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InForm

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The vocabulary of
academic speaking:
an interdisciplinary
perspective

Academic vocabulary in
the subject classroom:
Raising teachers'
awareness through
CLIL reflective practice

Using Moodle's glossary
activity to promote the
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Specialist Knowledge:
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Approach

This issue:

**Working with Words: Supporting
understanding of discipline-specific
vocabulary in IFPs**



InForm

Conference 2017



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INNOVATIVE IDEAS FOR ENHANCED STUDENT ENGAGEMENT

We are pleased to announce the eighth annual InForm Conference will take place at the University of Reading.

The event will include presentations and posters on themes related to international foundation and pathway programmes and provide an opportunity for interaction and sharing of practice with colleagues from the IFP community.

Saturday 15 July 2017

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Conference fee: £60

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Speaker proposals are invited from professionals involved in the delivery of international foundation and pathway programmes. As usual, the focus should be on issues associated with teaching and learning in this sector and address the conference theme. Sessions need to appeal to tutors and course managers across the curriculum.

The deadline for speaker proposals is **30 April 2017**.

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Mark Peace
Chair of the InForm Editorial Board

From the Editorial Board...

Issue 16 of InForm takes on the theme of the 2016 InForm Conference Working with Words: Supporting Understanding of Discipline-Specific Vocabulary in IFPs. The conference was hosted by the Foundation Centre at Durham University on 16 July featuring a range of stimulating talks and posters and we would like to thank all involved for an excellent day. Impressions of a number of the talks can be found in the article InFormal Reflections of the 2016 InForm Conference on p21.

We begin with articles from speakers at the 2016 conference, opening with the first keynote speaker Michael McCarthy, who demonstrates how evidence from spoken academic corpora can help to understand the lexicon of spoken academic interaction. Sandra Strigel then reports on a project in which academic tutors reflect on the role of language in their classrooms. Will Hutton goes on to describe a teaching and learning initiative in which students use Moodle's glossary feature to acquire historical and political terms. Following this, Rina Fokel de Vries and Veronica Raffin describe the 'specialist-specialist' model for vocabulary acquisition on IFPs. Lucy Watson and Elwyn Edwards then explain how a new content-based module called 'Global Society' is developing students' academic skills.

Still keeping with the conference theme Michael Bowles reports on an app being developed at Zayed University in the UAE for learning academic vocabulary. And then, in a departure from the conference theme, Rachel Dunn reports on a project introducing problem-based learning into a Foundation History course that also involves public engagement. Finally, we have two articles joining *InFormal Reflections of the InForm Conference 2016* in the *InFormal* section. Hannah Gurr gives a personal account of developing and teaching an English for Mathematics course and Michael Groves questions the move towards subject specific language teaching, promoting the value in using English classes to prepare students to acquire subject specific vocabulary themselves.

We now look forward to the InForm Conference 2017 at Reading on July 15 which is themed Innovative ideas for enhanced student engagement and encourage you to send in speaker proposals and to register. To submit an article or letter for the next Issue of InForm or with any query email inform@reading.ac.uk. Further details on p27.

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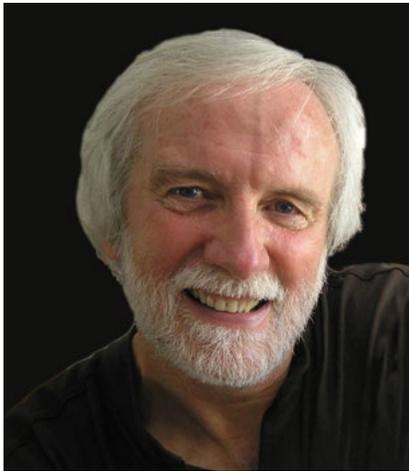
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The vocabulary of academic speaking: an interdisciplinary perspective

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While academic writing tends to orient towards genres (e.g. lab report, critical essay), successful academic speaking requires control of a vocabulary of interaction which is related to academic speech events (e.g. seminar, PG supervision, oral presentation). In this talk, using evidence from spoken academic corpora, we look at how best to understand the lexicon of spoken academic interaction. Corpus evidence suggests that academic speaking is a delicate balance between items shared with the vocabulary of everyday, non-academic interaction along with a pragmatically specialised vocabulary which has both cross-disciplinary and subject-specific implications.

Introduction

For anyone interested in identifying the nature and characteristics of spoken language in EAP contexts, one question that it behoves us to ask is: To what extent is spoken academic English like or unlike general spoken English? In particular, if we accept that everyday conversation is a benchmark against which other types of speaking may be effectively gauged, how does spoken EAP compare with conversation? The use of conversation as a benchmark has long been accepted in the field of conversation analysis (Drew and Heritage, 1992 p.19). Differences between conversation and more institutional types of talk generally relate to the institution's goals – in the case of EAP, the transmission of knowledge and the fostering of critical thinking and creativity through officially sanctioned events (lectures, seminars, classes, tutorials, etc.). These events place restrictions on the available grammatical, lexical and pragmatic repertoire. Within such events, we must also ask the question whether EAP speaking is characterised by disciplinary differences or whether commonalities across disciplines prove a more fruitful avenue to explore.

Such questions are best explored through the analysis of corpus data, and it is only relatively recently that spoken corpora collected in academic settings have become widely available. The EAP tradition was long dominated by the availability of written texts and some of its most cherished paradigms can be traced back to the early days of the ESP movement in the 1970s and 1980s and the growing influence in the 1990s and early 2000s of approaches that looked beyond the sentence, such as register analysis, discourse analysis and genre analysis (Hewings 2002; Paltridge 2013). Spoken corpora allow us to ask somewhat different questions, questions

generated by research into areas such as spoken grammar and spoken vocabulary and the interactive dimensions of teaching and learning in face-to-face (and, increasingly, online) situations.

Spoken EAP corpora

Spoken data are often difficult to collect owing to practical limitations and, in EAP contexts, institutional restrictions. Nonetheless, available spoken academic corpora such as MICASE (<http://quod.lib.umich.edu/m/micase/>) and BASE (www2.warwick.ac.uk/fac/soc/al/research/collections/base) offer great potential for researchers. Other spoken EAP corpora are reviewed in Nesi (2008). In the present paper, MICASE and BASE will be the primary sources of evidence and a social conversational sub-corpus of the CANCODE corpus (for details see McCarthy 1998) will provide a benchmark, as referred to in the introduction. To investigate possible disciplinary differences, I refer to three sub-corpora of MICASE, matched in terms of numbers of words, with data from Arts and Humanities, Engineering and Biology.

Broad-brush analysis

Two types of analyses can be achieved with corpus software: broad-brush analyses, where the data are looked at from a bird's-eye view in an attempt to gauge overall similarities and differences, and narrow-focus analyses, where particular aspects of the language are investigated. Questions I shall illustrate here are: How much do the MICASE sub-corpora share with the whole corpus? How much do these sub-corpora share with non-academic, everyday conversation?

Of the three sub-corpora, Arts and Humanities shares the greatest number of words with the MICASE corpus as a whole, while Engineering

has the lowest number of words in common. This should perhaps not surprise us, since the Arts and Humanities are strongly argument- and discussion-based and draw more heavily on the vocabulary that structures all thinking and intellectual investigation, vocabulary which is certainly not absent from the sciences and engineering, but which is also supplemented by a large amount of technical nomenclature. One conclusion might be that, for EAP in the Arts and Humanities sector, the corpus as a whole will be useful, while EAP for engineers might benefit more from closer examination of the specific sub-corpus.

The broad-brush comparison with everyday conversation yields a similar picture, with the Arts and Humanities data showing a greater overlap with non-academic conversation than the other two sub-corpora. This could perhaps suggest that early training in general conversational speaking would be an especially useful grounding for students wishing to study in the Arts and Humanities.

Narrow-focus analyses

Analyses with a narrower focus typically rely on frequency lists and/or keyword lists, which provide a way into more specific investigations of individual words or phrases. A frequency list is just that: a list of words ranked in order of frequency, enabling the researcher to get at the high-frequency, core words of a particular domain or, by the same token, to filter out infrequent or rare words when prioritising vocabulary for teaching and learning. A keyword list is a more sophisticated instrument, providing a list of words occurring significantly frequently in a corpus, thus offering a picture of the 'fingerprint' or 'DNA' of particular types of language. Table 1 is an example of how the two types of list can differ. In this comparison, all of the ticked words are very frequent in academic speaking, but only right and okay are keywords. What this tells us is that words such as I, you, well and know are not any more significantly frequent in EAP speaking than in everyday conversation (for example, EAP and conversation share a similar frequency of use of you know). Right and okay may tell us much about the management functions of EAP speaking, with right and okay functioning as classic discourse markers used by lecturers and teachers to organise the lecture, class, etc.

Table 1: Frequent words versus keywords in EAP speaking

	Frequent?	Keyword?
I	✓	✗
you	✓	✗
er	✓	✗
well	✓	✗
erm	✓	✗
right	✓	✓
okay	✓	✓
know	✓	✗

Keywords are often significant because they form part of high-frequency chunks in speaking. Two sample keywords from the top 100 in MICASE are terms and sense. Both form the basis of very frequent chunks which include in terms of, in the sense that and Does that make sense? In terms of is ten times more frequent in the BASE corpus than in everyday conversation and is thus of central importance for students in the comprehension and production of spoken academic discourse, while Does that make sense? is another example of the interactive management and monitoring of learning that teachers undertake in academic contexts. The chunks are often unequally distributed across disciplines. For example, in terms of has some 47% fewer occurrences in Physical Sciences and Engineering than in Social Sciences and Humanities data. Conversely, Does that make sense? occurs almost twice as frequently in Physical Sciences and Engineering as in Humanities.

Conclusion

This brief outline has shown some of the great potential of corpus analysis applied to EAP speaking. Good spoken corpora such as MICASE and BASE can not only provide basic information on frequency and keyness, but can also break the data down into disciplinary areas and types of interaction (e.g. monologue versus interactive talk). Such analyses can provide powerful evidence for materials writers and for EAP teachers both in terms of broad approaches to EAP teaching and more specific discipline-oriented needs. The various types of analysis, broad-brush and narrow focus, taken together give us a more nuanced picture of spoken EAP which enriches our understanding of this complex area of language education.

