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Business Communication: Role and Impact of  
Verbs, Nouns, Adjectives and Adverbs

Fatimah Dinna Mohd. Din

# **Business Communication: Role and Impact of Verbs, Nouns, Adjectives and Adverbs**

*Fatimah Dinna Mohd. Din*

*This paper explains the role and impact of content words in their noun, verb, adjective and adverb linguistic forms in line with business communication principles of objectivity, conciseness, consideration, courtesy, concreteness, clarity, correctness and coherence. This paper also discusses an error analysis of university business ESL students' letters, reports and summary writing. There was evidence of verb, noun, adjective and adverb errors that violated business communication principles of correctness, clarity and coherence. This paper recommends the use of business communication principles as a criterion for improving and evaluating the quality of verbs, nouns, adjectives and adverbs in documents required by organisations. Additionally, the paper recommends tasks that involve simultaneous transformation of information and linguistic transformation.*

## **Introduction**

The effective use of the English language for successful business communication has been a major preoccupation of authors concerned with business communication. One language aspect of English in business communication that has been given considerable attention is the role, use and impact of content words with linguistic verbs, nouns, adjectives and adverbs.

This paper has three sections. The first section deals with the language expectations of business communication in relation to the role, use and impact of content words in their verb, noun, adjective and adverb linguistic forms in business communication. The second section discusses a sample of verb, noun, adjective and adverb errors made by university business ESL students. The third section offers three recommendations involving

business communication principles, transformation of information and linguistic transformation.

## **Role and Impact of the Use of Verbs, Nouns, Adjectives and Adverbs in Business Communication**

Good and effective communication is important for business. Lesikar and Flatley (2002: 3), emphasise this importance when they say that:

Whatever position you have in business, your performance will be judged largely by your ability to communicate. If you perform (communicate) well, you are likely to be rewarded with advancement. And the higher you advance, the more you will need your communication ability. The evidence is clear: Improving your communication skill improves your chances for success in business.

Prominent authors of business communication insist that messages must be complete, objective, concise, considerate, courteous, concrete, clear, correct and coherent (Ober, 1998; Krizan et al, 1999; Lehman & DuFrene, 1999; Locker, 1999; Thill and Bovee, 1999; Murphy, Hildebrandt and Thomas, 2000; Locker & Kaczmarek, 2001; Lesikar & Flatley, 2002; Locker, 2003; Satterwhite & Olson-Sutteon, 2003). Furthermore, messages need to save the readers' time and build goodwill (Locker, 2003).

The above-mentioned authors' explanations on the eleven (11) elements are summarised in the following paragraphs. A business message is complete when it gives all the necessary information. A concise message is one that expresses the meaning completely in the fewest possible words without sacrificing the other elements. A considerate message emphasises positive, pleasant ideas and de-emphasises negative or unimportant ideas. To show consideration, one must generate a courteous tone through the use of sincere, tactful and thoughtful expressions. These qualities build goodwill and a positive image for the organisation.

A concrete message requires denotative (direct, explicit, often dictionary-based), specific, definite and vivid words rather than connotative, vague and general words. The use of denotative words facilitate and enhance clarity of messages. Clarity is necessary to the reader to understand, depend on and act on. A correct message is accurate in all details and it involves use of accurate grammar, punctuation, spelling and the right level of language. Accurate use of language and clarity of

messages are essential for coherence which assists the logical and smooth movement of ideas. All these elements interrelate to achieve effective business communication.

In the context of communication ability and skill for effective business communication, Lesikar and Flatley (2002: 27) specify a pertinent point that words have “shades of difference in the meaning of words.” Several authors of business communication explain this notion in the context and impact of verbs, nouns, adjectives and adverbs of content words on meaning in terms of objectivity, conciseness, consideration, courtesy, concreteness, clarity, correctness and goodwill in business messages.

The following paragraphs explain the impact of verbs, nouns, adjectives and adverbs in relation to the business principles of objectivity, clarity, conciseness, consideration and courtesy.

