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*Article*

# A Corpus-based Review of Philippine English Grammatical Constructions in ESL Master's Theses from 2019-2025

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**Abstract**

*Shaped and colored by Filipino culture and languages, Philippine English (PhE) is one of the Philippine languages, and its grammatical forms have endured over time. This paper argues that new PhE constructions arise from the linguistic knowledge and communication needs of their speakers. It utilized the corpus linguistics method to build a 300,000-word corpus of unpublished MAED-English theses written during the Academic Years 2019-2020 to 2024-2025, from which PhE grammatical forms were extracted. The use of unpublished theses was deliberate for authentic PhE grammatical constructions, since published research is edited for either American or British English. The PhE grammatical constructions were analyzed using early studies' findings, particularly Bautista's (2000), Borlongan's (2024), Hernandez's (2023), Salazar's (2022), Dita et al.'s (2022), and Dita's (2025) qualifications of PhE grammatical features. The corpus revealed 731 common grammatical features of PhE, such as wordiness, split infinitives, unidiomatic verb-preposition combinations, subject-verb agreement deviances, the interchange use of relativizers that and which, absence of pronoun-antecedent agreement, and the mixed AmE/BrE spellings. Interestingly, the corpus disclosed three new patterns: comma splices, sentence theme/subject redundancy, and unparalleled forms of linguistic units that express ideas of equal importance. It is therefore recommended that a more thorough analysis of PhE grammatical features using a new corpus of both published and unpublished texts be done. The paper reiterates the PhE scholars' recommendation for the inclusion of New Englishes and PhE in the ESL curriculum, to enable PhE users to gain a deeper understanding of the grammatical identity of PhE and express themselves more freely.*

***Keywords:*** *Englishes, Philippine English, PhE Grammatical features, SDG 17*

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## Introduction

English, one of the Philippines' official languages, has been embedded in Filipinos' lives. It is the official language of business, science, technology, government, education, and international communication. Nonetheless, studies have shown that the English used in the country is Philippine English (PhE), a localized English in the Philippines, a mixture of British and American Englishes (BrE and AmE) with the addition of original PhE expressions and grammatical constructions. Even educated Filipinos use the variety (Bautista, 2008; Dimaculangan & Gustilo, 2017; Hernandez, 2020). It has been reshaped and colored by the Philippine languages spoken across the archipelago. It is a legitimate variety that is a part of Kachru's outer circle within his (1985, 1992) three Concentric Circles model of English and other countries where English is used as a second language.

PhE has been recognized as one of the post-colonial Englishes in linguistic scholarship. It drew scholarly interest in the Philippines after Llamzon (1969) presented it as a legitimate variety of English spoken in the country. Studies on specific PhE grammatical forms have been conducted; nonetheless, Borlongan (2024) indicates that many PhE topics still need further investigation, especially their grammatical features. Similarly, Dita (2025) and Dita et al. (2022) highlight the importance of additional research and a deeper understanding of PhE's grammatical identity using more recent corpora to assess its development and status. Additionally, earlier studies used language data from published PhE materials, which were edited to conform to American English (AmE) or British English (BrE) standards.

The present paper addresses the mentioned gaps, and it tries to confirm the grammatical features of PhE revealed by old and recent studies, utilizing the researchers' newly built corpus of unpublished theses of Master of Arts in Education (MAED-English) students from 2019 to 2025, which were not yet language edited for AmE or BrE by ESL faculty. Specifically, it identifies the standard PhE grammatical constructions found in unpublished master's theses written by MAED-English student-researchers at a state university in Region 4 of the Philippines, from 2019 to 2025. It posits that the constructions from the theses of these graduate students are pervasive grammatical forms, as they have appeared in early and recent studies. Those new interesting features should be explored.

### *Philippine English and Philippine English Grammar*

Philippine English is a recognized and localized variety of American English (e.g., Borlongan, 2016, 2024; Gustilo et al., 2025; Salazar, 2022, 2023), characterized by distinct phonological, lexical, and grammatical features, and is used by educated

Filipinos. It represents a legitimate variety that belongs to Kachru's outer circle of English, alongside other countries where people use English as a second language (L2). This linguistic domain has attracted research interest; scholars and researchers enrich the literature on PhE by examining its phonology (e.g., Flores, 2016; Fuchs, 2022; Tayao, 2008a), lexicon (Biermeier, 2022; Dimaculangan & Gustilo, 2017; Salazar, 2013), and syntax (Collins et al., 2014; Dayag, 2016; Gonzales & Dita, 2018). Studies indicate that it has developed unique lexical, phonological, and grammatical features influenced by colonial English and the Philippine languages.

Indeed, PhE grammar scholarship originated as early as the late 20th century. Bautista (2001) identified the PhE grammatical features revealed by earlier PhE scholars whose analyses confirmed PhE grammatical deviations from AmE, such as faulty article and preposition usage, missing articles specifically in the expression *"majority of,"* faulty noun subcategorization, singularization of plural countable nouns, and pluralization of non-countable nouns, the use of past perfect tense in place of simple past or present perfect, lack of subject-verb and pronoun-antecedent agreements, and inconsistency in tense sequence.

