

THE LANGUAGE IN INTERACTIONAL SPEAKING AND CONVERSATIONAL WRITING

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There are some places for writing, speaking, written language, and spoken language to exist together. This research investigates some factors that make writing looks and feels like speaking. A database of 200 utterances taken from two subjects (100 utterances from each) in conversational writing (50 utterances per subject) and interactional speaking (50 utterances per subject) during the 6 months of data elicitation period is used. The major finding in this research is that the words found in conversational writing and interactional speaking are of similar level of commonness based on the three criteria of The Oxford 3000TM. The utterances are also similar in terms of complexity. The only slight difference is the way they were uttered through variety of speech acts. One minor finding is that the subjects feel no difference during their involvement in both settings. One subject admits to have made no planning, the other one says that he directly uses the words he has ever used when writing or reading and remembered.

Terdapat tempat di mana bahasa lisan dan tulis bisa menyatu. Penelitian ini menginvestigasi faktor-faktor yang membuat menulis terlihat dan terasa seperti berbicara. Sebuah database berisi 200 ujaran dari dua subyek (100 ujaran persubyek) pada percakapan tertulis dan percakapan interaksional (50 ujaran per setting) selama 6 bulan digunakan. Penemuan utama dalam penelitian ini adalah kata-kata yang digunakan pada kedua setting berada pada tahap keumuman yang sama berdasarkan tiga kriteria Oxford 3000TM. Ujaran-ujaran tersebut juga sama tingkat kerumitannya. Satu-satunya perbedaan kecil adalah bagaimana ujaran tersebut dituturkan melalui berbagai tindak tutur. Temuan pendukungnya adalah bahwa kedua subyek tidak merasakan perbedaan apapun selama keterlibatan mereka pada kedua setting. Satu subyek tidak membuat persiapan apapun, dan yang satu lagi menyatakan bahwa dia spontan menggunakan kata-kata yang pernah ditulis atau baca dan diingatnya.

Keywords : *conversational writing, interactional speaking, language*

Introduction

There have been quite many debates and theories related to language, whether it is spoken or written and when each of them is used. Goldstein (2008) suggests that language is a system consists of sounds and symbols used for expressing feelings, thoughts, ideas, and experiences. That system contains rules that are used for generating infinite variety of messages (Weiten, 2007). In relation to the meaning, there are some things lies behind the literal meaning that it is possible to have an utterance understood as a request and then it triggers further action (Searle, 1979). What would be a consideration is whether spoken language is produced only when speaking and written language is used only in writing. In relation to that, to decide what language is used and when, the characteristics of each language should be identified.

By nature, writing and speaking belong to productive skills (Harmer, 2001), but writing does not incorporate all the meaning potential of speech, writing and speaking are in practice used in different context for different purposes, and they impose different grids on experience (Halliday, 1985 : 92). Writing is visual, permanent, involves punctuation, delayed, and unlimited in terms of planning, editing, and revision while speaking is auditory, temporary, prosody, involves immediate feedback, and its planning and editing is limited by channel (van Lier : 1995). In that sense, it seems impossible to find someone whose language in speaking is written-like or spoken-like when writing. However, Nunan (1991) implies a reason why the language in a piece of writing looks more structured than the transcribed spoken language.

He stated that, if we could examine all the draft of a piece of writing, it may also look as unstructured (Nunan, 1991 : 85). So it can be inferred from that statement, that it is not certainly improbable to find a spoken-like language in someone's writing.

Furthermore, Halliday (in Nunan, 1991) implies that spoken language is more basic than the written language which is more complex in structure. In that sense, Nunan (1991) also explains that such thing happens because there are inferences about relevant knowledge possessed by the readers made by the writers due to the nature of writing that is distant.

In contrast, naturally, speaking and writing are actually quite similar. Both of them are productive skills (Harmer, 2001), and writing is said to be the 'frozen speech' (Moxley, 1990) as it exists for the sole purpose of representing what is said (de Saussure in Moxley, 1990). Still in line with that statement, what someone does when in writing is actually exploring the relationship between him/herself and the readers in similar way to the way s/he explore the his/her relationship to the listeners when having conversations (Gould, 1989). More principally, Aristotle (in Moxley, 1990) states that written words are signs of words spoken.

Considering the many similarities and differences between speaking and writing, this study was aimed to find out the similarities between two situations, conversational writing and interactional speaking. More specifically, the similarities were classified into three: words, lexical density, and speech act. In relation to conversational writing and interactional speaking, both were chosen as the settings for eliciting the data due to some reasons. The first reason was that both are similar in speed, degree of formality, and purpose. To provide a clearer impression, the two terms are defined as : 1. Conversational Writing: the writing

activity that is not for transactional purpose but for social or interactional purpose;

2. Interactional Speaking : the speaking activity that is done in daily life situation for the purpose of social interaction.

