

General Characteristics of Linguistic Feature of Language Registers in Writing among English as a Second Language Learners

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ABSTRACT

The linguistic demands of academic writing require learners to appropriately construct the lexico-grammatical structures to form their language registers in writing. Thus, lexical and grammatical analysis is a crucial process that provides an in-depth explanation of linguistic features of language registers in order to help learners develop their writing competence and for the teachers to provide the basis for instructions. However, there were few studies conducted to determine the characteristics of language registers in the context of English as a second language learning. For this reason, the main objective of this study was to determine the general characteristics of linguistic feature in terms of lexico-grammatical structures according to their linguistic aspects. Hence, a descriptive quantitative research design was utilized in this study by which the general characteristics of linguistic feature of students' language registers in essays were analyzed using a textual analysis approach according to the lexicon and grammatical items using a computer software, an automatic grammatical tagger. Based on Biber's analysis of Longman Grammar of Spoken and Written English, the results revealed that the general characteristics of the linguistic feature of respondents' language register in terms of lexico-grammatical structures are nouns, verbs, and prepositions which made up about 56% of all content words in students' essays. This study also highlights that writing as a variable in language research goes beyond simply looking at the learners' writing competence. Taken together, such linguistic descriptions would provide the basis for more principled approaches to ESL teaching methods in terms of lexico-grammatical structures which are fundamental aspects of language registers in writing.

KEYWORDS

English as a Second Language, language registers, lexico-grammatico, linguistic feature, writing competence

Introduction

Language register analysis gives important bases that may help understand the linguistic features of any register by looking into the lexical items and grammatical structures use in both spoken and written texts. Students are expected to communicate and produce English texts with appropriate use of vocabulary and grammar. Thus, the learners of English as a second language need to be competent in one of the essential language skills which is a productive skill in writing where they actually have to produce language themselves according to their writing competence with clear understanding of the lexical and grammatical structures in a context.

Therefore, to assess students' writing competence, teachers may ask them to write on a particular prompt which allows them to express their opinions or point of views with regards to a certain subject matters in essay where the language competence will be assessed through how logically they apply the words and deal with structural concepts such as vocabulary and grammar. In this manner, it shows how appropriately the students construct these lexico-grammatical structures to form their language registers in writing.

In relation to students' writing competence, many teachers and parents today have noticed the significant problems in linguistic skills among students in terms of the appropriate use of the vocabulary and grammar in different situations and scenarios.

Objectives

The researcher was interested to determine the writing competence and provide a clear description of the language registers among ESL College students through the analysis of the general characteristics of linguistic feature in terms of lexico-grammatical structures - linguistic categories through which register is realized. This study was conducted in order to ultimately help students develop the writing competence required in academic situations and for the teachers to provide basis for instruction that addresses the linguistic demands of academic writing. Thus, the research aimed to assess the writing competence and language registers in essays among ESL College Students.

Specifically, it sought to answer the following question:

1. What are the general characteristics of linguistic feature of the respondents' language register in terms of lexico-grammatical structures?

Literature Review

Language Register

According to Halliday (2018), language register points out certain lexical and grammatical items which are chosen by speakers in accordance to the context and situation, the language participants and the purpose or use of language in discourse. In addition, Biber (1995) explains that the language register refers to the use of language in various situations. He also believes that language register is an important part of situational context which considers the communication purpose, the mode of communication either written or spoken, the generation of events, and different backgrounds and characteristics of the participants. Also, Biber firmly concentrates on the characteristics of grammar in different types of text. Additionally, he does not conclude from the context that linguistic features maybe constructed in a text. He focuses on the register from the text end as a set of written form that shows the occurrence of certain grammatical features as relatively high or low frequencies. It can be inferred that language register comprises of many linguistic features including nouns, pronouns, verbs, adjective and other parts of speech – and these are categorized according to the relative use of the linguistic features. Biber also mentioned that a register exists in several linguistically and situationally related kinds of text. Further, with the corpus-based approach to English grammar, Biber (1999) takes into account four major registers: conversation, fiction, newspaper language, and academic prose. In addition, he also highlights that language register can be considered as “at almost any level of generality”. Thus, he examines lexico-grammatical structure from the text of each register and focuses on the actual utilization of the linguistic features in varieties of English. For this reason, he demonstrates a certain language register in accordance to its linguistic features.

