The Frequently Used Verbs and their Alternatives in the Theses of Undergraduate English Education Students

Muh. Jusran
jusranmuhammad44@gmail.com

Kisman Salija
kismansalija@unm.ac.id

Chairil Anwar Korompot
cakorompot@unm.ac.id

State University of Makassar, Indonesia

ABSTRACT

The research aimed at investigating the frequently used verbs in the theses written by undergraduate English education students at UIN Alauddin Makassar, classifying the verbs, and finding out the alternatives of the verbs which may facilitate students in the process of writing. The current study is necessary since it provides offered alternative verbs used in academic writing. Different from several previous studies that only investigate frequently used verbs in argumentative writing such as newspaper without availability of possible used verbs. It is expected that the alternatives can help students foster their academic vocabulary in order to have a better writing in terms of clarity and precision. This study employed descriptive research method underlain by corpus based analysis of students' vocabulary especially in terms of verbs used in academic writing. The objects of the research were undergraduate theses of alumni of English education students submitted in the library at state Islamic university (UIN) Alauddin Makassar. There were six theses selected from the last five year paper (in academic year 2013 up to 2017). The result of the research revealed that; (1) It has been figured out the verbs expressed frequently by students in academic writing. It is most likely that students tend to repeat or select a verb in the number of occurrences, (2) Several verbs which were most frequently used were 'show', 'make', 'use', 'help', 'expect', 'improve', 'give', and 'get'. The verbs have some synonyms in some various contexts in the students' scholarly writing, (3) The various uses of alternative verbs can be beneficial for students in several terms such as students would be able to create precise and good proposition. The list of alternative verbs may ease students to cite an expert's ideas by paraphrasing the predicate to avoid plagiarism as effectively as possible, (4) The most frequently used verbs found in the present study are categorised as procedural verbs, creative verbs, direct object verbs, reference verbs, and evidence based/data driven verbs.

Keywords: frequently used verbs, corpus based analysis, alternative verbs

ABSTRAK

Tujuan dari penelitian ini adalah untuk mengeksplorasi kata kerja yang sering digunakan dalam skripsi mahasiswa pendidikan bahasa inggris di Universitas Islam Negeri Alauddin Makassar, mengklasifikasi kata tersebut, dan mengetahui alternatif sinonim yang bisa memfasilitasi siswa dalam proses menulis. Penelitian ini dianggap penting karena menyediakan kata kerja alternatif yang digunakan dalam kepenulisan. Berbeda dengan kajian-kajian sebelumnya yang hanya berfokus pada kata kerja yang sering digunakan dalam tulisan argumentatif seperti koran tanpa tersedianya alternatif yang bisa digunakan. Hasil penelitian ini diharapkan dapat membantu mahasiswa untuk mengembangkan kosakata akademik dalam membuat tulisan ilmiah yang bermanfaat dan baik dari sisi kejelasan makna dan ketelitian dalam pemilihan kata (diksi). Penelitian ini menggunakan metode penelitian deskriptip yang didasari oleh analisis kesatuan tulisan-tulisan pada kata kerja yang digunakan mahasiswa dalam kepenulisa akademis. Adapun objek yang diambil adalah skripsi-skripsi alumni mahasiswa pendidikan bahasa inggris yang diajukan dan dikoleksi di perpustakaan di Universitas Islam Negeri (UIN) Alauddin Makassar. Ada enam skripsi yang diambil dari kajian lima tahun terakhir (tahun akademik 2013-2017). Hasil penelitian menunjukkan deskripsi-deskrispsi berikut; (1) Telah ditemukan kata kerja yang sering dipilih oleh mahasiswa dalam penulisan akademis. Terungkap dari beberapa mahasiswa yang menjadi subyek penelitian ini bahwa mahasiswa cenderung mengulang dalam memilih diksi kata kerja dalam jumlah yang frekuensi yang cukup signifikan, (2)

beberapa kosakata dalam bentuk kerja yang sering muncul adalah show', 'make', 'use', 'help', 'expect', 'improve', 'give', and 'get'. Kosakata tersebut tentunya memiliki sinonim dalam pelbagai konteks penulisan, (3) ketersediaan kata kerja alternatif bisa bermanfaat untuk mahasiswa dalam beberapa aspek terutama untuk memberikan argument yang tepat, serta memudahkan mereka mengutip gagasan penelitian untuk menghindari sedini mungkin penjiplakan, (4) Kata kerja yang paling sering ditemukan dalam kajian ini adalah kata kerja prosedur, kreatif, objek langsung, referensial, dan berbasis fakta/data.

