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LINGUISTIC FEATURES OF INFORMATIONAL TEXTS IN ENGLISH LEARNING

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Abstract: Informational texts play an essential role in English language learning because they expose learners to factual knowledge, academic concepts, specialized vocabulary, and formal patterns of written communication. Unlike narrative texts, informational texts primarily aim to explain, describe, classify, compare, and communicate knowledge. As a result, they demonstrate distinctive linguistic characteristics, including lexical density, academic and technical vocabulary, nominalization, complex noun phrases, passive constructions, grammatical compression, cohesive devices, logical connectors, and metadiscourse. These features enable writers to communicate substantial amounts of information concisely, but they may also create considerable difficulties for learners of English as a foreign language. This article investigates the principal linguistic features of informational texts and examines their significance for English language learning.

Keywords: informational texts, English language learning, lexical density, academic vocabulary, nominalization, complex noun phrases.

Introduction

Informational texts have become an indispensable part of contemporary English language education. Learners encounter them in school textbooks, academic articles, encyclopedias, online educational resources, newspapers, reports, scientific materials, and professional documents. Therefore, the ability to understand informational discourse is not simply a reading skill; it is an essential component of academic and professional literacy.

Informational texts differ from narrative texts in their communicative purpose. Their primary function is generally to provide information, explain phenomena, establish relationships between concepts, classify objects, or present evidence. These purposes influence the linguistic choices made by writers. Scientific and informational writing, for instance, contains specialized linguistic features that construct particular areas of knowledge and may create difficulties for students' comprehension and composition.

One of the major characteristics of informational English is its relatively high concentration of lexical and conceptual information. A short sentence can contain several layers of meaning:

«The rapid development of renewable-energy technologies has significantly reduced dependence on fossil fuels».

For a learner, difficulty may arise not only from individual words such as renewable, dependence, or fossil fuels, but also from the way these words are organized into complex grammatical units.

Academic and informational writing also frequently relies on complex noun phrases. Biber, Gray, and Poonpon demonstrated that advanced written English often achieves complexity through phrasal structures, particularly complex noun phrases, rather than simply through long sentences and multiple subordinate clauses.

The purpose of this article is therefore to examine the major linguistic characteristics of informational texts and consider how awareness of these characteristics can contribute to English language learning.

Methodology

This study employs a qualitative research approach based on an integrative literature review, descriptive linguistic analysis, and comparative analysis. Relevant studies in applied linguistics, corpus linguistics, systemic functional linguistics, and academic literacy are examined to identify the distinctive linguistic features of informational texts. Particular attention is given to lexical density, nominalization, complex noun phrases, grammatical compression, cohesive devices, and metadiscourse. Selected linguistic examples are analyzed to illustrate how these features contribute to information organization and influence reading comprehension. The findings are synthesized to determine their pedagogical implications for developing English language learners' reading comprehension and academic writing skills.

Results

Informational texts generally contain a high concentration of lexical items that carry conceptual meaning. Nouns, lexical verbs, adjectives, and adverbs are frequently used to communicate precise information. Compare: «Scientists looked at how plants grow» with: «Scientists investigated plant development». The second sentence is shorter but more lexically concentrated. The verb investigated is more formal than looked at, while plant development compresses a process into a noun phrase. Technical and academic vocabulary is another defining feature. Words such a biodiversity, infrastructure, sustainability, distribution, and development are frequent in informational discourse. For learners, vocabulary knowledge must therefore extend beyond everyday conversational English. Nation's research emphasizes the importance of adequate vocabulary coverage for successful reading and listening comprehension. However, memorizing isolated definitions is insufficient. Learners should understand vocabulary within semantic relationships and authentic contexts.

Nominalization is one of the most important features of informational and academic English. It involves expressing processes, actions, or qualities through nouns.

Examples include:

- develop → development;
- analyze → analysis;
- reduce → reduction;
- decide → decision;
- efficient → efficiency.

Compare: «The population increased rapidly» with: «The rapid increase in population created pressure on infrastructure». The second sentence uses increase as a noun and therefore packages a process as a conceptual object. Nominalization allows writers to compress information and construct abstract relationships. At the same time, it may make texts difficult for learners because the underlying action is less directly expressed. Students should therefore be taught to "unpack" nominalized expressions. For example: «the reduction of pollution» can be interpreted as: «pollution is reduced». Such transformations can make dense informational prose more accessible. Complex noun phrases are especially important in informational texts. Consider: «the long-term environmental effects of industrial development» The head noun is effects, while the remaining elements provide additional information. Another example is: «rapid technological development in developing countries». The noun development functions as the central concept, while rapid, technological, and in developing countries specify it. Research by Biber and Gray shows that written informational and academic registers have developed strong patterns of phrasal complexity. For English learners, identifying the head noun can significantly improve comprehension. Instead of translating every word separately, students can first determine the central concept and then analyze the modifiers. Informational texts frequently compress information through non-finite clauses, nominalizations, and passive structures. For example: «Researchers collected

