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ASSESSMENT OF STUDENTS' ABILITIES IN USING PERSONAL PRONOUNS IN A DISCOURSE

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ABSTRACT

This study was to assess the students' abilities in using personal pronouns in a discourse. A pronoun is a word that can replace a noun in a sentence. The noun that is replaced by a pronoun is called an antecedent. Pronouns in academic writing are not an event that occurs in one setting but a process that occurs over time. The research increases our understanding of how personal pronouns affect students' abilities in learning and experiences. The study concluded that knowledge of personal pronouns is important because almost all of the sentences that we produce have personal pronouns. Using inclusive personal pronouns can help students perceive themselves as sharing a common place, which can lead to better learning experiences and abilities in academic writing. It is also believed that the usage of inclusive pronouns contributes to a sense of group membership and cohesion. The use of personal pronouns in academic writing may promote community development, and some classes of personal pronouns (e.g., collective pronouns: we, they) indicate the amount of support students receive. One of the recommendations made was that English teachers should give much attention to teaching personal pronouns in academic writing.

KEYWORDS: Student, Abilities, Personal Pronouns and Discourse

Introduction

The knowledge of personal pronouns is important because almost all of the sentences that we produce have personal pronouns. Personal pronouns can make a sentence clearer because I can point to an object directly so the object refers to what or who. The research increases our understanding of how personal pronouns affect students' abilities in learning and experiences. However, it ignores the fact that language is essentially temporal. Instead, the proposed analysis procedures look at learning outcomes or aspects of the learning process after a course has been completed (Demmans-Epp, Phirangee, & Hewitt, 2017). This lack of automated temporal analytics that describe how student discourse changes over a term in response to the learning environment means our understanding of student language use and its relationship to the learning experience could be better understood. It makes sense to use personal pronoun data for diagnostic purposes. Personal pronouns (e.g., you, she, they, and us)

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are used to refer to other members of an online community, implying mutual awareness and participation (Kacewicz, Pennebaker, Davis, Jeon, & Graesser, 2014). The use of personal pronouns in an OLE has been discovered to signal which elements students are paying attention to, as well as their cognitive state and social standing.

According to Thompson, Kennedy-Clark, Kelly, and Wheeler (2013), pronoun metrics could be used as indications of progress in online collaborative work. They claim that changes in the use of the pronoun we, a first-person plural pronoun, might indicate shifts in focus (i.e., focusing on individual vs. group concerns). Thus, discrepancies in pronoun usage patterns may reflect disparities in collaboration quality. Others have argued that using inclusive personal pronouns (e.g., we) can help students perceive themselves as sharing a common place, which can lead to better learning experiences (Kramer, Oh, & Fussell, 2006). It is also believed that the usage of inclusive pronouns (e.g., we, our) contributes to a sense of group membership and cohesion. Demmans-Epp, Phirangee, & Hewitt (2017) noted that when other discourse behaviours, such as the number of posts and discourse facilitation procedures, are taken into account, the use of possessive personal pronouns may indicate community development, and some classes of personal pronouns (e.g., collective pronouns: we, they) may indicate the amount of support students receive.

Concept of Pronouns

A pronoun refers to a word or phrase that is used as a substitution for a noun or noun phrase, which is known as the pronoun's antecedent. Pronouns are short words that can do everything that nouns can do and are one of the building blocks of a sentence (Ginger Software, 2022). Common pronouns are he, she, you, me, I, we, us, this, them, that. A pronoun can act as a subject, direct object, indirect object, object of the preposition, and more, and takes the place of any person, place, animal, or thing. Bhat and Narayana (2007) stated that in linguistics and grammar, a pronoun (*abbreviated pro*) is a word or a group of words that one may substitute for a noun or noun phrase. Pronouns have traditionally been regarded as one of the parts of speech, but some modern theorists would not consider them to form a single class, in view of the variety of functions they perform cross-linguistically (Börjars & Burridge, 2010). An example of a pronoun is "you," which can be either singular or plural. Subtypes include personal and possessive pronouns, reflexive and reciprocal pronouns, demonstrative pronouns, relative and interrogative pronouns, and indefinite pronouns.