Kata kunci: *kata kerja yang sering digunakan, analisis berbasis kumpulan tulisan, kata kerja alternatif*

INTRODUCTION

Writing in academic world is awfully challenging. The core problem that students may certainly face is that how they then convey their messages in a paragraph. Having adequate vocabulary does not guarantee the flows of ideas. Moreover, students should be able to select certain words in order to have a good and systematic structure in expressing ideas.It is a must to think carefully about choice of words to develop a sentence. Certain words which are frequently encountered in everyday communication may not be suitable for use in academic essays. In addition, academic essays are expected to be clear and straightforward.

Clarity and precision are core principles of academic writing. The methodological process of writing entails the careful selection of words, including the appropriate use of verbs. Precision is especially important for scholarly writing in general and the writing of empirical articles in particular (Szuchman, 2008). Therefore, authors should strive to make certain that every word means exactly what they intended (APA, 2010).

It is clear that verbs are very essential to express ideas in form of clause or sentences. Students are demanded to use scholarly verbs in academic writing. Hence, students should be able to enrich their vocabularies in order to have precious content of ideas in a range of array of words. A key to fostering students' academic vocabulary is the availability of synonymous words. The researcher puts forward a claim that that a writer just remains imitating the words in previously certain papers instantly. In the other words, students tend to follow the structure even the words or sentences of previous writing (theses) collected in the library. As a consequence, students' papers frequently contain lack of less multiplicity of vocabularies and overused words.

Referring to explanation above, the researcher formulated the research questions as follows:
1. What were the most frequently used verbs in the undergraduate theses of English Education students at UIN Alauddin Makassar?
2. What were the alternative verbs being suggested to undergraduate theses of English Education students at UIN Alauddin Makassar?

METHOD

Design and Sample

The present research employed descriptive research method. The researcher applied the method to investigate the frequently used verbs in the theses written by undergraduate English education students and provide alternative verbs suggested to them or other next students. The objects of the research were undergraduate theses of alumni of English education students submitted in the library at state Islamic university (UIN) Alauddin Makassar.

Instrument and Procedure of Collecting Data

There were three means that were provided in order to obtain data in this study. The first was the standard list of frequently used verbs created by the researcher as guide to seek the verbs. The second was that papers or books which were utilised to list every single verbs commonly appear in students' theses. Thidly, the researcher employed Microsoft word equipped with a tool named 'find and replace' (Control + F) in order to find the verbs automatically. Regarding the alternative verbs, the researcher used context clues strategies and Cambridge Advance Learners' Dictionary to find out the context of the words. At the end of the study, it was also conducted interview to 3writers of objects of the research as representatives. Interview is "an openness to sequenced forms of questions in order to follow up the answers given" (Kvale, 1996).

The data were gathered from 6 students' from the degree of different alumni. In this study, the researcher made a visit to the library to explore the papers. Typically, empirical studies consist of distinct sections to reflect various stages of the writing or research process those are introduction, method, results, and discussion. Related to the procedure of collecting the data, the researcher picked over the verbs required in this study starting from the first stage of research process (introduction) up to the last one (discussion). Furthermore, the soft copies can be collected in order to investigate automatically then in Microsoft word.