In the same manner, Nordquist (2020) explains that to think of lexico-grammar, It is not just an association of two different fields of study but a as dimension which comprises aspect of lexical and grammatical analysis. As explained in systematic functional theory, lexico-grammar compacted into a meta-functional dimension, sustained in intricate from grammar to lexical items and organized into a series of chronological units. Halliday and John Sinclair (2013) wish us to comprehend that in the analysis of lexico-grammar or lexical pattern and grammatical items are not made up the same weight. Lexico-grammar is considered as very fashionable, but it does not comprises the two different patterns as perceived from its name. It refers to the analysis of particular amount of lexical patterns along with grammatical structures thus, it does not try to establish equal bases for grammar and lexical choices. Therefore, lexico-grammar is still refers to a kind of grammar, crafted, or associated with other lexis.

How Words and Grammar Are Interdependent?

Michael Pearce (2013), suggests that the flexibility of verbs describes the mutual relationship between grammar and vocabulary. These two linguistic aspects are interdependent by which we can infer that words have their own grammar. This relationship between lexis and grammar can be found in most parts of the language. For instance, lexical verbs have grammatical patterns – as a direct object, indirect object or both direct and indirect objects and others have no object occurrence. This generalization regarding language structures informs us that about how the language is being use and how does it look like. The structural and lexical behavior patterns are not shown by the linguist' perspectives to fit in the pattern. This field of study has been flourished in linguistic research using large computer data base or corpora and software. Thus, we can only determine and understand how words interact by simply analyze a language from samples of millions of words of running text. In Longman Grammar of Spoken and Written English (LGSWE), Biber et al. explain that it is a descriptive grammar of English that was first published in 1999 by Longman. This book is a legit description of the modern English. Some linguists considers it as a complement to A Comprehensive Grammar of English Language (ComGEL) published in 1985 and Cambridge Grammar of the English Language (CamGEL) published in 2002. Additionally, Hirst (2016) also explains that a large corpus-based grammar can be found in the Longman Grammar of Spoken and Written English which focuses on the grammatical description of English particularly on functional interpretation of the quantitative findings of the linguistic features. Thus, this grammar description presented the four major registers such as functional style, conversation, fictions, news, and academic prose as supplemented by examples

from two supplementary registers such as general prose and non-conversational speech. This book has been greatly complimented as a new milestone in corpus-based grammatical studies since the description of LGSWE covers both British and American English and it is based on a language corpus exceeding 40 million words. To the students who study in the university and teachers who undergo training courses, an abridge version of the LGSWE can be used since it was already published in 20022 while focusing on English language students and researches. Therefore, we can recognize language registers by giving attention to the specific lexical items and grammatical structures, intonation and pace by which these are also represented in all forms of communication modes such as spoken, written and signed. Also, language registers are affected by various factors perceived by the writers or speakers which are varied according to the syntax, grammar and tones used in communication.

Furthermore, Sardinha (2019) explains that the association among lexis or vocabulary, and grammar, or syntax are considered as lexico-grammar. At this point, grammatical structures and lexical items are mutually dependent to each other in the same level. This means that registers comprises both vocabulary and grammar which function together as one. The systematic functional linguistic (SFL) and corpus linguistics (CL) have interconnection to applied linguistics by which both of these theoretical-methodological frameworks consist of lexico-grammar that serve as main role. In the analysis of lexico-grammar, there were various dimensions have been studied including lexical pattern, chunk, phraseology, collocation, colligation, lexical bundle, formulaic language, lexical frames and etc. In the same vein, Robin (2019) explains that writer needs to use two sources of linguistic knowledge which constitute language register such as; syntax, a main element of grammar that allows speaker or writer to produce grammatical utterances and lexical items or lexicon used in natural language. By this combination of grammar and lexicon, there comes language register. These elements limit the grammatical structure of the utterance that can be drawn using theses lexical items. The choice of a lexical items used in a particular content unit is restricted to those words that can be seen in a grammatical structure once a generator has chosen the grammatical form of an utterance. For instance, the choice of a sentence's main verb is restricted to those verbs that can be deactivated once a generator has drawn itself to the utilization of a passive form in a sentence. Therefore, a lexical choice can be constrained by a grammatical choice or vice-versa. Furthermore, the words uttering some other content units of the utterance to generate is restricted as the other elements of that ally when one element of such part was chosen by the generator to deliver some units of the content. In conclusion, there were two kinds of linguistics restrictions on lexical choices such as, due to dependencies between lexical and grammatical choices and inter-lexical restriction due to dependencies among lexical choice, the grammatical form is restricted. Additionally, Chris Jay (2018) claimed that a number of socio-cultural difficulties can increase because many students have limited exposures to the target language in the classroom environment during the production and analysis of text. In addition to this, it often limited to a small coverage of experiences to students who have gained more encounters to English outside of the four corners of the classroom. Consequently, the students frequently stick to write according to the style, and use the features of language that they have had experienced previously as noted by the teachers. For this reason, the teachers often time reading letters written by students which sound like informal email or a social media post which sounds extremely formal. Students' frequently use of the convention of a text they use in their first language and culture becomes another adversity encountered in teaching writing. For instance, the unusual start of letter in Korean and Chinese writing feature would be different from English writing styles. Therefore, the best way to address this issue is that the teachers need to provide relevant practices and inform students what students need to include in their writing as well as explaining different patterns of text.