Previously, there have been quite many research focused on similar matter, the speaking-writing connection, or more specifically called cross-modality. Those studies showed variety of results. Amalia (2011), in her study, reveals that writing and speaking have significant positive correlation. Hubert (2008) states that he found the correlation to be weak in the beginning, but got stronger in more advanced level. Similar studies with interesting facts were also found in an article

of compiled research report by Chafe and Tannen (1987). Lull (in Chafe and Tannen, 1987) states that children start to write better than they speak, in terms of content, grammar, and diction, in their first half of fifth grade. In terms of sentence length and complexity, Blankenship (in Chafe and Tannen, 1987) found only little difference between campus lecturers' recorded speech and their writings.

Going into more detailed explanation, Horowitz and Newman (in Chafe and Tannn, 1987) compared handwriting, typing, and stenotyping and found that the faster the mode of writing, the more spoken-like the language. This might have something related to the strategy, as stated by Cayer and Sacks (in Chafe and Tannen, 1987), that basic writers tend to rely on oral strategy. This strategy knows no border, because according to Ochs (in Chafe and Tannen, 1987), adults also retain strategies used by children in their unplanned communication situation (typically spoken language).

The next finding shows that there is no clear difference between spoken and written-language in terms of semantic well-formedness, cohesion, and discourse structure (Hidi and Hillyard in Chafe and Tannen, 1987). This finding is in line with Biber's (in Chafe and Tannen, 1987) that indicates no single absolute difference between speech and writing in English.

All of the findings above are closely related to the nature of both conversational writing and interactional speaking, especially when seen from the mode and the setting.

Method

The design used in present study is a longitudinal observational case study as it focuses on finding previously set targets in a particular group of people that was observed in six months. The data were the utterances, both in conversational writing by means of chat box and text messages and daily conversations, produced by the subjects who are of similar background. There were two chosen subjects who were continuously engaged in data elicitations in the setting that was set to be as natural as possible. The utterances produced were recorded with a voice recorder device or steno-typed on sheets of papers.

The collected data were later sorted, reduced, coded, and analysed with no specific formula. The only specific formula used was Halliday's (1985) formula for counting lexical density. One parameter was also used in classifying the words, it was the Oxford 3000TM in Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary 7th Edition. For the analysis of speech act, Parker's (in Nadar, 2009) classification was used.

Result and Discussion

The result shows that the two subjects did not use different characteristics of the language in conversational writing and interactional speaking, both are spoken-like.

In words and expressions, there was no significant occurrence regarded as a tendency found. Only the first subject produced the chunk '*I don't know*' but not

quite frequent. The second subject also repeatedly use 'sucks', but not frequent enough and only in very short time span. Their utterances are also similar in number of average tokens and lexical items. The details are as follow :

1. Table of tokens and lexical items

Subject	Utterances			
	Spoken		Written	
	Avg. Tokens	Avg. Lexical Items	Avg. Tokens	Avg. Lexical Items
Subject 1	6,14	2,36	6,02	2,14
Subject 2	6,44	2,26	6,04	2,26

In choosing the words, both subject tend to use common English words (>80%) more. The complete result is shown in the table below :

2. Table of words distribution

Subject	Utterances			
	Written		Spoken	
	Listed	Not Listed	Listed	Not Listed
Subject 1	88.85%	11.14%	87.50%	12.50%
Subject 2	84,95%	15.04%	86.76%	13.23%

Some words that are not listed in the Oxford 3000TM are regarded as uncommon English words, but the subjects did not actually produce such words often. The

percentages in the right column (not listed) were resulted from various terms, person's name, and some uncommon English words.

The utterances were also analysed by using Halliday's formula in order to find out which language, between the one in conversational writing and interactional speaking, is more complex. The result shows only very slight different in lexical density. Overall, the utterances are less-lexically-dense and therefore said to be spoken like. The record is presented in the table below :

3. Table of lexical density

Subject	Utterances	
	Written	Spoken
	Lexical Density	Lexical Density
Subject 1	0.39	0.38
Subject 2	0.37	0.37

The last analysis was related to speech act. The utterances in conversations were analysed and classified into four types of speech acts. Both subjects are similar in tendency to use the four acts, even if some acts were used slightly more often than the other four, the difference is still not significant. A table presented below shows the result of the analysis :

4. Table of speech acts

Subject	Utterances					
	Written			Spoken		
	Act	Meaning	Frequency	Act	Meaning	Frequency

Subject 1	Direct	Literal	16	Direct	Literal	17
		Non-Literal	2		Non-Literal	2
	Indirect	Literal	29	Indirect	Literal	26
		Non-Literal	3		Non-Literal	4
Subject 2	Direct	Literal	17	Direct	Literal	22
		Non-Literal	1		Non-Literal	1
	Indirect	Literal	28	Indirect	Literal	24
		Non-Literal	3		Non-Literal	3

