

HIGHER EDUCATION AS A RITE OF PASSAGE: THE HERMETICIZATION OF ACADEMIC LANGUAGE AND BARRIERS TO ACCESS TO KNOWLEDGE

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Purpose: The aim of this paper is to examine academic language as a mechanism of symbolic power and gatekeeping in higher education, conceptualized as a contemporary rite of passage. The study aims to analyze students' perceptions of academic language in terms of cognitive difficulty, symbolic prestige, and exclusion, and to explore how these perceptions influence preferences for simplifying scholarly discourse.

Design/methodology/approach: The study adopts an interdisciplinary framework integrating ritual theory (van Gennep; Turner), Bourdieu's concept of symbolic power, and Andreski's critique of scientific jargon. Empirical data were collected through a diagnostic survey conducted among 288 students representing eight fields of study at selected Polish universities. The research instrument included Likert-scale items and a quasi-experimental comparison of academic and simplified text excerpts. Data analysis employed descriptive statistics, χ^2 tests, Spearman correlations, one-way ANOVA, linear regression, reliability analysis (Cronbach's alpha), and exploratory factor analysis.

Findings: The findings indicate a tension between the norm of scientific rigor and the demand for accessibility. Although students generally supported simplifying academic language, they also associated linguistic complexity with prestige and authority. Greater exposure to academic texts reduced perceived difficulty, while lecturers' communicative practices increased the likelihood of reading abandonment. Preferences for simplification were driven primarily by perceptions of exclusion and hierarchy rather than by self-assessed linguistic competence, with significant disciplinary differences. Factor analysis confirmed a three-dimensional structure of academic language perception: cognitive difficulty, symbolic prestige/power, and exclusion.

Research limitations/implications: The study is limited by its non-random and nationally bounded sample. Future research should include longitudinal and cross-national designs to examine the dynamics of linguistic socialization and the structural role of academic discourse across institutional contexts.

Practical implications: The results suggest the need for greater reflexivity in academic communication and for professional development initiatives aimed at balancing disciplinary precision with clarity. The validated measurement scales may serve as diagnostic tools for evaluating communication quality in higher education institutions.

Social implications: By demonstrating how academic language may function as a mechanism of exclusion and symbolic domination, the study contributes to debates on educational equity and access to knowledge. The findings may inform institutional policies aimed at widening participation and reducing communicative barriers in higher education.

Originality/value: The paper offers an original contribution by combining ritual theory and the concept of symbolic power with quantitative empirical analysis. It provides a multidimensional measurement model of academic language perception and extends research on educational inequality and communicative practices in higher education.

Keywords: academic language; symbolic power; higher education; accessibility; rite of passage.

Category of the paper: Research paper.

Introduction

The transformations of the contemporary world—particularly when viewed through the lens of the rapid development of information technologies, ongoing globalization, and closely related changes in labor market demands—are clearly reflected in the broader context of higher education. This domain undoubtedly constitutes one of the key areas of social reality in which the phenomenon of educational expansion has become a dominant feature (Kukla, 2009; Jedlińska, 2013; Myszka, 2015).

This expansion takes various forms, ranging from the growing number of young people seeking admission to available fields of study to the rising expectations placed on academic staff to develop their research and publication potential (Jałowiecki, 2021). The observed rise in student enrollment has shifted higher education from an elite model to a mass model (Trow, 1974). As Scott (1995) observes, this transition fundamentally transforms the nature of academic institutions, intensifying tensions between accessibility and distinction. In mass systems, symbolic mechanisms of differentiation — including linguistic ones — may become even more significant as markers of status within increasingly heterogeneous student populations. Researchers also emphasize that massification is a multidimensional process: on the one hand, it contributes to the growth of human and social capital; on the other, it poses challenges related to maintaining educational quality, securing adequate funding, and adapting curricula to the increasingly diverse needs of students (Kwiek, 2010).

Higher education institutions are therefore confronted with the need to redefine their functions and adjust their educational offerings to changing realities. Philip G. Altbach (2016) aptly concludes that two forces, mass higher education and the global knowledge-based economy, have triggered an unprecedented transformation (p. 352).

This article aims to analyze the hermetic nature of academic language in higher education, interpreted as a contemporary rite of passage. Drawing on classical ritual theory (V. Turner) and Stanisław Andreski's critique of scientific language, the authors seek to answer how

specialized, often incomprehensible language functions as a mechanism of selection and symbolic power within the academic environment. The research method is a diagnostic survey conducted among students at selected higher education institutions.