Moreover, Agha and Frog (2015) mention that many linguists explain the development of language register analysis according to their own specializations and utilize analytic procedures invented from different disciplinary practices. They concentrate on the organization of registers according to the range of semiotic tools as whether prosody or grammatical units, melodic contours or lexical items, kinesics behaviors, or verbal signs, spoken as utterances and etc. The linguists also explain the frameworks of communicative acts through various social practices and historical settings and the number of events they consider is extremely broader than those early models to language registers. For example, the term register was previously recognized as a category of speech variation. Differences in speech and written registers were distinguished mainly by representation of grammatical or lexical criteria according to the presence of complex social context and practices which also known as social situation where language is used. Even more, Biber (2013) explains that term register is specified as situationally defined as varieties. This means that the main points are anchored on the grammatical features of various text types. He does not conclude from the circumstance where linguistic structures maybe exist in a text but he views the register mainly from the end result as a package of texts that comprise occurrence of a certain grammatical structure as relatively high/low frequencies. Biber assigns registers to various kinds of text elements and later he determines the linguistic differences or similarities within the text samples. For this reason, he highlights that registers share commonalities in linguistic features including part of speech such as nouns, pronouns, adjectives and etc. by which

these features are recognized by the general use of these features. Thus, Biber also concludes that a register is found in several situationally and linguistically similar kinds of text. Biber (1999) takes into account the four major registers in his corpus-based approach to English grammar which includes conversation, newspaper language, academic prose and fiction. He also investigates lexico-grammatical features of text samples from each registers and focuses on the actual application of these structures according to different English variations. In this manner, he can demonstrate a certain language register in accordance to the linguistic structures, and it is categorized according to the major registers taken from each other.

Related Studies

Language Register

Cabellow et al. (2019) investigate the effect of language registers to the English language instruction. It focused on the varieties of language registers utilized by both teachers and students in the English as second language classroom and the way the language learning and classroom instruction are generated. The results show that both teachers and learners use official and non-official language form of English within the classroom settings. Thus, it was found out that the use of non-official form of English language minimizes communication gaps during oral interaction and it also helps facilitate learners' language acquisition. In the same light, Mercado et al. (2019) investigate the ways the language register impact the writing skills development among students in university level. The results show that there is a relationship between the writing skills development and language registers by means of sufficient knowledge and ability to distinguish the social situations which enabled language learners to accomplish a well-written text with the use of formal and informal language registers which at the same time facilitates their the appropriate usage of written language. In addition, the results also suggest that even though students often times use informal form of language registers, there is still the need to write according to diverse social situations which requires either formal or informal language or eventually both forms and to recognize the social background of the participants in order to determine the level of formality use in communication. Likewise, Yanti (2019) identified the types and function of language registers used by the traffic enforcers in their conversation or discourse by means of quantitative method. The findings revealed that there were four types of language registers found in the participants' conversation which include frozen, formal, consultative and casual registers with also four functions found in their use of language registers such as; emotive, directive, referential, and phatic function. Further, Raeisi, and Dasjerdi (2019) presents a study which attempted to determine the properties of lexico-grammatico of academic journal abstract according to systematic functional linguistic model of Halliday. The findings revealed that there was no significant difference between non-native and native abstract in relation to the lexical density. In the same vein, Miftakhul (2016) exposed that there were 24 forms of language registers on instant messages that were taken from the analysis of the linguistic feature in instant messages and the use of instant messages were determined according to gender and age of the respondents. The results show that young male seems to use nonstandard register by creating new form of language. On the other hand, the adult male basically use more formal language. Additionally, the females seem to be more expressive and frequently show their emotions in very polite manner. In conclusion, males participants seem to be impolite and talked less compared to the female counterparts.

