The Uniqueness of Linguistic Features in the Students' Written Discourse in Online Learning.

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ABSTRACT

This research aimed at finding and describing the types and the uniqueness of linguistic features in used by the students in their written discourse in BritishEnglishClass.com. The researcher applied a descriptive qualitative method that emphasizes on discourse analysis. The data collection was done using document analysis in form of chat history in BritishEnglishClass.com. The participants of this study were ten students taking the online private course. The result of the analysis showed that the students used six linguistic features namely (1) Lexical features (the use of interjection and abbreviation, code switching, code mixing and diction), (2) Orthographic features (the word spelling and capitalization), (3) Grammatical features (tenses, passive voice, verb use, and personal pronoun), (4) Discourse features (the use of interactional features and the stream of consciousness), (5) Paralinguistic and Graphic (emoticon usage and excessive punctuation) and, (6) other features (written out laughter) . The features are unique because it is different from the standard form of the language. The uniqueness also can be seen from the use of abbreviation that makes the students sentence shorter, the use of emoticon that represent the emotions and psychical activity that cannot be done through the chat room, The use of lower and upper case to represent the sound and the intonation of the student' sentence, the abandonment of convention of capitalization of proper nouns and the first words of sentences, and the creative orthography of some words.

Keywords: *Uniqueness, Linguistic Features, Written Discourse, Online Learning*

INTRODUCTION

Today, the study of the students' linguistic features in written discourse analysis can not only be done in the classroom but also on the outside either in online or offline context. In the online context, the students' linguistic features can be analyzed from the text in form of website, email, and chat.   The researcher is interested to study the linguistic features in form of chat based on the fact that the language in chat is more likely to arise new kind of new language that different from standard language due to the rapid development of instant messaging. Students tend to make their message short and brief in instant messaging, that is why they use the abbreviation and another form of language to make their conversation shorter but still easy to understand. The linguistic features of online context are unique features as they have the same meaning with the standard writing but different in form.

The linguistic features of the written text in offline context as mentioned above show the different and unique features of the text in online context. Hezili (2010) classified the linguistic features that exist in the online communication in terms of (1) orthographic features (alphabet, capital letters, spelling, and punctuation), (2) linguistic (informal vocabulary, abbreviation), (3) grammatical (word order, sentence structure), (4) discourse

features (coherence and cohesion) and (5) paralinguistic and graphics features (alternative marker such as capitalization, and little excessive punctuation). In addition, the main difference between the offline and online written discourse is the language in online context is often in nonstandard form.

One of the online English courses is British English Class which is conducted through instant messaging like Whatsapp. In this course, some of the linguistic features were found. First, some students have difficulties to express their opinion or if they want to ask something using full English and they frequently switch their English with their first language or mix the language. Second, they use the informal spelling of the words and combine letter and number to create words such as *th4nks 4 the info.* Third, the students' sometimes use abbreviations in their chat such as *BTW, LOL*, and *ROTFL* and they used excessive punctuation and capitalization. In addition, the students use some kind of features in the chat room like emoticon and symbol and use the nonstandard spelling of the word such as combining letter and number to create words. The variation of the use of the language in the online context used by the student's shows that there are some new unique forms of the language that may be very different with the standard language. In this study, the researcher tried to highlight the uniqueness of the linguistic features in the students' written discourse in BritishEnglishClass.com.

The researcher emphasized uniqueness because it has been already studied by some researchers that the features on the internet show some unique features that make it distinctive from standard features. Saalek (2015:137) in his study concluded that the communication via electronic communication mediums may facilitate the rise of the new variety of language that is e-discourse and create new forms and functions of language. Hence, researchers concur that the e-discourse has unique characteristics, which make it distinctive. The term uniqueness for the language in the internet is used because there are some form of the language that can not be found in the formal standard writing such as the use of emoticon to represent the emotion and psychical activity such as hugging and yawning or the use of upper and lower case to represent the intonation and other markers that contain meanings as if the students are interacting with their teacher directly.