### **Objectivity**

The verbs, nouns, adjectives and adverbs of content words have varying degrees of effects on objectivity in terms of strength, concreteness and forcefulness. According to Krinzan, Merrier, Jones and Harcourt (1999), objective messages necessitate the use of strong words for power and objectivity as well as concrete words because they are specific and precise. In their view, verbs and nouns are more strong and concrete than adjectives and adverbs. On this aspect, they say that:

A strong word in English will be either a verb or a noun. Verbs are the strongest words, and nouns are next in strength. Adjectives and adverbs, although needed for concreteness at time, are generally weaker, less objective words. You will want to give preference to verbs and nouns in your business messages and avoid the use of subjective adjectives and adverbs. Adjectives and adverbs tend to distract the receiver from the main points of the message. Reducing your use of them will help prevent you from overstating a point or position. To have an impact, business messages should convey objectivity by avoiding exaggeration. (1999: 91)

Several business communication authors state that verbs and nouns are more concrete than adjectives and adverbs and thus they should be used as much as possible (Locker, 1999; Thill & Bovee, 1999; Lesikar & Flatley, 2002). Like Krizan et al, (1999) these authors are of the same view that messages with adjectives and adverbs do not reflect objective judgement. Their reasons are that such words distract from the key words, the verbs and nouns in messages and these words further entail the use of more words.

## Clarity

The verbs play a dominant role in enhancing clarity of business messages in terms of word strength and forcefulness. The use of verbs is highly preferred compared to the use of nouns, adjectives and adverbs. Locker (1999) stresses the use of strong verbs and not nouns to carry the weight of the sentence. She emphasises that at sentence level, verbs present the information more forcefully. According to her, strong verbs make sentences more forceful and up to 25 percent easier to read. Thill and Bovee (1999) also share a similar view. They describe verbs as especially powerful because verbs carry the action. According to them, the more dynamic and specific the verb, the better is the effect. Lesikar and Flatley (2002) also agree on verb strength where they describe the verb as the strongest part of speech followed by the noun. In their view, the strength of these words lies in the focus given to action which carries attention and interest. They say that verbs deal with action and nouns with the doer of action.

In view of the dominant enhancing role of verbs, several authors discourage the use of 'camouflaged verbs' where the verb describing the action in a sentence is changed into a noun form (Ober, 1998; Thill and Bovee, 1999; Lehmann and DuFrene, 1999; Locker, 1999; Lesikar and Flatley, 2002). All these authors share the view that to write with clarity, vividness and precision, one should avoid camouflaged verbs. Locker (1999; 2003) mentions that nouns ending in : -ment, -ion, and -al hide verbs. She recommends that writers change nouns into verbs to present information more forcefully. Her examples are:

Weak: We will perform an *investigation* of the problem.

Better: We will *investigate* the problem.

Weak: *Selection* of a program should be based on the client's needs.

Better: *Select* the program that best fits the client's needs.

Thill and Bovee further add that words ending in -ion, -tion, -ing, -ant, -ence, -ance, and -ency change verbs into abstract nouns or adjectives and they weaken the impact of the idea and the writing style. These authors say that abstract nouns are less precise than concrete words. Ober (1998) defines camouflaged verbs as verbs hidden in nouns that weaken the action. Below are some of his examples that show the differences in clarity between the use of verbs and the verbs hidden in noun forms.

<i>Verbs</i>	<i>Verbs hidden in Nouns</i>
concluded	arrived at the conclusion
agreed	came to an agreement
requires	has a requirement for
analysed	performed an analysis of

In Lesikar and Flatley (2002)'s view, camouflaged verbs use abstract nouns and passive verb forms. In their opinion, abstract nouns do not form sharp and clear meanings in the mind. They say that words like 'administration', 'incompetence', 'discrimination' and 'incompatibility' cover broad and general meanings, concepts and ideas that are difficult to visualise what these words stand for. Below are their examples of camouflaged verbs and contrasting sentences that show differences between the use of camouflaged verbs and clear or strong verb forms.

<i>Action Verb</i>	<i>Noun Form</i>	<i>Wording of Camouflaged Words</i>
Assist	assistance	give assistance to
commit	commitment	make a commitment
discuss	discussion	have a discussion
investigate	investigation	make a investigation
liquidate	liquidation	effect a liquidation
reconcile	reconciliation	make a reconciliation

#### Contrasting Sentences

<i>Camouflaged Verb</i>	<i>Clear Verb Form</i>
1. The new policy involved the standardization of the procedures.	The new policy standardized the procedures.
2. We must bring about a reconciliation of our differences.	We must reconcile our differences.
3. The establishment of a rehabilitation centre has been accomplished by the company.	The company has established a rehabilitation centre.

