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The importance of affix knowledge in English for pharmaceutical sciences majors

Poster summary

Vocabulary knowledge is a strong predictor of reading proficiency (Dong, 2020), and morphological knowledge, including affixes, is particularly critical in English for the pharmaceutical sciences because a significant portion of medical terminology is derived from Greek and Latin, especially because their L1 is Japanese, which poses a handicap to mastering medical terminology because many terms are derived from Greek and Latin (Horst, Cobb, & Nicolae, 2005).

Abstract

Vocabulary knowledge is a strong predictor of reading proficiency (Dong, 2020), and morphological knowledge, including affixes, is critical in English for the sciences because a significant portion of scientific terminology has its origins in Greek and Latin. For Japanese students, a lack of exposure to these languages can be a handicap to mastering terminology. (Horst, Cobb, & Nicolae, 2005).

Understanding affixes can help decipher the meaning of unknown words. Nevertheless, even proficient L2 users of English tend to only learn words as a whole, without also studying morphemes, which would be a more efficient was of decoding text (Ballard & Tighe, 2007). Despite the importance of word parts, research has shown that EFL learners often lack this knowledge (Sakata, 2007) indicating a need for targeted vocabulary instruction. This poster will focus on weekly vocabulary quizzes designed for third-year pharmaceutical sciences majors, most of whom will either continue as researchers or work for pharmaceutical companies. This poster will show how to design quizzes and share effective study strategies, including active learning as well as more traditional learning approaches gleaned over the presenters’ combined 20 years’ experience of teaching affixes in the Japanese university EFL contexts.

Bios

Julia Kimura earned her PhD from Temple University and is a lecturer in the School of Pharmacy and Pharmaceutical Sciences at Mukogawa Women’s University. She is a proud JALT member and is serving her second two-year term as Director of Membership.

Elisabeth Fernandes has over 30 years of experience teaching English (EFL, ESL), French (FLE, FLS), and Portuguese as well as teacher-training in Canada, Thailand, and Japan. The is the membership co-chair for Osaka JALT and serves on the committees of several cultural and social organizations.