

# Indigenizing the English Language

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## Abstract

*This preliminary study is a description of the syntactic features of formal written Philippine English using 19 graduate term papers as corpus of the analysis. The features found to be distinctive of the corpus are the following: the unusual application of congruence rules, both subject-predicate and pronoun-antecedent, the reclassification of lexical items, including the transitive-intransitive distinction and the mass-count distinction, the simplification of tense/aspect usage, the unusual use of adjectives and adverbs, the unusual word order involving the object of the verb or the adverb and the unusual use of lexical items. The study serves as database for further investigations into the forms of the evolving Philippine English that have become standardized or are on their way to becoming standardize.*

## Introduction

In "History of English in the Philippines," (Bautista, 1997) Andrew Gonzalez surmises that the special features that are observed to characterize Philippine English have been existing since the day the Filipinos began learning English as a second language with their individual languages as substrata. Over the years, language scholars did various studies on the characteristics of this emerging

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variety of English which belongs to what was then variously called post-colonial English or Third World Englishes and currently the New Varieties of English or the New Englishes. Teodoro Llamzon was the first to systematically describe what he called Standard Filipino English in its oral phase in 1969 (Gonzalez, 1976). In 1972, Gonzalez reviewed Llamzon's work and expressed his reservations about the use of the term *standard*. Alberca and Gonzalez described both the oral and written features as they were found in the mass media (TV and print) in 1978. Gonzalez using a tighter research design in *Studies on Philippine English* (1985) elaborated on the features that were seen to indicate a trend towards which the standardization of this emerging variety of English will go.

In the 1997 article, Gonzalez describes the syntax of Philippine English (his term) thus:

The tense/aspect system of verbs and the article system of nouns have undergone restructuring so that the uses of these forms are different from their uses in Standard American English: these areas need further investigation since they have not been systematically studied by local linguists. The subclassification of verbs and nouns and the selectional restrictions or cooccurrence rules between verbs and nouns as well as verb and preposition combinations or two/three word verbs are often local adaptations and do not follow the American Standard English (sic) forms and combinations.

**2. The Purpose of the Paper.** This paper is part of the writer's on-going study on the syntax of the evolving Philippine English which aims to discover the standardized forms of Philippine English. The present paper is a study of the syntax of formal written Philippine English. It is a preliminary description of its syntactic features made on the basis of the corpus used in the study.

**3. The Corpus and the Methodology.** The corpus used in this study consists of 19 graduate term papers of an average length of 35 pages of double-spaced mostly computer-encoded text with 7 – 10 sentences per page. Approximately 5320 sentences are used in the analysis. (The tedious method of sentence counting would have been ideal). The writers of these term papers are college teachers of different universities and colleges in Mindanao. They are assumed to have a wide exposure to the English language and to possess the English writing skill for graduate work.

The use of formal written text as corpus is highly relevant especially as “the written form is often sooner standardized than its spoken form” (Gonzalez, 1985). Moreover, studies on Philippine English should include corpora from other domains than those of the mass media or of literature. The use of text written by teachers is appropriate in that teachers, along with media practitioners and literary writers, are disseminators of language use.

The corpus for analysis is assumed to have been edited, albeit by the writers themselves, so that the special forms and combinations that emerge are not random but are reflective of actual usage. Since the chances of random error are minimal, the writer therefore has included every special form and combination that occurred. Forms that are obviously typographical errors are excluded. A listing of these special forms and combinations in different categories was made and rudimentary frequency counting was done on the most recurring special forms and combinations for the different categories. Special forms and combinations that are not merely idiolectal but common to several (and therefore dialectal), are marked as they are indicative of a trend in which the standardized form will take or has, perhaps, taken.

The following are used as bases for comparison in this study: *The Grammar Book: An ESL/EFL Teacher's Course* by Celce-Murcia and Larsen-Freeman (1983), *A Course Book in English Grammar* by Freeborn (1987), *Reference Guide to English: A Handbook of English as a Second Language* by Maclin (1994) and the *Oxford Dictionary of Current Idiomatic English* by Cowie and Mackin (1975).