Like Lesikar and Flatley, Lehman and DuFrene (1999) share the view that the use of abstract nouns will slow comprehension as well as make it difficult for receivers to envision. In the examples below, Lehmann and DuFrene show that sentences with camouflaged verbs are longer than the sentences with strong verbs.

*Camouflaged Verb*

1. Confirmation of the date will be received from the president.  
(10 words)
2. The management team has been directed to identify a plan to create a reduction in shipping costs by 20 per cent.  
(21 words)

*Strong Verb*

- The president will confirm the date.  
(6 words)
- The management team has been directed to identify a plan to reduce shipping costs by 20 per cent.  
(17 words)

**Conciseness**

Conciseness in sentence length is a necessary requirement to enhance clarity of business messages. Specifically, short, clear sentences and short, simple words present concise messages and save time. Furthermore, the receiver's attention is directed toward important details and is not distracted by excessive and unnecessary words and details. The following paragraphs explain the different ways of achieving conciseness through the use of the verb, noun, adjective and adverb parts of speech of content words.

***Use of the Active Verb Construction and the Passive Verb Construction***

In business communication, there is a specific preference for the use of active verb construction over the passive verb construction because the active form is more direct, shorter, stronger, more vigorous and clearer than the passive. The examples below show that the active verb construction is shorter than the passive verb construction.

*Passive*

1. This policy was enforced by the committee.  
(7 words)
2. A complete reorganization of the of the administration was affected by the general manager. (14 words)

*Active*

- The committee enforced the policy.  
(5 words)
- The general manager completely reorganized the administration.  
(7 words)

### ***Use of Active Verbs at Word and Sentence Levels***

Locker (1999, 2003) stresses on the need to use active verbs most of the time because they have shorter, more understandable words and thus, they produce shorter, stronger sentences with fewer words. Below are some of her examples that show how the verbs at word and sentence levels tighten writing and facilitate clarity for easier comprehension.

#### **Examples at Word Level**

- |    |                                       |           |   |                 |        |
|----|---------------------------------------|-----------|---|-----------------|--------|
| a. | make an <i>adjustment</i> (noun)      | (3 words) | - | <i>adjust</i>   | (verb) |
| b. | make a <i>payment</i> (noun)          | (3 words) | - | <i>pay</i>      | (verb) |
| c. | make a <i>decision</i> (noun)         | (3 words) | - | <i>decide</i>   | (verb) |
| d. | reach a <i>conclusion</i> (noun)      | (3 words) | - | <i>conclude</i> | (verb) |
| e. | take into <i>consideration</i> (noun) | (3 words) | - | <i>consider</i> | (verb) |
| f. | make a <i>referral</i> (noun)         | (3 words) | - | <i>refer</i>    | (verb) |
| g. | provide the <i>assistance</i> (noun)  | (3 words) | - | <i>assist</i>   | (verb) |

#### **Examples at Sentence Level**

- a. We made a *decision* (noun) to have a *discussion* (noun) on the subject. (11 words)  
We decided (verb) to *discuss* (verb) the subject. (6 words)
- b. The *adoption* (noun) of the waste management programme on the part of the public was due to *public awareness* (noun) of the problem. (21 words)  
The public *adopted* (verb) the waste management programme because they were *aware* (verb) of the problem. (14 words)
- c. There was a *modification* (noun) of the programme by the state. (10 words)  
The state *modified* (verb) the programme. (5 words)
- d. Zaki made an *enumeration* (noun) of his main points. (8 words)  
Zaki *enumerated* (verb) his main points. (5 words)
- e. The author did an *analysis* (noun) of the results. (8 words)  
The author *analysed* (verb) the results. (5 words)
- f. The responsibilities are that the technicians determine the practice, *selection* (noun) of the site, *supervising* (gerund) the installation and *certification* (noun) of the safety of the equipment. (24 words)  
The responsibilities are that the technicians determine the practice, *select* (verb) the site, *supervise* (verb) and *certify* (verb) the safety of the equipment. (20 words)
- g. *Consideration* (noun) will be given to your request. (7 words)  
Your request will be *considered*. (verb) (5 words)
- h. *Selection* (noun) of a programme should be based on the client's needs. (11 words)  
Select (verb) the program that best fits the client's needs. (9 words)



### Use of Gerunds and Infinitives

Locker (1999, 2003) also mentions that the use of gerunds and infinitives can make sentences more concise. She defines a 'gerund' as the 'ing' form of a verb where grammatically it is a verb used as a noun. For the infinitive, she defines it as the form of the verb that is preceded by the word 'to'. Below is her example to illustrate the concise effects of these words.