1. Theoretical assumptions

One of the key analytical categories in the study is the concept of the rite of passage. It is assumed that, in accordance with Arnold van Gennep's classical conception, the commencement of university studies can be interpreted through the prism of a rite of passage. In *Les rites de passage*, van Gennep (2006) argues that any transition from one life stage to another is accompanied by specific ceremonies and social practices, comprising three phases: separation, transition, and incorporation (*séparation, marge, agrégation*) (p. 21). The beginning of university studies fits this schema particularly clearly. The phase of separation manifests in the abandonment of the former role of a secondary school student. Liminality, in turn, is associated with the initial period of study—a time of uncertainty, adaptation, and initiation into academic life, during which the student no longer belongs to the school world but has not yet attained the status of a professional. Finally, with the internalization of the rhythm of academic life, the completion of initial examinations, and entry into the institutional structures of the university, incorporation occurs, understood as the symbolic inclusion in the academic community.

Victor Turner further developed van Gennep's concept, emphasizing the significance of the liminal phase. In *The Ritual Process*, he writes that liminality is a state in which individuals find themselves on the threshold between established social forms (Turner, 1969, p. 95). It is precisely this state of "in-betweenness" that characterizes the initial period of university studies: the student exists in a condition of suspension, having lost a former status while not yet having attained a new one. Turner also introduces the notion of *communitas*, which he describes as a spontaneous experience of community and equality that emerges during transitional periods. In the context of higher education, *communitas* manifests itself, for example, in first-year student integration activities, the shared struggle with academic demands, or communal life in student dormitories.

From an anthropological perspective, the commencement of higher education is a rite of passage from the stage of school-based youth to academic and professional adulthood. It has a symbolic dimension (matriculation ceremonies), a social dimension (a change of status and affiliation with the academic community), and a psychological dimension (the process of gaining independence and constructing an adult identity). As van Gennep and Turner's theories demonstrate, entering university is not merely a didactic process but also a culturally embedded initiatory experience that confers new meaning on both individual and collective identity.

A crucial analytical category in this study is symbolic power, conceptualized within the framework proposed by Pierre Bourdieu. According to the French sociologist, symbolic power is a form of domination embedded in categories of thought and perception, operating effectively through its “misrecognition” and acceptance by both the dominant and the dominated. Bourdieu (2007) notes that every established order tends to present its own arbitrariness as natural (p. 63). Elsewhere, he emphasizes that symbolic violence operates primarily through the unconscious recognition of its principles, which state that symbolic violence is a form of violence exercised upon a social agent with their complicity (Bourdieu, 2009, p. 664).

Symbolic power, therefore, operates in a dual manner: first, it reinforces the existing order through naturalization; second, it employs language and systems of symbols to establish and legitimize categories of thought that the majority accepts as objective and accurate. In this way, social structures are reproduced subtly, often going unnoticed by the groups subject to them. This perspective is consistent with Foucault’s (1980) understanding of discourse as a site where knowledge and power are mutually constituted. Academic language does not merely describe reality but actively shapes what can be legitimately said, thought, and recognized as valid knowledge. From a critical discourse perspective (Fairclough, 1992), institutional language practices both reflect and reproduce existing social hierarchies, embedding power relations within apparently neutral communicative forms.

In this context, the role of specialized, hermetic language within the academic environment becomes particularly salient. Bourdieu and Passeron (1995) observe that, for most French people, academic language is a dead language rather than a mother tongue, even for children from educated social classes. As a result, it is far removed from the languages actually used by different social classes. The rejection of rational pedagogy in this context amounts to the assumption that all students are equal in their ability to meet the demands of academic language (p. 8). This observation resonates with Bernstein’s (1971) distinction between elaborated and restricted codes, which demonstrates how educational systems privilege specific linguistic forms associated with dominant social groups. In a similar vein, Street (1984) argues that literacy should be understood not as a neutral technical skill but as an ideological practice embedded in relations of power. Academic language thus constitutes not only a communicative medium but also a socially situated code that regulates access to institutional legitimacy.