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Academic vocabulary in the subject classroom: Raising teachers' awareness through CLIL reflective practice

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This article reports on a small scale research project conducted with subject teachers on an international foundation programme (IFP). To explore teachers' attitudes and beliefs regarding the fostering of language skills in their classrooms, data was collected through interviews and lesson recordings. Based on these findings, a workshop series founded on the principles of Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) was designed that invited teachers to reflect on their practice and to share ideas how they could incorporate a greater language focus. This article will specifically report on one key area of the workshops, the development of academic vocabulary.

One challenge faced by many subject teachers is how to foster language development in their classrooms. While one might argue that language teaching is the sole responsibility of English language professionals, in reality the distinction between subject and language learning is not as clear-cut as both go hand in hand. Some subject curricula might even include such aims as "developing subject-specific language skills". However, as most subject teachers are not English language specialists, it can be difficult to decide how to deal with language related issues in the content classroom: What should be focused on and what kind of learning and teaching strategies should be used?

The answer might lie in the pedagogical framework known as "Content and Language Integrated Learning" (CLIL). It is an approach widely used in Europe where more and more schools and universities teach curricular subjects in English. CLIL acknowledges that most students in such settings – just like on many IFPs – are not yet proficient English language users and emphasis is therefore put on a dual focus of learning: "The key issue is that the learner is gaining new knowledge about the 'non-language' subject while encountering, using and learning the foreign language." (European Commission for Multilingualism, 2008). While CLIL can be put into practice in different ways (Coyle et al., 2010), it is of interest to IFP professionals as it highlights the subject teachers' role in discipline specific language learning and their need to plan and deliver lessons that take students' linguistic abilities and limitations into account. However, experiences of CLIL teachers also tell us that this can be challenging – especially if the teacher has no previous experience of language teaching – and therefore appropriate training is needed if

such an integrated approach is to be successful (Marsh et al., n.d; Milne et al., 2010). This involves raising teachers' awareness of how language is used to represent content knowledge and how it affects learning tasks, how opportunities can be created to generate discussions and exploration of language, and of the importance of developing classroom communication and interactional skills that foster language learning (Llinares et al., 2012; Johnson, 2009 p. 48).

In an attempt to raise such language awareness and to introduce a group of IFP content teachers to CLIL, a small-scale research project was undertaken over the course of two semesters. Seven subject teachers from a range of backgrounds (e.g. Economics, Management, Architecture etc.) and programmes (foundation, international year one, pre-masters) participated; none of them held any formal English language teaching qualification. The project consisted of two phases: Firstly, focus group and semi-structured interviews were conducted to explore teachers' attitudes and beliefs towards the fostering of English language skills in their classrooms. Additionally, observational data was collected to gain an insight into their teaching practice. The data was then analysed using a thematic approach and the findings fed into the second phase of the project, the design of a series of reflective practice workshops. Each workshop provided a brief theoretical overview of how the issues raised by the teachers might be addressed by CLIL, followed by reflective activities to enable the teachers to relate theory to practice. Using data from their own lessons (in the form of transcripts or audio recordings), the teachers discussed in pairs or small groups how they had addressed the issue in question and to what

extent they felt their teaching had fostered the development of language skills. This was followed by reflections on whether and how they could introduce a greater language focus by implementing CLIL strategies as an alternative approach in the future.

Amongst a range of issues, one key area of interest that evolved from the phase one data collection was the fostering of academic vocabulary. Although the teachers had described their responsibilities mainly in terms of subject-related content and skills, there was an acknowledgment that this also involved language. One teacher for example stated: "I don't see myself as an English teacher but as a person who needs to teach students about relevant words...or phrases that are appropriate within that [subject]". Subject-specific vocabulary was considered important as it would provide the students with professional and academic status and was seen as a key indicator for achievement. Yet, teachers also felt strongly that such vocabulary was often "obtrusive" or "inaccessible" to students. They were also keen to point out that the acquisition of such words should go beyond mere "parroting" and that students would need to be able to demonstrate understanding of the underlying concepts.

While there was consensus in the focus groups that students should indeed be able to use academic language confidently, the lesson recordings and interviews revealed that teachers tackled the teaching of such vocabulary very differently in practice. During the planning of their lessons, some had thought specifically about the words and phrases they wanted their students to use, while others commented more generally that students should use "academic" language. Equally, some teachers included activities to allow students to practise the new words, for example through partner or group work, while others delivered their lessons in a more teacher-centred way, involving mini-lectures with little opportunity for student talk.

Based on these findings, a series of reflective workshops was designed with two sessions specifically dealing with the issue of academic vocabulary. The first focused on the accessibility of academic language and the difference between "horizontal" (i.e. everyday) and "vertical" (academic) language as part of regular classroom discourse (Llinares et al., 2012 p. 38). During the reflective parts of the workshops the teachers examined their lesson transcripts in light of such questions as: What kind of language are you drawing on (horizontal / vertical)? To what extent is it accessible? How

could you make it more accessible? This led to discussions about how to find a "balance" between the two types of language and how to utilise one type of language to foster the other. It also triggered some teachers to reflect on their assumptions when dealing with international students. Reporting back after the workshop, one teacher said it had made her think about the level of understanding she could reasonably expect. Consequently, she rewrote parts of a lecture to make it more accessible as she realised she had probably assumed "too much" in the past.

Secondly, we discussed the importance of a dialogic teaching approach to create opportunities for communication and interaction as core principles of CLIL (Llinares et al., 2012 p. 52). "Transmitting" knowledge and providing students with academic words is not enough – teachers need to plan their activities in such a way that students are linguistically and cognitively engaged. This often involves some form of dialogic activity that allows common understanding of subject knowledge to be created. At the same time students benefit linguistically as relevant vocabulary is being used and general language skills practised. Again, teachers were invited to examine excerpts from their transcripts and asked questions such as: Who talks most / least in my lesson? How long are student and teacher utterances? Is there interaction between students? Who uses academic language (teacher or student)? While some teachers were happy with the dialogic nature of their lessons, others highlighted the need for more student engagement. When asked if they would do anything differently, all teachers came up with alternative ways to embrace a greater language focus. Ideas included the use of pair work prior to plenary discussions to help students build confidence, and the provision of academic key word cards as prompts during presentations.

Later in the workshop series we returned to the issue of academic vocabulary as part of the wider area of classroom communication and interaction. Although the teachers had stated in the interviews how important it was that students did not just "parrot" but were able to explain underlying concepts in their own words, the transcripts revealed that students often "got away" with repeating individual words and phrases, while teachers took it on themselves to provide explanations. We thus discussed the importance of managing the classroom talk in such a way that the onus was on the students to explain, justify or exemplify their answers for the benefit of content and language learning.

At the end of the workshop series, the

teachers had examined a range of language related issues. In their feedback, many positively highlighted that they now had a better understanding of the role of language in their classrooms and particularly how to manage classroom talk more beneficially. While all said they had gained valuable insights into their practice, some doubted to what extent the adoption of a "full" CLIL approach was really possible, given the time constraints on a busy IFP. Others questioned whether a greater language focus would lead to a "simplification" of the subject – a concern refuted by other participants who felt CLIL was about making content more accessible, not simpler. This discussion demonstrates another key benefit of the workshops: They provided the space for open discussion and professional reflection on content and language learning, on theoretical issues and classroom practice. Such a communal space is important for any educational setting, but particularly in an area such as the international foundation programmes where no formal teacher training programmes exist and professionals looking for pedagogical guidance on how to best support international students still have limited resources to turn to.

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Using Moodle's glossary activity to promote the acquisition of historical and political terms on an International Foundation Programme

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This article outlines some of the specific challenges associated with the teaching and learning of key terms for history and politics. In particular, contestability is a marked feature of many key terms in these fields and is central to building the more sophisticated understanding demanded in a university context. It describes how Moodle's glossary feature has been used on Queen Mary's IFP to support the knowledge and understanding of discipline-specific terms in history and politics. Although the first instance of its use saw very limited take-up, the author argues that considered use of the glossary activity can make a useful contribution to promoting vocabulary acquisition.

The context

This article describes a small-scale project intended to encourage a group of International Foundation Programme (IFP) students to make use of the collaborative glossary function within Moodle in order to strengthen their knowledge and understanding of political and historical terms. Queen Mary University of London's IFP in Humanities and Social Sciences attracts students who are looking for a demanding foundation programme which offers a broad curriculum in preparation for their undergraduate degree. There are two cohorts and many students have received an English-medium high school education prior to the programme. Consequently, in general, English language skills are high. The philosophy of the programme is very much to link it to the overall ethos of Queen Mary where there is an emphasis in fostering certain key skills and attributes which transcend disciplinary confines, articulated through the Queen Mary Graduate Attributes. Of note to this particular project is the expectation that a Queen Mary student will engage critically with knowledge and have clear communication skills.

'More difficult than physics' – why learning historical and political terms is challenging

International Foundation Programme students at Queen Mary take three subjects chosen from a suite of ten in addition to the core modules in English Language and Study Skills. The objective of this project was to promote the use of Moodle's glossary function as a means of encouraging students to take ownership of some of the essential terms in two subjects on the IFP: International Relations and Politics (IRP) and History. In both subjects, clearly, student mastery of key terms is concomitant with success. For example, a successful student of history on the IFP would need to know what the Treaty of Versailles was as well as be able to articulate its significance. Equally clearly, however, is the fact that the significance of historical events or phenomena is contestable and varies markedly depending on perspective. This contestability of key terms is especially marked in IRP. Indeed, Heywood notes that 'Concepts have a particular importance for students of politics. It is no exaggeration to suggest that political argument often boils down to a struggle over the legitimate meaning of terms.' (2000: 3). An example of such a contested concept which students studying IRP on the IFP wrestle with is that of the state, which, depending on differing visions of state function, can be seen as synonymous with government or even society, but which can also refer to a component part of a federal entity. Additionally, students need to be sensitive to the evolution of the concept of the state over time.