Example :

Wordy: A plant suggestion has been made where they would purchase a QWIP machine for the purpose of transmitting test reports between plants. (22 words)

Tighter: The plant suggests *purchasing* (*gerund*) a QWIP machine to transmit test reports between plants. (13 words)

### Effective Combination of Verbs, Nouns, Adjectives and Adverbs for Conciseness.

1. Use of Nouns to perform the function of adjectives to describe Nouns
  - a. The people need to know more about *investment for the public*.  
(11 words)
  - b. The people need to know more about *public investment*.  
(9 words - more concise)
  - a. They should write a report on *companies that deal with insurance*.  
(11 words)
  - b. They should write a report on *insurance companies*.  
(8 words -more concise)
2. Use of verb '-ing/-ed/-en forms to perform the functions of adjectives
  - a. In Asia, the *countries that are developed* gave assistance to the *countries that are developing*. (15 words)
  - b. In Asia, the *developed* countries gave assistance to the *developing* countries. (11 words – more concise)
  - a. The police kept the *goods that were stolen* in the strongroom.  
(11 words)
  - b. The police kept the *stolen goods* in the strongroom.  
(9 words – more concise)

3. Use of verb + adverb combinations to form nouns  
Examples: fly-over break-in break-out take-off hold-up
  
4. Use of Adjectives and adverbs
  - a. Wordy: He waited in an impatient manner. (6 words)
  - b. Concise: He waited impatiently. (Adverb) (3 words)
  - a. Wordy: The production manager disregards methods considered to be of no use. (11 words)
  - b. Concise: The production manager disregards methods considered useless. (Adjective) (7 words)
  - a. Wordy: ...the financial analysis that they had not finished (8 words)
  - b. Concise: ...the unfinished financial analysis. (Adjective) (4 words)
  
5. Use of adjectives of quality to form nouns
  - a. Wordy: The poor people are often generous to each other. (7 words)
  - b. Concise: The poor are often generous to each other. (5 words)
  - a. Wordy: The young people are usually impatient. (6 words )
  - b. Concise: The young are usually impatient. (5 words)
  
6. Use of Compound Adjectives
  - a. Wordy: She wrote a report that was *up-to date*. (7 words)
  - b. Concise: She wrote an *up-to-date* report. (5 words)
  - a. Wordy: His policy of *going slowly* was well-received. (7 words)
  - b. Concise: His *go-slow* policy was well-received. (5 words)

### **Consideration and Courtesy**

It is to be noted that the above-mentioned authors of business communication generally agree that the use of the active and passive verbs help reflect consideration and courtesy for various purposes. Their views are summarised below:

#### **Use of Active Verb**

- a. Use the active verb construction to express neutral information than the passive verb construction. The former communicates more clearly, concisely and forcefully than the latter.
- b. Use the active verb construction to give appropriate and effective emphasis on positive and important information or to present pleasant ideas.

#### Use of Passive Verb

- a. Use the passive verb construction to give appropriate and effective de-emphasis on negative, unimportant, insignificant or unpleasant information, for example, on letters of complaints and refusals of credit and loan.
- b. Use the passive verb to give emphasis on the object receiving the action, and not on the agent.
- c. Use the passive for business tact, for example, to avoid assigning blame.
- d. Use the passive verb when the doer of the action is unimportant to the message
- e. Use the passive when the writer prefers not to name the performer

The above descriptions explain clearly the essential and communicative power of the linguistic verbs, nouns, adjectives and adverbs of content words. The differing semantic and syntactic characteristics of verbs, nouns, adjectives and adverbs have unique, significant impact on achieving different effects for objectivity, clarity, conciseness, consideration and courtesy in terms of contextualised meaning, contextualised appropriacy and contextualised effectiveness.