**4. The Analysis.** On the basis of the corpus, the features observed to be distinctive in formal written Philippine English are the following: the unusual application of congruence rules, both subject-predicate and pronoun-referent / antecedent, the reclassification of lexical items, including the transitive-intransitive distinction, the mass-count noun distinction, the simplification of tense/aspect usage, the unusual use of prepositions, the unusual use of articles, the unusual usage involving auxiliary verbs, the unusual use of adjectives and adverbs, the unusual word order involving the object of the verb or the adverb and the unusual use of lexical items.

The special forms and combinations that were found can be categorized broadly into a) lexical and b) syntactic. Under lexical fall such subcategories as unusual use of lexical items, reclassification of lexical items and unusual preposition usage. Under syntactic fall such subcategories as unusual use of articles, noun

pluralization, unusual tense/aspect usage, unusual usage involving auxiliary verbs, pronoun-referent/antecedent incongruence, unusual adjective and adverb usage, word order involving the object or adverb, and subject-predicate incongruence.

#### 4.1. Lexical

##### 4.1.1. Unusual Use of Lexical Items

Seven (7) instances of unusual use of vocabulary items were found. Some of these include the following:

... used English and mix-mix in *the delivery of the lesson* (teaching/imparting the lesson).

... they were given instructions and *clarified* (enlightened on) some questions regarding...

... description was also used to vividly *picture out* (portray) events and persons involved.

... the investigation ... *gives light to* (sheds light on) the question...

Language use and preference may also *bear implications* (have implications/have a bearing) on ...

All people in ... are all good and of equal status, *only that* (except) that some have powers ...

Some children tend to be anxious and *tensed*. (tense).

##### 4.1.2. Reclassification of Lexical Items

In the data, transitive and intransitive verbs were reclassified when prepositions were omitted or added or when the object of a transitive verb was omitted.

Instances of omission are fewer than those of addition. In the following instances, the verbs are treated as though they are transitive verbs.

... though it deals (with) the Bilingual Education Policy ...

... the Philippine multilingual scene boasts (of) some ....

... particularly those who are majoring (in) Filipino ...

By adding prepositions after transitive verbs, users reclassified these into

intransitive verbs. Some of these instances include the following:

- ... There have been studies done to explore *into* the influence (explore the influence) of the mass media ... (but explore for oil)
- The negotiators have to trace *up* first the family (trace the family first).
- ... pouted her lips and stomped *on* her feet (stomped her feet)
- ... code-switching concerns *with* the communicative effect (concerns the ...)
- ... as they enter *through* the tertiary level ... (enter the tertiary ...)
- ... the test given corroborated *with* the claim that ... (corroborated the claim...)
- ... the researcher requested from a computed center *for* a random ... (requested a random ... from a ...)
- ... when the bride's family demands *for* additional dowry... (demands additional ..
- ... she demanded *for* fifty pieces of ... (demanded fifty pieces of ...)
- ... she mentioned *of* an on-going dissertation... (mentioned an on-going...)
- ... which the 1987 Constitution has stipulated *for*. (has stipulated.)
- ... those who refused *for* conversion ... (refused conversion)
- Other moderate family also claim (sic) *for* additional... (Other moderate families also claim additional ...)

On the other hand, the following examples show a reclassification of the lexical item when the object of a transitive verb is omitted.

- ... only a small number of the students do not read magazines. Probably, they cannot afford to buy (.). (them)
- Some children were cutting (.); others were coloring the pictures they had drawn. (were cutting out the pictures or whatever ...)

#### 4.1.3. Unusual Preposition Usage

Prepositions have always been the bane of second-language learners of English. For Filipinos who have fewer prepositions in their individual languages, mastering the lexical idiosyncracies of English prepositions is made easier by simply omitting them or more frequently by substituting one form for another. One hundred and twelve (112) instances of unusual preposition usage including those

that result in a reclassification of the verb were found in the data. Some of the more unusual combinations are the following:

... not many scholars are focusing their attention *to* this matter...  
 The implementation of the BEP focused *in* certain aims and goals ...  
 ... an unpublished thesis of ... focused its survey *to* 286 teachers...  
 This paper is focused only *in* the process of ...