This observation demonstrates that academic language is neither a natural nor a universally accessible means of communication—even for individuals from privileged backgrounds—and thus functions as a selective mechanism of access. It serves as a linguistic instrument of exclusion that presupposes possession of appropriate cultural and linguistic capital. Only those who have mastered this code can participate in academic communication on equal terms; in doing so, they gain prestige and recognition, which constitute a form of symbolic capital. Linguistic competence, in this sense, is not limited to knowledge of grammar and vocabulary but also encompasses the “right to speak”. Bourdieu (2009) argues:

[...] [A] rigorous science of language substitutes the question of the social conditions of the possibility of linguistic production and circulation. Discourse always owes its most important characteristics to the linguistic production relations within which it is produced. The sign has no existence (except abstractly, in dictionaries) outside a concrete mode of linguistic production. All particular linguistic transactions depend on the structure of the linguistic field, which is itself a particular expression of the structure of the power relations between the groups possessing the corresponding competences (p. 647).

Consequently, academic language functions as an instrument of symbolic power: it legitimizes the prestige and position of those who have mastered it while excluding those who lack the requisite competencies. In this way, hierarchical structures within the academic field are not only sustained but also naturalized, thereby facilitating the reproduction of social inequalities.

When higher education is analyzed as a rite of passage, academic language assumes a crucial role—not merely as a vehicle of knowledge but as a tool for constructing and maintaining boundaries of access to that knowledge. Andreski (1973) incisively exposes the “smokescreen” of scientific jargon, observing that: “The usage of mumbo-jumbo makes it very difficult for a beginner to find his way; because if he reads or hears famous professors from the most prestigious universities in the world without being able to understand them, then how can he know whether this is due to his lack of intelligence or preparation, or to their vacuity? (p. 21)¹” Rather than fostering openness, such language reinforces the symbolic prestige of academic communities and operates as a mechanism of selection, requiring novices to possess adequate cultural and linguistic capital to participate fully in the academic field. In this sense, higher education does not so much provide access to knowledge as initiate individuals into a specific communicative code. Andreski (1973) demonstrates that scientific jargon functions like an incantation: it obscures meaning, maintains hierarchy, and sustains barriers to entry; his critique extends beyond epistemology into the realm of social mechanisms—linguistic hermeticism strengthens the elitist character of higher education, marginalizing those who lack the competencies required for legitimate participation.

2. Description of Methods

The study employed a diagnostic survey. It was conducted among students at selected higher education institutions in Poland (Silesian University of Technology, University of Silesia, University of Opole, University of Economics in Katowice) in October 2025. The questionnaire included items assessing the frequency of linguistic difficulties and the extent to which academic language hinders comprehension of content (Questions 1-2), as well as the consequences of these difficulties for students' attitudes, such as avoiding questions due to

unfamiliarity with “appropriate” academic jargon (Question 3). The operationalizations enabled examination of whether symbolic barriers translate into actual limitations on participation in academic classes and projects (Question 6). Subsequent items focused on perceptions of academic language as a tool for constructing hierarchy and distance relative to teaching staff (Question 7), for enhancing lecturers’ authority (Question 8), and as a form of initiation into the university environment (Question 9). The survey also included questions contrasting the symbolic function of academic language with its perceived practical usefulness (Question 10) and preferences regarding the simplification of academic discourse (Question 11).

A vital component of the research instrument was a block of quasi-experimental questions comparing a text fragment in an academic style with its simplified version (Questions 13a-13c). This element enabled an empirical examination of the process described by Bourdieu as a mechanism of legitimization and the reproduction of inequality through language (Bourdieu, Passeron, 1995). The questionnaire thus allowed not only a statistical description of the frequency of problems associated with hermetic language but also a qualitative capture of its role as an initiatory ritual and an instrument of symbolic power.

A total of 288 students from eight fields of study participated in the survey: Applied Linguistics (n = 102; 35.4%), Law (n = 48; 16.7%), Romance Studies (n = 44; 15.3%), Management (n = 41; 14.2%), Chemistry (n = 18; 6.3%), Computer Science (n = 14; 4.9%), Biotechnology (n = 11; 3.8%), and Logistics (n = 10; 3.5%). The study examined perceptions of academic language (difficulty, prestige/elitist character, and exclusionary function) and preferences for simplifying academic discourse. Responses to Likert-type items were coded numerically on a five-point scale (e.g., 1 = “strongly disagree”, 5 = “strongly agree”; for frequency items: 1 = “never”, 5 = “very often”). Questions 18-20, which compared text fragments A and B, were analyzed as categorical variables.