Cavanlit (2022) conducted a quantitative analysis of 45 editorials from the websites of three local newspapers, identifying the frequency of grammatical deviations in PhE newspaper editorials, focusing on subject-verb agreement, articles, and prepositions. His frequency counts indicated a 49% occurrence of deviant cases in article usage, specifically the omission of definite articles. It was followed by 34% subject-verb agreement deviations, including clausal, collective, countable, non-countable nouns, pronoun antecedents, indefinite pronouns, compound subjects, and relative clause antecedents. Seventeen percent pertained to what Bautista (1997 in Dimaculangan, 2015) calls unidiomatic preposition usage. He concluded that grammatical deviations in PhE local newspaper editorials are prevalent and emphasized the importance of understanding the unique features of the variety, particularly in print media; thus, he suggested using PhE as a medium for information dissemination and for influencing opinions within a specific context.

Dimaculangan and Gustilo (2017) validated Bautista's (1997, 2001) *based from* and *result to* (result in) among the unidiomatic verb preposition combinations used by early ESL PhE writers in the 21st century. Dimaculangan and Gustilo's (2017) corpus revealed the same explanation of the Filipino semantic meanings in Bautista (1997) i.e., the use of the preposition *from* might have been due to the literal meaning of *base*, the fact or observation from which the reasoning process began; whereas, the word *result* is semantically associated with goal, hence PhE speakers settle for the preposition *to*. Borlongan (2024) posits that the alternative PhE *based on* and *result to*

have not yet replaced the L1 English *based on* and *result in* and suggests that they do not seem to replace the latter yet.

Borlongan (2024) describes the standard grammatical features of PhilE based on his research and observations. Notably, the major categories he highlights are tense and aspect usage, subject-verb agreement, and pronoun and preposition use, which he emphasizes are consistent with earlier studies. He discusses Bautista's documentation of using 'one' with a singular noun, even when the noun should be plural. Filipinos use a singular noun because of the word one at the beginning of the phrase. He says the omission of the article 'a or the' before 'majority' is not surprising. He adds that Hong Kong and Singapore English also exhibit these tendencies, though they occur more frequently in PhE. He also notes using the word 'assure' without an indirect object and sometimes with a direct object. He further explains that the proper construction of 'assure' should include the entity being assured and the assurance given, as in 'The faculty assured the administration of support in the years ahead."

Even earlier studies on PhE grammar (Alberca, 1978; Gonzalez, 1985; Bautista, 2000) as cited and synthesized by Bautista (2001) reveal similar features like: subject-verb disagreement, especially in the presence of an intervening prepositional phrase; missing or incorrect article in *majority of*; preposition usage based on the literal semantic meaning of the phrase such as *result to*, *based from*, *cope up with*; deviant noun subcategorization, including non-pluralization of count nouns and pluralization of mass nouns; disagreement between pronouns and antecedents; and distinct tense- aspect usage including unusual use of verb forms and tenses, and lack of tense sequence.

Malicsi (2010) describes PhE grammar, lexicon, and phonology using the data from: 1) the inaugural address and 2007 and 2008 State of the Nation's Addresses (SONAs) of the former President Gloria M. Arroyo, which he opined are products of several best writers the presidential staff could tap; 2) the Department of Education (DepEd) 2008 press release and memorandum; 3) the Commission on Higher Education (CHED) memorandum; and 4) the third joint Council of Department Chairs of English and College English Teachers Association (CDCE and CETA) 2004 National Convention journal. He also administered his self-made objective test to ESL teachers who attended the training and workshops he conducted nationwide. His analysis of PhE grammar revealed deviant verb preposition combination such as: a) support instead of support for, b) keep their children to school instead of keep them in school or keep making them go to school, c) share to instead of share with, d )in search for rather than search of, e) point to rather than point of, and in search for rather than in search of, super heating instead of overheating.

The above literature conforms with Salazar's (n.d.) description of PhE grammatical features found at all social levels such as (1) absence of the verb singular markers in the present tense as in *The teacher discuss the same grammatical rules* or *One of the boys give the teacher a bouquet*; the use of present perfect for simple past as in *We have discussed it yesterday*, and past perfect for present perfect (*He had already presented the memorandum of agreement*; the use of the auxiliary verbs in present forms in subordinate noun clauses rather than past forms as in *She hoped that she can come tomorrow* or *He says that he could visit you tomorrow* and the use of transitive verbs intransitively as in *Enjoy*; I cannot *afford*; I do not *like*.

Gonzales, Jambalos, and Romero (2003) explain that from 1898 to 1987, linguistic change occurred in the Philippines, and Philippine English (PhE) evolved even more rapidly. The host language acts as a substratum, influencing the features of the transplanted English. The inability of Filipino English speakers to master the covert sub-categorical systems of English (noun, verb tense, and article) and their selection restrictions is manifested overtly. The system and subsystem of English grammar appear as persistent errors among Filipino users of English; nonetheless, Gonzales et al. (2003) refer to them as perduring features, which they describe as linguistic changes and not necessarily signs of deterioration. As previously stated, this paper aims to identify the grammatical constructions used by educated PhE speakers in ESL master's theses between 2019 and 2025.

