



The use of pronouns as a reflection of the spoken language involvement in students writing

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Abstract

In any language, different grammatical means are used to express messages or ideas. The written language is different from the spoken one in many ways, one of which is the use of pronouns, especially personal pronouns. The purpose of this study is to compare the use of personal pronouns in written texts of novice writers (high school students) with their use by expert writers (journalists). The research assumption is that these pronouns – functional words that usually do not get a lot of attention from scholars – can serve as a mean for style assessment, thanks to their wide circulation in discourse and their different roles. The research corpus includes 107 compositions written by high school students and 18 opinion articles written by journalists. The findings indicate that, on the one hand, students do not use third person pronouns and pronominal suffix (that are not subject, predicate or copula) as much as journalists do. This means that students avoid using the cohesion function of these pronouns – a characteristic of written language. On the other hand, students use personal pronouns which are typical to spoken language, more often than journalists do. These findings demonstrate one of the weak points in students' writing – the involvement of the spoken language in the written one. The findings also point out the special quality of pronouns as a mean for assessing and improving the style of writing.

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