There are four (4) instances of this unusual use but the users are divided between using *in* or *to* when the SAE usage is *on*.

Another local usage that may be standardized is *result/resulted/resulting to* of which there are eight (8) instances of occurrence in the data. The SAE usage is *result/resulted/resulting in*.

... it resulted *to* two orders by virtue of...  
 The events resulted *to* the change of the instructional ...  
 It resulted *to* 79 or 32.5% ...  
 ... the language of borrowing and even resulted *to* acculturation.  
 ... multilingualism has certainly resulted *to* some important concerns ...  
 The melting pot culture consequently results *to* language shift ...  
 ... the speaker conveys his message to others by ... thus resulting *to* a systematic exchange ...  
 The study resulted *with* the conclusion that ...

Some other forms and combinations of unusual usage include the following:

... that television is indeed a very strong influence *of* (on) language change.  
 ... the influence of the mass media *in* (on) language change...  
 ... its differences, similarities and influences *to* (on) their socio-psychological...  
 ... the morphemic changes that occur *to* (in) some of the borrowed words.  
 ... predict time lapsation between which the lexical items are borrowed *to* (and) their eventual integration into Pilipino.  
 ... the consequences of having learned another language *to* (on) their social...  
 ... the researcher's insight *to* (into) the natural setting, events ...  
 ... occurrences of this phenomenon would account *to* (for) the influence ...

... occurs as replacements most often *to* (of) nouns and verbs...

... a similar study ... be conducted *to* (on) another set of ...

... English is relegated *in* (to) the school ...

... don't shout *in* (on) the bus...

International norms are specified *to* (in) each society.

... pertaining to his membership *of* (in) a cultural or ethnic group.

... has no child *in* (by) his royal wife...

... the social status of his children *to* (by) his common wife.

... sets of guidelines imposed *to* (on) the subjects ...

... because of some duties and responsibilities coupled *to* (with) such rank ...

... events and persons involved *on* (in) her narrative as exhibited *on* (in) her sample.

... considered as one of the major barriers *for* (against) the process of the intellectualization of Filipino.

... that she has no high regards *with* (for) the ...

... use English *to* (in) their neighborhood.

*At* (In) the neighborhood, the language used is ...

... predominantly spoken at home and *at* (in) the neighborhood.

... hectares of land planted *with* (to) a wide variety of crops.

... who migrated *in* (to) General Santos.

... as more women are more conscious *with* (of) social prestige ...

... but have insisted *in* (on) its interdependence *with* (on) cultural and ...

... who gathered evidence in support *to* (of) it.

... the reflection of the language *to* (on) the ... culture.

Ethnography here is conceived *on* (in) reference to the ...

They became interested *on* (in) the structures of sentences...

... seeks an appointment *to* (with) the speaker.

... to record the speeches *in* (on) three different occasions.

... is actually a test or a gauge *to* (of) the sincerity ...

... is very influential *to* (with) both the families of ...

... the difference lies *on* (in) the power and assets ...

The concept of domain was, *on* (in) the same year, made popular by ...

... single English words inserted *to* (in) a Tagalog structure.

... students who give priority *in* (to) studying their lessons ...

Mod magazine deals more *on* (with) issues ...

... the student has to code-switch *at* (in) the middle of the sentence.

The pattern of code-switching is more *on* (of) of the intrasentential type.  
The respondents' interest *on* (in) the media ...

... based *from* (on) the earlier-mentioned facts ...

... based *from* (on) the work of ...

... categorized based *from* (on) the real time ...

*In* (From) the point of view of the pupils, ...

The findings here show that they agree *to* (with) that (sic) of Haugen ...

