



MASARYK UNIVERSITY Language Centre



POSTGRADUATE ACADEMIC WRITING COURSE

SESSION 2

WELCOME

Autumn 2019 Seminar 2 notes – we will use today.

Homework task: * ***Find a partner and review each others new vocabulary and language. Choose the best (most useful / practical) vocabulary to present to the group.***

Useful new vocabulary:

1.

2.

3.

Today's aims:

- To pick up where we left off last seminar
- To explore further styles and types of academic writing and academic language

1. Styles of writing

Consider the differences in approach between these four versions of the beginning of a story, Goldilocks and the Three Bears. * **Working with a partner, Identify which is in a nursery style, which a journalistic style, which novelistic, and which academic. Then discuss with the group.**

1. Human beings have interfered with bears' natural habitat ever since Goldilocks was on the scene. Remember how she carried on while the three bears were out walking in the woods? They thought they could come back and find everything as they had left it, except that their porridge would be just the right temperature to eat. No such luck. There had been an uninvited visitor.

2. Once upon a time there were three bears. There was a daddy bear, a mummy bear and a baby bear. They all lived together in a little cottage in the woods. One day, mummy bear made some porridge for breakfast but it was too hot to eat. "Let's go out for a walk while it cools," Daddy Bear said. "Yes, let's," Baby Bear said. So the three bears went for a walk in the woods.

3. One lovely sunny morning, while Father, Mother and Baby Bear were having a stroll to give their porridge time to cool, a little girl called Goldilocks pushed open the unlocked door of their cottage in the woods.

4. "This porridge you've made is too hot." Daddy Bear said to Mummy Bear. "Why don't we go for a walk while it cools? It's a lovely sunny morning."

"Yes, let's," said Baby Bear. Mummy Bear agreed, so the three bears left their little cottage for a walk in the woods.

(Adapted from: <http://myweb.tiscali.co.uk/academicwriting/nursery2.html>)

2. Academic Style

Good academic style is neither extremely formal and incomprehensible, nor too informal or close to spoken language. A balanced, middle ground needs to be found.

*** Read and discuss the texts below with the group. Choose the best "academic" one of them.**

1. The move from a structuralist account in which capital is understood to structure social relations in relatively homologous ways to a view of hegemony in which power relations are subject to repetition, convergence, and rearticulation brought the question of temporality into the thinking of structure, and marked a shift from a form of althusserian theory that takes structural totalities as theoretical objects to one in which the insights into the contingent possibility of structure inaugurate a renewed conception of hegemony as bound up with the contingent sites and strategies of the rearticulation of power.

2. Sociobiologists are often accused of genetic determinism. Now if genetic determinism means that genes matter for behaviour, the thesis seems hard to reject. Dogs act differently from humans, and this is not just a matter of different environments. If, on the other hand, genetic determinism means that genes settle behaviour independently of environment, then it is biological nonsense. Genes programme organisms to reproduce, and reproductions will often require being responsive to features of the environment. What we can expect from genes is contingency plans: psychic mechanisms that respond

to different environmental histories with different motivations. The sociobiologist's problem is to identify what these adaptive contingency plans are.

3. Well, I think the good point about London is that London is still a very tolerant and very relaxed place, and most people, I find, are very friendly. It's still a very fluid society if you go to America, you find a much more ghettoised society in terms of races, where you have middle class black ghettos and middle class white ghettos, whereas in this society you don't have that rigid, that rigid sort of ghettoised society, even in Brixton, which is supposed to be, you know, the black area in London you find, sort of middle class white people and black people living side by side, it's still a much more mixed and heterogeneous society than, than America. And it is in many ways in London an open and a tolerant society.

4. Much has been learned from efforts to achieve the goals of the World Summit and the Jomtien Declaration in the past decade. Despite the sometimes disappointing numbers and achievements, much more is known about what works in education than was the case a decade ago. What were once innovative ideas and promising pilot projects have become desired reforms and national programmes, successful approaches to particular problems-such in girls, education and schooling for children in remote-areas-have been developed, documented and disseminated. These include e.g. specific ways to get more children into school; specific efforts to ensure that girls have full and equal access to basic education and are able to reach the same levels of achievement as boys; or comprehensive policies and programmes that enhance educational quality and promote gender sensitivity. Finally there are a lot as these or different kinds of benefits we can get it from education, but it depend on the nature of environments (school, family, community).

(Adapted from: 1. Judith Butler, 1997; 2. Goodin, R.E.; Pettit, P.:1993;p. 600; 3. Harmer J, 1989; 4..Majed, Al-Ali; 2006)

3. General Characteristics of Academic Writing

*** Choose three of the statements below, write down your thoughts, then share them with a partner. Review each others ideas and English.**

Researchers must always be objective.

Research is an act of discovery.

Writing in the first person – as I – in a dissertation is always a bad idea.

When I write a dissertation, I have to say something original.

Research mostly involves going to the library, collecting information from books and magazines, and putting it in your paper.