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Segesrtad (2002) in his study found that, in terms of abbreviations some seemed to be taken over from the norms in international chat, rooms, *lol* (laughs out loud) and *brb* (be right back) and after all the modes have been investigated, it showed that even though web chat is a sort of written conversation, the most frequent token is the word *du* [you], and not the period.. It seems that the norms of standard writing are not as important in this situation. It also shows the importance of the topic, or perhaps the goal of interaction, in the situation: the words *du* [you] and *jag* [I] are what people talk about. He also found that writers use all capital letters, repetition of words, emoticons, asterisk, symbol replacing words to as paralinguistic cues in the interaction.

Thurlow and Brown (2003) found common patterns on the student's message were found: such as shortenings (missing end letters), e.g. 'lang' for language' ,Contractions (missing middle letters), e.g. 'gd' for 'good',;g' clipping (final letter missing, e.g. 'goin' for'going', Other clippings, e.g. 'hav' for 'have', Acronyms and initialisms, e.g. 'v' for 'very', Letter/number homophones, e.g. '1' for 'one' Non-conventional spelling, e.g.'sum' for 'some'.

Based on the previous studies above, this researcher focused also on the uniqueness of linguistic features of the language over the internet, especially in the chat room. The features found were classified into types of linguistic features.

RESEARCH METHOD

This research employed a descriptive qualitative design that emphasizes on discourse analysis to analyze the language features in terms of Orthographic, Lexical, Grammatical, Discourse, Paralinguistic and Graphic features used by the students to interact with their teacher in online learning. Participants of this research were ten students who took a private online class in BritishEnglishclass.com which is called Pertamax class. The classroom that was studied is Pertamax class. In this class, the students are required to have an online classroom for twelve sessions for a month. There are eight chat sessions and 4 voice record sessions. However, the researcher only focused on the students' chat sessions.   To get the data, the researcher used the transcription of the students' chats that show the teaching and learning process of online classes that take place for a month. The students' posting in the class was the main data for this research.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The findings of this research showed that the students used six linguistic features in the chat room. The explanation of the linguistic features can be seen in the table below:

Table 3.1The Linguistic Features used by the Students in Online Class

No	Linguistic features	The items
1	Lexical	a. Interjection b. Abbreviation c. Word Letter Replacement d. Code Switching and Code Mixing e. Diction
2	Orthographic	a. Words spelling b. Capitalization
3	Grammatical	a. Tenses b. Passive voice c. Verb use d. Personal Pronoun
4	Discourse	a. Interaction features b. The stream of consciousness
5	Paralinguistic and gr	a. Emoticon usage b. Excessive punctuation
6	Other features	a. Written out laughter

The detail findings of each feature in the table above can be seen in the following description.

1.   Lexical Features

Lexical features deal with the use of informal vocabulary in online communication. The vocabulary of a language, defined in terms of the set of words and idioms given distinctive use within a variety. The types of lexical features found in this research can be seen in the table below :

Table 3.2 The Types of Linguistic Features in The BritishEnglishClass.Com

Types	Online Form	Standard Form
Interjection	Oooow Hurray Aarrgghhhh Opps Yuhuu	Ow Hurray Argh Oops Yoo-hoo
Abbreviation	LOL Odp mt ID and NL	Laugh out loud Officer development pro Management training Indonesia and Netherlan
Word letter replacement	U	You
Code-switching and Mixing	Because my homework nomor lain	Because my homework my another wa number
Diction	White a second miss	Wait a second miss

In terms of lexical features, there were 5 types of features found. The explanation of each types can be seen as follows :
a. Interjection. Interjection is a word or expression that occurs as an utterance on its own and expresses a spontaneous feeling or reaction, The words, yuhuu, oooow, wow hurray and opps are interjections that function to express the students' feeling or reaction during the course.
b. An abbreviation is the shortened form of a word or phrase that is used to represent the complete form of the words. The abbreviation was used to make the words shorter so the students didn't have to take too much time to type the words. One of the examples was LOL which stands for laugh out loud. It was used to show that he was laughing because the teacher said funny thing.
c. Word letter replacement refers to the replacement of a word into a single letter. In this research, the student replace the word you into a single letter u.
d. Diction. In the diction part, the student sometimes used inappropriate word that have the same sound with the word such as white to refer wait in the sentence, white a second miss.
e. Code-mixing and code-switching are the interchangeable use of two languages in one sentence/ utterance in this research that the student performed code switching and code mixing in response to her teacher's question and Diction that refers to the choice of word when writing. In this research, the researcher found that the student chose wrong diction in the sentence.