## 4.2. Syntactic

The syntactic features include unusual article usage, noun pluralization, unusual tense/aspect usage, unusual usage involving auxiliary verbs, pronoun-antecedent/referent incongruence, unusual adjective and adverb usage, word order involving an object of the verb or an adverb and subject-predicate incongruence.

### 4.2.1. Unusual Article Usage

The articles together with the prepositions provide the most number of unusual uses. One hundred twenty (120) instances of unusual article usage were found in the data making article usage the structure most divergent from SAE usage.

Several reasons make article usage difficult for second language learners. According to Celce-Murcia and Freeman (1983), "Article usage depends to a large extent on the discourse context to determine what is definite and indefinite," or what is known (definite) and unknown information (indefinite). In addition, article usage is closely tied up with the lexical classification of English nouns into mass vs. count. This is a distinction in which languages differ from one another. Furthermore its generic vs. indefinite usage must also be taken into consideration.

Four (4) patterns of unusual article usage were found in the data. These include the omission of the article in sentence-initial position, the omission of the definite article in referring to a language name when the language name is adjectival, the non-use of an article where one is required, the use of an article where none is required and the use of an inappropriate article.

The following exemplify the loss of the article in sentence-initial position:



- ( ) Code-switching phenomenon has been explored ...
- ( ) Opposite situation occurs in the ... Central School...
- ( ) Philippine Bilingual Policy (1972) delineates specific subjects ...
- ( ) Vernacular is used to manifest intimacy between the speakers ...
- ( ) Problem of teachers is not serious.
- ( ) Mindanao State University High School is a state-owned ...
- ( ) English language is still preferred in reading, writing ...
- ( ) Sapir-Whorf Hypothesis or simply Whorf Hypothesis ...
- ( ) Language of negotiation would determine ..
- ( ) Sama-Sinama language is distributed among ...
- ( ) Cebuano language is currently spoken in ...

The following exemplify the loss of the article to refer to a language name when the language name is used as an adjective.

... it showed that ( ) English language is used in the various subjects ...  
 ... in reading and writing, ( ) English language is used by ...  
 ... the preference of the teacher is ( ) Filipino language ...  
 ... the students responded that ( ) Filipino language is being used ...  
 ... her exposure to ( ) Cebuano language is minimal ...  
 Teachers of ( ) Filipino language must cooperate with the ... if they want ( )  
 Filipino language to be standardized.  
 The domains of ( ) Filipino language are expanding ...  
 The students generally prefer ( ) Tagalog language for internal functions.  
 ... for the senior high school ( ) English language is both used and preferred  
 ...  
 The result shows that ( ) English language ranks the highest ...  
 ... this particular discourse basically uses ( ) Sebuano language.  
 ... they prefer to use ( ) Sebuano language when talking ...  
 ... belonged to ( ) Malayo-Polynesian language family.  
 The following exemplify the non-use of an article where one is required:

... who have learned both languages at (an) early age will reach ...  
 The nature of (the) subject matter also determines language choice: (the)  
 Filipino bilingual often talks about ...  
 Most studies on code-switching have been more focused on (the) occur-

rence of mixed codes in...

The survey revealed that in reading and writing, (the) English language. Social stratification refers to (the) hierarchical structuring of group (sic) in

...

The hierarchy reflects inequalities ... usually based on (a) combination of income, occupation, education ...

... to determine and define the roles and functions of (the) nobility towards the ...

... every communicator adds color to (an) individual's identity in the society.

... leaving the multitude locked in (the/a) struggle for survival.

All the respondents agreed to watching TV and listening to (the) radio.

... signify their interest in listening to (the) radio

As of now, (the) sociological study of language seems to proceed ...

This study is (an) ethnography of speaking in the presentation ...

The goal of (the) workman in the ethnography of speaking ...

... the share of (the) Imam who will perform ...

... when held on (a) different wedding day ...

... singing and listening to (the) sermon or homily ...

... this is (a) source of pride among them.

The dominance of (the) native language is revealed in ...