## Designs and Methods

The study employed a mixed qualitative-quantitative descriptive methodology to identify the enduring grammatical structures of PhE found in the unpublished theses of Master of Arts in Education majors in English students from the two campuses of a state university in Region 4, Philippines. It employed the corpus linguistics process in producing a 300,000-word text corpus of theses from Academic Years 2019-2020 to 2024-2025, from which PhE phrases and clauses were extracted. Houston (2006) defines corpus linguistics as examining large, naturally occurring language and observing relative frequencies, either in raw form or through statistical operations. Adamou (2019) notes that this method adopts an empirical stance in studying language, and the corpus can be used qualitatively and quantitatively to provide occurrences of specific information.

*The Corpus*

Five theses from each Academic Year (AY) from 2019-2020 to 2024-2025 that had passed the oral examination before the panel of examiners (i.e., ESL instructors and

professors) and had been assigned to the present researchers for language editing were the data sources. These were written by MAED-English graduating students from the College of Teacher Education of the two campuses of a state university for each mentioned AY, totaling 30 theses, each thesis of 10,000 words in length, to create a corpus of 300,000 words. The preliminary sections, i.e., the approval sheet, dedication, acknowledgment, table of contents, and all the appended materials with the concluding sections, i.e., the writer's biodata and list of references, were all excluded from the newly built corpus. Chapter 5, which provides a summary of the study, was also removed to balance the length of each thesis within the corpus.

The use of unpublished theses was deliberate for authentic PhE grammatical constructions, since published research articles are edited for either AmE or BrE. Furthermore, it is supported by the International Corpus of English (ICE), a spoken and written English corpus established in the early 1990s for comparative studies of World Englishes, which includes unpublished written texts written by educated speakers of the specific English variety who learn English in the country of origin of that variety. For instance, the texts for the Philippine component (ICE-Philippines) include unpublished students' writing outputs such as essays, personal emails, and business letters. Educated users of PhE produced the corpus of unpublished theses; they were secondary school ESL teachers from private and public Junior and senior high schools, as well as tertiary ESL faculty members of private and government higher education institutions in Laguna and its neighboring provinces, with ELT experience ranging from 5 to 15 years.

As previously stated, data was collected from the newly built corpus of ESL master's theses assigned to the present researchers for language editing before submission. Hard copies of the theses were kept for data counterchecking. The compilation of the theses and gathering of PhE grammatical constructions began in March 2020 when the Thesis Final Defense for the SY 2019-2020 took place. It concluded in the fourth quarter of SY 2024-2025, while the researchers individually edited the theses to meet language editing requirements. Each thesis was assigned a file number for the writer's anonymity, as per agreement with the thesis writers and the corpus source.

*Data Analysis*

This paper slightly modified Bautista's (2000) manual coding of grammatical features of PhE and followed her procedure in analyzing the present data. The first stage involved carefully reading each thesis and noting deviations from American English (AmE) norms in the margins. The coauthor cross-checked the seeming

deviations against the original text to confirm accuracy. Since the researchers were language editors, they manually and religiously identified PhE sentential structures. What seemed to be typographical errors, like run-on sentences, were ruled out and considered vision slips; however, comma splices were part of the analysis. Graphological inconsistencies such as spelling, punctuation marks, capitalization, and the like were also excluded from analysis.

To countercheck their identification of PhE phrases and sentence constructions, they fed each thesis into the Grammarly tool checker, which generated all instances of L1 English (AmE or BrE) grammatical errors. They intentionally used the Grammarly AI grammar checker and editor to quickly identify PhE grammaticality since the AI checker reads it as L1 English errors. The results from manual analysis and the AI tool were copied and pasted into a single file to facilitate progress. The list of PhE items was printed for more precise and easier counterchecking when data gathering was complete. The researchers' manual analysis results were cross-checked against those obtained from the Grammarly language checker. When the Grammarly checker read the item as errors, the researcher decided whether they were errors or PhE grammatical features.

Another ESL college professor reviewed the labeled deviations for validation. The disagreements between the researchers and the validator were discussed until a settlement was reached. The grammatical deviations were not treated as errors; hence, they were not corrected. Instead, they were described using the study's analytical framework. After confirming the PhE deviations, they were analyzed and classified based on the earlier findings of PhE grammatical features presented in the literature review, specifically of Bautista (2000), Borlongan (2024), Hernandez (2023), Salazar (2022), Dita et al. (2022), and Dita (2025).

## Results/Findings

The present study involved identifying perduring PhE grammatical constructions. Table 1 presents the pervasive PhE grammatical constructions identified in the unpublished master's theses of ESL teachers from secondary and tertiary schools, and the number of instances of their appearance in the texts.