In considering the challenges faced by students in both disciplines, a number of features can be identified. While language constraints may hamper mastery of key terms for some students, it is also important to note that students need to be sensitive to the fact that ideological frameworks differ over time and space. They also need to be attuned to the distinction between the informative (referential) function of political language and its persuasive (conative) uses (Jakobson, 1960). Studying IRP and history on an IFP is also likely to introduce a new geographical perspective which may be a challenge. In addition, the sheer number of key terms marks a step-up from high school studies. Further, to a greater extent than in the school context students are encouraged, indeed expected, to grapple with this contestability (Connolly, 1993). In doing so both orally and in writing students need to apply some of the key functional skills that are typically stressed in EAP teaching, skills such as comparing and contrasting, highlighting connections, evaluating and placing emphasis and reporting what others say. History students on Queen Mary's IFP, for example, study the events of May 1968 in France, which is a good example of the type of layered, contradictory milieu central to historical study where an understanding of contradictory perspectives is crucial in order to make sense of a cavalcade of historical events, phenomena and figures.

Successful vocabulary acquisition

Research evidence suggests that vocabulary acquisition occurs most effectively in a conducive environment which is language and word-rich and which consequently fosters word consciousness. This process has been explored extensively in the work of Camille Blachowicz when looking at vocabulary acquisition for schoolchildren in the United States. Blachowicz et al (2006) found that vocabulary acquisition occurs most fruitfully when there is intentional teaching of selected words with multiple types of information about each word together with opportunities for repeated exposure, use and practice and that this needs to be combined with the teaching of word-learning strategies that give students the ability to learn new words independently. These principles are in evidence in textbooks used in the teaching of IRP and history to undergraduates, which highlight key terms through the use of marginal definitions and textboxes.

The screenshot shows a Moodle glossary entry titled "The July Crisis" posted on Wednesday, 22 June 2016, at 10:36 AM. The entry text reads: "The July Crisis refers to the escalation of events in July 1914 following the assassination of the Austro-Hungarian Archduke and heir to the imperial throne in Sarajevo that ultimately led to the outbreak of World War One. The complex network of alliances and treaties between the various European states magnified the impact of this political assassination beyond the Balkans." Below the text are two images: a historical illustration of the assassination in Sarajevo and a map titled "KARTE VON EUROPA IM JAHRE 1914" showing the network of alliances between European states. Below the images is a "Comments (2)" section with two entries: one suggesting the addition of another image showing the spark of the crisis, and another thanking the user for the suggestion and noting that the map shows the perspective of the Central Powers, including Great Britain and Ireland.

Figure 1
An example glossary entry showing how images can be included and how comments appear

Using Moodle's glossary on an IFP

The hypothesis in this small-scale project was that the glossary feature in Moodle could be used to supplement the textbook and classroom activity in order to create an additional space where students could strengthen their understanding of key terms through writing their own glossary entries and that this process would be in line with Blachowicz et al's principles for successful language learning. The glossary activity in Moodle allows participants to create and maintain a list of definitions. Entries can include embedded links, images and embedded media content (Figure 1). Entries can be browsed alphabetically or by category and the glossary can be set so that entries are approved by default or require approval by a teacher before they are viewable by everyone. When auto-linking is enabled, entries will be automatically linked where the concept words appear elsewhere in the course area. Comment on entries from course participants can be enabled and it is also possible to allow entries to be rated. The glossary can also be linked to a block to the side of the course area. The glossary function has a range of uses, for example it can be used as a 'getting to know you' space where new students add their name and personal details, but in this small-scale project the purpose was to promote its use by students as a collaborative bank of key terms.

In terms of what occurred in practice in the classroom, the first iteration of this project with a group of January-start students was very far from a success with very limited engagement. The project was introduced to students and they were encouraged to contribute with the exhortation that it would consolidate their understanding and also contribute to their success in upcoming examinations. Appeals were also made to students' sense of collaborative endeavour. In informal conversation with students who 'took part' in the project it was clear that they saw how the glossary could be useful and indeed that they were attracted to its creative and collaborative elements. In particular, the fact that it was an online resource that they could access and update flexibly was mentioned as being particularly appealing. They also appreciated the fact that the glossary could be set so that all entries were moderated by a teacher before publication as this created confidence in the quality of the entries. Students, however, cited lack of time and the fact that there was no explicit expectation that they had to contribute as the main factors behind their lack of engagement.

It is clear, therefore, that this first attempt to

promote Moodle's glossary activity with IFP students was not a success. Nonetheless, the teaching team on Queen Mary's IFP remain positive about its long-term value. Informally, students have indicated that they share this assessment. Defining and explaining key terms is the absolute foundation of good historical and political writing and it is something students struggle with. It is particularly important for students to develop their ability to define as opposed to simply describe; indeed, understanding this distinction is central to critical thinking. Moodle's glossary activity provides a dynamic space where students can develop their ability to write cogent definitions that can also be annotated with comments from their peers. In our first attempt to make use of the glossary activity to support students in their acquisition of historical and political terms we failed to provide sufficient structure to support a methodical use of the tool and insufficient clarity as to what our expectations were. As a consequence, we plan to persevere with this tool through spelling out exactly how students will be expected to make use of it. For instance, for the history module, a schedule of key terms will be drawn up in the first week of the semester and students will be expected to complete their assigned glossary entries as a starting point for weekly seminars.

Conclusions

The acquisition of key terms is fundamental to success in the study of history and IRP, but students need to be conscious of the fact that terms in these disciplines are more often than not layered and contentious rather than straightforward. The glossary tool in Moodle provides a virtual space where students can work with these key terms and incrementally produce a moderated resource for the benefit of all students. While in its first incarnation use of the glossary at Queen Mary was not successful, it is hoped that a more structured approach will bear fruit.

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Specialist Knowledge: An Interactive Approach

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The 'specialist-specialist' model aims to facilitate the acquisition of discipline-specific vocabulary. In this model, students (the subject specialists) and the EAP tutor (the language specialist) inform and provide input to each other. The interactive process allows the EAP tutor to help students build their own corpus of specialist terminology and let them discover the subject-specific meanings of certain lexical items. The model builds on students' specific needs and intrinsic motivation, and promotes learner autonomy by providing students with the tools to interpret and produce language in their chosen academic field, thus easing the transition from foundation to their target programme.

The Need for Specialist Vocabulary

Although the EAP module of most foundation pathways offers some specialisation when it comes to the topics chosen for materials and assignments, lexical discipline-specificity has been known to be limited: usually the AWL (Academic Word List) is taught. Teaching a generic lexis upon which students later build subject-related vocabulary may not reflect real-life learning, however, nor meet actual needs (Hyland, 2002). Rather than learning step-by-step, and proceeding from the basic inventory of the GSL (General Service List) to the AWL and only then more technical vocabulary, students tend to absorb the language they need (ibid), which might well be the specialised vocabulary items encountered in their degree module.

In academic texts, about 15% of words is thought to comprise discipline-specific, technical vocabulary (Coxhead, 2000). In actual practice, this percentage varies: corpus research has demonstrated that it is science students in particular who need specialist words. In a study conducted by Hyland and Tse (2007), it was found that the GSL and AWL did not cover 22% of the words in the sciences sub-corpus that was analysed. For the sub-corpus of the social sciences, this percentage was lower, amounting to 12% (see Figure 1a for another, similar example). Figure 1b illustrates that students also need to be aware that words can have different meanings or connotations in different academic fields. Last but not least, certain lexical features, such as nominalisation, tend to be more frequent in certain disciplines than in others (Jordan, 2012). As these examples show, it is indeed questionable whether students are best served with a 'common' core lexis, all the more if one remembers that the purpose of the

foundation year is to provide students with the tools and means they need to progress with confidence to their chosen academic subject (Jordan, 2012). (See figure 1)

Should the EAP tutor become a subject specialist?

Given the sometimes significant variation in the lexical inventory of academic fields, Hyland & Tse (2007, p. 235) conclude that, 'Teachers should help students develop a... discipline-based lexical repertoire'. In response to the discussion about the need for discipline-specificity, lately there has been a trend towards ever closer collaboration between EAP course providers and academic departments, sometimes resulting in the development of tailor-made courses (e.g., 'EAP for law students'). In practice, though, it can be neither feasible nor desirable to take a narrow focus and cater to such a highly specialised audience. Although instructions in discipline-specific genres can often relatively easily be given, the chances are that most EAP teachers do not have enough grounding to deal with the diction or content of specific fields (Spack, 1998, in Jordan, 2012), which means that huge investments in terms of time and effort will have to be made. It may also be impractical to divide students into subject areas with their own specific vocabulary curriculum (Clapham, 2001). After all, the pathways are there to group students broadly together along subject lines, so as to prevent having to design a special course for that one student who will progress to, say, a medical biology programme.

Figure 1
Differences in:
(a) amount and nature of specialist terminology; and
(b) word meaning in various academic disciplines (Unilearning, 2000)

Sample Texts from Sciences	Sample Texts from Humanities
<p>(a) The number of <i>Dillwynia juniperina</i> seeds with <i>elaiosomes</i> removed per depot was significantly different from the number of seeds without <i>elaiosomes</i> removed per depot ($t = 9.64, d.f. = 38, p < 0.05$). The mean ($\pm$ SD) number of seeds with <i>elaiosomes</i> removed was 6.75 (\pm 2.27), compared to 1.15 (\pm1.27) for seeds without <i>elaiosomes</i> ... In contrast, for <i>Acacia linifolia</i> the number of seeds with <i>elaiosomes</i> removed per depot was not significantly different to the number of seeds without <i>elaiosomes</i> ($t = 0.98, d.f. = 37, p > 0.05$)...</p>	<p>(a) The adoption of a <i>classical management style</i> can produce managers who are <i>non-reflexive</i> or <i>show tunnel vision</i> when problem solving. One symptom of <i>tunnel vision</i> is <i>selective focussing</i> (Fulop, 1995), where the manager only looks at an issue from his or her own perspective rather than attempting to identify alternative perspectives such as that of subordinate staff. In contrast, more modern management styles aim to use a <i>critical approach to problem solving</i> as well as utilising <i>relational management techniques</i> to create <i>workable employer-employee relations</i> (Fulop, 1995).</p>
<p>(b) - For the memory task, the number of participants from the no breakfast condition who performed poorly was <i>significant</i>. - In terms of eye colour, blue is <i>dominant</i>.</p>	<p>(b) - The issue of land rights is <i>significant</i> for Aboriginal people. - News Limited is the <i>dominant</i> partner in the takeover bid.</p>

Alternative means: the EAP teacher as facilitator

If EAP teachers cannot or do not want to become subject specialists, what can they offer their students instead? Well, first and foremost, they should use the full potential of their own specialism, which is language and language teaching. With regard to the acquisition of discipline-specific vocabulary, EAP teachers can act as language guides or organisers (Jordan, 2012). For example, they can show students the way towards specialist dictionaries and corpora, and teach them the skills they need to employ these resources efficiently and effectively. At the Birmingham International Academy, we also promote keeping a vocabulary notebook, into which students can enter any specialist words or phrases they might find useful and which, over time, builds into a 'personal dictionary' for their degree module or future studies.