Data Analysis
The researcher analysed the verbs with iterative process and keywords-in-context (KWIC). Meanwhile, Microsoft Word equipped with thesaurus, Cambridge advanced Learner's Dictionary, and context clues were deployed to find out the alternative verbs. There had been lists of reporting verbs that were already found by previous researches.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The Most Frequently Used Verbs in Theses
If seen from the number of students who used the verbs, these are the verbs which are the most frequently found in students academic paper starting from the most respectively; **SHOW, MAKE, USE, HELP,** and **EXPECT.**

- The verb '**SHOW**' which was used by the six students (all subjects) in chapter IV for the number of occurrences was **116** times.
- The verb '**MAKE**' was also used by the six students in chapter II (**54 times**) and in chapter IV (**49 times**).
- Followed by the verb '**USE**' for **37 times** in chapter II by 4 of 6 students.
- Next, that is '**HELP**' in 34 times for 5 of 6 students (chapter II).
- The last mostly used verb is '**EXPECT**' in 16 times in chapter by 4 of six students.
- It can be illustrated in the following table:

	The Most Frequently Used Verb	Chapter	Total Frequency used	The Number of Subjects
1	SHOW	IV	116 times	All (six students)
2	MAKE	II and IV	54 and 49 times respectively	All (six students)
3	USE	II	37 times	4 students
4	HELP	II	34 times	5 students
5	EXPECT	I	16	4 students

Verbs in Contexts

SHOW:
*As seen from the sentences below, the context of the word '**shows**' means:
- to prove something or make the truth or existence of something known
- to make it possible for something to be seen
        Here are the verb 'show' in context of sentences:
*the findings of pre-test in experimental class was showed in **Table 4.1**.*
*the findings of pre-test in control class was showed in **Table 4.2**.*
*the findings of post-test in experimental class was showed in **Table 4.3.***
*the findings of post-test in control class was showed in **Table 4.4**.*
the data showed that no students strongly disagreed and disagreed.
the data showed that no students strongly disagreed,
the data showed that no students strongly disagreed and disagred

USE:
*As seen from the sentences below, the context of the word '**use**' encompasses:
- to put something such as a tool, skill or building to a particular purpose
- to take advantage of a person or situation; to <u>exploit</u>
        Here are the verb 'use' in sentences in context:

Regularization is an item in which a regular marker is used in an irregular one
certain types of verbs tend to use the same preposition
students' errors can be used as a means to measure
he uses reading text as the test to find out the errors of adjective clause
an adjective clause uses pronouns to connect the dependent clause to the independent
dependent clause used as an adjective
Regularization is an item in which a regular marker is used in an irregular one
students' errors can be used as a means to measure

HELP:
        As seen from the sentences below, the context of the word '**help**' encompasses:
- to make it possible or easier for someone to do something, by doing part of the work yourself or by providing advice, support, etc.
Here are the verb 'help' in context of sentencees:
but also it helped them to understand the text
readers use their schema) first to help them get a whole picture of a text
Instrumental reading is done to help people achieve a clear purpose
To get the reading activity more organized and to help students to get better comprehension
Visual media can serve a concrete image which can help students to easily interpret. . .
Teachers can also directly draw a picture on a board to help with explanation

EXPECT:
        Looking at the context of the verb 'expect' in students' writing cover at least:
-to think or believe something will happen
- to think that someone should behave in a particular way or do a particular thing
- to want something to happen or to be true
Here are the verb 'expect' in context of sentences:
It was expected that the findings of thisresearch provide significant contribution
the findings of this researchwere also expected to strengthen the current belief

The findings of this research were also expected to give practical contribution to English teachers
It was expected that the findings was useful reference for
Thesuggestions areexpectedtobetaken asconsideration
it is alsoexpected to teacher tobe able to use this media
The findings of study are expected to provide information about grammatical errors
In general, through this research, the writer expects that the result

IMPROVE:
As seen from the sentences below.the context of the word '**improve**' means:
-to (cause someone or something to) get better