*Table 1. Summary of PhE Pervasive Grammatical Features Found in Unpublished Master's Theses*

| Grammatical Features | Frequency |
|---|---|
| Wordiness | 125 |

| | |
|---|---|
| Split infinitives | 104 |
| Unidiomatic verb-preposition combination | 98 |
| Subject-verb agreement | 82 |
| - Singular form of plural countable and plural form of non-countable | 31 |
| - Absence of the present singular verb marker | 30 |
| - The use of the word *majority* without the article *a* | 21 |
| Deviant article usage or missing articles | 80 |
| Tenses | 77 |
| - Inharmonious tense sequence | 30 |
| - Use the modal past tenses for present form | 18 |
| - Use of present perfect for simple past, and past perfect for present perfect | 29 |
| Interchange use of *that* and *which* | 63 |
| Absence of pronoun-antecedent agreement | 59 |
| Hodgepodge AmE/BrE spelling | 35 |
| Total | 731 |

*Table 2. Summary of written PhE Grammatical Features Not Found in Earlier studies*

| **Grammatical Features** | **Frequency** |
|---|---|
| Comma splices | 122 |
| Subject redundancy | 92 |
| Sentence Deviant parallelism | 86 |
| Total | 257 |

## Discussion

*Pervasive PhE Grammatical Features*

Table 1 displays the common PhE grammatical structures identified in the corpus and their occurrence frequency. The table indicates that the writers' tendency toward wordiness was the most frequent feature (125 instances). This wordiness is evident throughout all parts of the theses under study, including the titles of the tables in chapter 4. Garcia-Arañas (1990) first observed PhE wordiness in her syntactic analysis of PhE in selected universities in Manila. Additionally, the tendency toward wordiness can be explained by contrastive rhetoric, primarily as described by Kaplan (1966), who suggests that a thought pattern unique to a culture influences its mode of communication. This pattern is reflected in the length of sentences and paragraphs and their structure. Each language demonstrates a distinct writing style. For example, English communication tends to be linear, direct, and concise. In contrast, Filipino written and spoken communication may be wordier and, at times, flowery, which should not be considered errors. The following representative extracts show the researchers' wordiness.

- *This section examines the various dimensions of teacher competency <u>when it comes to</u> creating supplementary materials for Reading courses.*

- *This highlights the importance of catering to students' interests in order to promote effective reading engagement and comprehension.*
- *Teachers are expected to carry out their performance in line with the standards of competence.*
- *These encompass a wide array of educational resources employed to extend and enhance the primary English curriculum for Grades 4 to 6.*

As can be observed, the sentences may be grammatical but wordy. The first underlined expression may be changed to the word "in" in the same manner that the last three expressions may be reduced to one word, "to, perform, and various" for academic tone. The wordy table titles that appear in chapter 4 are notable. Representative of similar constructions follows:

- *Frequency Distribution of the Respondents' (Profile in terms of) Age*
- *Frequency Distribution of the Respondents' (Profile in terms of) Gender*
- *Frequency Distribution of the Respondents' (Profile in terms of) Grade Level*
- *Students' Background in Web 2.0 Tools in terms of Awareness*
- *Students' Background in Web 2.0 Tools in terms of Frequency of Use*
- *Students' Background in Web 2.0 Tools in terms of Ability to Use*

As can be seen, the lengthy first three titles may be shortened to a more direct Frequency Distribution of the Respondents' age, gender, or grade level. Likewise, the last three titles may be condensed to Students' Awareness of Web 2.0 Tools, Frequency of Web 2.0 Tools Use, or Ability in Using Web 2.0 Tools, since the paper is clear about the agent, students.

The corpus also revealed a high frequency (104) of split infinitives throughout the five chapters of each thesis, with some recurring examples in the corpus, including:

- *It is critical to capitalize on the development and enhancement of teachers' language competencies to better transform and impact the language interests of students.*
- *Paris (2018) explored how specific metacognitive strategies, such as predicting content, empower readers to actively participate in the reading process.*
- *Dankworth (2020) suggested that the use of vlogs in educational settings has been shown to positively impact learners' performance in several ways.*
- *SQ3R, with its structured steps of surveying the text, generating questions, actively reading, self-reciting key points, and reviewing the material, equips students with a framework for actively engaging with the text. This process encourages them to not just passively read, but to think critically about the content, ask questions, and solidify their understanding.*

Gonzales and Dita's (2017) study revealed a similar high frequency of split infinitives in Outer Circle Englishes spoken and written discourse. While they found that '*just*, *really*, and *you know*' are the PhE infinitive splitters in oral communication, this paper revealed the modifier *better* and adverbs of manner as PhE infinitive splitters in thesis writing. Splitting infinitives seems natural and does not create a comprehension problem for researchers and their target readers.

Bautista's (1997) unidiomatic verb-preposition combination and Dita's (2025) multi-word verbs appeared in the corpus 98 times. The expressions 'based from' appeared repeatedly across chapters 1-5, whereas 'result to' and 'effect to' flowed in chapters 2 and 4, the review of related literature, and the discussions of the results, for example:

> *- These specific problems from a lack of purpose and audience for writing result in unrealistic writing assignments and obscure presentation of ideas based from a particular issue of discourse*."
> *- Based from the result, it can be concluded that the level of students' attitude towards independent writing as to comprehension has a great extent in learning, with an evident overall mean of 3.12. The respondents have their own way or strategy for producing a good written output or gaining a thorough understanding of the topic.*
> *- Despite of commendable efforts, the average score of 4.69 and the mean percentage score of 46.88 were observed among the program's participants. These indicate a worrying trend of declining reading comprehension skills among students and….*

The expression 'effect to' is notable even in the titles, e.g., *Teachers' strategies and their effect to the students' performance*. The constructions 'cope up with' 'share to', and 'request for' appeared mainly in the preliminary pages, particularly in the acknowledgement and dedication pages, and in the appended letter requesting data collection. As ESL teachers with more than three decades of experience, aware of the various Englishes, the researchers have learned that the L1 English expressions, 'cope with' and 'request/requesting,' do not require the prepositions 'up and for,' as explained in L1 English grammar books. The present corpus reflects the PhE academic writers' English communication agility; they express themselves by liberally using the existing PhE verb-preposition combinations, which are also based on their understanding of the words' semantics.