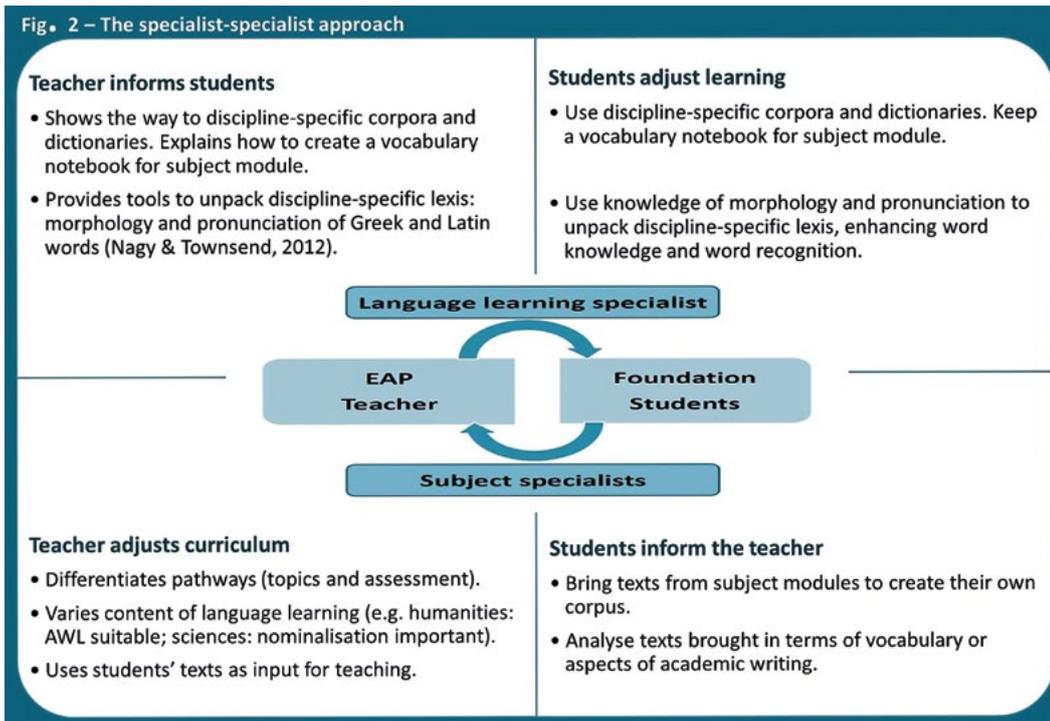
A complementary means of stimulating the independent acquisition of vocabulary is to instil generic lexical knowledge, so as to help students get to grips with the terminology they (will) encounter in their subject area. Many words used in academic practice, whether they be AWL or more technical items, derive from Greek and Latin, and share

certain characteristics. Targeted instruction in, for instance, the complex morphology and phonological features of lexical items of Greek or Latin origin will make it easier for students to unpack discipline-specific terminology and learn how to recognise, use, and absorb the words they need for their target discipline. Similarly, in sciences pathways, more attention can be paid during EAP lessons to complex noun phrases; for future law students, argumentative language might be useful.

Teacher and students as specialists in their own fields

Another, more learner-centred way of exploiting and meeting students' specific needs is letting them provide input for the EAP curriculum in the form of authentic texts from their own chosen field. As Nagy & Townsend (2012) state, vocabulary – and, one might add, vocabulary acquisition – gains greatly in significance if it is applied within the language of the target discipline. Students will also enjoy their learning more if they study texts and topics that are directly relevant to their chosen subject (Jordan, 2012). If students bring their own text to the EAP class as input for vocabulary exercises and activities, they can directly apply what they learn to what they need in actual practice. In mixed-discipline

Fig. 2 – The specialist-specialist approach

Figure 2
The specialist-specialist approach

groups, using subject-specific texts can even be used to raise students' awareness of how disciplines differ in terms of vocabulary, the meaning of certain words, and related lexical features such as nominalisation or the use of discourse markers to build an argument. Swales & Feak (2004) have applied this approach to reporting verbs, letting students provide their own mini-corpus to be analysed in the EAP classroom for different types of reporting verbs.

In the specialist-specialist model, the EAP teacher provides input in terms of specialist knowledge in their own field, handing students the tools they need to tackle the vocabulary of their chosen discipline. In their turn, students act as specialists by informing the teacher, offering materials for use in the EAP classroom and analysing these in terms of what they have been taught about vocabulary and word usage. Figure 2 illustrates how this results in a mutually reinforcing, informative teaching and learning cycle. (See figure 2)

Conclusion

When it comes to the need of students to build subject-specialist vocabulary, the EAP tutor is faced with a number of challenges. Foundation programmes often cannot offer subject-specific EAP courses, and EAP tutors may lack the background knowledge to teach within the realm of a specific scientific field. However, EAP tutors can act as facilitators, using their linguistic expertise to encourage and promote students' independent acquisition of subject-specific lexical items.

In the 'specialist-specialist' model, students are regarded as specialists in their own field; the EAP tutor is a language specialist, who scaffolds the learning process by handing students the tools they need to learn and actively use new vocabulary items. The close cooperation between students and EAP tutor fosters the acquisition of the lexical knowledge that students require to interpret and produce language in their chosen academic field. The ultimate aim of this interactive process is for students to become autonomous learners, driven by their intrinsic motivation and interests, and capable of making a smooth transition from foundation to their chosen future career.

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Making Sense of Global Society: Teaching Key Conceptual Vocabularies in the Foundation Year Classroom

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This article describes our teaching practice on and assessment of a content-based module called 'Global Society' developed for the IFYP at the University of Southampton. Global Society focused on introducing 'key conceptual vocabularies'; lexica associated with contemporary global issues such as 'globalisation' and 'sustainability', which were embedded in the authentic materials used in task-based activities. Our aim was to activate students' existing critical skills and help them utilise a range of knowledge and contemporary ideas in an academic environment. We believe that our approach increased our students' academic literacy and helped ensure that they were better prepared for undergraduate study.

'Working with words'; in many ways this is what we do every day as EAP tutors. But is increasing a foundation year student's academic and subject specific vocabulary enough? Are the Academic Word List (AWL) and subject-specific corpora really helpful in developing the level of sophisticated understanding required for undergraduate study? Might it be more effective to focus on a few key concepts used across a wide variety of academic disciplines? Rather than learning a list of useful vocabulary, we wanted to enable students to activate their existing critical skills and learn to utilise a wide range of knowledge and contemporary ideas and issues in an academic environment. This article describes how this rationale informed our teaching practice this year on a content-based module called 'Global Society', which forms part of the International Foundation Year (IFY) at the University of Southampton.¹

Rationale:

Today's global challenges are attended by lexica which permeate all areas of society, including higher education. Concepts such as 'sustainability' now inform the business models of many multinationals and can be found in educational literature too. Indeed, the University of Southampton's 'Vision 2020' strategy states that graduates should leave 'equipped with sustainability knowledge and skills across social, cultural, economic and environmental dimensions' (University of Southampton, 2015). Such language highlights a move towards interdisciplinarity in academia which has increased over the past few decades (Knight et al, 2013, Trowler et al, 2012), and suggests that university graduates need to be able to think in connected and multi-

dimensional ways. UK universities wishing to remain significant players on the world stage will have to produce graduates equipped for the global 'labour market'.

Even 'post-Brexit', UK universities continue to promote themselves as outward-looking, 'internationalised' spaces of global importance. Our own university's marketing literature reflects this trend, endeavouring to show that research and teaching are geared towards the global and current concerns about sustainability and the environment.

IFY at the University of Southampton:

Southampton's IFY attracts students studying a wide variety of subjects. The programme includes some subject-specific elements, but the core modules, Academic English, Global Society and Critical Thinking, are not directly tailored to the students' undergraduate courses. The aim of these core modules is to enhance students' general study skills, critical thinking and academic literacy. According to Lea and Street (1998), 'academic literacy' is the socialisation of students into their particular field of study, enabled by a deeper understanding of the discourses and expectations of that discipline. In today's educational context, the 'big issues' of the day are increasingly integral to academic study. A Foundation course can give students the tools to begin the process of engaging with academic discourse early on by exposing them to what we are calling 'key conceptual vocabulary' such as 'globalisation', 'climate change' and 'sustainability', which are ubiquitous in UK HE.

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¹ We would like to acknowledge our colleague, Victoria Rowe, who initially set up the 'Global Society' module.

Consequently, Global Society is themed around internationally significant topics such as 'Global Capitalism', 'The Environment' and 'Human Rights'. The module introduces these concepts, encouraging the students to think critically about their underlying historical, ideological and political assumptions. By enhancing students' comprehension beyond simply understanding words as labels (Frey, Fisher & Berkin, 2009), the module increases their critical engagement with ideas and concept knowledge beyond the classroom in preparation for their future studies.

Teaching:

Global Society is taught via a 90 minute lecture and a 45 minute seminar each week and assessed using essays, presentations and exams. The materials and mode of delivery aim to develop students' critical thinking skills by utilising 'task-based' learning activities; for example, presenting key vocabulary using authentic texts in lectures and asking students to revise, recall and manipulate the target language at home in preparation for student-centred discussions in seminars (Nunan, 1991; Bygate, Norris & van den Branden, 2015). One pedagogical feature of this module is the 'flipped' or 'inverted classroom' (Lage et al, 2000), where students use multimedia and the VLE (Blackboard) to complete a variety of tasks, for example, a short Internet-based research task, or a guided note-taking activity based on a text or video, in preparation for the weekly seminar. Completing these tasks outside the classroom encouraged independent learning and ensured maximum discussion time so that the topics could be covered in greater depth. As the year progressed the seminars became far less tutor-led and students presented and justified their points of view in a spontaneous manner, demonstrating their 'turn-taking' and listening abilities; key academic skills which are notoriously difficult to 'teach' in EAP (Karas, 2016).