## **An Error Analysis of ESL Students' Errors Relating to Content Words with Verb, Noun, Adjective and Adverb Linguistic Forms**

### **Rationale**

The combined importance of content words in their verb, noun, adjective and adverb linguistic forms in business communication and the organisations' expectations prompted the author to carry out an error analysis of university business ESL students' use of the English language.

There were two purposes for the error analysis. The first purpose was to find out whether university business ESL students' language errors involved content words in their verb, noun, adjective and adverb forms. The second purpose was to find out whether the ESL students' verb, noun, adjective, and adverb errors violated any of the principles of business communication as discussed in the previous section.

In the context of classroom research, the author analysed the errors found in the application letters, reports, letters of complaint and summaries

of 45 university business ESL students from the Faculty of Business Management, Universiti Teknologi MARA. At the time the error analysis was carried out, the ESL students were taking a course in 'Job Application Process' during the July-November 2004 semester.

The rationale for analysing students' errors in their application letters, letters of complaint, reports and summaries is because these are some important documents which need to reflect the expected quality of English as required by organisations. It is evident in job advertisements that many organisations clearly define and pre-determine their criteria, acceptable levels and standards of English for language requirements as part of the overall job and workplace requirements. This fact clearly indicates the organisations' expectations of compliance with the language requirements. The documents at the onset of the job application process and of those required at the workplace need to reflect the language quality as specified by organisations.

Below is a sample of descriptions of language requirements that are frequently specified in job advertisements. The language requirements given below were obtained from the national local paper, "The New Straits Times" in the year 2004.

1. Candidates should possess a high degree of competency in English.
2. Possess good writing in English
3. Good communication skills especially in written and spoken English
4. Good oral and written English
5. Competent use of English
6. Fluent in English
7. Fluency in English
8. Excellent spoken and written English
9. Proficient in written and spoken English
10. Ability to speak in English
11. Able to communicate fluently in English
12. Good command of English
13. Strong command of English is a must.
14. Must possess excellent written and oral communication skills in English
15. Excellent spoken English is a must.
16. Good spoken English is a must.
17. Excellent command of English
18. Possess good communication skills both spoken and written English
19. Good command of spoken and written English is absolutely necessary
20. Good written and verbal communication skills in English

These criteria of language requirements stated in job advertisements clearly show the high standards in the quality of English required by organisations. Significant words describing language expectations in job advertisements such as, 'good', 'competent', 'skill', 'excellent' and 'fluent' clearly indicate the expectations for the need of error-free presentations, grammatical accuracy and language effectiveness.

## **Discussion of Findings**

There were two findings.

### **Finding 1**

A close analysis of the business ESL students' range of errors shows that their errors did involve content words with verb, noun, adjective and adverb forms. Refer to Appendix A for a sample of verb, noun, adjective and adverb errors that the ESL students made in their application letters, letters of complaint, reports and summaries. In terms of content words with these linguistic forms, the ESL students' errors can be categorised into two types of errors.

#### **Type 1 Errors: Incorrect use of verbs, nouns, adjectives and adverbs**

The first type involves lexical and grammatical errors where the students chose the wrong linguistic form of the content word for the meaning they wanted to express. Specifically, they made the errors at the level of individual words where they used the wrong linguistic form of the content word in terms of verbs, nouns, adjectives and adverbs. Some examples are given below.

#### **Examples from Letters of Application**

1. They give me a *confident* (*adjective* used instead of a *noun – confidence*) to make me *independence* (*noun* used instead of an *adjective – independent*) and committed to my job.
2. I have to alert on my job function and be more *responsibility* (*noun* used instead of an *adjective – responsible*) because if my boss not around I'm the one the client refer and I have to make a *decide*. (*verb* used instead of the *noun – decision*)

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3. I am interested to *application* (noun used instead of the verb – *apply*) for this position and *I belief* (noun used instead of the verb – *believe*) that I have enough qualifications, *requires* (verb used instead of the noun – *requirements*) and *experienced* (verb/adjective used instead of the noun – *experience*) that you require.

### Examples from Letters of Complaint

1. Our dean 's sent her regard and a big *apologize* (verb used instead of the noun-apology) to you.
2. It is not our *responsibile* (adjective used instead of the noun – *responsibility*) for looking after the cleanness everyday.
3. The faculty had made a such measurement like fine, *advise* (verb used instead of the noun – *advice*) and *dismissed* (verb used instead of the noun – *dismissal*) from the university or send for *suspend* (verb used instead of the noun – *suspension*) for several period which agreed by the authority.