Baustista's (1997 as cited in Dimaculangan 2017) explanations of the combination *based from* and *result to* still hold for the writers, i.e., the writers consider

the semantics of the head word, for instance, 'from' in base from is due to the literal meaning of base, the foundation used as a point from which (something) can be developed. For Danica Salazar, the Oxford English Dictionary editor for World Englishes, Filipinos make sense of these combinations using analogies; thus, she refers to them as nativized semantic-structural analogies. These pervasive PhE structures from the nativized semantic-structural analogy process, Salazar (n.d.), which are Bautista's unidiomatic verb-preposition combinations and Dita's multi-word verbs, are valid and legitimate, as Salazar (n.d.) explains that non-native speakers of English are permitted to introduce new structures because corresponding semantic and formal templates are built into the English language system.

Eighty-two instances of subject-verb agreement deviance were identified, particularly with simple present verbs and subjects featuring intervening phrases. The writers may be unaware of English rules concerning verb forms used with subjects that contain parenthetical expressions, or their linguistic knowledge of the number assigned a plural meaning to subjects containing parenthetical expressions beginning with "with, as well as and along with." Relatively, Bernardo and Madrunio (2015) claim that using verbs that do not agree with their subjects, especially in cases with intervening clauses or in sentences beginning with expressions such as the number or a number, stems from Filipinos' difficulty in identifying the subjects of those sentences. Nonetheless, the high frequency of subject-verb agreement absence, specifically in subjects with intervening phrases, supports Hernandez's (2023) assertion that PhE subject–verb agreement with intervening prepositional phrases has somehow infiltrated academic writing, as he found them in his corpus of published disciplinary research articles.

On the present tense form, both teachers and students confidently recite the correct usage of the base and s-forms in the present tense; however, writing, as shown by the corpus, shows a lack of the singular marker. As earlier scholars have noted, this phenomenon stems from L1 interference. Tagalog present-tense verbs do not indicate number, unlike English verbs with distinct present and plural forms. The following excerpts represent the common PhE subject-verb agreement feature in the present corpus.

- *The "very high" results (in speaking) <u>suggests</u> that students likely find code-switching to be a valuable means of achieving better performance in their studies.*
- *Their self-perception (as bilingual individuals) were linked to their academic success and emotional well-being, with students expressing greater confidence in their ability to navigate between languages and contexts.*

- *For Grade 6 ESL learners, navigating two languages (in their social and academic lives) significantly enhance educational experiences.*

Related to the subject-verb agreement absence is the plural form of non-countable nouns, such as advices, evidences, researches, literatures, trainings, and works (activity or effort). The non-countable nouns were treated and pluralized with the plural markers of countable nouns.

Another subject-verb agreement-related deviance found in the corpus was using the expression 'majority' instead of the L1 English 'a majority', which was observed in the theses. The 21 instances of these expressions' appearance are particularly in the results, discussion, and summary of findings sections in chapters 4 and 5.

- *The lack of researches on the students' achievement and the success of using metacognitive strategies for their writing mechanisms have inspired the researcher to experiment and to write this paper.*
- *From the statements from the related literatures, having enough facilities for teachers' use really has an impact on the teachers and learners.*
- *Teachers can manipulate and create a simple PowerPoint presentation since most of the time, they conduct trainings as well as being speakers at seminars using PowerPoint presentations.*
- *The use of various technologies and equipment in works (teaching, transactions, etc.) has significantly changed the way people live their everyday lives.*

Employing Platt et al.'s discussion of mass and count nouns in the New Englishes, Bautista (2000) suggests that words that have already become countable nouns in PhE are not a case of overgeneralization. However, rather than a case of reclassification, e.g., research is reclassified as a countable research study or report. She further conveys that PhE, along with other Englishes, can introduce innovations, as L1 English linguists such as Swales and Feak, and Celce-Murcia and Larsen- Freeman have posited that the distinction between countable and non-countable nouns is shifting in the new Englishes.

Another pervasive usage is 'wherein' instead of 'in which' or 'through which'. Bautista (2008) claims that other varieties hardly use the adverb wherein because it is felt to be formal and archaic. It still appears to be a particle used for a lexical item that cannot be easily named (e.g., Their study is anchored on the engagement model of Yarbrough (2002), wherein the adviser focuses on

developing a relationship with the advisee to enhance student self-sufficiency in the pursuit of a degree). As the sample conveys, the writer seemed to struggle to find a suitable word to convey her thoughts about what creates a mentor-mentee relationship or to use a linking word that would connect the two clauses.