2. **Orthographic Features**

Orthographic features deal with the use of the alphabet, capital letters, spelling, punctuation, and ways of expressing emphasis (italics, boldface, etc.). The types of orthographic features found in this research can be seen in the table below :

Table .3.3 Types of Orthographic Features

Types	Online forms	Standard form
Words spelling	Useing Pleasw Phartner Immedietly Appyied	Using Please Partner Immediately Applied
Capitalization	i am effi, i am working in east java, i am from purw east java	I am Effi, I am working in Tuban , Java, I am from Purwakarta, East Ja

In terms of orthographic features, there were two types of features found. The explanation of each type can be seen as follows:

a. Word spelling deals with the way the words are spelled. In this research, the researcher found some misspelling of the words such as immedietly, applyed, useing, pleasw.
b. Capitalization deals with the writing of the words that are in upper case in the first letter then the rest of the letter is written in lower case. The students sometimes jut write their sentence in lower case even it is for proper noun such as name (ujang suhendar, effi), and City/name of a place(tuban,east java, purwakarta)

In this research, the researcher found that sometimes the students didn't pay attention to the word spelling and capitalization while interacting with their teacher in the chat room. They abandon the convention of words spelling and capitalization in the standard form.

3. Grammatical Features

Grammatical form deals with the grammar of the sentence that makes the meaning in terms of distinctive use of sentence structure, word order, and word inflections. The types of grammatical features found in this research can be seen in the table below:

Types	Online Form	Standard Form
Tenses	I am searching grammar formula yesterd	I searched grammar formula yesterday.
Passive voice	The flight is delay because	The flight is delayed because
Verb use	But I already confused	But I am already confused
Personal pronoun	.if I give she free movie ticket.	If I give her free movie ticket

In terms of grammatical features, there were 4 types of features found. The explanation of each type can be seen as follows:

a. Tenses

In the example above, the student wanted to explain her past activity in this case yesterday.   The tense is simple past that is used to indicate an activity or situation that began and ended at a particular time in the past. However, she typed 'I am searching grammar formula yesterday' which is grammatically wrong. The activity that happened in the past should be written using verb II (past tense), and the verb searching is wrong in that sentence because it was not the activity that happened at the moment.

b. Passive

In passive sentence, the verb is in past participle form. However, in this research, the student typed her sentence using simple form. The sentence should be 'the flight is delayed because…'.

c. Verb use

In this research, it appeared that the student wrote the sentence without to be (am/ is/are) that is important in every sentence such as I already confuse or lusi going to wear hijab when she married.

d. Personal pronoun

The students sometimes used incorrect personal pronoun in their sentence. They typed if I give she free movie ticket instead of the correct one, I give her free movie ticket.

In terms of grammatical features, the students seem typed their sentence using wrong tenses, they also typed the sentence without to be (am/is/are), and didn't follow the rule of passive sentence and used an incorrect personal pronoun.

4. Discourse Features

Discourse features deals with the coherence, relevance, paragraph structure, and the logical progression of ideas. The types of discourse features found in this research can be seen in the table below:

Table 3.4. Types of Discourse Features

Types	Online Form	Standard Form
Interactional features	How about plus?	How about plus?
The stream of consciousne	O iya ga teliti aja Pola ini tetap berlaku untuk or: ketiga tunggal ya	Oh iya, saya tidak teliti, ini tetap berlaku untuk (ketiga tunggal ya

In terms of discourse features, there were 2 types of features found. The explanation of each type can be seen as follows:

a. Interactional features. The students used interaction features when interacting with their teacher. The most used interaction features used here was the question mark. The question proposed by the student because they wanted to clarify the teacher's explanation or to ask more about the topic discussed

b. The Stream of Consciousness also appeared in the students' chat room. The stream of consciousness style of writing is marked by the sudden rise of thoughts and lack of punctuation.