A pronoun is a word that can replace a noun in a sentence. The noun that is replaced by a pronoun is called an antecedent. For example, in the sentence *"I love my dog because he is a good boy," the word "he" is a pronoun that replaces the noun "dog."* Generally speaking, pronouns allow us to shorten our sentences and make them sound less repetitive (Thesaurus, 2021). A pronoun refers to a word which is used in place of a proper noun or a common noun. Generally, a pronoun takes the place of a particular noun. The pronoun refers to its antecedent. A pronoun helps us avoid unnecessary repetition in our writing and speech (Idioms, 2022). In English grammar, a pronoun is a word that takes the place of a noun, noun phrase, or noun clause. The pronoun is one of the traditional parts of speech. A pronoun can function as a subject, object, or complement in a sentence (Nordquist, 2019). A pronoun is a word that replaces a noun or noun phrase. Using pronouns correctly eliminates unnecessary noun

repetition in your writing. It may also interrogate, distribute, demonstrate, or reciprocate the whole sense of a sentence, acting either as a subject or as an object.

Types of Pronouns

Possessive Pronouns: A possessive pronoun is a pronoun that can take the place of a noun phrase to show ownership (as in "This phone is mine"). A possessive pronoun is a word that replaces a noun (or a noun phrase) and shows ownership (Shrives, 2019). The possessive pronouns are "mine," "yours," "his," "hers," "ours," and "theirs." A possessive pronoun is a pronoun that is used to express ownership or possession. For example, the word "hers" is a possessive pronoun in the sentence Charlotte noticed that Seth's dog was bigger than hers.

Personal Pronouns: A personal pronoun is a short word we use as a simple substitute for the proper name of a person. Each of the English personal pronouns shows us the grammatical person, gender, number, and case of the noun it replaces. I, you, he, she, it, we, they, me, him, her, us, and them are all personal pronouns (Traffis, 2020). A personal pronoun is a pronoun that is associated primarily with a particular person in the grammatical sense.

Relative Pronouns: A relative pronoun is one that is used to refer to nouns mentioned previously, whether they are people, places, things, animals, or ideas. Relative pronouns can be used to join two sentences (Ginger Software, 2022). A relative pronoun is a pronoun that is used to introduce a relative clause. In particular, relative pronouns usually introduce relative clauses that describe nouns or other pronouns.

Reflexive Pronouns: A reflexive pronoun is a type of pronoun that is preceded by the adverb, adjective, pronoun, or noun to which it refers, so long as that antecedent is located within the same clause. Betts (2018) noted that reflexive pronouns are used when the subject and object of a sentence are the same. Reflexive pronouns are words ending in "self" or -selves that are used when the subject and the object of a sentence are the same (e.g., I believe in myself).

Indefinite Pronouns: An indefinite pronoun is a pronoun that refers to an unspecified or unidentified person or thing. It's vague rather than specific, and it doesn't have an antecedent (Nordquist, 2020). Indefinite pronouns include quantifiers (some, any, enough, several, many, much); universals (all, both, every, each); and partitives (any, anyone, anybody, either, neither, no, nobody, some, someone). Many of the indefinite pronouns can function as determiners. Positive indefinite pronouns ending in "body" can be interchanged with those that end in "one," such as "anybody" and "anyone."

Demonstrative Pronouns: Demonstrative pronouns are pronouns that point to specific objects. They take the place of a noun, noun phrase, activity, or situation. They always consist of this, these, that, those, and sometimes include none, neither, and such (Dictionary, 2022). A demonstrative pronoun is a pronoun that is used to point to something specific within a sentence. These pronouns can indicate items in space or time, and they can be either singular or plural. The demonstrative pronouns are "this," "that," "these," and "those."

Interrogative Pronouns: An interrogative pronoun is a pronoun used to ask a question. For example, the word "who" is an interrogative pronoun in the sentence "Who are you?" Like most other pronouns, interrogative pronouns replace nouns in sentences (Thesaurus, 2021). An

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interrogative pronoun is a pronoun that is used to make asking questions easy. There are just five interrogative pronouns. Each one is used to ask a very specific question or an indirect question. Some, such as "who" and "whom," refer only to people. Others can be used to refer to objects or people.

Intensive Pronouns: An intensive pronoun is almost identical to a reflexive pronoun, but their functions differ. Intensive pronouns are used to add emphasis to the subject or antecedent of the sentence. An intensive pronoun is used to refer back to a noun or pronoun in order to emphasize it. Here is a list of the intensive pronouns: "myself," "yourself," "herself," "himself," "itself," "ourselves," "yourselves" and "themselves." An intensive pronoun is almost identical to a reflexive pronoun.