The 80 instances of deviant article usage, often characterized by the omission of articles, are a notable feature of the existing grammatical patterns observed in the corpus. This result is supported by Cavanlit's (2022) finding that 49% of deviant cases occur in article usage, specifically the omission of definite articles. The English article system is one of the problematic aspects of the language for L2 learners, such as Filipinos. Crosthwaite and Choy (2016) claim that indefinite and definite articles have a complex system arbitrarily mapped onto surface forms. Filipino users of English struggle with articles because Tagalog is an article-less language, lacking a system of articles akin to those found in English.

Nevertheless, the complex rules for article usage in BrE or AmE would not hinder PhE users from expressing themselves, even in academic writing, by creatively dealing with articles, i.e., using them interchangeably or omitting them. They may deliberately use or omit articles as their writing requires, as shown by the following extracts:

- *This study used __ descriptive design. (Missing article a)*
- *Based on __ foregoing theoretical framework, a conceptual design is developed to elicit the answers to the following areas of investigation. (Missing article the)*
- *These are the areas in which the study focused in order to find a valid and substantial evidence for the present study. (Unnecessary use of the article the)*
- *Also, it is their awareness in applying the skills in the real-world situations that allows them to think critically, as the readings above present about the research literacy. (Deviant use of the article, which should be a)*
- *A research on how language teachers adapt their approaches based on the specific needs and development levels of their students should be conducted to enhance the students' competence. (Use of article before a non-countable seen as countable)*

Regarding the use of articles before countable and non-countable nouns, Bautista (2000) stated that the use of 'majority' without an article and the use of the article 'a or 'an in a non-count noun (e.g., research), which is considered a count noun.

The inharmony of tenses is also notable in the corpus of unpublished master's theses by ESL teachers. This feature is also observed in undergraduate students' essays, raising questions about its nature. Is it a PhE feature, an unconscious mistake, or more seriously, an error (Gonzales, 1983) or a slip of the pen when the writers are

immersed in information and their thought processing cannot be disrupted? Regardless, the 30 instances explicitly found in the methodology section of the theses cannot be overlooked. The sample excerpts below are a familiar feature in Chapter 3, the methodology section.

- *The purposive sampling technique is used to gather the 70 Grade 11 Senior High School students who are studying at ……. as the actual respondents of this study. This technique was appropriate because the population parameter was homogeneously distributed. To gather information and data in the study, the survey questionnaire was the primary instrument used to elicit answers to the fundamental questions raised. The questionnaire will be self-constructed and validated. It is reproduced and will be distributed to respondents upon approval. The data to be retrieved from the survey forms are analyzed, tallied, and tabulated for statistical treatment.*

The present paper supports Bautista's (2000) assertion that the lack of consistency in staying within one axis of time in relating a methodology followed in conducting a study may be a performance error, an acquisitional deficiency, or an indication that a new pattern is forming in the variety; hence, thorough analysis should be done using a newly built corpus of narratives.

Forty-seven instances of tense interchange use, i.e., the use of the past forms of modal verbs instead of the present form, the use of the present perfect instead of the simple past, and the use of the past perfect for the present perfect tense, were also recorded. The use of would instead of will in discussing the expected recipient of the significance of a study reflects Bautista's (2000a) conviction that it may be an attempt to sound more official and formal. The thesis's authors would not stress themselves observing the L1 English tenses rules, but seem to convey their thoughts smoothly and freely, as reflected in the following extracts.

- *Principals, English Department Heads, and teachers would gain insights into the factors that contribute to effective language learning practices in and out of the classrooms. They would (where can is more appropriate) benefit from the study's findings by gaining a deeper understanding of the variables that hamper and contribute to the students' language performance. (The researcher presents the significance and benefits that those mentioned will gain from the study.)*
- *For seven months of the pandemic, most countries worldwide had temporarily*

*closed educational institutions to contain the spread of COVID-19 and reduce infections. (The paper was written in 2021; thus, the present perfect of the underlined verb phrase is more appropriate.)*

- *Before the School Year 2020-2021 opening of classes, _____National High School has conducted an online survey to determine each student's preferred learning modality. Based from the study, students have chosen two learning modalities: modular and online distance learning.*

The corpus revealed 59 instances of pronoun-antecedent disagreement. The singular pronoun 'It' evidently should have singular antecedents; nevertheless, it is given plural antecedents even in titles like: *Interactive Strategies: Its Effect on Students' Spoken English Communication Skills*. It is important to mention that the singular antecedent for the pronoun "they" was not counted as a grammatical feature because the present researchers have been discussing with their students, 'they' as the 2015 Word of the Year that became Word of the Decade (2010-2019) by the American Dialect Society (ADS) to refer to the individuals whose gender does not fall under the binary of she or he.