### Examples from Reports

1. It was found that all the respondents or 100% of the respondents have *absolutely* (adverb used instead of the adjective- *absolute*) knowledge in computer.
2. 35% student make *suggest* (verb used instead of the noun – *suggestion*) that the lecturer should take *serious* (adjective used instead of the adverb – *seriously*) for students' attendance.
3. Students always spend their loan for other things that's not a *necessary* (adjective used instead of the noun- *necessity*) to them and they misspend.

### Examples from Summaries

1. Recommendations that could proposed that the government should have National forest Programs which cover this area like *global responsible*, (adjective used instead of the noun – *responsibility*), stop the logging until this *planned involve* (verb used instead of the noun – *involvement*) and well-planned forest *developed*, (verb used instead of the noun- *development*), sharing advantage and environmental programs like education, seminar and campaign.
2. There is great risk with newly-cleaned system because of *corrupted* (verb/ adjective used instead of the noun – *corruption*) due to counterpart's *neglient*. (adjective used instead of the noun – *negligence*)
3. Firstly, we take the pollution cause by human *negligent* (adjective used instead of the noun – *negligence*) and *irresponsibility* (noun used instead of the adjective – *irresponsible*) person.

## Type 2 Errors: Overgeneralisation and Overapplication

The second type of lexical and grammatical errors shows evidence that the grammar rules relating to the linguistic verb, noun, adjective and adverb forms of content words were inaccurately applied in terms of overgeneralising or overapplying. Below are some examples of errors in terms of overgeneralising or overapplying the wrong word.

**Example 1** shows the persistent use of the noun form instead of the verb form. This example is taken from a student's summary of a newspaper article on a current issue.

All of the above is the major and the common way to *transmission* (*correct verb form – transmit*) that AIDS virus. So it is not very easy to *transmission* (*correct verb form – transmit*) the AIDS virus if we always live the healthy ways as to know all about the AIDS transmission. We should learn the other ways that this virus can be *transmission* (*correct passive verb form – transmitted*). This is because the unexpected ways that the virus be *transmission* (*correct passive verb form – transmitted*). Nowadays, there is other ways to *transmission* (*correct verb form – transmit*) AIDS.... IT will be the ways to *transmission* (*correct verb form – transmit*) the AIDS to the other person.... It will be *transmission* (*correct passive verb form – transmitted*) to the others when only one person get that virus and the others will effect....Nevertheless, barbers and traditional tattooists also will get the risks to *transmission* (*correct verb form – transmit*) that virus if they use the same razors so they are *advice* (*correct passive verb form – advised*) to apply vaseline or jelly from the tube and not from the jar to minimize risks of infection....Thus, the most probable route that can *transmission* (*correct verb form – transmit*) AIDS in cases that one child bleeding into another through a nosebleed.

**Example 2** shows the use of the verb form instead of the noun form.

59% of respondents indicate that *serve* (*correct noun form – services*) of the librarian is quite satisfied while 42 % of the respondents indicate the *serve* (*correct noun form – services*) of the librarian is good.

**Example 3** shows the wrong application of the noun form in the given context.

Normally it does take some *patients* (*correct noun form – patience*) to explain to them, here else there are people who could not expect it at first. This is where *patient* (*correct noun form – patience*) come most. Without *patient* (*correct noun form – patience*) on explaining to them this could not be resolve between two parties.

In this context as indicated by the student, the correct form of the noun should be 'patience', which refers to an abstract concept of an attitude or a virtue. The student's use of the nouns 'patient' and 'patients' is incorrect because these nouns refer to a person or persons respectively.

## **Finding 2**

The principles of business communication was the criteria used to evaluate whether the ESL students' verb, noun, adjective and adverb lexical and grammatical errors mentioned in finding 1 violated any of the principles. It was found that the ESL errors primarily violated the principles of correctness, clarity and coherence of messages. The principle of correct messages depends greatly on the accurate use of language and the right level of language which subsequently affect clarity and coherence required for logical understanding of messages. On this criteria, the ESL students' lexical and grammatical inaccurate use of verbs, nouns, adjectives and adverbs affects the correctness of messages which subsequently affects the clarity and the coherence of messages. These would negatively reflect the writer's lack of language competence. It is also important to point out that errors which affect correctness, clarity and coherence of messages would be perceived as being inconsiderate and discourteous. The presence of errors in the documents would reflect the writer's insensitivity to the required language quality in line with business communication principles and organisation expectations and criteria.