Data analysis employed complementary statistical methods tailored to the variables and research objectives. In the initial stage, descriptive statistics included frequency and percentage distributions, as well as means, medians, and standard deviations. Relationships between categorical variables were examined using the χ^2 test of independence, with effect size reported as Cramér’s V. Associations between ordinal variables were assessed using Spearman’s rank correlation coefficient (ρ). Differences between groups were analyzed using one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA), with effect size reported as η^2 . Given the relatively large sample size, ordinal variables were treated as approximately interval-level measures, consistent with standard practice in social science research. To model predictive relationships, particularly those related to perceived linguistic difficulty and preferences for simplification, linear regression analysis was applied. The internal consistency of the scales was assessed using Cronbach’s alpha (α). In addition, exploratory factor analysis (EFA) was conducted to identify the principal dimensions underlying perceptions of academic language. All statistical analyses reported in this study can be fully replicated using the free statistical software Jamovi.

3. Results

In the examined sample, a clear preference for greater accessibility of academic language was observed, along with moderately high agreement with statements about its prestige-related and exclusionary functions.

Table 1.
Descriptive statistics of selected items

opinion	M	Me	SD
Simplification reduces scholarly value	3.21	3	1.11
Abandoning reading due to difficulty	3.38	3	1.03
The language displays knowledge rather than conveys it	3.44	4	0.98
The language emphasises status/authority	3.67	4	0.99
Jargon excludes some students	3.52	4	1.00
Language constructs a student–staff hierarchy	3.59	4	0.97
I would prefer the language to be more accessible	4.18	4	0.82

Note. M – mean, Me – median, SD – standard deviation.

Source: own study.

The scrutiny of descriptive statistics indicates that, for most of the examined items, both the medians and means were located above the midpoint of the scale, suggesting an overall tendency toward agreement with the presented statements. At the same time, the standard deviation values reveal a degree of variability in students' responses, particularly regarding issues related to the symbolic function of academic language.

An analysis of self-reported exposure to academic texts (scale 1-4) indicates that the vast majority of respondents encountered such texts either occasionally or several times a week. The most frequently reported form of contact was reading several times per week (44%), followed by sporadic contact (36%), whereas only 13% of participants reported daily engagement with academic texts. A complete lack of contact with this type of material was declared by 7% of respondents.

Regarding the assessment of the comprehensibility of the compared text excerpts, the overwhelming majority of participants identified the simplified version as easier to understand (71%). In comparison, only 12% considered the original version more accessible. The remaining respondents judged both excerpts to be similarly difficult (10%) or reported difficulty in making an unequivocal assessment (7%).

The χ^2 test revealed a statistically significant association between field of study and the selection of the excerpt perceived as easier to understand: $\chi^2(21) = 46.8$; $p = 0.001$; $V = 0.23$, indicating a relationship of small-to-moderate strength. The strongest preference for the simplified version (B) was observed in the technical and natural sciences (chemistry, biotechnology, computer science). In contrast, relatively more frequent indications of “both similar” were recorded in linguistics and Romance studies. Similarly, in the question concerning which excerpt was “more academic” (Question 19), the academic-style fragment predominated; however, differences between fields of study were again evident: $\chi^2(21) = 39.5$; $p = 0.008$; $V = 0.20$. Students in the humanities were more likely to accept that the simplified style could be considered “equally academic” (response “both”).

The relationship between the frequency of contact with academic texts (Question 5; scale 1-4) and abandoning reading due to difficulty (Question 2; scale 1-5) was also examined. A statistically significant negative correlation was found ($\rho = -0.36$; $p < 0.001$), indicating that more frequent engagement with academic texts was associated with fewer reports of abandoning reading. In addition, abandoning reading correlated positively with the assessment that lecturers’ language hinders content comprehension (item “hinders”; scale 1-5): $\rho = 0.41$; $p < 0.001$, and with the frequency of encountering unclear formulations during classes (Question 6): $\rho = 0.33$; $p < 0.001$.

To compare group means across fields of study, a one-way ANOVA was conducted on key Likert-type variables. Preferences for simplifying academic language (item “I would prefer...,” scale 1-5) differed significantly across fields: $F(7, 280) = 4.62$; $p < 0.001$; $\eta^2 = 0.10$. On average, students in law and the natural and technical sciences expressed the strongest support for simplification. In contrast, the lowest—though still relatively high—support was observed among students in linguistics and Romance studies. Perceptions of the prestige-related function of academic language (e.g., “emphasises status”, Question 4) also varied significantly by field of study: $F(7, 280) = 2.71$; $p = 0.010$; $\eta^2 = 0.06$, indicating a small-to-moderate effect size.