Reciprocal Pronouns: A reciprocal pronoun is a pronoun that indicates a reciprocal relationship. A reciprocal pronoun can be used for one of the participants in a reciprocal construction, i.e., a clause in which two participants are in a mutual relationship. According to Wikipedia (2018), the reciprocal pronouns of English are one another and each other, and they form the category of anaphors along with reflexive pronouns (myself, yourselves, themselves, etc.).

Personal Pronouns in Academic Writing

Pronouns in academic writing are not an event that occurs in one setting but a process that occurs over time. This process is necessarily messy. In the process of constructing a pronoun in academic writing, you will need to think, plan, struggle, revise, re-write, and mess about in order to discover exactly what it is you want to say and how you want to say it (Johnson, 2017). In academic writing, first-person pronouns (I, we) may be used, depending on your field. Second-person pronouns (you, yours) should almost always be avoided. Third-person pronouns (he, she, they) should be used in a way that avoids gender bias.

First-Person Pronouns (I, we): Personal pronouns that refer to the author or authors – I, we, my, etc. – are a topic of debate in academic writing. In some scientific disciplines, the first person has traditionally been avoided to maintain an objective, impersonal tone and keep the focus on the material rather than the author (McCombes, 2019). However, first-person pronouns are becoming increasingly standard in many types of academic writing (though they are still more prevalent in some fields than others). Some style guides require the use of first-person pronouns when referring to your own actions and opinions. For example,

✖ When **we** are given more freedom, **we** can work more effectively.
✔ When **employees** are given more freedom, **they** can work more effectively.

✖ As **we** age, **we** tend to become less concerned with others' opinions of **us**.
✔ As **people** age, **they** tend to become less concerned with others' opinions of **them**.

Second-Person Pronouns (you): Addressing the reader directly with the pronoun "you" is rarely appropriate in academic writing. To avoid it, rephrase or use the impersonal pronoun. The

second-person point of view belongs to the person (or people) being addressed. This is the "you" perspective. Once again, the biggest indicator of the second person is the use of second-person pronouns: you, your, yours, yourselves. For example,

✖ In order to become a doctor, **you** must complete a rigorous education and years of training.

✔ In order to become a doctor, **one** must complete a rigorous education and years of training.

Third-Person Pronouns (he, she, they): Third-person singular pronouns in English are traditionally gendered (he/him, she/her), but gender-neutral language is considered increasingly important by many universities, publications, and style guides. In older writing, you will often see masculine pronouns (he, him) and nouns (mankind, firemen) used as universal or neutral (McCombes, 2019). This is now considered outdated and biased. Some writers combine masculine and feminine pronouns in constructions such as "he or she." However, this often results in awkward or convoluted sentences, and it is not inclusive of all genders. To refer to people of unknown or unspecified gender, the pronouns they/them/there are generally the most appropriate choice. They have long been used as singular pronouns in informal contexts, and a growing number of style guides (including APA and MLA) now endorse this usage in academic writing. As an alternative to the singular they, you can often simply pluralize the subject of the sentence, or revise the sentence structure so that no pronoun is necessary. For example,

✖ When a child turns 18, **he** gains various rights and responsibilities.

✔ When a child turns 18, **they** gain various rights and responsibilities.

✔ When **children** turn 18, **they** gain various rights and responsibilities.

✔ Children gain various rights and responsibilities at the age of 18.

As with all pronouns, when using the singular, "they" make sure it is clear who you are referring to. If the pronoun could result in confusion, rephrase your sentence to name the subject directly or revise the sentence structure to clarify.

Conclusion

The study concluded that knowledge of personal pronouns is important because almost all of the sentences that we produce have personal pronouns. Using inclusive personal pronouns can help students perceive themselves as sharing a common place, which can lead to better learning experiences and abilities in academic writing. It is also believed that the usage of inclusive pronouns contributes to a sense of group membership and cohesion. The use of

personal pronouns in academic writing may promote community development, and some classes of personal pronouns (e.g., collective pronouns: we, they) indicate the amount of support students receive.

Recommendations

1. English teachers should give much attention to teaching personal pronouns in academic writing.

2. The teachers should use personal pronouns in daily communication with the students when they teach them genres.

3. They should insert pronouns into the genre lesson so the students can exercise the personal pronouns in written or spoken text.

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