Lexico-Grammatico

Kobayashi et al. (2016) determined the learners' written production as affected by the first language proficiency levels. The findings show that the level of language register awareness in children was influenced by their first language. In addition, most learners show specific features of language registers including nominalization, conjuncts and predictive modals found in their academic writing. In contrast, the Japanese learners present various informal language features indicated as first person pronouns, private verbs, and independent clause coordination as indicated in their written outputs. Additionally, Selfa and Dahme (2016) revealed that the overall data on the interaction markers have restricted the interactional strategies among learners. The findings also suggest that there is interaction of the cognitive maturity and the genre's social convention through the development process among proficient English writers. In relation to this, according to Biber (2009), there were three dominant word classes found in LGSWE which include nouns, adjectives and prepositions. Generally, the above mentioned word classes are frequently used in academic prose than other forms of registers and that they are many relevant features that comprises the characteristics of academic writing such as; nominalization, noun phrases, stance nouns and etc.

Furthermore, Suyudi (2019) stated that types of finite verbs and main verbs are the most prevalent in academic writing with approximately 62.05%. Moreover, Caplan (2012) stressed out that in academic writing as determined according to corpus analysis, there were three tenses likely prevalent namely; simple present, simple past and the present perfect. In addition, Alzuhairi (2012) found out that in students' academic writing, most all tenses of verbs are frequently used. In conclusion, the results of this study can be drawn as guide toward development of the teaching methodology in teaching verb tenses. Moreover, these finding also useful for the enhancement of learners comprehension and mastery of the

grammatical aspects of English. In addition, Bickel et al. (2013) claimed that word order effects mostly play out for the proportion of noun tokens. The word order rules students follow also regulate the amount of noun roots they produce. Therefore, there is a higher average proportion of nouns in sentences of verb-final languages than in sentence of verb-non-final languages. By the same token, Rini (2019) affirms that in dealing with finite and nonfinite verbs phrases, the students show fair level of performance in writing English sentences. Through the analysis of simple sentence construction, the results of the study suggest that the students were fair in the construction of both finite and non-finite verbs phrases. Furthermore, Listyantari (2016) showed that in syntactic analysis of functions of to-infinite phrases in articles made by students, there were 99 to-verb phrases extracted from 78 sentences. In relation to this, the findings also classified the to-infinitive phrases according to nominal function, adjectival function and adverbial function and among these phrases, adjectival function is found more frequently occurred in the articles.

Moreover, Yusof and Nayan (2019) stated that there were proof to which students often time committed errors in the usage of subject-verb agreement in their composition. The findings show that students mostly committed errors in the general rules than the sub-rules of subject-verb agreement. It implies that with the absence of these rules in their first language, students encountered problems in subject-verb agreement. Subsequently, Singh (2017) revealed that students oftentimes committed errors on the usage of subject-verb agreement and tenses of verbs. For this reason, students tend to over-generalized tenses of verbs and used them interchangeably. Thus these types of errors lead into difficulties in complex sentence construction by which they tend to disregard the essential clauses. For this reason the findings suggest that the teachers should understand the difficulties encountered by the students and provide appropriate grammar instructions. In the same manner, Budiansyah (2015) reveals that the students commonly committed errors on the use of misformation of the lexical items in their writing. Additionally, there were also three types of errors found in students writing such as; misordering, omission, and addition. Also, the results confirms that due to first language interference, students oftentimes committed grammatical errors in their writing. Further, these findings are similar with a study by Utari (2017) which revealed that students committed grammatical errors in terms of omission, insertion and selection. The results also show that selection was considered as the most frequent types of error found in student narrative as marked by the inappropriate supply of preposition along with sentences. Furthermore, Musdalifah (2017) analyzed the students' writing based on types of error. It was found out that the students committed three types of errors on the use of preposition such as omission of preposition, insertion of preposition and selection of incorrect preposition. Overall, the findings revealed that error in selection of incorrect preposition was the predominant types of errors found in students' writing. Finally, Roland (2016) noted that there were at least five main grammatical functions of adjective phrase in students' written composition such as adjective phrase head, noun phrase modifier, subject complement, object complement and appositive. Overall, the results of the analysis show that object complement was the most predominant type of adjective phrase used in students' writing.

