
THE STRATEGIES OF USING INTERMEDIATE AND UPPER-INTERMEDIATE VOCABULARY IN ACADEMIC WRITING

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ABSTRACT:

In light of these insights provided by developing writers, the following applications are proposed to raise learner awareness and provide meaningful and engaging practice. Though they have been designed in light of the needs and goals of learners preparing to enter the university, some are relevant to other populations, such as international students already pursuing a degree in an English-speaking country and high school students. For learners in matriculated classes, the extent to which they are able to make use of these techniques may depend on their instructors and their own ability and motivation to work autonomously. A wide range of activities and games are highly recommended to help learners develop academic vocabulary use in all four skills.

Introduction. Academic writing requires precision and clarity, and a strong vocabulary is key to achieving both. But how do you move beyond basic words and effectively incorporate more sophisticated vocabulary into your academic work? This article explores strategies for using intermediate and upper-intermediate vocabulary to elevate your writing and impress your readers. The academic vocabulary these participants used most effectively tended to be words or phrases they had turned to for many of their written assignments. Students 6, 8, and 9 mentioned learning the utility of linking adverbs in all types of essays. Student 6 stated, “[I try to use] connectors and transitions. They’re already in my mind because I have been practicing since January.” Others remembered exactly when and where they had learned a word they tended to use and reuse in their writing.

Before you even think about cramming in big words, consider the context of your writing. What are you trying to convey? Who is your audience? Using advanced vocabulary inappropriately can make your writing sound forced and unnatural. Focus on choosing words that fit the specific topic and tone of your work. Actively build your vocabulary by reading extensively within your field of study. Pay attention to how authors use specific words and phrases to express complex ideas. Keep a vocabulary journal to jot down new words and their definitions. Thesaurus tools can be helpful, but use them with caution. Ensure the synonym you choose truly fits the context and maintains the intended

nuance. While it's tempting to show off your vocabulary, prioritize precision over showing off. Don't use a complex word when a simpler one will do. Your goal is to enhance clarity, not obscure meaning. For instance, instead of "utilize," consider "use." Instead of "ascertain," perhaps "determine" is a better fit. Intermediate and upper-intermediate vocabulary often involves words with subtle shades of meaning. Take the time to understand these nuances. For example, "suggest" and "imply" have similar meanings but carry distinct connotations [1]. Using the wrong word can alter the entire message of your sentence. Don't limit yourself to single words. Intermediate and upper-intermediate vocabulary also includes phrases and collocations that can add fluency and sophistication to your writing. For instance, instead of "very important," consider "of paramount importance." Instead of "bad result," try "adverse consequences." Like any skill, using advanced vocabulary effectively takes practice. Incorporate new words and phrases into your writing assignments, essays, and even emails. Findings from the interviews suggest that all nine participants, regardless of performance on this essay or previous standardized tests, recognized the importance of academic vocabulary in composition. Student 2, for example, explained that he uses more formal words in his essays than when speaking with friends "because that will help me write in advance level." Many of the interviewees indicated that when they make revisions to their writing, it is often to replace a word or expression with something more academic. Student 7 stated she would go back to her essay to change a term because she "can think about other academic words." Similarly, Student 4 explained he would revise his work if he "found another academic word can describe what I want to say." Student 5 also changes a word "if it's too informal." When asked about specific words they had chosen for the present essay, the interviewees emphasized the importance of register. Student 3 claimed that he chose the word constraints because he thought it was academic [2]. Student 6 used the word frivolous for the same reason, though it is, in fact, not on the AWL. When interviewees were asked about the weakest and strongest parts of the essay they had written for this study, register was clearly something they bore in mind. Student 1 thought the best part of his essay was "using more complex words," and Student 5 mentioned her "advanced vocabulary." In contrast, Student 7 thought her "word choice maybe not so good," and Student 8 considered inappropriate lexical register to be one of the weakest parts of her essay, which was, in her words, "not so academic." Some of the learners were quick to point out what they perceived to be obstacles in their writing. The most common reason given was time constraints [3]. Student 8, who complained that the vocabulary in her essay was not sufficiently academic, indicated that she was not pleased with her sentence We cannot make sure the virtual world for people is good or bad and had wanted to change it, but had not had enough time. Students 1, 2, 3, 4, 6, and 7 also mentioned time as being an important factor in whether they go back to check word choice or attempt to find more academic terms. Student 6 correctly cited however and beneficial as examples of academic words, but his overall AWL Use on this essay was the lowest (2.07%), and he believes this is because, when pressed for time, he opts for the first word that comes to him, regardless of the register. Students placed at pre-intermediate level can understand sentences and frequently used expressions related to areas of most immediate relevance (e.g. very basic personal and family information, shopping, local geography, employment). They can communicate in simple and routine tasks requiring a