... run and owned by (the) naturalized Chinese-Filipino community.

... their existence must have been due to (an) influential population which had ...

... primarily to discover the dynamics of change and to determine (the) extent of borrowings ...

The following exemplify the use of an article where none is required:

... caring for the abandoned children and the destitute aged men and women of *the* society.

The lack of exposure of the students on (sic) *the* textbooks, media and ...

... *the* English prevails due to the existence of *the* textbooks where most

...

... it was *a* bad luck if the royal in-law cannot recognize him ...

Only 5 or 6% of the respondents show interest in *the* sports ...

The influence of media such as *the* TV programs, radio and ...  
 ... registered a 100% preference for *the* TV programs ...  
 ... the dominant language spoken and used by ... for *the* commercial activities is the (sic) Tausug.  
 Interview with *the* three members of the tribe ... was also conducted ...  
 ... establishing the close connection between *the* communication and culture.  
 The result reveals a big disparity between *the* Sebuano and *the* Tagalog. The respondents' most often borrowed word when speaking in *the* class is ( ) noun, then followed by ...  
 There are some faculty members who employ the reporting method in *the* class.

The following exemplify the use of an inappropriate article:

... a number of teachers preferred to use *the* (a) combination of the languages ...  
 Andrea and Cathy still have *the* (a) firm grasp of Cebuano syntax.  
 As a long-time resident of ..., she is in *the* (a) position to make an encompassing description of ...  
 The survey used the following instruments: ... and *the* (a) tape recorder.

#### 4.2.2. Noun Pluralization

A number of nouns which are used in their singular form have been reclassified when they are used in their plural form. These include the following:

... *researches* be done on lexical borrowing especially in the light ...  
 For example, giving of *advices*,  
 ... my attempt ... will contribute to the numerous *researches* ...  
 ... assured of accessibility and administrative *supports*.  
 ... language and education *researches*.

#### 4.2.3. Unusual Tense/Aspect Usage

Fifteen (15) instances of unusual tense/aspect usage were found in the data. These include the inappropriate use of the progressive, the use of the simple past

for the present perfect or vice-versa and the use of the past for the present.

The following exemplify the inappropriate use of the progressive:

... was distributing the candies, I *was hearing* (heard) the apparently oldest boy ...

... the approach in the data gathering, the methods of analyzing the data *are having* (have) significant difference...

Majority of the pupils commented that their teachers *are using* (use) the mix-mix...

This is the opposite in ... where the pupils *are always speaking* (always speak) the Sebuano language.

Three *were representing* (represented) the public school and two represent (sic) (represented) the private school.

... who posited that the (sic) Sama *is having* (has) 17 consonantal phonemes.

The following examples, on the other hand, show the use of the simple past for the present perfect or vice-versa.

Many *said* (have said) that in order for a nation to move forward, a national language which is truly for its nation ...

... fully aware that the existence of the BEP which *was* (has been ) implemented since 1974 ...

... was born in Marbel, *has studied* (studied) in the same place and lived in ...

Another variety ... has likewise been found dead. However, the variety in Zamboanga ... *remained* (has remained) the mainstream language in the city ..

... over the last few decades, ... the Chabacano language has been perceived to be deteriorating .... Moreover, the implementation of the BEP in the education sector ... *posed* (has posed) an additional threat ...

In the examples that follow, the simple past is used instead of the present or vice-versa.

Currently, a number of teachers *preferred* (prefer) to use ...

She insisted and wanted to persuade them but they opposed her. As a sign of disgust, she just *extend* (extended) her arm sideways, *shrug* (shrugged) her

shoulder, *pout* (pouted) her lips ...

A number of Cebuano speakers live in urban areas ... However, a majority of them *lived* (live) in rural areas ...

#### 4.2.4. Unusual Usage Involving Auxiliary Verbs

Fifteen (15) instances of unusual usage involving auxiliary verbs were found in the data. These include the use of the inappropriate auxiliary verb, the unusual word order involving the verb phrase, and the use of the inappropriate verb form after the auxiliary.