Theoretical Framework

Douglas Biber's Text-Linguistic Approach to Register Variation

This theory of language register analyzes the linguistic features of various registers in terms of lexico-grammatical structure used in English. Biber (2009) in his analysis of different registers indicated the co-occurrence patterns across discipline within the academic prose; Natural Science, medicine, social sciences and etc. This theory is basically applied in a large corpora which deals with quantitative and functional analysis of linguistic patterns across registers.

Biber and Conrad's Framework of Situational Analysis of Language Registers (2009)

To facilitate the text analysis, Biber and Conrad provide a general framework to be applied in the study which is known as Framework for situational Analysis. This framework is made up of factors which can be considered as affecting variables of the language registers in a particular social situation which include; participants, settings, relations among participants, communicative purpose, topic, and channel.

Methodology

Research Design

A Descriptive quantitative research designs were utilized in this study. Specifically, it aimed to analyze and describe the writing competence and the general characteristics of linguistic feature of language registers in essays through the analysis of lexico-grammatical structures used among ESL College Learners.

Research Locale

This study was conducted at one of the state universities in Zamboanga City. Recently, there were a total of 16 accredited programs offered in the university. Six programs are level III accredited; five programs level II accredited; four programs level 1 accredited, and one program for preliminary accreditation status. Apart from accreditation, the university was also able to have all of its programs conferred with Certificate of Program Compliance (COPC). This university is located at

the R.T. Lim Boulevard, Baliwasan, Zamboanga City. In relation to this study, it justifies that among all programs of the university, the BS in Development Communication students under the college of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences were selected as respondents because this is the only program in its university that aims to produce Development Communication graduates with high interpersonal skills specifically in writing since they develop and produce multimedia materials and writing composition for development.

Population and Sampling Procedure

The participants were composed of 40 Bachelor of Science in Development Communication (BS in DevCom) students of who enrolled in the first semester of School Year 2021-2022. Hence, this study employed total enumeration sampling technique since it included all 40 BS DevCom students who were on their On-the-Job Training. Especially, in all among programs of the university, the BS DevCom students were usually assigned with the writing tasks in the offices including designing the trifold promotional flyers, promotional videos, writing office reports, event documentation writing and etc. which are in congruent to the development communication field.

Research Instruments

This study utilized two instruments, namely; (a) Socio-demographic Questionnaire; (b) Essay Writing prompt that was used to determine the participants' General Characteristics of Linguistic Feature of Language Registers. This instrument consisted of one writing prompt adapted from Michael Goodine (2021), a Resources Provider of Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL). The essay is composed of a Writing Academic Discussion Question where the respondents were asked to write an essay with the topic on "The widespread use of the internet that has a significant effect in today's New Normal Education" with minimum of 150 words. These writing outputs were analyzed and scored and coded in order to determine the writing competence and language registers used by the participants. Moreover, the said instrument was a standardized instrument.

Data Gathering Procedures

When the respondents were already guided and they understood the directions, they filled out the Socio Demographic Profile. The first task took about 10 minutes. Then, when the respondents were done with the first task, they were then asked to proceed to the next task which was the writing test. This took another 45 minutes to accomplish. This test utilized a writing prompt where the respondents' use of language registers and writing competence were analyzed and scored. Lastly, when all had already been administered and data were gathered, the researcher classified, tabulated and analyzed the responses made by the respondents.

Data Analysis Procedure

To determine the general characteristics of the linguistic feature of the respondents' language registers in terms of lexico-grammatical structures in writing, their essays were analyzed and categorized according to the lexicon and grammatical items using a computer software, an automatic grammatical tagger known as "CLAWS. Thus, these lexico-grammatical structures had been determined, analyzed and classified according to their linguistic aspects which finally revealed the results on the general characteristics of linguistic feature of respondents' language register.

Results and Discussion

Research Problem 1: What are the general characteristics of the linguistic feature of the respondents' language register in terms of lexico-grammatical structures?

Table 1.0 shows the frequency of grammatical aspects that describe the general characteristics of linguistic feature of respondents' language register in terms of lexico-grammatical structures. All texts in the respondents' essays were grammatically annotated using an automatic grammatical "tagger", CLAWS. With this grammatical tagging system, it was found that there are top three word classes especially prevalent: nouns, verbs and prepositions in the respondents' register. This finding was supported by Biber (2009) in his Longman Grammar of Spoken and Written English which shows that "academic" grammatical features come from the most structural categories by which there were also three word classes prevalent such as nouns, adjectives and prepositions found in that register. In this way, he describes a specific register according to its linguistic features. He looks at register only from the text end as a set of texts that exhibit relatively high/low frequencies of occurrence of the particular grammatical features.

