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THE ENGLISH VERB: FACTUAL AND NON-FACTUAL MESSAGE

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Abstract

The study identifies the verb functions in two genres, namely short stories and academic articles. A comparison is made between the two sets of texts to see whether there is any difference in the use of verbs. The purpose behind the selection of these two genres is because they are seen to differ from each other in their rhetorical organization. The study on English verb functions is carried out using the meaning-based framework as proposed by Reid (1991). In this framework, language is viewed as comprising of signs in which each sign is a meaningful unit that contributes to the communication of messages. Language is seen as a tool of communication that can be perceived and learnt as a system. The findings of this study show that we can learn the nature of verbs in terms of Linguistic Factuality. It is found that various forms appear to have their own distinctive features and help in conveying specific communicative messages. Apart from that, the study also shows that there exist some differences concerning the verbs used in both genres. It appears that there is a widespread use of linguistically factual events in both short stories and academic articles. This shows that the events in both genres convey more completed actions and thus, indicate linguistically 'true' messages. The study has been useful in detailing patterns of use that have been glossed over in grammar textbooks.

Introduction

In most parts of the world, it is becoming increasingly important for students to master English, a global language. With Malaysia's decision to reintroduce English as the medium of instruction for Mathematics and Science in its educational system, the need to upgrade proficiency in the language is further intensified. As a result, teachers, particularly language teachers, face a greater challenge to making education a success.

The actual situation in schools and colleges around the country is of great concern to language educators. Language teachers in schools and lecturers in colleges and universities have shown disappointment over the poor performance of students in English. At the same time, most of them