

**Putting Academic Vocabulary Lists to the Test:
Measuring the Academicity of Different Generations of the TOEFL**

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In the context of profiling spoken discourse features in academic settings with three academic spoken corpora of three million words as the database, it became clear that academic vocabulary plays an important role in such discourse. Existing research in other contexts also contends that vocabulary knowledge plays a significant role in listening comprehension, providing further support for our argument that knowledge of academic vocabulary facilitates academic communication and academic vocabulary should form an important element in an English proficiency test for academic purposes. Since the creation of the University Word List (Xue & Nation, 1984), a number of academic vocabulary lists have appeared, including the Academic Word List (AWL, Coxhead, 2000), Academic Formulaic List (AFL, Simpson-Vlach & Ellis, 2010), PHRASE List (Martinez & Schmitt, 2012), and Academic Vocabulary List (AVL, Gardner & Davies, 2013). These lists were created following different frameworks, and therefore differ in their scopes of coverage. The present study aims to evaluate the usefulness of two of these lists, namely, AVL and AFL, for detecting academicity, i.e., density of academic vocabulary, in different generations of the TOEFL, which is intended for determining candidates' suitability for academic studies in universities. In the present study, I first analyze the approaches and criteria adopted in creating these vocabulary lists and then apply the lists to profiling the academic lexical coverage of the listening and reading sub-tests of multiple forms of TOEFL pBT and TOEFL iBT. I will finally report my findings from these analyses.

References

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