He assumed that it was effective to improve the students reading skill
The researcher attempted to improve the students' interest to read
The effectiveness of using Hello Magazine to improve the reading comprehension
Therefore, it helped the teacher to improve students' reading comprehension
She reported that this strategy was effective to improve the students' reading comprehension
Using narrative text is effective to improve students reading comprehension of second year
Using interesting topic in reading comprehension effective to improve the students interest
Pleasure reading material very effective and can improve the student reading
The researcherdid appliedHello Magazine to improve the students' reading comprehension. Students to do extensive reading outside classroom to improve their reading skill.
To improve the willingness to learn
It significantlyimprovesthestudents'readingcomprehensionskill

GIVE:
As seen from the sentences below, the context of the word '**give**' means:
-to offer something to someone, or to provide them with it
-to produce or cause something
-to perform an action

Although reading can give us many information
The students did not feel pleasant when their teacher gives them a lesson
Teaching reading in the class, for some students, has not given a significant influence.
This research was intended to give empirical contribution
This researchwere also expected to give practical contribution to English teachers
The teacher gave a monoton strategy to teach the students
An activity in which students are given a text
Students are given a text, and then they have to underline
This media could give contribution in improving students' reading
Readers cannot directly give response to writer as in a conversation
if they are given text which are too difficult for them

GET:
As seen from the sentences above, the context of the word '**get**' means:
-to obtain, buy or earn something
-to cause something to happen, or cause someone or something to do something

the researcher used an interview guide to get some information's about the teacher
Interview is a dialog which is done by the interviewer to get the information
the teacher orally face to face to get the information
After got the result of document of students

Most of students in learning get bored when the teacher uses conventional
in order to make the students get motivated and get interested in learning
the data that the researcher have got from the preliminary study.
none of them got excellent and or good score, three students (11.54 %) got fair score, eleven students
(42.31 %) got poor score, and twelve of them (46.15 %) got very poor score

The Suggested Alternatives Verbs
   The availability of the following synonymous verbs were analysed and launched by taking into account of the multiplicity of the context of used verbs. The process of finding out the context the words leads to the previous procedures.

Analyse	examine
	determine
	evaluate
	figure out
	interpret
	investigate
	resolve
	study
	test
	estimate
	explore
Apply	implement
	administer
	employ
	exercise
	handle
	practice
	utilize
Argue (*Try To Convince; Present Support*)	assert
	claim
	present
	suggest
	explain
	appeal
Ask (*Question*)	demand
	inquire
	challenge
	quiz
	request
Ask (Request)	call for
	charge
	demand
	request
Assume	think
	guess
	believe
	take for granted
	infer
	presume
	speculate

Believe	think consider suppose judge trust ascertain
Carry Out	execute accomplish perform realize finalize hold organize
Choose	select elect decide pick name appoint adopt
Classify	categorize arrange divide label distribute allocate
Collect	accumulate gather amass assemble compile
Conclude	deduce adjudge wrap up
Conduct	carry out hold undertake organize oversee manage direct
Consist	contain dwell cover enclose encompass
Consider	take into account reflect on

	deem
	judge
Contribute	devote
	granted
	commit
Deliver	convey
	distribute
	express
	share
Describe	illustrate
	explain
	outline
	specify
	characterize
	define
	express
Determine	decide
	settle on
	establish
	agreed on
Develop	build up
	extend
	enlarge
	expand
	improve
Divide	allot
	separate
	group
	share out
	allocate
	split
	subdivide
Do	accomplish
	perform
	carry out
	execute
	run
Encourage	inspire
	motivate
	boost
	persuade
Expected	hope
	project
	supposed
Explain	elaborate,
	clarify,
	explicate,
	explore
Evaluate	estimate
	calculate,

	assess
	appraise
	test
Face	challenge
	deal with
	encounter
	tackle
	look toward
	confront
	cope with
Find	search
	discover
	come across
	locate,
	seek for
Finish	accomplish
Focus	concentrate
	direct
	adjust
	centralize
Get	obtain
	gain
	score
	catch
	acquire
	find
	mark
	accept
	grab
Give	offer
	provide
	bestow
	confer
	afford
Have	own
	encompass
	enclose
	cover
	possess
Help	assist
	aid
	hand
	facilitate
	support
	do a favor
Hope	suppose
	expect
	wish
	look forward to