Table 1.0 Frequency of Grammatical Features in Respondents' Language Register annotated using CLAWS Part-of-Speech Tagger for English

Feature	Frequency	Percentage
<i>Nouns</i>	<i>1550</i>	<i>24.0945127</i>
<i>Verbs</i>	<i>1173</i>	<i>18.2341054</i>

<i>Prepositions</i>	900	13.9903622
Adjectives	601	9.34245298
Pronouns	579	9.00046635
Conjunctions	506	7.86569252
Articles	494	7.67915436
Adverbs	430	6.68428416
Determiners	195	3.03124514
Interjections	5	0.07772423
TOTAL	6,433	100%

This analysis of lexico-grammatical structure was based on the framework of Biber's Longman Grammar of Spoken and Written English (2009), a corpus-based reference grammar of English. This framework describes the structural characteristics of grammatical features and at the same time it describes lexico-grammatical patterns of use of those features and provides relatively comprehensive description of the register. This figure presents many frequency findings that describe the patterns of use for particular grammatical features. Overall, there are three word classes found more frequent in respondents' language register such as: nouns, adjectives and prepositions. In addition, there are many related specific features that especially describe the linguistic features of register in terms of lexico-grammatical structures (e.g. nominalization, noun phrases with multiple modifiers, verb phrases, verbal phrases, tenses of verbs, subject-verb agreement, and etc.). The result shows that nouns are the most prevalent in respondents' register followed by verbs and prepositions. In contrast, adverbs are the less common in respondents' register despite there is a specific adverb category that is typical of student essay (e.g. adverbs of degree). This implies that the learners who overused single words for instance, common collocations of so, too, most, very more frequently tended to have a narrower range of adverbs.

In relation to this, according to Biber (2009) the findings reported in LGSWE show that there are also three word classes especially prevalent in: nouns, adjectives and prepositions. Overall, this grammatical classes are more frequent in academic prose than in other registers and there are many related specific features that are especially characteristics of academic prose (e.g. nominalizations, noun phrases, stance noun + of-phrase). In contrast, verbs are much less common although there are specific verb categories that are typical of academic prose (e.g., copula be, existence verbs, derived verbs and passive voice verbs).

Lexico-grammatical Structures

On Nouns

White (2021) defines nouns as words that refer to people, places, things, or ideas. Under the umbrella term, there are actually several types of nouns. Some nouns are common and others are proper. A common noun is a noun that refers to people or things in general, e.g. boy, country, bridge, city, birth, day, happiness. A proper noun is a name that identifies a particular person, place, or thing, e.g. Steven, Africa, London, Monday. In written English, proper nouns begin with capital letters name people, places or things. In this study, the findings show that 24% of all content words in respondents' essays are nouns and the most frequently used type of nouns in their language registers are singular common nouns (e.g. ability, activity, advantage, etc.). This implies that nouns are pervasive in most part of the sentences in respondents' writing. Further, these nouns are commonly used by the respondents as a subject of a sentence (The internet has turned our existence upside down.), as a direct object (Teachers use online materials.), as the object of a preposition (The use of internet has been rampant in our everyday lives.) and as a predicate noun (Learning in the New Normal is a challenge.). In addition to noun, NSW Education Site (2021) defines nominalization as a process for forming nouns from verbs (for example, reaction from react or departure from depart) or adjectives (for example, length from long, or eagerness from eager). With this explanation, the results of this study show that nouns formed with -ion, -ment and -ty are much more common (e.g. education, assignment, flexibility) in students' essays. Furthermore, the descriptions of respondents' language register in this study are anchored on one of the major register components which is the description of pervasive linguistic features. The focus of this register perspective is on lexical and grammatical features that are frequent and pervasive (Biber and Conrad, 2009). Registers share many linguistic features – such as nouns, pronouns, verbs, adjectives, etc. – and they are distinguished by the relative use of these features” (Biber 2000). According to Biber, several linguistically and situationally similar kinds of texts constitute a register.