Assessed Group Project – Urban Planning Development Brief:

To assess the key academic skills we aimed to develop, we designed a multi-faceted task which required extensive research, effective team-working and confident presentation skills. In the task, groups of four students were asked to take on the role of urban planning consultants and submit a master plan for a new settlement on the edge of a fictional capital city of a country with an emerging economy in central Africa. Their plan had to be presented to the city council, which would

award the contract to the group whose project demonstrated the best use of resources and provided sustainable solutions to the social and economic issues in the city. The students were told to use Nairobi in their research as the model for the fictional city. They were given a maximum of ten minutes to make their 'pitch', followed by five minutes of questioning by the 'city council board', played by IFY tutors.

We wanted the students to demonstrate an awareness of the interconnected nature of the issues surrounding development and draw on their knowledge from the module. In order to create a successful proposal, they had to select information, focus on a few clearly defined areas, and deliver the material concisely and confidently. The element of role play seemed to liberate many of the students. Rather than produce a 'standard' group presentation with each member presenting an aspect of a topic, the majority of the students understood that they needed to persuade the 'city council'. We received a wide variety of proposals, with students creating 3D models, making commercial videos show-casing their 'consultancy', and a slick and professional presentation where the participants dressed in identical clothing and fully entered into the role of commercial consultants.

The most striking element was the students' depth of understanding. The most successful proposals utilised the 'key concepts' taught on the module to engage with global issues. In so doing, the students demonstrated academic literacy and critical thinking skills far in advance of those expected of students in a Foundation Year.

Feedback and Conclusions:

Student feedback about the module was generally positive with 14/43 students stating they were 'more conscious of current issues' and felt they were 'becoming a global citizen'. 10/43 students praised the module for its 'interesting topics' and 4 students said it was their 'favourite' module. 3/43 said the seminar discussions helped with developing an 'in depth understanding' of the topics and 4/43 students noted how the module improved their understanding of the ways in which today's global issues are multi-dimensional and interlinked. The module was also praised by students for allowing them to express their own opinions.

Although this year's IFY cohort had a healthy progression rate of 75%, it is impossible to say how much this was due to the impact of the rationale and approach we adopted in the Global Society module. For significant evidence we will have to await data from the ongoing tracking

of IFY students as they move through their substantive programmes and feedback from our teaching colleagues in receiving schools. We have, however, already received a significant number of comments from IFY students who progressed this year saying that they have felt confident joining in class discussions and tutorials from the very start of their undergraduate studies. Some students even said that they felt they were able to contribute more to the discussions than home students. We feel that this demonstrates that the approach and rationale we have used in Global Society, alongside the skills the students have acquired in the Academic English and Critical Thinking modules, have successfully embedded a fundamental range of key concepts in the students, which they will be able to activate throughout their future studies.

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Vocabulary on the go: An academic vocabulary learning app for Arabic learners on an English Foundation Program

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AVA (Academic Vocabulary App) is a mobile vocabulary learning app based on the pedagogical principles of noticing, retrieval and generative use. It aims to help Arabic learners at a low B1 level on an international Academic English Foundation program to develop their knowledge and use of 600 restricted general and academic word families and their most frequent and useful collocations. It does this through organizing the word families into learning blocks that contain 6 different stages and 13 different activity types. It also utilizes features of gamification and adaptive learning to make the experience individualized and motivating for the learners.

Vocabulary breadth and academic reading

Several studies have shown the importance of having a sizeable vocabulary prior to starting a degree course in English. According to Hazenberg & Hulstijn (1996), learners need knowledge of around 10,000 words to begin an academic degree course. Vocabulary is particularly important to enable learners to read and comprehend the academic texts that they are presented with. According to Nation (2013, p.208), knowledge of the 3-4,000 most frequent word families in English will enable readers to understand 95% of the words in most written texts with instructional support. However, in order to read and understand most texts independently of the teacher, learners need to know 98% of the words in a text, which is equivalent to 8-9,000 word families (Ibid). It is clear, therefore, that all English Foundation courses should ensure learners have a receptive knowledge of at least the 3,000 most frequent word families and that learners should be encouraged to continue to develop their vocabulary through self-access programs.

Learner background

Zayed University is one of three state-funded higher education institutions in the United Arab Emirates (UAE). The learners aim to complete a 4-year degree program conducted through the medium of English. Students who do not possess a high enough level of English when they enter the university are required to enroll in the Academic Bridge Program (ABP) – an intensive English for General Academic Purposes (EGAP). The learners are predominantly Emiratis, but there are also Arabic-speaking students from Saudi Arabia and Yemen.

Results from the IELTS exam show the weak reading skills of students in the UAE. In 2014, the average band score in the Reading Module of the IELTS exam was only 4.6 - the lowest in the world for all major IELTS testing countries (IELTS, 2014). Additionally, vocabulary testing of ABP students reveals that of 295 students exiting the final level only 10% have a receptive vocabulary of 3,000 word families. 60% know 2,000 words and 17% only know 1500 word families. This shows that most learners lack the necessary lexical knowledge required to tackle academic texts.

Learning vocabulary

There is a vast literature about the ways that learners can develop their vocabulary and how teachers can best support this. One strategy is to provide an extensive reading program, although this has been shown to be quite inefficient. A more promising and often neglected approach is the deliberate and intentional study of vocabulary within a self-access model (Nation, 2013 p.2). One tool to develop this is a vocabulary app such as Vocabulary and Spelling City, Quizlet and the Duo Lingo. However, the underlying theories of vocabulary learning are often not stated and most focus on only one aspect of word knowledge, such as the word-form relationship or spelling. The Academic Vocabulary App (AVA) has been designed initially for the learners at the middle level of the ABP program and aims to overcome the shortcomings identified in other apps.

Design and conceptualisation

AVA was designed and written by EAP teachers in the ABP in conjunction with an instructional designer from the university's Centre for Educational Innovation (CEI). The app was then built by a development company in Dubai. The app is primarily designed to be used by the learners as a self-access tool outside the classroom, using their smart phones or tablets. However, teachers can also make use of it in class to play team games to review groups of words.

Lexical content

600 restricted word families form the lexical content of the app and these were taken from a new word list of the 2,750 most frequent, restricted word families. This wider list was based on four of the most recently published frequency-based word lists, such as the New General Service List and the New Academic Vocabulary List. The 600 word families were divided into 12 learning units of 50 words each and these Units were further sub-divided into 5 Blocks of 10 words.

Structure and content

A screen shot of the home screen of the app below (Figure 1) shows the six main areas:

- The Profile area allows users to check their progress through the activities and their rank in their class and level.
- The Activities section contains the main learning materials. (Figure 2)
- The Quizzes enable users to review the words at different intervals. (Figure 3)
- The Word Guide is a mini dictionary with English definitions, Arabic translations, word forms and collocations. (Figure 4)
- The Weak Words area allows users to see words they frequently answered incorrectly.
- The Strategies area is designed to help develop vocabulary learning strategies and how best to use the app.

Learning activities

Within the Activities area for each block of ten words, learners are presented with six different stages:

- Notice the meaning
- Notice the form
- Learn in context
- Learn other forms
- Learn collocations
- Read a text

Each of these stages contains 2 or 3 different learning activities with at least one item for each word. For example, the "Notice the meaning" stage has three activities:

- Matching Arabic - Users have two possible Arabic translations and have to choose the closest one.
- Choose the correct picture – Users have two pictures and select the one that best represents the meaning of the word.
- Scrambled sentences – Users are presented with four to six words (including the target word) and re-order them to make a correct sentence.

Underpinning pedagogical principles

The activities and sequence are primarily based on the vocabulary learning principles of noticing, retrieval, generative use (Nation, 2013) and spaced repetition. In the app the first stage of the Activities focuses on making the Meaning-Form relationship in the mental lexicon. In the app most retrieval is receptive retrieval, such as when a word is met again in the Learn in Context Stage. The third principle is generative or creative use. (Ibid: 110) In the app, users see the same words introduced again as other parts of speech and collocations, which help to develop their breadth of word knowledge. Finally, the principle of spaced repetition (Pimsleur, 1967) is based on the idea that retrieval needs to happen at ever increasing intervals to help move the memory of the meaning and form into the long-term memory. The app does this by focusing on Blocks of 10 words in one day, so that users encounter the same words 10 -12 times in the space of 30 minutes. The Quizzes then ensure that further encounters happen after 24 hours, 1 week and 4 weeks. The app also addresses the unique challenges facing Arabic learners of English, such as vowel blindness.

Elements of gamification

Several elements of gamification have been built into the app. Firstly, completion of the activities within each stage is based on a mastery model. Users have to get two items correct for each word in order to successfully complete each stage and to unlock the next stage within a learning block. Secondly, users receive points for each correct answer and for completing a stage. These points increase as the user progresses through a block of materials. Finally, there is competition between users so users can see where they rank in their class and level in terms of the points they have collected.



Figure 1 Home screen

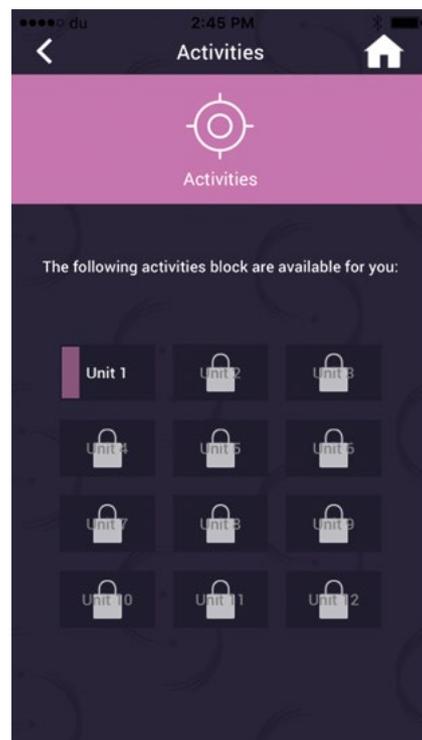


Figure 2 Activities

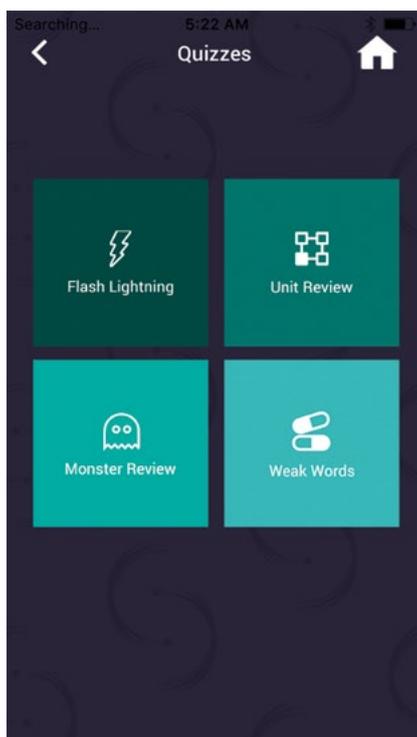


Figure 3 Quizzes



Figure 4 Word guide word card

Piloting

The completed vocabulary app is currently being piloted with 7 groups of learners. A total of 142 students are involved in the pilot. So far, the feedback from learners has been positive. In a survey mid-way through the semester, 70% of the respondents said that the app helped them learn vocabulary a lot and 26% said a little. 37 respondents or over a quarter of all the learners said they wouldn't change anything about the app. Others made some useful suggestions, including giving the user more choice about the sequence of activities and removing one of the longer scrambled sentence activities, which was proving to be too challenging. This feedback has been turned into a list of changes for the app company to make for next semester, when the app will be piloted again with more students.