simple and direct exchange of information on familiar and routine matters. They can describe in simple terms aspects of their background, immediate environment and matters in areas of immediate need.

Students placed at Intermediate level can understand the main points of clear standard input on familiar matters regularly encountered in work, school, leisure, etc. They can deal with most situations likely to arise whilst travelling in an area where the language is spoken and can produce a simple connected text on topics, which are familiar, or of personal interest. They can describe experiences and events, dreams, hopes and ambitions and briefly give reasons and explanations for opinions and plans. Students placed at Upper-Intermediate Level should be able to understand the main ideas of complex texts on both concrete and abstract topics, including technical discussions in their field of specialization [4]. They can interact with a degree of fluency and spontaneity that makes regular interaction with native speakers quite possible without much strain for either party. They can produce clear, detailed text on a wide range of subjects and explain a viewpoint on a topical issue giving the advantages and disadvantages of various options. Vocabulary is the knowledge of words and word meanings. As Steven Stahl (2005) puts it, "Vocabulary knowledge is knowledge; the knowledge of a word not only implies a definition, but also implies how that word fits into the world." Vocabulary knowledge is not something that can ever be fully mastered; it is something that expands and deepens over the course of a lifetime. Instruction in vocabulary involves far more than looking up words in a dictionary and using the words in a sentence. Vocabulary is acquired incidentally through indirect exposure to words and intentionally through explicit instruction in specific words and word-learning strategies. According to the National Reading Panel (2000), explicit instruction of vocabulary is highly effective. To develop vocabulary intentionally, students should be explicitly taught both specific words and word-learning strategies. To deepen students' knowledge of word meanings, specific word instruction should be robust (Beck et al., 2002). Seeing vocabulary in rich contexts provided by authentic texts, rather than in isolated vocabulary drills, produces robust vocabulary learning (National Reading Panel, 2000). Such instruction often does not begin with a definition, for the ability to give a definition is often the result of knowing what the word means [5]. Rich and robust vocabulary instruction goes beyond definitional knowledge; it gets students actively engaged in using and thinking about word meanings and in creating relationships among words. Research shows that there are more words to be learned than can be directly taught in even the most ambitious program of vocabulary instruction [6]. Explicit instruction in word-learning strategies gives students tools for independently determining the meanings of unfamiliar words that have not been explicitly introduced in class. Since students encounter so many unfamiliar words in their reading, any help provided by such strategies can be useful.

For ELLs whose language shares cognates with English, cognate awareness is also an important strategy. Dictionary use teaches students about multiple word meanings, as well as the importance of choosing the appropriate definition to fit the particular context. Morphemic analysis is the process of deriving a word's meaning by analyzing its meaningful parts, or morphemes. Such word parts include root words, prefixes, and suffixes. Contextual analysis involves inferring the meaning of an unfamiliar word by

scrutinizing the text surrounding it. Instruction in contextual analysis generally involves teaching students to employ both generic and specific types of context clues.

Conclusion. The more you use them, the more natural they will become. Seek feedback from professors, writing tutors, or peers. Ask them to point out instances where your vocabulary choices could be improved or where simpler language might be more effective. Constructive criticism is invaluable for refining your writing style. By following these strategies, you can confidently integrate intermediate and upper-intermediate vocabulary into your academic writing. Remember, the goal is to communicate effectively and elegantly, showcasing your understanding of the subject matter while maintaining clarity and precision. Word-learning strategies include dictionary use, morphemic analysis, and contextual analysis.

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