## **Conclusion**

Based on the principles of business communication, the ESL students' verb, noun, adjective and adverb errors in letters of application, letters of complaint, reports and summaries violated the significant principles of correctness, clarity and coherence.

## **Recommendations**

There are three recommendations. First, the principles of business communication in terms of objectivity, conciseness, consideration, courtesy, correctness, clarity, concreteness and coherence provide the professional criteria for error analysis and editing of documents. ESL



students must be sensitised to the language criteria related to business communication principles. The criteria would conceptually and linguistically help ESL students to achieve the desired effects and quality of verbs, nouns, adjectives and adverbs. Therefore, business ESL students at tertiary level, should be directed and guided to use the principles of business communication as one effective instrument to help them improve, evaluate and edit their use of these content words. The criteria should be applied to error analyses and editing of documents like letters of application, resumes, reports, letters of correspondence and minutes of meetings.

Second, for ESL students to understand the above-mentioned criteria, they need to develop the right cognitive formal schemata. The required background knowledge essential to develop such schemata should relate to:

- a. the role of verbs, nouns, adjectives and adverbs in relation to contextualised meaning along principles of objectivity, conciseness, consideration, courtesy, concreteness, clarity, correctness and coherence and
- b. the semantic and syntactic impact of verbs, nouns, adjectives and adverbs in terms of contextual appropriacy and contextual effectiveness to achieve the linguistic effects as desired by the principles which are mentioned above in (a).

Another aspect of knowledge that would benefit ESL students in the effective use, control and manipulation of verbs, nouns, adjectives and adverbs involves two important notions: transformation of information and linguistic transformation. The former refers to the reformulating, reconstructing, rephrasing, paraphrasing and reexpressing of an idea. In the context of these content words, the latter refers to the use of another linguistic form, namely, the verb, noun, adjective and adverb as an alternative way of reformulating, reconstructing, rephrasing, paraphrasing and reexpressing an idea. Knowledge of these notions is strongly applicable to the processes of writing letters of application, resumes, reports, letters, summaries and minutes of meetings. This is because these documents involve transfer of information from different or various sources. The process for the effective transfer of textual information necessitates both transformation of information and linguistic transformation.

Third, the evidence of business ESL students' verb, noun, adjective and adverb errors strongly indicate the need for ESL students to be

involved conceptually and linguistically in both processes of 'transformation of information' and 'linguistic transformation'. Involvement in these processes would greatly assist ESL students to conceptualise, reconceptualise, construct and reconstruct language features to achieve the needs as required by the principles of business communication.

The guided reproductive tasks given in Appendix B are examples that would effectively engage ESL students in the two transformation processes. These tasks provide semantic, lexical, syntactic and facilitative contexts to help the ESL students to comprehend and subsequently rephrase or reconstruct information, using another linguistic form of the content word.

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## APPENDIX A

### **A Sample of Verb, Noun, Adjective and Adverb Errors taken from UiTM Business ESL Students' Letters, Reports and Summaries**

#### **Letter of Application**

1. My job has affected me by making me a more *organize* person.
2. I've learned to be *patients* when dealing with people.
3. Normally it does take some *patients* to explain to them, where else there are people who could not except it at first. This is where *patient* come most. Without *patient* on explaining to them this could not be resolve between two parties.
4. I hope one day I can fulfill my dream to become a good and a *success* marketing man.
5. They were give me a *confident* to make me *independence* and committed to my job.
6. Did in time and I can accepted any *recommended* or *advised* from my friend.
7. I have to alert on my job function and be more *responsibility* because if my boss not around I'm the one the client refer and I have to make a *decide*.
8. AMI Insurance BHD. is my first company after my *graduate*.
9. I was learning this job from basis level until now, I'm still learning how to improve myself to *communication* with client when they ask question about job.
10. I am interested to *application* for this position and I *belief* that I have enough qualifications, *requires* and *experienced* that you require.
11. I hope you *satisfied* with my resume. Any *confusing* please call me on 03-5537241.
12. I hope you will give opportunity for an interview and I will be *availaibility* for an interview at any time convenience to you.
13. I likes *worked* in a team especially in the fairly *organizing* environment and I must make sure I completing my task with *successfully*.
14. I am a *graduation* Bachelor of Business Administration.
15. I'm interested to fill vacnat post regarding to my *educational* and skills level are *requirement* by the post.