Future developments

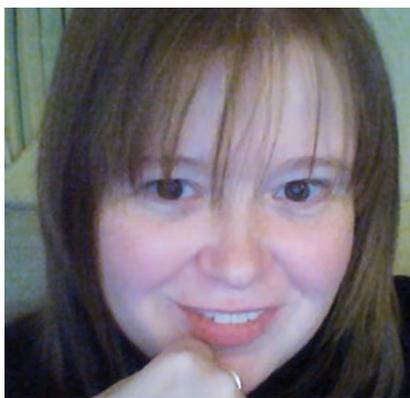
At present the app is only available to Zayed University students, but once the app development team are happy with the final product, it will be made available to other Federal English foundation programs in the UAE. It is hoped that the product can be commercialized and sold to other Gulf Arab countries and other versions can be developed for other markets. In addition, new content for the app will be added for the other two levels of the ABP and perhaps subject-specific courses in the Colleges in the university. Ultimately, the aim is for the app to form part of a comprehensive vocabulary development program for all learners at Zayed University from the time they enter the university until the time that they graduate, so that they will be better prepared to read and understand the academic and professional texts they have to read at university and beyond.

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Enhancing the Student Learning Experience: Developing a PBL resource for Foundation History students

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Meaningful student engagement with learning is often difficult to achieve, as students become passive observers rather than active participants in teaching sessions. This paper briefly describes a two-year project that aimed to address this issue with Foundation History students via Problem Based Learning and identifies the long-term effects of the venture.

Introduction

Meaningful student engagement with learning is often difficult to achieve, as students become passive observers rather than active participants in teaching sessions. This paper briefly describes a two-year project that aimed to address this issue with Foundation History students and identifies the long-term effects of the venture.

The project under discussion was a collaborative venture between Durham University's Foundation Centre and Durham University Museums. The Foundation Centre allows direct progression to degrees at Durham University for students from non-traditional backgrounds. The student cohort is primarily made up of two main groups: mature home students returning to education and younger international students. Students are supported throughout their learning and prepared to begin undergraduate study in all departments of the University. This project aimed to promote student learning and develop specific research and presentation skills useful for transition to level 1.

The project intended to enhance Foundation student learning through the development of a Problem Based Learning (PBL) resource focussed on public dissemination of student research in Ancient History. We aimed to encourage students to carry out research into history and museum collections via field trips. As part of the process we created online learning tools to promote learner autonomy and support the creation of student output. Students also benefitted from guest lectures by Curator of University Museums. The initial iteration involved students studying the Level 0 module, 'Introduction to Ancient History' in their first term at Durham University.

The project was funded by a Durham University Enhancing the Student Learning Experience (ELSE) grant and ran from 2012-2014. Following this period, the PBL activity

and related assessment became a permanent component of the 'Introduction to Ancient History' module.

What is Problem Based Learning?

In many teaching rooms learning is a passive activity; students listen and take notes before reproducing the same material in assessments (Delisle, 1997 :9). This is often the case with History. The Foundation Centre wanted to encourage student engagement with the subject matter to promote learning and demonstrate that History is more than 'dusty books'. PBL is a method of teaching subjects in which students are encouraged to think about a particular problem or scenario that is set within a real world framework. Through a staged sequence of problems or tasks, students acquire relevant subject-specific and key transferable skills. The main components of PBL are group work, problem solving and discovering new knowledge.

The aim was to encourage students to start thinking like active researchers early on in their careers, thereby easing the transition from level 0 to level 1. Through their Ancient History project, students developed skills that are central to their undergraduate studies: critically examining information, integrating it into a public presentation and evaluating their own knowledge across history, language and communication.

Using Problem Based Learning in Ancient History: What did we ask students to do?

Students were given control over their own learning, as they had to define their own research question based on an area of Ancient History they were interested in. They had to conduct research using a primary source and/or artefact as a starting point. As the Foundation Centre worked in conjunction with

Durham University Museums, students were encouraged to embrace the collections held by the University and take advantage of specialist knowledge available to them. To demonstrate their knowledge, the students had to produce an academic poster based on their findings, present it at a research forum (poster competition) then write an essay drawing their research together as a final assessment.

By enabling students to research an area of personal curiosity, the PBL activity generated interest in both the subject matter and the related summative assessments (poster and essay). This reinforced the theory that learning which offers the satisfaction of a personal need, generally generates a positive approach, interest and engagement (Newton, 2014). Of course, what one student needs and values may not be exactly the same as another, but the need for autonomy is widespread, and offering some control over learning is powerfully motivating (Deci & Ryan, 2000). Additionally, direct interaction with historical objects can support a richer and more memorable learning experience (Newton, 2014; Steier, 2014).

By working in small groups to research particular areas, students learned about communication, teamwork and delegation. They were given case studies to assess and had to informally present their findings to the rest of the group during teaching sessions – this was in preparation for the poster presentation. Students were encouraged to look at their research from different perspectives and synthesised knowledge gained from their Academic Practice module, Ancient History and wider subject experience.

Public engagement: Student poster competition

The culmination of the PBL activity was a poster presentation and competition for the students presented as part of a public engagement activity at the Oriental Museum (in 2012) and at Palace Green Library in Durham City in later years. Each year the event has been well attended, with representatives from Durham University Museums and the School of Education in attendance alongside current and former Foundation students. Various prizes were awarded including a Durham University Museums Poster Prize, Student Poster Prize (voted for by the Ancient History cohort) and a Best Title Prize.

As the ESLE project intended to enhance Foundation student learning through the public dissemination of student research in Ancient History, it was good that Durham

University Museums were able to host the poster competition within their public spaces. Although the presentation and award ceremony was held over one afternoon, the posters often remained on display, enabling students and visitors to enjoy the students' work. We received many positive comments from visitors including one from the USA. This proved to be very rewarding for the Foundation students and served to magnify their motivation and interest in the activity.

What did we learn?

The most valuable aspect of the project was the ability for the Foundation Centre to collaborate with non-academic departments and colleagues. This was particularly useful in a historical subject, as students benefitted from the hands-on experience of visiting a museum and engaging with collections that science students get from a laboratory. Using a real-world focus (such as a PBL activity) encouraged students to 'see the point' in the subject and, as a result, invest in the module.

Allowing students to choose a topic not only promoted learner autonomy but also introduced the notion of original research early in their academic careers. The creation of an annual event that allows Foundation students to present their research in a mutually supportive environment helps to promote research skills and public engagement.

One negative was that some students had difficulty managing a research project alongside other more traditional, structured assessments. To resolve this, after the first year more guidance and additional workshops were available to support student development. Similarly, a small percentage complained about the freedom within the module; international students preferred to be given a set topic/question to investigate and wanted a traditional essay/assignment rather than a term-long project. This was valuable for Foundation Centre staff as it highlighted cultural differences and made staff recognise and manage student expectations.

Conclusions

Following completion of the two-year pilot project the academic poster assignment has been fully integrated into summative assessment of the 'Introduction to Ancient History' module. This has enabled students to address wider presentation skills early in the academic year and reinforces the atmosphere of research-led education and scholarship that the Foundation Centre wishes to promote to its stakeholders.

Student feedback on the process has been positive. In addition to the benefits of learner autonomy and increased engagement with the learning experience, student focus groups identified the skills they developed during the PBL activity gave them a 'head start' in other assessments later on in the Foundation Year. This is a very positive outcome and it is anticipated that a longitudinal study can be conducted to measure the impact of the PBL activity across the students' undergraduate careers.

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'InFormal'

Reflections on the InForm Conference 2016

Amanda Fava-Verde, Aaron Woodcock, Mark Peace, and Mariama Sheriff

INTRODUCTION

In July this year, four members of teaching staff from the International Study and Language Institute (ISLI) headed up north to this year's InForm Conference held at Durham University and themed *Working with Words: Supporting understanding of discipline-specific vocabulary in IFPs* (International Foundation Programmes). Delegates were a mixture of subject specialists (e.g. Chemistry), English for Academic Purposes (EAP) specialists and Applied Linguists, their common factor being that they are all involved in some way (directly or indirectly) with the teaching and learning of international students on foundation degree programmes. Amanda, Aaron, Mark and Mariama each share their own reflections on the day's events.

Does teaching discipline specific vocabulary work?



By Amanda Fava-Verde
Programme Director, International Foundation Programme, ISLI

Two thought-provoking presentations had me questioning whether teaching discipline-specific vocabulary at Foundation level was something of an impossible ideal - both proposing that foundation level students should rather be guided to develop the skills and strategies needed to empower them to go out there

and cultivate their own lexicons and mastery of their own subject specific styles. Both these presentations favoured teaching the broader concepts of academic discourse rather than the specific disciplinary nuances, taking the longer term view that our role is to open these students' minds to global citizenship rather than close them in to specific academic communities.

