant more interactivity and dialogues among the learner and the lecturer related to the text produced per each work per student. In the case of PUT students, it can be applied, however, we believe this is more appropriate to high school students whose English subject lasts for the entire year, unlike ESP classes at PUT which last for one semester only. It requires more time and classes to be done gradually in order to have the expected results.

The product approach is regarded as the classical approach in which the student is beforehand equipped with a model text. This is a common practice not only because it is already provided by the teacher's textbooks but it is also considered by the lecturers as a very reliable model to be followed.

Al Bloushi, B. J., Al Shuraiaan, A. (2024) stress that this approach dominated the teaching of writing before '80 and the aim and focus are on grammar accuracy. It contains using the model sentences or texts that the students copy when writing.

D'Argenio (2022) supports the idea that providing students with an example is non-negotiable. However, the lecturer should always be careful not to dictate such models, but instead provide those as supporting material to the students, who can tailor their tasks independently from the model. Providing students with a template, which they can use to stick to, is regarded as helpful in elementary and intermediate levels of English. To the advanced learners, this method is seen as depriving the students of freely and independently expressing themselves. Thus our recommendations, based on the above mentioned principles are to start with samples, and later on, when gained experience, experiment with other methods to avoid the learner getting stuck within a framework.

## **7. Writing Challenges to PUT Students and Solutions**

In a classroom setting or any other assessment environment, writing is assessed by taking into consideration these main objectives: It should be clearly organized (not only in terms of coherence-the logical ordering of ideas but also structured appearance), it should be unified, it should address the topic well, use subject-related terminology, stick to a certain length in the case of a letter of application, motivational letters etc. A good piece of writing is one which is fluently and easily read by the reader.

The difficulties our learners face are not related to grammar but instead 'to clearly state the reason why one is writing'. ESP writing is regarded as a purpose-driven one, thus knowing whether you are writing to inform, to persuade, to convince, to give instructions and so on, is the prime idea to be considered.

The task of organizing ideas is of paramount importance and at the same time directly linked to the division into paragraphs. Many learners get lost in writing, leading to serious challenges in ordering their ideas, thus lack of coherence. The pre-writing stage, which can be done in groups or pairs, should never be skipped. It is the warm-up moment, similar to the one before starting physical activities. Students brainstorm ideas and become more aware of the task they have to later elaborate on, basing their ideas on what the requirements are. Afterwards, the next step is organizing the ideas logically, and outlining the material by pointing out the key ideas and the secondary ones.

Based on the results of the two questionnaires and mostly from our observations throughout the years, in a number of generations, some of the challenges our learners face while writing in English are mostly related to the writing genre. Each written task is of a specific format and structure. Such things can be easily learned, but in doing so, one should first be aware of the various formats and genres and then, be given instructions on how to draft each one in order for the task to fully serve its goal and audience. It is strongly advisable to teach and cover each genre in separate classes for them to easily distinguish one task from another. Each written assignment has a specific structure, consisting of different types of paragraphs that once learned by the students, it is easier for them to directly put those structures into practice. Regarding the fixed linguistic structures, that is something they get used to more easily once provided with a list of phrases and sentences to use in their tasks.

Knowing which register to use in accordance with the written task. Depending on the person they are writing to, the reason and the genre, one should clearly distinguish whether to complete the task in a formal, informal or neutral registers. Using inappropriate register leads to incorrect addressing of the receiver. When teaching students some writing principles, lecturers first require them to always and first of all be clear on who the addressee is going to be. The important role of writer-reader interaction in a piece of writing is characteristic to gender-approach used in ESP (Luu Trong Tuan, 2011). This helps know what register to use, (language formality), how to express oneself, select appropriate content and how to address the reader.

Sentence constitution and complexity. Students often have issues in compiling complex sentences and when they do, they are more prone to mistakes. In order to overcome this issue and to engage them in practice, they are asked to rewrite paragraphs to come up with as many sentence combinations as possible. This way they revise grammar and exploit the variety of words/terms.

Concerning subject-related terminology, they can freely express themselves because the main focus while studying ESP is vocabulary. They are already fitted with the specific terms to be used and ready to put them into practice. Terminology is of paramount importance to any field of study, besides engineering, and it constitutes the main difference in terms of linguistics to all disciplines such as medicine, sports, economics, law etc. Choosing the right word in the right context, in either oral or written communication matters a lot when studying/using ESP, be it engineering or any of the other fields above mentioned.

Skipping cultural differences. Most of the time learners take it for granted that they will be writing to Albanian recipients, however, this is not always the case. Along with globalization and online working, nowadays it is very common to work for international or foreign companies/institutions. It is required by work ethics to always be respectful towards other co-workers who in this case might come from other cultures and traditions, thus while writing it is necessary to avoid stereotyping and to consider other people's perspectives.