To identify predictive factors associated with the perceived difficulty of academic language and preferences for its simplification, two linear regression analyses were conducted. In the first model, the dependent variable was self-reported abandonment of academic texts. The predictors included frequency of contact with academic texts, evaluation of how much lecturers’ language hinders content comprehension, the frequency of unclear formulations encountered in class, and control variables related to the field of study. The model was statistically significant ($R^2 = 0.29$; $F(12, 275) = 9.28$; $p < 0.001$). The strongest predictor of abandoning reading was the perception that lecturers’ language impeded understanding, whereas more frequent engagement with academic texts was associated with a lower propensity to discontinue reading; a significant, albeit weaker, effect was also observed for the frequency of unclear formulations. The second model examined predictors of preferences for simplifying academic language and included beliefs about the exclusionary function of jargon, its role in

constructing hierarchy and reinforcing lecturers' authority, and evaluations of whether language simplification reduces the scholarly value of content. This model identified which of these beliefs most strongly shape students' attitudes toward the postulate of making academic language more accessible.

In accordance with the adopted theoretical assumptions, the questionnaire items were grouped into three scales reflecting distinct dimensions of perceptions of academic language, and reliability was assessed using Cronbach's alpha coefficient. The scale measuring linguistic difficulty and cognitive barriers—including, among other aspects, abandonment of reading academic texts, frequency of unclear formulations, perceived impediments to comprehension, and avoidance of asking questions—demonstrated good internal consistency ($\alpha = 0.81$). The scale measuring the elitist and prestige-related character of academic language, which encompassed beliefs about its role in displaying knowledge, emphasizing status, constructing hierarchy, reinforcing lecturers' authority, and fulfilling an initiatory function, showed outstanding reliability ($\alpha = 0.84$). The scale measuring exclusion and access to resources—covering perceptions of jargon as an exclusionary factor that limits access to prestigious knowledge resources and full participation in academic discourse—achieved acceptable to good internal consistency ($\alpha = 0.78$).

Exploratory factor analysis of the Likert-scale items identified a three-factor structure underlying perceptions of academic language. The data were suitable for this analysis, as indicated by satisfactory values of the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) measure and a significant result for Bartlett's test of sphericity ($p < 0.001$). Using the extraction method with Varimax rotation, three relatively independent dimensions emerged, each with eigenvalues exceeding unity. The first factor, related to the prestige and symbolic power of academic language, comprised items with high factor loadings ranging from approximately 0.69 to 0.76. The second factor, interpreted as cognitive barriers and linguistic difficulty, included items with loadings between approximately 0.65 and 0.71, while the third dimension, associated with exclusion and access to knowledge resources, consisted of items with loadings ranging from approximately 0.69 to 0.74. Altogether, the three factors accounted for approximately 56% of the total variance in responses. The first factor explained about one quarter of the variance, with the remaining two accounting for additional substantial proportions, indicating appropriate dimensional reduction and a well-defined latent structure of the analyzed construct.

4. Discussion

The study aimed to examine how students from different fields of study perceive academic language in terms of cognitive difficulty, symbolic prestige, and its exclusionary function, and how these attitudes relate to preferences for simplifying scholarly discourse.

The results confirm that academic language operates not only as a vehicle of communication but also as a marker of symbolic prestige. Students' ambivalent attitudes—favoring simplification while simultaneously associating complexity with authority and scholarly value—reflect Bourdieu's (1991) concept of symbolic power, whereby domination is most effective when it is misrecognized as legitimate. Hermetic language is thus naturalized as an attribute of “scientificity,” reinforcing hierarchical distinctions within the academic field.

In this sense, academic discourse operates as a structured field of meaning production in which power is exercised through the regulation of legitimate speech (Foucault, 1980; Fairclough, 1992).

Consistent with Bourdieu and Passeron (1995), the data demonstrate that academic discourse functions as a selective code requiring prior possession of cultural and linguistic capital. Reading abandonment was predicted primarily by perceptions that lecturers' language hindered comprehension, indicating that barriers are embedded in communicative practices rather than reducible to individual deficits. This finding supports the thesis that academic language contributes to the reproduction of inequality.

The factor analysis empirically substantiated a three-dimensional structure—cognitive difficulty, symbolic prestige/power, and exclusion—corresponding to the theoretical framework. The prestige dimension reflects processes of distinction and accumulation of symbolic capital (Bourdieu, 1984), while the exclusion dimension highlights unequal access to legitimate speech. The cognitive dimension captures the experiential aspect of liminality (Turner, 1969), as students navigate uncertainty during early stages of academic socialization. The negative correlation between exposure to academic texts and reading abandonment further supports the initiatory interpretation of higher education (van Genneep, 2006), suggesting gradual incorporation into the academic community, albeit without eliminating structural asymmetries.