Mike Groves of Birmingham University, playing devil's advocate, questioned whether a focus on subject-specific vocabulary teaching in the foundation EAP classroom might even be damaging, suggesting we run the risk of placing our students into 'linguistic silos' by doing so. While not criticising subject specificity in general, he argued that it might be more helpful to exploit the fact that foundation year students spend half their academic lives being taught the very subjects that we are preparing them for, and that they already have access to rich, subject specific discourse through their content modules. Far better therefore, to encourage them to explore the myriad of online tools available to them (such as Lextutor, word clouds etc.) and use them in informed and disciplined ways.

Elwyn Edwards and Dr Lucy Watson of the University of Southampton had also come to the conclusion that a subject-specific approach doesn't work; foundation year students are studying too many different subjects to group them usefully in discipline-specific groups.

They have found a novel way around the problem through a new content-

based 'Global Society' module which aims to teach students to become academically literate and critical thinkers by engaging them in discussions they find interesting and relevant to their lives as global citizens. The module focusses not on teaching specific lexis but rather on teaching key conceptual vocabularies – cross-disciplinary concepts such as sustainability, globalisation, capitalism, human rights and development, drawing attention to the ideologies which underpin them. The approach will allow students to function across a broad range of academic discourses (and undergraduate courses) and later in the global marketplace.

Teaching discipline-specific vocabulary can work



Aaron Woodcock,
Teaching Fellow in English for Science and EAP, ISLI

What caught my attention most was how crucial discipline-specific vocabulary is to academic success and how expertise in both language teaching and the subject specialism are needed to teach this vocabulary effectively. Many of the talks were by subject specialists involved in language teaching or language

teachers involved in teaching subject-specific English (sometimes referred to as ESAP). One such talk was by Dr Simon Rees of Durham University. Rees is a chemist who has been collaborating with English language teachers to produce an online chemical language test that has produced very encouraging washback effects on chemistry-specific vocabulary acquisition and academic success in Chemistry. Students take this test at the beginning and end of their Foundation course, and poor language test scores were found to be a predictor of poor academic achievement in Chemistry. The test provided a framework for teaching and learning chemistry-specific vocabulary, and it was found that explicit teaching of this vocabulary could enhance both their language test scores and their academic achievement in Chemistry.

Our own experience here at Reading within ISLI and other departments supports these findings. On our English Language for Chemists and English for Science modules, we've found that the explicit teaching of discipline-specific lexis has had a positive impact on academic achievement in Chemistry and Food Science. And undergraduate Henley Business School students on our Academic Skills & Language for Finance course (part of the Academic English Programme embedded provision) have responded extremely positively to a strong focus on discipline-specific vocabulary development. Perhaps these findings are not very surprising, but they confirm that teaching discipline-specific vocabulary has enormous potential in helping students access their subject and achieve their full academic potential. They also demonstrate the importance of utilising joint expertise in both language and the target subject. Let's hope for more such cross-disciplinary collaborations in the future!

Let the data do the talking



Mark Peace
Senior Academic Tutor IFP, ISLI, Chair of
InForm Editorial Board

The InForm conference has always been an active forum for sharing ideas and opinions, but I was particularly delighted this year with the number of talks that openly shared data, results and feedback. In some cases this showed clear trends, in others interpretation was open to discussion and in all cases sharing of data provided additional insight.

In his opening keynote, Associate Professor of Linguistics Michael McCarthy presented analysis of the high frequency keywords 'point', 'terms' and 'sense' in discipline-specific sub-corpora. This showed differences in academic language used by lecturers in different disciplines and clearly illustrated the potential for using spoken academic corpora analysis for tailoring English teaching material for specific disciplines.

Hannah Gurr from the University of Bristol shared student feedback on her foundation English Link class for Mathematics. After hearing of her innovative approach to teaching the course, which involves plenty of interaction including online quizzes and videos, we might expect a rave response from all students to all aspects of the course. Hannah presented student responses to a survey in their raw form, and while largely positive, some students would still rather have more Maths teaching instead of the additional English teaching. This is something many of us find when teaching our *International English* or *Academic Skills* modules despite trying to make it relevant to the students' subjects, and Hannah's open sharing of feedback was very welcome in enabling discussion on this.

Sandra Strigel from Newcastle University gave an interesting presentation on raising linguistic awareness of subject teachers through workshops on Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL). Teachers were encouraged to be reflective about their teaching. The feedback that Sandra presented showed that teachers became more aware of language issues, vocabulary in particular, as well as the student experience. I found myself reflecting on the use of language in my own Physics teaching.

It's exciting to hear of the research that's happening. The frank and open presentation and discussion of findings is of great value to the IFP community, particularly as it enables individuals to draw their own conclusions.

Using learning technologies can boost academic success



Mariama Sheriff
EAP Pre-session Tutor (ISLI, summer 2016)
and Foundation Tutor at the University of
Oxford Brookes.

A number of presenters at the conference showed how using learning technologies effectively can enable students to learn discipline-specific vocabulary in order to overcome language barriers that can prevent them from understanding taught content.

Moreover, learning technologies also prime students to employ study skills and criticality (transferable skills which facilitate learner autonomy and ultimately foster wider academic success).

Teaching discipline-specific vocabulary characteristically involves helping students notice the meaning, use and form of language then record and memorise it effectively; here, I felt the conference presenters provided a broadening outlook on how learning technologies can facilitate the learning of vocabulary and encourage proactive, reflective and motivated students. Hannah Gurr from the University of Bristol showed how the online tool Quizlet <https://quizlet.com/> was notable for the way in which it helps her and, more importantly, how it can enable students themselves to tailor the learning of vocabulary to individual needs. Moreover, it gives students the scaffolding they need to prioritise what to learn and to break learning down into manageable chunks.

Corpus websites are not often designed with lower level language learners in mind, and so it was good to hear about more student-centred online platforms that can help students analyse language patterns specific to their chosen discipline. Dawn Knight (Senior Lecturer in Applied Linguistics at the University of Cardiff) has co-created WordWanderer <http://www.wordwanderer.org/>, which promises to be a user-friendly way for students to examine different aspects of discipline-specific vocabulary. Visual learners in particular are likely to find it helpful. Megan Bruce of Durham University demonstrated how centres that build a corpus based on academic texts written within their own institutions can then create tailored corpus-based teaching and learning activities, which can help students focus on the key features of subject-specific academic writing. This also lends well to giving students a sense of belonging to their academic community. Both sessions, like many others, helped to frame stimulating discussions on how to give students more meaningful practice as well as a sense of ownership over their learning both in and outside the classroom.

CONCLUSIONS

It may seem, on the surface at least, that there's little consensus on how best to support the learning of discipline-specific vocabulary. However, lack of consensus tends to lead to diversity of opinion, experimentation and debate, as illustrated by this blog post. As long as this is open, evidence-based and T&L-driven (which it was at InForm 2016), IFP students here at Reading and around the UK can only benefit.

How I survived teaching English for Mathematics

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This article details an approach to supporting the English and foundation mathematics skills of students on our International Foundation Programme (IFP). It includes the steps I took in developing course materials, details my first lesson of the course (leading on to student presentations), introduces the use of flashcards to improve learners' retention of maths vocabulary, and finally outlines the use of a Google+ community as a multimedia platform to share content with learners.

In September 2014, nearly two decades on from being the recipient of an undistinguished grade 'D' in A-level maths, I found myself teaching English for mathematics on the International Foundation Programme (IFP). The remit of the 'Link' classes – the name assigned to what had previously been situated within a 'support' paradigm – is to scaffold and develop in tandem the subject and English language skills of IFP learners; this is in order to maximise the benefit for learners who are less than familiar with the language of instruction. The specific context for the Maths Link class is to provide for this in relation to units in *Introductory* and *Further Foundation Mathematics* delivered by the university's School of Mathematics (SoM). Students attend four hours per week of lectures and tutorials in the SoM, complemented by just one 50-minute Maths Link class run by our (EAP) Centre.

Although I had achieved an 'A' in GCSE mathematics, and had maintained an interest in the ideas, if not the practicalities, surrounding maths, the prospect of having to teach IFP students in this area was quite daunting; the situation was further compounded by a dearth of ready-made materials that were fit for purpose. Thus it was that the first year required a great deal of effort on my part to meet the challenge. At the start of a third year of Maths Link operations, I can attest to the fact that this investment has produced considerable returns.

Document analysis

The first step was to identify the nature of the content delivered by the SoM, and establish whether I was even capable of dealing with the concepts myself. A couple of invaluable sites which enabled me to have confidence that I was using the terminology correctly were mathsisfun.com for single concepts, and Khan Academy (www.khanacademy.org/math) to hear them being discussed. The constraints of my timetable were such that I was unable to attend SoM lectures, but over the first few

weeks I found the syllabus on the SoM website, as well as the lecture notes, textbook and weekly homework exercises and their solutions on the university's VLE, Blackboard. The course materials seemed very dry, so I took the advice of a colleague and attempted to start off by stimulating students' interest in what sort of questions mathematics can help us to answer.

A stimulating first lesson

With this in mind, I kicked off the first class with a lesson based around a clip from Professor Brian Cox's 2011 show *A Night with the Stars* (featuring Jonathan Ross, Simon Pegg, Sarah Millican and James May), in which, using a simplification of Richard Feynman's equations, he calculated the probability that a large diamond would spontaneously jump out of its box. This *could* conceivably occur as the sub-atomic particles that make up the diamond (and all matter) do actually jump around in time and space. The students need to find out three things in order to complete the task: (1) the value of Planck's constant h , (2) the age of the universe in years and (3) how many seconds there are in a year. They will then be able to compare that number to this inequality: $t > \frac{x\Delta x m}{h}$, which is 'the time [t in seconds] you would have to wait, on the average, to have a reasonable chance of that diamond hopping out of its box', where x = the distance we want it to hop, Δx = the size of the box and m = the mass of the diamond. Spoiler: the mind-blowing answer is that you would have to wait six hundred billion times the current age of the universe for something as large as that diamond to jump out of its box.

Student presentations

After this first session, I have one student per week give a three-minute presentation on a mathematician (say, Feynman or Planck), formula, or any other aspect of maths which they feel would interest their peers. Past student presentations have focused on Euclid, Fibonacci, Pascal's Triangle, the cyclic number

142857, Bayes theorem, the Chi Square test, Mandelbrot, Mental Arithmetic, Pythagoras, the Quantity Theory of Money, Polynomial equations and Matrices. All students from last year's class who responded to my survey (n=13) said they enjoyed watching each other present, and all but one agreed it was a chance for them to improve their presentation skills. I certainly learnt a great deal myself.

