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Workshop academic language

20th November 2024

Welcome back!



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Academic Language

What is it?

What is the problem?



Academic Language

Do you recognise this?





Do you recognise this?

Gaps in academic vocabulary -> writing
Gaps in idiomatic speech -> take things too literally
Lack of cultural capital
Unfamiliar with conventions in academic writing

Excellent playground Albanian/English
Informal tone vs formal language
Good topic knowledge but difficulty showing it in exams
Throw information at a question



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Key issues

- Lack of Albanian/English as a second language
- Lack of Albanian/English **formal** language
- Hidden gaps
- Risk of underachievement
- Language acquisition is a structured process



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Subject / Academic Language



Subject language



The mother of all flu pandemics

The **flu virus** is a survivor. It must continually **evolve** in order to evade its biggest threat - the **immune system**.

Mammals, including humans, make **antibodies**, which recognise and target the virus. "So it has to keep **mutating** to escape being destroyed," explains David Morens from the US National Institute of **Allergy and Infectious Diseases**.

Despite these tactics, most of the **strains** that make people ill during the eponymous "**flu season**" are sufficiently similar to infections most of us have been exposed to before.

Our immune systems recognise common parts that these new strains share with their **ancestors**, and can launch an effective **defence**.

Every so often, however, a different strain emerges and infects people - one that contains new **genes** from an **animal** virus.

Its novelty is its most effective weapon against our immune defences.

And if it is infectious enough to find its way easily into a new **host** - perhaps via an innocent sneeze - it can spread rapidly and cause a global **epidemic** - or **pandemic**.

What does subject language look like?

Examples

Common scientific words

This may not be target language for the lesson – prior knowledge of meaning may be assumed

Mammal
Allergy
Infections

Ancestors
Animal

Disease

More technical scientific words

This may not be the target language for the lesson

Evolution
Flu
Mutating

Antibodies
Immune system
Genes

Technical words with similar meanings, which need to be understood to be different.

This will be the language that will enable the precision necessary for higher achievement.

Epidemic, Pandemic,
Flu, Flu season

Specialist words with different meanings in science to their everyday context.

This language presents the challenge of preserving multiple meanings of the same word(s)

Virus
Strain
Host





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Check your textbooks

Make a list of subjects words

How do students learn these?



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Academic words

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Academic language

- Not in the most frequent 2,000 words
- Formal (not technical) vocabulary cutting across a range of subject disciplines (e.g. *authority, define, assume, legislate, layer*)
- Word families
- Headword 'access' (family words – accessed, accessibility, accessing, accessible, inaccessible)



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Check your textbooks

Make a list of academic words

Compare lists

Condense to one list



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How to teach academic language

1. Present
2. Give meaning
3. Consolidate
4. Check



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Activity

- Make an international duo.
- Teach your colleague an academic word in your language.
- Use the four steps.



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