The quasi-experimental comparison of academic and simplified texts revealed a persistent tension: while simplified language enhanced comprehensibility, the original version was more frequently perceived as “more academic.” This pattern illustrates Andreski's (1973) critique of scientific jargon as a mechanism that sustains intellectual authority through obscurity. Complexity appears to derive value not from communicative efficiency but from the prestige it confers.

Disciplinary variation adds further depth to the analysis. Stronger support for simplification among students in technical and legal fields contrasts with greater tolerance for stylistic complexity in the humanities, echoing Hyland's (2004) argument that rhetorical expectations are shaped by epistemological traditions.

Taken together, the findings substantiate the central thesis that academic language functions as an initiatory code mediating access to knowledge, prestige, and participation within a structured field of power. From the perspective of education management and communication quality, they underscore the need for greater reflexivity in academic discourse. Simplification need not undermine scholarly rigor; rather, it challenges the assumption that opacity is a necessary condition of authority. The validated measurement scales provide a diagnostic tool for institutional evaluation and open avenues for longitudinal and comparative research on academic communication. Balancing disciplinary precision with inclusivity may help mitigate exclusionary mechanisms while preserving the normative standards of academic knowledge production.

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Footnotes

¹ All direct quotations from Polish have been translated by R.K.M.

Appendix (Translation of the survey questionnaire into English)

Instructions for respondents: Please answer the following questions by selecting the appropriate option. The results will be analysed exclusively for scientific purposes.

How often do you encounter expressions during classes whose meaning is unclear to you?

- Never
- Rarely
- Sometimes
- Often
- Very often

To what extent does the language used by lecturers hinder your understanding of the presented content?

- Does not hinder it at all
- Rather does not hinder it
- Hard to say
- Rather hinders it
- Definitely hinders it

Do you ever avoid asking questions during classes because you are concerned that you do not know the appropriate “academic” language?

- Never
- Rarely
- Sometimes
- Often
- Always

Do you believe that specialised academic jargon performs an exclusionary function with respect to some students?

- Definitely not
- Rather not
- Hard to say
- Rather yes
- Definitely yes

To what extent do you agree with the statement that knowledge of academic language influences access to prestigious resources (e.g. grants, student research groups, research collaboration)?

- Strongly disagree
- Rather disagree
- Hard to say
- Rather agree
- Strongly agree

Have you encountered a situation in which a lack of familiarity with the “appropriate” vocabulary limited your participation in classes or academic projects?

- Never
- Rarely
- Sometimes
- Often
- Very often

To what extent do you agree with the statement that academic language constructs a hierarchy between students and academic staff?

- Strongly disagree
- Rather disagree
- Hard to say
- Rather agree
- Strongly agree

Do you think that complex scholarly language increases lecturers' authority?

- Definitely not
- Rather not
- Hard to say
- Rather yes
- Definitely yes

Do you believe that mastering academic jargon constitutes a form of “initiation” into the university environment?

- Definitely not
- Rather not
- Hard to say
- Rather yes
- Definitely yes

How do you assess the usefulness of hermetic academic language for the development of your own professional competences?

- Completely useless
- Rather useless
- Hard to say
- Rather useful
- Very useful

Would you prefer lectures and academic texts to be formulated in a more accessible manner?

- Definitely not
- Rather not
- Hard to say
- Rather yes
- Definitely yes

What strategies do you most often use to cope with incomprehensible academic language?

- Reading additional literature
- Consultations with lecturers
- Discussions in student groups
- Use of online sources (e.g. forums, dictionaries)
- Other (please specify):

Instruction: Read the following pairs of text excerpts and answer the questions.

Excerpt A (academic style):

“The process of internalising social norms in the course of institutional academic socialisation conditions an individual’s ability to function within the educational field, which is determined by relations of symbolic power”.

Excerpt B (simplified style):

“During our studies, we learn principles and rules that allow us to function in the academic environment, where relations of influence and prestige are also important”.

13a. Which excerpt was easier for you to understand?

- Excerpt A
- Excerpt B
- Both to a similar extent
- Hard to say

13b. Which excerpt do you assess as more ‘academic’?

- Excerpt A
- Excerpt B
- Both to a similar extent
- Hard to say

13c. Which excerpt would encourage you more to continue reading?

- Excerpt A
- Excerpt B
- Neither excerpt
- Hard to say