The corpus shows 48 instances of the use of the relativizer, *which* instead of that, and 15 instances of the use of *that* in place of *which*. However, prescriptive and pedagogical L1 English grammars prescribe the distinct use of the two relative pronouns, i.e., the relative used before essential clauses that give important information and are not separated by a comma. On the other hand, 'which' is used before a non-essential clause, which adds unimportant details set off by a comma. The results do not corroborate Suárez-Gómez's (2018, as cited by Dita, 2023) findings on the use of relativizes in casual spoken PhE compared with other varieties. Dita (2023) found that 'that' was more frequently used regardless of syntactic function, but it comes in for the antecedents' function as subjects. She assumed that the frequency of subject relative clauses is attributed to the influence of significant contact with Tagalog, in the case of the present written corpus, the relativizer 'which' was found to be used more frequently. The following are representatives of 'which clauses' for 'that clauses' and vice-versa, with the *which clauses* not separated by commas found in the present unpublished writing output of ESL teachers and instructors.

- *The construct of academic writing, which integrates tasks, aims to assess is defined as the ability to write texts which display appropriate and meaningful uses of and orientations to source evidence both conceptually and textually. (where **that** is more appropriate)*

- *This process not only increases the development of their languages but also their self-confidence, as they become more likely to express themselves in a manner which reflects their linguistic identities.*
- *This issue is prevalent in environments where students' first language differs from the language of instruction. In such cases, students may struggle to fully comprehend academic content that can lead to academic underperformance and disengagement.*
- *The present research looks at the useful features to achieve grammatical competence that is important in improving writing skills.*
- *It requires skills in constructing sentences correctly and precisely which can be successfully done with enough in writing and the English grammar.*

Lastly, the corpus exhibits a random 35 interchange of BrE and AmE spelling; nevertheless, the low frequency may indicate writers' direct citations, verbatim copying of literature extracts into their papers, or unawareness of the differences between AmE and BrE orthographies. Among the mixed AmE/BrE spellings used interchangeably in the current data are acknowledgment/acknowledgement, analyse/analyze, enrolment/enrollment, fulfil/fulfill, honor/honour, internalisation/internalization, program/programme, and recognize/recognize. Nevertheless, Fush (2022) seemed to invalidate the current writers' belief that the corpus sources were unaware of the differences between BrE and AmE orthographies. He (2022) found that although PhE spelling follows AmE standards, some British spellings still occur occasionally and were frequently used in earlier PhE.

*PhE Grammatical Features Not Found in Earlier Studies*

Analysis also revealed PhE grammatical features not found in earlier studies, as illustrated in Table 2. The 122 comma splices outnumbered the three new findings on PhE grammatical features. A comma splice, as learned in secondary years ESL classes, refers to two sentences/independent clauses written as one, sometimes separated by a comma. The comma splice found in the present corpus was limited to the compound sentences joined by a comma, and those joined by a coordinating conjunction without a comma.

As previously mentioned, run-on sentences are excluded from the present analysis and are attributed to writers' mistakes due to visual or mental fatigue issues. Nonetheless, the finding on comma splices may be confirmed by future studies. Further analysis may be required to confirm whether the comma splices can be counted as a feature of PhE or are a product of the writers' mental exhaustion and

negligence, or they may be performance slips or simple typographical errors. Nonetheless, the following extracts from the corpus suggest another interesting future investigation.

- *The researchers argued that Facebook might be an effective learning tool, it can motivate students and increase their engagement, interaction, collaboration, and confidence.*
- *The SQ3R method offered partial support for the hypothesis, demonstrating a significant effect but its influence on literal and critical comprehension remains inconclusive.*
- *Purposive sampling aims to select individuals from a larger population representing important traits related to the research question and the sample should be representative, enabling researchers to generalize to the entire population.*

Redundancy (92) that resulted in wordiness was observed not only in statements where the word own may be deleted, e.g., "It also helps teachers identify their own thoughts and feelings, as well as their own strengths and weaknesses, and it helps them acquire confidence." Another new finding is subject redundancy, evident throughout the corpus, which is the repetition of the sentence theme, as illustrated by the following extract. Indeed, this feature is also observed in the written outputs of the researchers' undergraduate ESL students and their spoken English inside the classroom.

- *The study of Beck and Roosa (2020), <u>it</u> provides evidence that supports the idea that a well-structured course component enhances the students' engagement.*
- *The abovementioned literature, <u>it</u> shows that due to the growth in diversity, educators recognize the importance of connecting students' personal experiences to the curriculum to arouse their attention and make learning relevant.*
- *Based on the data, <u>it</u> is indicated that there is no significant difference between independent writing and integrated writing as to helpfulness, comprehension, and language practice at 0.05 level of significance.*

The sentence themes are clearly stated; however, the writers renamed them before presenting the rheme. It is another interesting topic to investigate, as the 86 instances suggest that it may not be an unconscious renaming of the themes in the sentences. It may be a deliberate way of emphasizing the theme, or an unconscious

addition of what the writers might have considered appositives. In this case, it may be considered an error, not a PhE feature.

The last new feature revealed by the present corpus is deviant parallelism (86) of items that occur in series. Okunowo, as cited by Al-Ameedi and Mukhef (2017), states that parallelism is a linguistic phenomenon that explains the relationship between units of linguistic structures, which are constructed in parallel or related in some other way. When writing, writers need to ensure that words and phrases are repeated in succession with the same grammatical structures across two or more parts of a sentence. For example, if the previous clause is in the active voice, the other element should also be in the active voice. Maintaining parallel structures improves grammar, writing style, and clarity of expression. The following extracts represent linguistic units with ideas of equal importance presented in non-parallel structures that remain comprehensible.

