

From general to Academic English: a lexico-grammatical journey

Fiona Aish

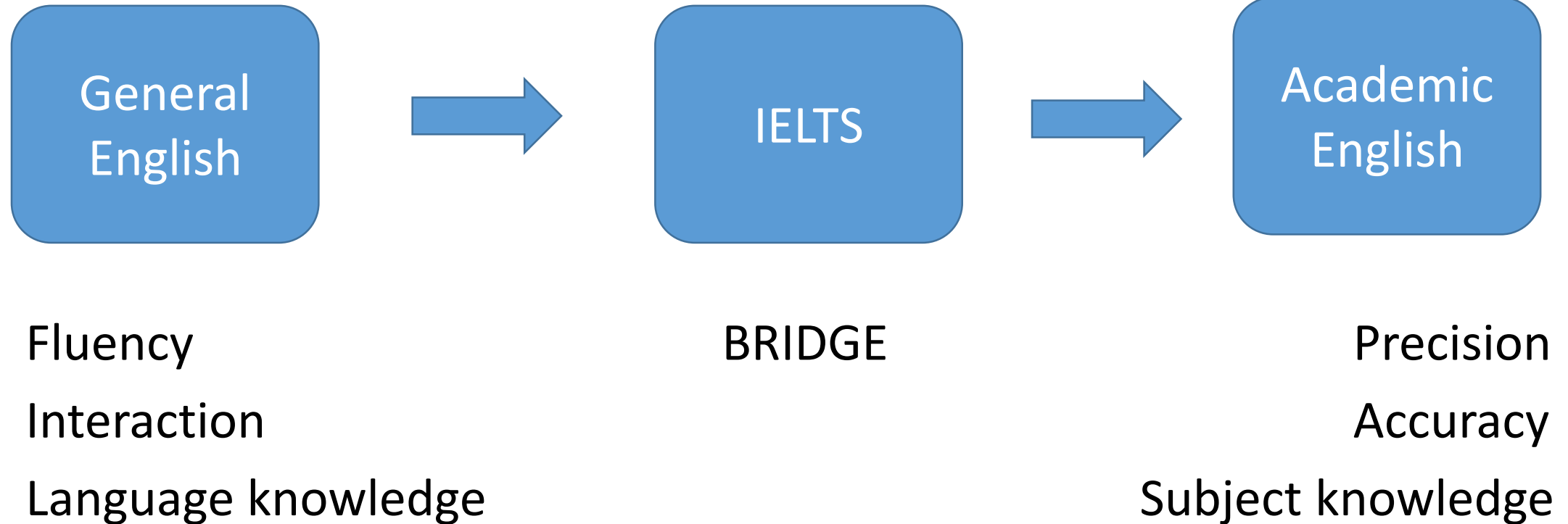
Today's journey

- The travellers (students and teachers)
- The destination (exams and assessments)
- The route (language and teaching)
- The preparation (pathways and resources)

Task 1: *Thinking about our students*

- Why do students want to get a degree from an English medium university?
- What do students need to do to get into an English medium university?
- What language expectations do students have about university study?

Communicative competences



1. Writing

Task 2: *What language do students need for each task?*

1. Imagine you won the lottery. Write a description of how your life would be different.

2. The threat of nuclear weapons maintains world peace. Nuclear power provides cheap and clean energy. The benefits of nuclear technology far outweigh the disadvantages. To what extent do you agree or disagree?

(www.ielts.org)

3. Account for the importance of regulatory control in the financial sector and discuss the implications for banks in the European Union.

Features of general & academic English

General English	Academic English
Verb based	Noun based (noun phrases)
Lexically vague	Lexically dense
Wide range of tenses	Fewer tenses used
Short utterances	More complex clauses
Hedging has social implications	Hedging has knowledge implications
Circumlocution & repair	Cohesion
	Accurate & precise

Task 3: *Thinking about teaching EAP...*

Account for the importance of regulatory control in the financial sector and **discuss** the implications for banks in the European Union.

Match the different coloured sections of the essay title to the function:

- Topic
- Restriction
- Focus
- Action

Task 3: *Analysing noun phrases*

1. The study **showed** the importance of fatty acids.
 2. The recent study **showed** the importance of fatty acid consumption for optimal brain function.
 3. The study which was conducted across three universities **showed** the importance of fatty acid consumption for optimal brain function in young adults.
- *What teacher preparation is required?*
 - *How could you use the sentences above to teach noun phrases?*
 - *What GE activities could be transferable?*

2. Listening

The issue of listening

Lectures:

- input is knowledge & argument
- language is specific
- lectures are long
- speech is authentic
- format is free – note-taking & some discussion

General English (and IELTS):

- input is language & transactions
- language is general
- recordings are short
- speech is scripted
- format is structured – tasks, activities & answers

Task 4: *Helping our students listen well*



9

25

CD1

You are going to hear a lecturer describing life for Victorian families. Listen and choose TWO letters (a–e) to answer the question.

Which of the following are myths about upper-class Victorian families?

- a Families lived with servants.
- b Children were mainly home schooled.
- c Fathers occasionally taught their children Latin.
- d The Victorians were not generous to the poor.
- e Parents were strict with their children.

How could you help students with this activity?

What GE activities could be transferable?

'In the UK, the tax rate for corporations is 20% of profits. There are a number of ways in which corporations can reduce their tax bill but all companies pay corporation tax unless they make a loss in any given tax year. However, the way in which the system works has been heavily criticized by Taylor. According to Taylor we need to think more carefully about how the taxation rules work in practice, especially related to growth in small businesses overall. Although Sachs's theory can apply here, certain economists believe that Sachs has overlooked some fundamental calculations. The interpretations from other economists suggest that small businesses should expect slower growth in all economic climates but to my mind this is an incomplete picture and needs further clarification.'

Why might students find this difficult to listen to?
How could you help them?

Aish, F. & Tomlinson, J. (2014) Lectures

Key points

- GE - language operationalises functions & enables transactions
- IELTS – language helps builds skills & address specific tasks
- EAP – language facilitates evaluative judgements, stance, critical thinking & the processing of subject knowledge

The language journey is ...



3. Resources and preparation

Resources: *Be prepared for the transition*

- Course books: Collins EAS, Palgrave, Oxford EAP
- Websites: various blogs, and EAP websites (Prepare for Success, Academic English online)
- Reading material: Modern Language Teacher, JEAP
- Professional organisations: IATEFL, BALEAP
- Courses: DELTA
 - Short EAP courses (SOAS, LSE)
 - MA (with EAP module)
- Job hunting: www.jobs.ac.uk, www.baleap.org

Pathways: *For students and teachers*

Pre-university:

- IELTS courses
- EAP (English for Academic Purposes) courses
- University foundation programmes (Kaplan, INTO, NCUK)
- Pre-sessional programmes

At university:

- Insessional programmes

Thanks for listening

www.facebook.com/TargetEnglishUK

twitter.com/TargetEnglishUK

fiona@target-english.co.uk