Retention of maths vocabulary

After a few sessions, it became clear that some basic terminology was missing from students' lexicons, and also that they were not retaining the subject-specific vocabulary from week to week. Part of each class was therefore dedicated to exploring new terms, and reviewing old ones. These were identified by going through the weekly homework tasks and solutions and highlighting any new and potentially problematic vocabulary. In weeks 5-6, for example, students study exponential growth, the tricky vocabulary including *rumour*, *radioactive*, *half-life* and *deemed safe*. In week 8, it included the verb *to subtend* as well as the nouns *radius*, *diameter*, *circumference*, *arc*, *chord*, *secant* and *tangent*.

Flashcards and (de-) contextualised vocabulary

After watching Leo Selivan's January 2015 IATEFL webinar on *Quizlet*, I began to make flashcards with word or picture definitions for students to study on their smartphones/tablets via the app, or on their PCs via the weblink. Students can study alone, test each other or play competitive games, all of which facilitate more frequent exposure. Students are thus exposed to the lexis in context via their notes, exercises, textbooks, lectures and tutorials, as well as in a decontextualized form in the course materials and via *Quizlet*. This vocabulary was also activated in Maths Link classes by having students peer teach in groups, sometimes after having them watch YouTube videos which work through various maths problems. Again, according to my survey of my students, the vast majority agreed with the statement 'I like how the vocabulary was taught' and thought the videos were 'generally useful'.

About the same time, I had begun to create more professional looking materials, with a standardised structure using our department's 'house-style', so that students could build up a bank of course materials for each week.

A multimedia platform

Starting in September 2015, I experimented with use of a *Google+* community as a multimedia platform to increase learners' enthusiasm for all things mathematical (if this is not a viable option, a similar effect may be achieved with a closed Facebook group). I used it to share links to the *Quizlet* vocabulary, the slides from students' weekly presentations, maths events linked to the calendar: Ada Lovelace Day (October 11th), Mole Day, National Cat Day (Schrödinger's, naturally), Isaac Newton's birthday (December 25th), Valentine's Day, Pi Day (3.14.16), plus any mathematicians honoured by Google Doodles. I also included links to Khan Academy for tricky concepts, GIFs, jokes and brain teasers as well as maths-related TED-Ed videos.

I keep my eyes open and collect jokes, articles, videos and memes from Twitter, Facebook and YouTube channels to enliven the course materials and make some of the lexis and concepts more memorable. Responding to comments from last year's students on the survey, the sessions could be improved by an increased focus on solving maths problems in class. Generally, students said that they 'enjoyed peer teaching' and 'learnt something from doing peer teaching', so in the future I intend to work on better 'activating learners as instructional resources for one other' (Wiliam, 2011).

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*Go to about 40 minutes into the programme where Prof. Brian Cox embarrasses Jonathan Ross, as the latter finds it impossible to even begin the calculation.

Selivan, Leo. 2015. *Quizlet: more than just flashcards* [IATEFL Webinar] 24 January 2015. Available at: <http://www.iatefl.org/join/webinars#past> [Accessed 30 October 2016].

Wiliam, D. 2011. *Embedded Formative Assessment*. Bloomington, IN: Solution Tree Press

Useful websites:

www.mathsisfun.com

www.khanacademy.org/math

quizlet.com – an online learning tool for learning vocabulary via flashcards

Providing focus, or limiting options? Lexis, disciplines and English for Academic Purposes

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This article briefly examines some of the theoretical work behind the move towards Subject Specificity in English for Academic Purposes (EAP). It suggests that there are two aspects of foundation year teaching which distinguish this area from the wider field of EAP. Given these differences, the article goes on to suggest that an alternative approach could be adopted in order to achieve the goal of linguistic and academic literacy in specific subjects. This involves equipping the student with the skills to identify, record and assimilate the core vocabulary of their discipline, and allow the student to build his or her own academic lexicon.

In recent years there has been a very apparent turn in English for Academic Purposes (EAP) towards the idea of subject specificity, especially in the area of lexis. This has been inspired by the increasing insights provided by the study of computerized corpora, as well as the scholarship of writers such as Ken Hyland, who has been a prominent and highly influential voice in the teaching of EAP for a number of years.

This article aims to question whether this focus of subject-specific lexis is appropriate for the pre-university sector. This is by no means meant to denigrate the excellent work that has come about through the study of discipline or subject-specific lexis, and nor is it to claim that subject-specific lexis has no place in EAP. The intention is to question whether this approach is applicable to the needs of foundation students, given their particular learning needs and position in the academic community.

A theoretical approach

As mentioned above, probably the most prominent voice in the literature about the benefits of subject specificity is Ken Hyland. He has been prolific in his scholarship of EAP, and also highly vocal in his championing of a discipline-specific approach. His main argument has been three-fold. Firstly, he sees writing as a social activity (Hyland, 2002). This means that no academic writer is writing in isolation. Everyone writes as part of a group, and to become part of the group we need to adopt the features of the group communication. For EAP, this is not, as Hyland (2006, p.2) points out, simply a matter of "controlling linguistic error or polishing style". To become part of the academic community, an academic writer needs to write with features including, but not limited to, lexical

density, effective use of metadiscourse features (Groves, 2013) and epistemological balance. Hyland (2002) also makes the point that research into second language acquisition indicates that students should not be expected to master the core forms of language before they grapple with the subject specific. It is well understood that the features of language are not acquired in order of complexity, (Robinson, 1991) and therefore, Hyland argues, syllabuses should not be arranged this way. This allows him to argue that more complex language features, such as highly specialized lexis, can be taught before students have completely fluent linguistic abilities.

However, Hyland & Tse (2007) admit that there are certain features of academic writing that are clear across the academic board, otherwise the phrase "Academic discourse" could not exist. He also cites the growing body of research into the subject specialisms, including his own. However, it must be remembered that much of this is linguistic research, researching the nature of academic text, not pedagogical research, into what students need to know. For these reasons, he makes excellent arguments that EAP is distinct in many ways from general English Language Teaching, but fails to convince that there is a need to plunge into discipline-specific teaching from the very start of the students' academic careers.

An older metaphor.

Bastone (1994) used the metaphor of flying in a plane and looking down at the countryside. At 30,000 feet, the countryside looks uniform. We can see large features, such as hills and mountains, but otherwise it is even. As we descend to 10,000 feet we can make out roads, and rivers and copses of trees.

As we come into land, we see what seems like random detail close up. Grammar, he argues, is similar. This metaphor is extendable to academic English. From 30,000 feet, certain regular features are clear, such as the need for hedging. At 10,000 feet, other features become apparent, such as the difference between a discursive essay and a lab report. Finally, at ground level, there are further intricacies, such as subject-specific hedging strategies, outlined skillfully by Hyland and Tse (2004). It does not seem unreasonable to argue that foundation students need Academic English at 30,000 feet to start with. As they move on through their academic careers they can develop their subject-specific knowledge, vocabulary and other discourse features.

What makes foundation different?

Foundation programmes have many features in common with the wider world of EAP. However, two important distinguishing factors are that other subjects are taught and that the students are still maturing into effective members of the academic community. Every foundation programme has some element of content module alongside the EAP; what this means is that the students are dealing with content and concepts that are rich in the language of their discipline as a key part of their studies.

In addition, the students are at the beginning of their academic careers. This means that foundation programmes have a responsibility to help students develop their study skills, something that is deeply embedded in the vast majority of foundation programmes. However, this is more than a responsibility: it is an opportunity for the students to learn rigorous and effective ways of developing their own personal academic, subject-specific lexicon.

Opportunity Cost

Given that the curricula of foundation programmes are generally so crowded, if focus on subject-specific language is adopted, it needs to replace something else. This is what economists refer to as an "opportunity cost"- in other words, the sacrifice made in order to incorporate something new (Sloman, Wride and Garratt, 2012). While, in a perfect world, we would be able to cover every aspect of EAP in the time available, the question is clear. Is the focus on subject-specific lexis worth the cost of what has to be left out to make space for it? This leads to the question of whether the gain is worth the loss.

A way forward

None of this is to deny that any student needs to be proficient in the particular lexis of their discipline. Engineering students need to know concept of Torque, the word for it and a large amount of other information about the word, including, but not limited to its pronunciation, collocations and register. However, they are surrounded by the discourse of their field for large parts of their working week. So, it is here that they can employ strategies to learn the norms and expectations of their field. The EAP instruction comes in, not by giving the students the words that they need, but by giving students strategies to identify, record and assimilate the lexis themselves, giving them ownership over the whole process. These strategies could include using websites such as [lexutor.ca](http://www.lexutor.ca) to analyze their own output, using word clouds to identify the words that they need, and the myriad of websites and apps from Quizlet to Memrise to reinforce the vocabulary. Lower tech approaches such as writing learning journals with the new vocabulary, and the use of index cards are also useful here. Alongside this, the EAP teaching teams can build these strategies into a curriculum, and rigorously check that the students are engaging. This can even become part of the formal assessment, for example by portfolio.

The focus therefore shifts from limited sets of lexical items, identified for the students. Instead, the student has become the key point in the process, equipped with skills to build their own, personal lexicon from whatever academic field they work in and towards.

Conclusion

An impressive amount of excellent linguistic scholarship has come from the recent turn towards subject-specific lexis in EAP. However, in the particular context of the foundation year, it would seem clear that it is the role of EAP departments to equip the students with the skills that they need to identify and use the linguistic features of their target discipline. This is a skill which will help them adapt to the communicative needs of their discipline, at university and beyond.

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THIS IS A CALL FOR PAPERS FOR ISSUE 17 OF *InForm*

The submission of papers is now invited for the seventeenth edition of *InForm* from members of the academic community associated with international foundation programmes. Issue 17 will be published in December 2017.

We are interested in articles related to the variety of academic disciplines commonly found across international foundation programmes and remind contributors that *InForm* is not predominantly an English language teaching journal. *InForm* also includes a letters page with readers' responses to the articles included in previous editions. Letters should be no longer than 200 words.

Journal articles (of no more than 1500 words) should be sent by email to inform@reading.ac.uk by 12.00 pm on 30 September 2016.

For more information and a full writer's guide please visit www.reading.ac.uk/inform

If you wish to discuss an idea for an article, please email us on inform@reading.ac.uk





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