The following are some illustrative examples found in the data:

What perhaps *are* some observable and ... *do* children *place* on their languages? (What perhaps are some observable and ... placed by children on ...)

... as "they feel the waves" on which aspect *could* their language *be filled*. (... on which aspect their language could be filled)

... but no studies have shown as to what extend (sic) *does* this *occur* among the bilingual speakers. (... as to what extent this occurs among ...)

When asked what language *do* these pupils *used* (sic) while in class ... (... what language these pupils use while in class...)

Since the activities of the pupils *did not only limit* to speaking in the classroom... (... of the pupils were not limited only to ...)

Acculturation happened to both ..... and *may happened* to any tribe ... (may happen)

Sociology *is concern* not so much with language as ... (is concerned)

... the private schools *involve* (involved) in the study ...

The communicative *is control* (is controlled).

Gone are the days when a bride ... *would jumped* (would jump) to the ground ...

#### 4.2.5. Pronoun-Antecedent/Referent Incongruence

The lack of congruence between the pronoun and its antecedent/referent involves the use of the appropriate pronoun for the antecedent and the lack of congruence in number between the pronoun and its antecedent.

This is shown in the examples that follow:

... CS occurs when speakers explained *his* (their) ideas and tried to convince *his* (their) classmates.

... communication between the mother and *their* (her) children are (sic) more often than that of the father.

A survey was conducted by the Survey Committee on Bilingual Education *who* (which) drafted the instruments ...

Pupils when writing their respective activity (sic), *it* uses... (When pupils write their respective activity, they use ...)

#### 4.2.6. Unusual Adjective and Adverb Usage

Twenty five (25) instances of unusual adjective and adverb usage were found in the data. These include the use of an adverb for an adjective, the use of the past participle form but without the *-d*, *-ed*, *-t* as adjective, the use of double superlatives, the unusual use of the *than* construction, the unusual use of adverbs.

The following examples show the unusual use of adjectives and adverbs:

... says that only *fully* (full) bilinguals or speakers who have learned both languages ...

I answered *smilingly* with "Good morning, too." (Smiling, I answered, "Good morning."/ With a smile, I answered "Good morning.")

... each to be explained for about two or three minutes using the Filipino-*base* language ... (Filipino-based ...) (5 instances by 3 persons)

It is *oftenly* (often) said that the culprit ...

... the private schools *involve* (involved) in the study ...

Other coordinators signal a *switch* (switched) code ...

It is used very *functional* (functionally) often for delivering political speeches ...

... the researcher's insight to ... are (sic) *most valuable than* anything

else in the research process. (is more valuable than anything else .../is the most valuable product (?) in the research process)

... it can be gleaned that ... teachers are not so proficient *than* that of the ... teachers (sic). (...teachers are not so proficient as the ... teachers.) can be the cause why Sebuano is used in ... ( ) than in the city. (is used in ... more than in the city.)

... the word "Ina" for a ... is the *most sweetest* (sweetest) word ...

... code-switching occurs because speakers can express themselves freely in the *most easiest* (easiest) way. (3 instances by 1 person)

... his linguistic production has been ( ) outstanding that (so outstanding that) he is viewed as a central figure ...

Tausug is regarded as the *superior* language *than* Sama ... (as superior to Sama)

#### 4.2.7. Unusual Word Order

Unusual word order is shown in the occurrence of adverb and adjective modifiers or clauses and objects of transitive verbs in positions that are different from SAE usage. This is shown in the examples that follow.

He speaks a purely Visayan language. (He speaks a Visayan language purely. (?) He speaks a pure (?) Visayan language.)

... found that code-switching most occur (sic) in sentences ... (found that CS occurs most in sentences)

... certain subjects can be more discussed in one language ... (can be discussed more fully (?) in one language ...)

Intersentential occurrences between sentences (sic) sparingly appear only. (Intersentential occurrences appear only (?) sparingly.)

Terms related to settlements were not anymore present in the text of ... were not present anymore in...)