the samples and analyzed them» may become: «The collected samples were analyzed». Passive constructions are especially common in scientific and institutional discourse because the process or result may be more important than the person performing the action. However, students should not be taught that passive voice automatically makes writing "academic." Rather, they should understand its communicative function: passive voice can shift attention from the actor to the process, object, or result. Grammatical compression therefore requires learners to develop functional rather than purely formal grammatical awareness. Informational texts depend heavily on cohesive devices that connect individual propositions.

Common examples include:

- however;
- therefore;
- consequently;
- in addition;
- for example;
- although;
- as a result.

For example:

«Solar energy is increasingly accessible. However, its effectiveness depends on geographical conditions». The connector however tells the reader that a contrast is coming. Similarly: «The population increased rapidly. Consequently, demand for housing also increased». The connector consequently establishes a cause-and-effect relationship. Such linguistic signals are particularly valuable for language learners because they help reveal the organization of information. Cohesion is also created through lexical relationships. Writers may repeat or vary key concepts: «climate change → global warming → temperature increase → environmental change». Recognizing these relationships helps learners construct a coherent mental representation of the text. Informational and academic texts frequently contain expressions that guide readers through the organization of information.

Examples include: «First, the causes will be discussed». «In contrast, the second approach...»«The following section examines...» «It is important to note that...»

These expressions can be understood as metadiscourse because they help writers organize their texts and establish relationships with readers. Hyland's analysis of academic discourse demonstrates that writers use linguistic resources to express stance and engage readers across disciplinary contexts. For English learners, metadiscourse provides valuable signals about textual structure. Teaching such expressions can help students identify introductions, contrasts, explanations, conclusions, and evaluations.

Discussion

The findings demonstrate that informational texts should not be regarded simply as texts containing "difficult vocabulary." Their complexity emerges from the interaction of lexical, grammatical, and discourse features.

A learner may know the individual words in: «The rapid expansion of urban infrastructure has contributed to increasing socioeconomic inequality» but still struggle because the sentence contains:

- abstract vocabulary;
- nominalization;
- a complex noun phrase;
- grammatical compression;
- implicit conceptual relationships.

Consequently, English instruction should address informational-text competence at several levels.

First, students need systematic instruction in academic and technical vocabulary. Second, they need to recognize nominalized expressions and complex noun phrases. Third, they should learn how connectors signal relationships among ideas. Finally, they should understand how writers guide readers through discourse. This suggests that reading instruction should move beyond questions such as "What does this word mean?" toward questions such as:

- What is the main noun in this phrase?
- Which words modify it?
- What process is hidden in this nominalization?
- What relationship does this connector express?
- How does the writer organize the information?
- How certain is the writer about the statement?

Such questions develop linguistic awareness and encourage learners to become independent readers. Informational-text analysis can also support writing development. After identifying features in a text, learners can reproduce them in their own writing. For example: «People use renewable energy more and more» can be transformed into: «The use of renewable energy is increasing». Similarly: «Scientists looked at how the temperature changed» can become: «Scientists investigated temperature variation». Through such transformations, students learn that academic English involves not only knowing more vocabulary but also knowing how to package information effectively.

Conclusion

Informational texts represent an important area of English language learning because they expose learners to the linguistic patterns used to communicate academic, scientific, educational, and professional knowledge. Their distinctive characteristics include lexical density, specialized vocabulary, nominalization, complex noun phrases, grammatical compression, passive constructions, cohesive devices, logical connectors, and metadiscourse.

These features allow writers to communicate complex information accurately and efficiently, but they can also create substantial challenges for learners of English as a foreign language. The main difficulty is therefore not necessarily the presence of individual difficult words; rather, it is the way multiple linguistic features combine to compress and organize information.

The analysis suggests that effective English teaching should make these features explicit. Learners should be taught to recognize academic vocabulary, identify the structure of complex noun phrases, unpack nominalizations, interpret logical connectors, follow cohesive relationships, and understand how writers guide readers through informational discourse.

Ultimately, linguistic awareness can transform the learner's relationship with informational texts. Instead of seeing academic English as a collection of complicated words and sentences, learners can begin to recognize a systematic set of linguistic choices used to construct and communicate knowledge. This awareness can contribute not only to stronger reading comprehension but also to the development of academic writing and broader communicative competence in English.

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