## **Letter of Complaint**

1. In your letter recently you have made several *complain* about the attitude of students, *unproperly* toilets condition and public phones that were not working *efficient*. We are really worry about all those weakness and *unefficient* of the Faculty and the *behave* of all students.
2. Although we have emphasize the *important* of *professionals* attitudes in our school, but there was a few students have difficulty in showing their *professionals* attitude.
3. It is not our *responsible* for looking after the cleanness everyday.
4. Secondly, we are looking forward for your next *visitation* which will be more convenience in the future.
5. Our faculty had give a complain letter to the company of the public phones to take an *activity*.
6. Our dean's sent her regard and a big *apologize* to you.
7. Your *complain* are been taken, *seriously* action which are done by *advise* from lecturer, warning in notice board, and charge to the student identified involved in this case.
8. The faculty had make a such *measurement* like fine, *advise* and *dismissed* from the university or send for *suspend* for several period which agree by the authority.
9. We would like to make an *apologize* if you feel *uncomfort* during use our toilet service.
10. You are *pleasantly* to come to the office of Faculty of Business and management for level 3 to *complaint*, directly about the student which are *unpolitely*.

## **Reports**

1. It was found that all the respondents or 100% of the respondents have *absolutely* knowledge in computer.
2. Students always spend their loan for other things that's not a *necessary* to them and they misspend.
3. 35% student make *suggest* that the lecturer should take *serious* for students' attendance.
4. 59% of respondents indicate that *serve* of the librarian is quite satisfied while 42% of respondents indicate the *serve* of the librarian is good.
5. 38.8 percent found the quality of computer is *satisfied*.

6. 50 percent of them found the toilet is *smell*.
7. Cooperation with private sector and government preparing to face this problem by *preparation* RM 1.1 billion.
8. The *assistance* must be *knowledge* with the information regarding with the computer inside and outside.
9. A proper time management must be *practice* so that student can fill their time efficiently.
10. The course was *instruction* by the manager.

### Summary Writing

1. Recommendations that could proposed that the government should have National forest Programs which cover this area like global *responsible*, stop the logging until this planned *involve* and well-planned forest *developed*, sharing advantage and environmental programs like education, seminar and campaign.
2. The forest fires that incurred in Sweden came from human *negligent* also came from *loose* of enforcement.
3. All of the above is the major and the common ways to *transmission* that AIDS virus. So it is not very easy to *transmission* the AIDS virus if we always live the healthy ways as to knows all about the AIDS *transmission*. We should learn the others ways that this virus can be *transmission*. This is because the unexpected ways that the virus be *transmission*. Nowadays, there is other ways to *transmission* AIDS....IT will be the ways to *transmission* the AIDS to the other person.....It will be *transmission* to the others when only one person get that virus and the others will effect....Nevertheless, barbers and traditional tatootists also will get the risks to *transmission* that virus if they use the same razors so they are *advice* to apply vaseline or jelly from the tube and not from the jar to minimize risks of infection... Thus, the most probable route that can *transmission* AIDS in cases that one child bleeding into another through a nosebled.
4. Through involve in FI, Malaysian engineers can get the new *experienced* and knowledge for National *cars* maker, Proton.
5. There is great risk with newly-cleaned sysem because of *corrupted* due to counterpart's *neglient*.
6. Firstly, we take the pollution cause by human *negligent* and *irresponsibility* person.
7. The *applied* of *advance* technology like 'haze buster' also might reduce the degree of haze in our environment.

8. But Subramanian assure that consumer can be *complaint* if the product fail in operation.
9. A beach which is *beautifully*, and sandy beaches also hugs the Malaysian coastline is called PRt Dickson.
10. They get it *easy* in terms of sea transport, road transport or air transport from point they are being through the destination they want to go with acceptable cost and *conveniencing* facilities provided by the transport operator.