Identify	recognize
	classify
	categorize
	discover
Illustrate	demonstrate
	exemplify
	expose
	highlight
	mark
	point up
Improve	develop
	advance
	progress
	enhance
	enlighten
Include	involve
	contain
	encompass
	comprise
	consist of
Increase	comprise
	advance
	build up
	expand
	broaden
	enlarge
	boost
	expend
	raise
	step up
	intensify
	deepen
Indicate	signify
	specify
	designate
Influence	impact
	affect
	impress
Investigate	observe
	look into
	explore
	examine
	interrogate
	probe
Involve	engage
	associate
	implicate
	concern
	affect
	occupy

Know	comprehend
	perceive
	grasp
	notice
	experience
Make	allow
	create
	generate
	prepare
	form
	compose
Master	comprehend
	perceive
	grasp
	understand
	cram
Motivate	stimulate
	encourage
	trigger
	provoke
	induce
Need	entail
	requires
	necessitate
	demand
	call for
Prepare	arrange
	organize
	set up
	plan
	equip
Prove	show
	establish,
	demonstrate,
	confirm
	verify
	attest
Provide	supply
	facilitate
	support
	administer
	maintain
	arrange
Recommend	suggest
	propose
	urge
	advise
	advocate
Review	recall
	reassess

	evaluate
Say	declare
	state
	affirm
	argue
	assert
	claim
	report
	respond
	suggest
	announce
	answer
Select	choose
	pick
	decide on
	pick out
	elect
See (To Perceive With Eyes)	notice
	observe
	perceive
	identify
	examine
	recognize
	survey
	discover
See (To Comprehend)	grasp
	understand
	comprehend
	catch
Show	demonstrate
	illustrate
	display
	present
	exhibit
	mark
Solve	overcome
	cope with
	resolve
	figure out
Suggest	recommend
	propose
	urge
	advise
	advocate
Support	sustain
	maintain
	encourage
	aid
	provide

Take	hold
	receive
	capture
	grab
	reach
Think	view
	consider
	take into account
	assume
	guess
	judge
	conceive
	deem
Use	utilize
	employ
	apply
	manage
	practice
	run
	adopt
	handle
Understand	comprehend
	discern
	grasp
	interpret
	master
	catch
	apprehend
	deduce
	conceive
	note
	infer
	appreciate

The writer in this point argues what have been found in the current study. The study presents what are the frequently used verbs in undergraduate students theses. The students' writing involves three procedures which are the highlighting the verbs, finding out the the contexts of the verbs, and providing the alternatives or synonyms that may have similar meaning. The most frequently used verbs that were found in this current research are **show, make, use, help, expect, improve, give,** and **get.** Those verbs above should be paid attention as students, teachers, and lecturers. In academic writing, it is expected that a student has a rigorous proposition in expressing a verb in order to have better ways of expressing ideas.

In line with previous literature (Bloch, 2010), this section indicated that reporting verb could most possibly be categorized into frequently used verbs. In this case, the verb '**show**' was found as the highest numbers occurrences. The study is trying to provide synonyms to such aforementioned verbs which were frequently overused. Indeed, authors who submit poorly written manuscripts to journals can be nearly 12 times more likely to have their manuscripts rejected than are their counterparts (Onwuegbuzie& Daniel, 2005). Synonymy, or semantic equivalence, is an important yet intricate linguistic feature in the field of lexical semantics. Synonyms are not completely interchangeable; rather, they differ in shades of meaning

and vary in their connotations, implications, and register (Di Marco et al., 1993). Any natural language consists of a considerable number of synonymous words which enables English speakers "to convey meanings more precisely and effectively for the right audience and context" (Liu &Espino, 2012).