On Verbs

White (2021) defines a verb as a word that expresses an action or a state of being. Most verbs provide key information about the subject of a sentence and are central to the sentence's predicate. Whether a verb is literally performing the action in the sentence or merely linking the subject to the rest of the information, they're always "doing" something. Verbs are

the busybodies of sentences that serve to bring the entire thought to completion. In this study, 18% of all content words in respondents' essays are verbs and the predominant type of verbs used by the respondents are base form lexical verbs (e.g., affect, afford, agree, allow, apply, become). Furthermore, Suyudi (2019) in his research focused on finding the types of finite verb and main verbs shows that the most dominant type of main verb is action verb with 62.05%.

Based on the findings of this study, subject-verb agreement is the most notable grammatical errors in respondents' register. It is concluded that the respondents made errors in the general rule of subject verb agreement; if the subject is singular, the verb must be singular and if the subject is plural, the verb must also be plural. The respondents' essays contain the following error samples (e.g. The birth of technology have many impacts on education system, Life become easier, The use of internet nowadays are very useful, It support the new normal education.) It implies that respondents more often commit grammatical error in this area because they try to avoid using the sub rule of subject verb agreement. This is evident since majority of the errors made are under the general rule of subject verb agreement. In support to this claim, Nayan (2019) notes that another factor that causes learners to make errors in subject verb agreement is because of the L1 interference (inter language errors) where they notice that in their L1, there is no rule which says that a singular subject requires a single form of verb. It can also be concluded that interference from the native language is a source of difficulty in second language learning. Furthermore, Yusof and Nayan (2019) stated that there is evidence which students still possess problems in the usage of their subject verb agreement in their writing. A majority of the students have problems in their general rule than sub-rules. Students have problems in subject-verb agreement because they do not have this kind of rule in their L1. Furthermore, they do not really put as much effort as they could to further improve their writing. Besides, some students did not realize that they made errors in their writing since they have problems in this area. Therefore, remedial actions should be taken in order to help them produce a good piece of written work. Lecturers can employ direct approach in teaching these students and at the same time organize activities which are related to subject verb agreement. Singh (2017) on his analysis of Grammar Errors Made by ESL Tertiary Students in Writing revealed that subject-verb agreement and tenses were the most common type of errors. Students over-generalized and perceived that the tenses could be used interchangeably. Another common error found was in the students' construction of complex sentence. In such constructions, they failed to include essential and nonessential clauses. If teachers do not teach strategies to assist students in comprehending the concept of Subject-Verb Agreement (SVA), tenses, essential and nonessential clauses, these students will continue to make such errors in their tertiary education. The findings may have useful implications for English language teachers as understanding students' learning difficulties and providing appropriate grammar instruction is the key to effective teaching for ESL teacher

On Preposition

Guzman Jr. et.al (2018) define prepositions as small words that serve important functions in the meaning of sentences. They show relationships between persons, objects, places etc. They also act as vital markers to the sentence structure. Simple prepositions are words like at, for, in, off, on, over, and under (e.g. He sat on the chair, There is some milk in the fridge, and She was hiding under the table, the cat jumped off the counter). These common prepositions can be used to describe a location, time or place. The results of this study show that 14% of all content words in respondents' essays are preposition. The most common prepositions used in students writing are; preposition "to" (26%), preposition "of" (22%) and preposition "in" (19%). This implies that respondents frequently use preposition "to" in order to indicate time, place and direction especially they commonly use this preposition as verbal phrase which is congruent the results of this study that the most predominant type of verbal phrases found in respondents' register are "to"-infinitive phrases which expresses purpose. This finding is supported by Listyantari (2016) on her syntactic study syntactic analysis of the functions of to-infinitive phrases in Jakarta articles which shows that the adjectival function of to-infinitive phrase occurred in six Jakarta post articles. Then it was followed by the nominal function of to-infinitive phrase. Then the adverbial functions which constitutes a frequent use of preposition "to" in those articles. Based on the analysis of this study, there are some errors committed by the respondents in the use of prepositions as classified into four categories: misformation, omission, insertion and selection. According to Budiansyah (2015) Misformation errors are characterized by the wrong form of the morpheme structure. In other words, the error using one grammatical form in the place of another grammatical form or the learner supplies something, although it is incorrect (e.g. falled down, What did you doing at eight o'clock?, It is an book). For the second error category, Utari (2017) stated that in omission of preposition, the learner drops using where it is obligatory (e.g. I woke up in the morning *5 o'clock, I was waiting * the bus, my class started *. Third category, insertion of preposition, students supply preposition in the sentence where it is undesirable (e.g. I reached to the campus, I saw to my teacher) and the fourth error category, selection of preposition, refers to the incorrect use of preposition by which students supply prepositions in their sentence which are not appropriate (e.g. I came here in the 15th of July, He has done it from a systematic manner).