The criterion on attitudes ... should not only be used among the native speakers... (... should not be used only among ...)

Since the activities of the pupils did not only limit to speaking ... (... of the pupils were not limited only to speaking ...)

It could be probably due to sudden language switch ... (It could probably be due to... )

Pupils when writing their respective activity (sic) ... (When pupils write their respective activities ...)

Then the researcher requested from a computer center for (sic) a random generation of numbers. (... requested a random generation of numbers from a computer center.)

... it is not only due to language interference but also to other ... (... it is due not only to language interference ...)

#### 4.2.8. Subject-Predicate Incongruence

Thirty-one (31) instances of subject and predicate incongruence were found in the data. It tended to be preponderant in cases where an intervening phrase or clause came between the subject and predicate. But it was also found in simple cases where apparently the subject had undergone a number reclassification.

Some of the more unusual uses are shown below:

... The couple *is* (are) proficient in both English and ...

... On the other hand when the couple *was* (were) interviewed they were happy ...

... the availability of competent teachers to handle these identified subjects ... *were* (was) considered difficult.

... teachers are experienced and *has* (have) served the school for years.

... state of an individual or group who *identify* (identifies) with more than...

This is another reason why marriage between ... cousins *are* (is) common...

... intermarriages among the different groups *was* (were) strictly prohibited.

Occurrence of borrowing, code-mixing, code-switching ... *were* (was) extracted from the text.

The presence of ... ligatures in Ilonggo *are* (is) manifested in the text.

New teachers with sufficient units in Pilipino *needs* (need) additional ...

... linguistic phenomena *is* (are) analyzable both within ...

The description of the status of the language use and preferences among the students and their parents *were* (was) done across ...

... presence of large companies like ... best *exemplify* (exemplifies) the economic potential of the city.



... the following statistical analysis *were* (was) made ...

The parents' general preference for Tagalog in almost all domains *seem* (seems) to suggest that ...

Moreover, the foregoing data *points* (point) out the direct ...

... it is also the lessons learned from the story that *attracts* (attract) the

...

The following information *are* (is) taken from ...

#### 4.2.9. Other Syntactic Features

Other syntactic features were observed in the data but these do not appear to be distinctive insofar as the present corpus is concerned. Some of these include the unusual word order in reported speech or in restatements of responses to questions.

The following examples show these features.

... is inquiring from Sarah how old is her daughter now. (... how old her daughter is now).

... it is desirable to discover what is a bilingual's attitude towards his own bilingualism. (... to discover what a bilingual's attitude is towards ...)

... shows how widely distributed are the subjects in terms of ... (... how widely distributed the subjects are in terms of ..)

**5. Conclusion.** This preliminary description of the syntax of formal written Philippine English using text written by teachers has dwelt only on the syntactic features found to be characteristic of the corpus. A fuller investigation and description would have included a more systematic sampling procedure to include corpora representative of academic writing in other fields of learning. A more rigid frequency count could have been done to include not just the number of occurrences of a particular form or combination but also the number of individuals using the particular form and combination. This will indicate that the recurring form is a regularly occurring form and not one resulting from random lapses. A fuller investigation and description would also have considered features beyond the sentence structure. These discourse features would have shown the characteristic ways in which concepts are introduced, developed and concluded.

In concluding this article, the writer underscores the position that most

linguists take as regards labeling these unusual forms and combinations as “incorrect,” “ungrammatical,” or as “learners’ errors that have fossilized in the learners’ language.” From the prescriptive grammarian’s perspective, these may indeed be “errors” that must be expunged from the learners’ language. On the other hand, proponents of the interlanguage theory will view the same as manifestations of the learners’ attempts at reconstructing the grammar of the target language. Still, these same forms and combinations may be viewed as different from those that are in the more established varieties of English but that they may be stamped with the speakers’ frame of reference, thus the peculiar way of expression. These may also be viewed as the non-native speakers’ way of owning or appropriating the English language, their way of indigenizing a foreign tongue.

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