In the end of the data analysis, the subjects were interviewed and indirectly asked for their perceptions about what they usually do when writing and speaking and whether they feel the difference and make adjustments. Generally, they did not feel different when having conversation through writing (conversational writing) or speaking (interactional speaking). The results of the interview are placed on the table below :

5. Table of subjects' perceptions

Subject	Perceptions
Subject 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Doesn't plan what to say. • Feels no difference whether he is in writing or speaking situation.
Subject 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sometimes remembers what he has written and says that once more when speaking.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Feels no difference when he is in writing or speaking situation.
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The subjects produce the language which is identical in conversational writing and interactional speaking. This finding might support and add something to the statement of Lull (in Chafe and Tannen, 1987). He stated that students tend to write better in their fifth grade, but this theory does not apply among the students who are non-native speaker of English. The vocabularies are still common ones and the utterances are still less-lexically-dense, no matter whether they are writing or speaking.

Blankenship (in Chafe and Tannen, 1987) suggests that no difference between writings and speeches in terms of sentence length and complexity. Based on the finding above, it is safe to say that this theory is correct and supported. Another agreement based on the findings should also be given to the theory from Horowitz and Newmann (in Chafe and Tannen, 1987). Considering the mode that influences whether the language is going to be spoken-like or written-like, the conversational writing and interactional speaking share the same mode, quite fast and provides very little time to plan what to say. Therefore, it can be agreed that the language in conversational writing and interactional speaking are both spoken-like due to the influence of the mode.

Still in related to the settings, the argument that when writing someone is actually exploring his relationship with the readers as what he does in speaking (Gould, 1989) is somewhat true seeing the fact that the two subjects produced utterances

in conversational writing in similar fashion to what they did in interactional speaking. Going back to the theory that states that logic has a predominant role (Hairston, 1986), the findings (subjects' perceptions) did not show such influence. In contrast to logic, the subjects seemed to rely on habit and therefore produced the utterances spontaneously. So, rather than a new product of logic, the utterances are closer to what is said by Young (in Nunan, 1991) as the 'legitimate' knowledge.

The subjects in this research are university students of the third year of their study in English teaching department. They have also passed some writing and speaking courses with satisfying results. What has been the problem is why they are still using 'basic' language when they were involved in the conversational writing. According to Cayer and Sacks (in Chafe and Tannen, 1987), only basic writers rely on oral strategy, this statement is, however, does not apply in the case when the mode of the writing is similar to speaking. Even advanced students, although they are non-native, still retain the 'basic' strategy when they are cornered by the need for speed in writing. This finding is in line with Ochs' (in Chafe and Tannen, 1987) statement that some communicative strategies used by children are retained by adults in their unplanned situation (typically spoken language).

One subject, R, reported that in speaking, he sometimes use similar utterance to what he has ever written. This result may support a theory of Raimes (1983) that writing reinforces grammar, structures, idioms, and vocabulary. More importantly, this also indicates that writing in chat room may improve oral fluency (Payne and Whitney in Thornbury, 2005).

The genre, in this research, is not a concern. Therefore data were taken from variety of genres. Sometimes the subjects respond to any question given and sometimes they just told a story (narration). Hidi and Hillyard (in Chafe and Tannen, 1987) imply that genre does not influence the language, whether written or spoken. The finding here has similar substance to Hidi and Hillyard's.

The subjects were also aware of which situation they were in and adjusted the way they express things, not the structure and complexity, but the speech acts. They used indirect speech when refusing something in speaking and writing situation, but for other purposes, they were more open and used direct speech with literal meaning. In short, the subjects might have met the rules which is said by Shumin (in Richards and Renandya, 2002) as sociolinguistic rules and norms governing the appropriate time and realisation of speech act.

Overall, the findings in this research strongly support Biber's (in Chafe and Tannen, 1987) finding that there is no single absolute difference between the language in writing and speaking. Both writing and speaking are strongly correlated (Amalia, 2011). Therefore, when compared, they share many similarities (Nunan, 1991). Lastly, it can be agreed that writing exists for the sole purpose of representing speaking (de Saussure, in Moxley, 1990).

Conclusions

From the results and the discussions, there are some conclusions can be taken and suggestions to be given. The first point is that subjects did not differ the language in conversational writing and interactional speaking because they did not acquire English as second language, but they learnt it. Furthermore, the subjects were also

influenced by the settings, simply saying, they did not adjust the language because the writing that they did, was not like writing, but more like speaking. That does not mean that they were not aware of which situation they were in, because they switched the way they delivered the meanings through variety of speech act.

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