Regarding the project executed byYeh, Liou, & Liin 2007, it investigated phenomenon of overused adjectives by non-native speaking learners (NNS). This study designed five online units for increasing students' awareness of underused specific adjectives for EFL college writing. The recent researcher deliberately established the study because the use of verb and adjectives in academic writing might appear in similar circumstances as seen in the findings. In proof, in the last test (Yeh, Liou, & Li's study), students had tried to apply more specific items (other possible alternatives) and thus enhanced their overall writing quality. Such strategies can certainly be implemented to obtain such remarkable improvement.

Moreover, clarity and precision are core principles of academic writing. The methodological process of writing entails the careful selection of words, including the appropriate use of verbs. Precision is especially important for scholarly writing in general and the writing of empirical articles in particular (Szuchman, 2008). Moreover, it was described in the findings that the subjects of the research had tendency to use a verbs in much amount of frequency. Even, a student seemed to use a verb many times in a paragraph. Consequently, students writing composition contains lack of less multiplicity of vocabularies and overused words.

Studies have shown that vocabulary improvement and lexical selection in writing tasks are also emphasized by evaluators of student writing (Engber, 1995 & Santos, 1988).The frequently used verbs abbreviated **FUV** by the researcher, such as **make, use, help, expect, improve, give,** and **get** should be properly used based on what the authors' intention. The importance of word selection for writing has been recognized by scholars such as Johnson (2000), who stresses that a writer has to use precise diction to express the intended messages.

In relation to the offered alternative verbs, it has been attached some synonymous verbs that can be a reference to facilitate students in process of writing. The alternative verbs which were found in the current research are expected to help students determine which words that they really intend. The availability of the verb list is also hoped to be optional verbs to take into account. In the other words, students can use the offered verbs in terms developing, citing, and paraphrasing an expert's ideas based on the context of their arguments.

The Classification of Verbs

Verbs in academia (Meyer, 1997) are distinguished by the particular aspects of semantic understanding as described by Johnson and Maratsos (1977: 1744) that "thinking can be false; that knowing presumes truth; that thinking is not equivalent to saying" . Therefore, the typology of verbs comprised three major discriminating values: (a) verbs representing statement, (b) verbs representing cognition, and (c) verbs representing knowledge or action.

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS

The current study reveals the frequently used verbs in theses of undergraduate English Education students at university followed by the types, and several possible alternatives of the verbs . Based on the finding on the discussion, the researcher comes to descriptions as follow: The most frequently used verbs were 'show', 'make', 'use', 'help', 'expect', 'improve', 'give', and 'get'. The other frequently used ones are attached in the present study as well. The types of the most frequently used verbs found in the undergraduate theses comprises three major discriminating values which was creation verbs, direct object verbs, procedural verbs, and evidence based/data driven verbs.

The types of the verbs are categorised as the verbs representing knowledge or action, while other type also found was referenced verb categorised as the verbs representing statement. The offered alternative verbs can be recommended to help students in writing. The verbs have some synonyms in some various contexts in students' writing as provided in the previous chapter. What is more, the present

study which was offering alternatively synonymous verbs, was expected to encourage and build up students' awareness that there are possible alternative verbs available in offline and online dictionary. In fact, it is most likely that students had tendency to repeat or select a verb in the number of occurrences. As a result, certain verbs are exceedingly overused. This could occur because of several reasons: that a certain verb is only suitable in a certain context; it is just only the verbs that students know which (generally used); in the same words, writers are lacking of vocabulary and tend to use verbs used in daily conversation to express their ideas. The arguments are according to the students' experiences in writing based on employed interview to the involvers of the research.

Based on the conclusion above, the researcher puts forward some suggestions as follows:

1. The current study leads to a consideration that students must be directed to be aware that there are many options, synonyms, or alternatives of a word that could be used in order to have a clear argument based on appropriate contexts.
2. For upcoming research, it is strongly recommended that the research is not limited in number of samples and methods in verbs analysis
3. In order to broaden the knowledge of corpus analysis, there might be a further study in relation to second or foreign language acquisition in academic writing. This might show and clarify how students express a word and why they then choose those vocabularies in terms of diction and context.

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