- *Collaboration among learners by enabling communication, sharing ideas, and solve problems is crucial in enhancing their ability to work effectively in a group setting.*
- *Consequently, writing facilitates learning by helping the students to explore, clarify, and think deeply about the ideas and concepts they encounter in reading. This claim is supported by Enriquez (2013), who states that reading inspires students, introducing them to great ideas and improving their ability to think critically and analytically.*
- *This not only enhances their academic performance but also their positive social interactions, ultimately contributing to a supportive classroom environment. (This not only enhances their academic performance but also fosters positive social interactions, ultimately contributing to a supportive classroom environment.)*
- *Insufficient accessibility and network connectivity, schools with limited ICT facilities, a lack of appropriate training, a lack of time, and a lack of teacher competency are some of the problems.*
- *The respondents were determined using the Simple Random Sampling technique. Everyone in the sample was selected randomly. The researcher used Slovin's Formula to determine the estimated target respondents on the total population of Teachers in Majayjay District. Using Slovin's formula, the researcher can sample the population with a certain level of accuracy. Data were collected using a quantitative questionnaire survey method.*

The above results are validated by PhE scholars, such as Salazar (in Mercene, 2021), who affirms that English has become a Filipino language and emphasizes that Filipinos have been using it without American involvement for over 100 years. They have contextualized it, made it their own, and made it work for them by using it. The examples of grammatical features in the present corpus demonstrate how Filipino ESL teachers and students modify English usage in response to their learning experiences and communication needs.

Moreover, as Salazar (n.d.) states, this does not mean that PhE speakers who do not always adhere to the rules of standard BrE or AmE are careless or cannot completely master the language. Learning English as a second language in school makes them more aware of grammar, as they engage in conscious linguistic analysis and develop rules for English as a Second Language (ESL). Borlongan (2024) asserts that PhE is becoming independent from AmE and does not simply follow forms of its parent AmE.

Bautista (2000a) suggests that the new grammatical features in PhE might have resulted from Filipino ESL speakers' efforts to simplify the complex English grammatical forms. Since PhE is a transplanted variety, its grammatical features, among its other aspects, should not be viewed as errors but as Filipinos' linguistic creativity and inherent self-expression. An important reminder follows the above results: a variety is considered standard regardless of whether its speakers accept or reject it when it is widespread, systematic, and rule-governed (D'Sousa, 1998). Thus, these new features of PhE need to be analyzed further using a new corpus written by educated speakers across the Philippine regions.

## Conclusions

The existing PhE literature and this descriptive corpus-based study confirm that PhE has developed distinct grammatical constructions influenced by its ecology, the communicative needs of its speakers, and their linguistic knowledge over time. These hybridized forms, not found in other varieties of English, make PhE a unique language. Interestingly, they are intelligible and comprehensible even to speakers of other Englishes, as shown by intelligibility studies (e.g., Gustilo et al.,2025; Dita & De Leon, 2023). Literature shows that PhE scholars agree that Filipino speakers of PhE experience find no difficulty understanding PhE and its grammatical constructions. Nevertheless, Bautista (2001) posits that the only English varieties suitable for academic writing are AmE or BrE; hence, further studies on PhE grammar in academic writing, whether published or unpublished, are needed to confirm this observation. The suggested studies may also confirm Hernandez's (2023) argument that,

concerning subject-verb agreement, PhE is poorly embedded in Schneider's stage of exonormative stabilization.

When confronted with the issue of some English teachers perceiving the unique forms as errors, Gonzales' (1983) explanation of when an error becomes a feature of PhE should be revisited. It is supported by Bautista (2001) and Borlongan (2024), who agree that errors become a feature of PhE when they are widespread and systematic, used by educated speakers, and occur with high frequency, as posited by D'Sousa (1998). They should not be viewed as errors but as deviations from the mother Englishes, AmE and BrE. Li's (2009) assertion that research in World Englishes has made a strong stand for the legitimacy of new features of ESL Englishes also addresses the question.

The current researchers strongly reaffirm, along with earlier studies, the importance of recognizing that the evolving norms of Englishes, especially those related to PhE in a globalized context, should play a significant role in teacher education programs and ESL curricula at all levels. Since World Englishes and PhE have been included in some course content and offered as subjects at leading universities in the country, such as Ateneo de Manila University, De La Salle University, and the University of Santo Tomas, it is essential to teach PhE grammar thoughtfully. However, focusing more on the variety relevant to students' future workplaces is also advisable.

Incorporating WE and PhE into English Language courses will help teachers better assess and support their students' spoken and written English, more accurately, their diverse Englishes. Meanwhile, students will gain confidence in expressing themselves without fear of being ridiculed for grammatical mistakes. Over time, their favorable reception of English materials and their ability to freely express themselves in the English language they are most comfortable with can improve their functional literacy. Addressing UNESCO SDG 4, which emphasizes quality education and language, means that teaching and learning should extend beyond British or American English. It involves promoting International English, ESL, EFL, or EIL varieties, that people worldwide speak and understand, and using these as mediums of instruction (MOI) in content areas taught in English.

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