I am supposed to express my own opinions in a dissertation.

There is a big difference between facts and opinions.

Pretty much everything you read in textbooks is true.

There is a big difference between a fact in science and a fact in humanities.

When two experts disagree, one of them has to be wrong.

A story that does not have an ending is not a very good story.

**** From what you have just read and discussed, what are 3 important features and characteristics of postgraduate academic writing? * Write down your ideas using full sentences.***

4. The Power of Words - Discussion questions

Why is vocabulary important? In what ways can building and increasing your vocabulary improve your academic writing? * **Discuss in pairs or small groups, then discuss with the group.**

5. General academic words

Match the letter of the most appropriate definition with the following words from the Academic Word List.

* **Complete the task individually, then discuss with the group.**

1. ___ predominant
a. the most common b. the earliest variety c. the weakest
2. ___ phenomenon
a. a spectacular event b. something which occurs at a precise time
c. something that is observed to happen or exist
3. ___ whereas
a. in contrast b. similarly c. in another place
4. ___ dynamic
a. fuel-powered b. constantly changing and progressing
c. rigid, fixed to a spot
5. ___ paradigm
a. a rectangular shape b. contrasting theories of the same event
c. a model which explains an event
6. ___ hierarchical
a. passing information from generation to generation b. multi-layered
c. a system of ranking by importance
7. ___ arbitrary
a. without principles or plans b. judged by merit c. following pre-determined procedures
8. ___ parameter
a. a system of measurement b. defined limit c. variability
9. ___ commodity
a. a feature shared by two or more people b. something sold for money c. weakness
10. ___ infrastructure

- a. animal skeleton b. public transport system c. the basic facilities of an organisation, society

(Adapted from Alison Brown, 2007)

AWL materials: <http://www.uefap.com/vocab/vocfram.htm>
<http://web.uvic.ca/%7Egluton/awl/>
<http://web.scc.losrios.edu/nuttalg/vocabularyresources>
<http://www.lex tutor.ca/>

6. Formal vs Informal Vocabulary

- * Individually or in pairs, identify the informal expressions in the following sentences.*
** Rewrite the sentences, replacing the informal expressions with a more formal equivalent.*

1. Significantly, even at this late date, Lautrec was considered a bit conservative by his peers.
2. Later Florey got together with Paul Fildes in an experimental study of the use of curare to relieve the intractable muscular spasms which occur in fully developed infection with tetanus or lockjaw.
3. Simply making the effort to reclaim this wasted stuff for fertilizer would have a positive effect on greenhouse releases.
4. It is difficult to imagine exactly what is meant by saying that such a classification is natural as any collection of things could be classified in this way.
5. The radical restructuring of British politics after 1931 doesn't lie in the events of 13-28 August, but in the changing attitudes within the National Government.
6. The material amenities of life have gone up in Western society.
7. The press reflected the living culture of the people; it could influence opinion and reinforce existing attitudes but it did not come up with new forms of entertainment.
8. The aggregate of outstanding balances went up and down quite violently.
9. Dieters often feel that they should totally get rid of high-fat and high-sugar foods.
10. The solitary feeding of insectivores in forests was therefore put down to a foraging strategy involving the pursuit of cryptic and easily disturbed prey by singletons.

(Adapted from: UEFAP: <http://www.uefap.com/writing/feature/intro.htm>)

7. Discourse Markers - Linkers

Words that link together ideas and phrases effectively help to make a piece of writing easier to follow and more cohesive. This is particularly important in academic writing where new ideas are being developed, reasoned arguments are being applied and scientific methodology and results are being described and detailed. It's also important when producing and communicating results and conclusions in research studies.

* *The following linking words are more formal and therefore more appropriate for academic writing than their alternatives eg. so, because, to, but.*

* **Use the following linking words / phrases in a sentence, (use a sports / scientific context if possible):**

result (words that introduce a result or logical connection): eg An adequate number of subjects were unable to be recruited, **therefore** the intended study could not be completed as intended.

- *as a result:*

- *therefore:*

- *consequently:*

reason (words that express a reason for something): eg **Due to** the high prevalence of concussion in American football, it is compulsory that helmets are worn by all players.

- *due to:*

- *owing to:*

purpose: (words that express a purpose or intention to do something): eg *All subjects were blinded to the drug they received, **in order to** remove any potential bias.*

-*in order to:*

- *in case:*

contrast: (words that express contrast or introduce that something is different): eg **Despite** the low subject numbers, the study demonstrated clearly that....

- *although:*

- *even though:*

- *in spite of*:

(Adapted from: Latham-Koenig and Oxenden, *New English File – Advanced*, 3rd Edition, 2010)

HOMEWORK TASKS:

- * Complete the above activity 7 if not completed in class.
- * Find a research article you consider to be well written in English, and look at its language.
- * Write a short 100 – 150 words on what the research area is, why you consider the article to be well written, and perhaps what could be improved (if anything) about it – based on what we have been discussing so far.
- * We will peer review this written work next seminar.