5. Paralinguistic and Graphics Features

Paralinguistic and graphics features deal with general presentation and organization of the online written language, defined in terms of such factors as the use of spaced letters, the alternative markers for emphasis (paralinguistic), the use of capitalization, the little excessive punctuation. The types of discourse features found in this research can be seen in the table below :

Table 3.5. Types of Paralinguistic and Graphics Features

Types	Online Form	Standard Form
Emoticon usage		:)* :~ : :x
Excessive punctuation	I do!!!	I do!

In terms of paralinguistic and graphic features, there were 2 types of features found. The explanation of each type can be seen as follows:

a.   Emoticon usage the students used a lot of emoticon to show their emotion while chatting with their teacher. Emoticon is pictorial representation of facial expression characters, usually punctuation marks, numbers and letters, to express a person's feelings or mood, or as time-saving shorthand. Some of the emoticon showed that the students are happy and show their smile (:D and :) and their laugh (XD) . the students also express their shock trough emoticon (:O) ,the students also used emoticon while thinking and also when giving a wink to the teacher.

b.   Excessive punctuation. The students used excessive punctuation to emphasize their words such as I do!!! .The excessive punctuation here function as a mean to show the students' excitement about the matter discussed in the chat room. The students type 'I do' by using excessive punctuation, in this case double exclamanation mark in respond to the jokes and it emphasized that she would do sweep cleaning.

6. Other features

The other linguistic features found in this research is written out laughter. Written out laughter represents the sound of the students' laughter. Instead of using smiley or emoticon, the students 'type'their laughter into a word hahaha and wkwkwk .

Table 3.6. Written Out Laughter

Online forms	Standard form
Wkwkwk	
Hahaha	
Hehe	Ha-Ha

By analyzing the students' written discourse in online learning, we can see that there were many unique features that appeared in the chat room beside the errors in terms of orthographic and grammatical features. These errors can be problematic for the students formal writing as Kadir et al (2012:280) stated that the nonconventional spelling used actually raises educational concerns as teachers are worried that such writing might appear in their formal written document. However, further studies are clearly needed in order to justify the claim.

Beside the error, the written discourse over the internet is unique and can be said that it creates a new form of language that is different from standard language that we used in our daily life. The features found in the analysis were abbreviation that make the students sentence shorter, the use of emoticon that represent the emotions and psychical activity that can not be done through the chat room, The use of words, lower and upper case to represent the sound and the intonation of the student' sentence ,the abandonment of convention of capitalization of proper nouns and the first words of sentences, and the creative orthography of some words.

Saalek (2015:135) stated that the revolution in the electronic communication may give rise to new modes of communication. Electronic discourse is a new variety of language that leads to significant variations in the written structure of language. The new variety of the students' written discourse in online learning has a unique characteristic that makes it distinctive.

4. Conclusions

In online learning, especially in BritishEnglishClass.com the students used six linguistic features namely, lexical features (interjection of vocabulary, abbreviation, word letter replacement, code mixing and code switching and diction) , orthographic features (words spelling and capitalization) , grammatical features (tenses, passive, verb use and personal pronoun), discourse features (interactional features and the stream of consciousness) and paralinguistic and graphics features (emoticon usage and excessive punctuation) and other features (written out laughter) .

The features that appear during the course were different from the standard form of the language that makes the students' written discourse in online learning is unique. The uniqueness found can be seen in the way the students typed their word. The student sometimes used the abbreviation, emoticon, word letter replacement, and abandonment of convention of capitalization of proper nouns and the first words of sentences   The students also could express their emotion and also adding the 'sound of their conversation' in the chat room such as the sound of the laughter. The student also

represented the psychical activity such as hugging, yawning, kissing through emoticon and another uniqueness can be seen in the creation of creative orthography found in this study. These features can be categorized as a new mode of communication and writing that has its own features.

The future researcher may study the features that are not only focused on the five linguistic features but the other aspects of linguistic features. Related to the errors that the student made in online classes such as the misspelling and unconventional spelling that may affect the students formal writing, the further studies are clearly needed to conduct and Related to the limitations of this study, the researcher suggest to the future researcher to study the linguistic features in online learning with a large number of sample since this study sample were ten five students taking the English course in BritishEnglishclass.com.

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