Spelling written words in English is not a problem for our students even though they are used to the phonetic character of Albanian. However, there is also one other thing that comes to help in this case, which is the spell check feature on their devices. This feature truly plays an important role in helping the student distinguish a mistake and correct it.

The outcome of all writing instructions can be easily seen in the writing performance of the future employees/engineers along with the writing performance during their studies. However, such input can only be achieved via a longitudinal study which could be taken into consideration in another article.

## 8. Conclusions

Writing skills in English constitute a huge advantage to students and future employees/employers due to the inevitable interaction/ communication among people around the world and the English language status of being 'an international language', 'a lingua franca' and 'the official language of correspondence' to many educational institutions, organizations, businesses, corporates, governments etc.; due to globalization, migration, internationality that has placed people studying in international educational institutions or working for international instances; and above all, the inescapable presence of writing activity in any stage of a person's life, from early childhood, until retirement.

From the survey results, both categories inquired (lecturers and students), were fully aware of and positive on the importance of acquiring and implementing writing skills in ESP classrooms. The most frequent difficulties our students encounter when learning writing skills in English are: the organization of ideas and acknowledgement of the format and structure per each written task. Unlike other context, vocabulary poses the least problematic aspect, since it is thoroughly covered during the semester and a considerable part of the textbook activities are about the lexicon.

Depending on what the lecturer wants to achieve in an English writing class, the students' need, the language level, the duration of the subject, knowledge of writing skills in Albanian, it is the combination of all these elements that helps the teacher decide which approach to use when teaching writing in English. From experience, there is not one good approach and less good one. Sometimes a combination of approaches does the work best.

## 9. Limitations

It is a study that takes into consideration a certain group of students. The findings cannot apply to any English-speaking student from other branches. It concerns a certain category of ESP students

(Information Technology Engineering, Telecommunication Engineering and Electronics Engineering). In another research, the target group could be wider than the one in this study.

It is also limited to a certain location. Teaching and learning depend a lot on the environment, the social context, age group, background, and native language spoken by both categories. Consequently, another setting could lead to other results.

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## Appendix A: The research questions for the students

RQ1. How good are you at writing in Albanian?

- a) Not good b) good c) very good

RQ 2. How good are you at writing in English?

- a) not good b) good c) very good

RQ 3. What do you think might help you in learning how to write in English language?

- a) writing tasks during foreign language classes  
b) teacher's feedback  
c) writing homework  
d) additional writing lessons  
e) none of the above  
f) other (please specify)

RQ 4. Do you read teacher's comments in your writing tasks?

- a) sometimes b) always c) never

RQ 5. What do you lack in writing?

- a) writing skill in Albanian  
b) lack of grammatical structures  
c) lack of linguistic structures  
d) organization of ideas  
e) lack of terminology in the respective field of study  
f) other (please specify)

RQ 6. Do you think the writing skills you learn in Albanian might help you when writing in a foreign language?

- a) Yes b) No c) Not sure

RQ7. Does knowledge of terminology of your field of study help you in writing tasks?

- a) Yes b) No c) Do not know

RQ8. How important do you think writing skills are for your studies?

- a) not important b) important c) very important  
RQ 9. How important do you think writing skills are for your future career?  
a)not important b) important c) very important  
RQ 10. How often do you use AI when you do writing tasks?  
a)never b)rarely c)sometimes d)always

#### **Appendix B:** The research questions for the lecturers

- RQ 1.How would you rate your students' writing skills in English?  
a )poor b)average c)good  
RQ 2.How often do you do writing task in class?  
a)rarely b)sometimes c)always d)never  
RQ 3.What do students lack the most in writing?  
a)writing skill in Albanian  
b)lack of grammatical structures  
c)lack of linguistic structures  
d)organization of ideas  
e) lack of terminology in the respective field of study  
f) other (please specify)  
RQ 4.Does knowledge of their field of study terminology help them in writing tasks?  
a)yes b)no c)not sure  
RQ 5.How important do you think writing skills are to the students for their studies?  
a)not important b)important c)very important  
RQ 6.How important do you think writing skills are to the students for their future career?  
Answer given in a linear scale (1-not important- 5- very important)  
RQ 7.Does the ESP textbook you use provide enough space for writing?  
Answer given in a linear scale (1-not much- 5- very much)  
RQ 8.Which writing approach do you mainly use?  
a)process approach b) genre-based approach c)other  
RQ 9.Do you think AI in general and writing assistants such as Grammarly etc. are 'contributors' in writing tasks?  
a)yes b)no c)maybe