In relation to the above error categories, the followings are the samples of errors committed by respondents; Misformation (The teachers use the gadgets to gives and teach their students, We need to used it in line with the latest news in daily reports, The significant possible effect of online learning is that it helps to improved learning.), Omission (Omission of preposition “in” (individual who participated ** online class, Omission of the preposition "in"(Lots of students suffer this kind of issue especially * New Normal Education), Omission of the preposition “with” (** the help of internet, I can study well at home.) and Insertion (In this New Normal system (Education) has a very great effect to the students, In today’s schooling most of the students are now expecting by the helps of internet, It helps also the teachers to increase learning and in teaching) and selection (Most of us are using it through gadgets, It supports the New Normal education by having the purpose of giving information and knowledge over education). It implies that the respondents are lack of knowledge about the proper use of prepositions according to the purpose and meaning of the sentences thus they have confusion on the different functions of the prepositions which resulted in using prepositions that are inappropriate with the contexts.

Additionally, Budiansyah (2015) reveals that the most common error which most students made is using misformation; its frequency is 307 errors or 80%. Then the second common error is misordering with 44 or 16%. The third type of error is omission with 24 errors or 6% and the fourth type of error is addition with 2 errors or 1%. It can be concluded that the reason why they made errors because by the target language. Some rules of the target language make the learners fail to distinguish each other’s. It means that the most common errors that the students made are derived from intralingual transfer.

Further, these findings are similar with a study by Utari (2017) which reveals that the types of preposition errors that occurred in students’ narrative composition were: omission (23.47%), insertion (26.08%) and selection (50.43%). This study also reveals that the most frequent type of preposition error committed by the eleventh grade students on their narrative was selection with the occurrence 58 errors (50.43%). Selection is marked by the supply of prepositions in their sentences which are not appropriate.

Furthermore, Musdalifah (2017) analyzed the students’ writing based on types of error. Meanwhile, the frequencies of error were calculated in percentage. The research revealed: The eleventh grade students of SMA Negeri 2 Pinrang as sample contributed three types of errors on the use of preposition of place in their writing, those were, (1) omission of preposition (8.98%); (2) insertion of preposition (29.49%) and; (3) selection of incorrect preposition (61.53%). The researcher concluded that dominant type of error of this research was error of selection of incorrect preposition with the percentage 61.53% and the occurrence 48. Thus, based on the results of the analysis of lexico-grammatical structures in respondents’ essays, it is safe to conclude that the general characteristics of linguistic feature of respondents language register in terms of lexico-grammatical structures are nouns, verbs and prepositions which made up about 56% of all content words in their essays. This statement is strongly supported by Biber (2009) who posited that the register perspective combines an analysis of linguistic characteristics that are common in a text. He also points out that registers can be defined “at almost any level of generality.” The underlying assumption of the register is that core of linguistic features (e.g. pronouns and verbs) serve communicative functions. Therefore, to carry out the linguistic analysis of a register, one must consider the extent to which linguistic features are used to identify the linguistic features that are pervasive and especially common in the target register (Biber, 2009).

Conclusion

The general characteristics of linguistic feature of respondents’ language register in terms of lexico-grammatical structures are nouns, verbs and prepositions which made up about 56% of all content words in their essays. In addition, the findings strongly suggest that the mastery of grammar and vocabulary is the most crucial factors to consider by the ESL College students in choosing their language registers in writing. Since these students are second language users of English, it is undeniable that the mastery of English grammar and accurate use of vocabulary are great important elements in both speaking and writing. So much more, the Filipino students are mostly concerned with their English language proficiency and become more conscious whether they would write grammatically incorrect or insufficient of the lexical items.

Moreover, the participants’ first language may really influence the use of their L2 by which the cultural aspects and first language give impact to their register in second language performance which includes aspects such as grammar, choice of words as well as tone in writing. It is also evident that readers who are not really exposed to the second language environment and who are deeply immersed in their first language and culture could hardly cope with the L2 communicative situations in both spoken and written texts. Thus, the theory of product approach to writing suggests that the students should be given a model with accurate lexico-grammatical construction and then they are guided to imitate it in order to create a similar product (Soonpaa, 2007). Hence, based on the findings of the study, the faculty members are

recommended to integrate the grammar aspects in English courses. In this way, teachers should provide more writing practices, mentoring and monitoring of students' writing outputs to improve students writing competence.

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