



## A CORPUS-BASED ANALYSIS OF PREPOSITIONS OF TIME AND LOCATION IN FILIPINO STUDENTS' WRITTEN ESSAYS

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**Abstract:** *One of the gremlins in ESL pedagogy are prepositions, specifically at, in, and on that direct nominal groups to general or specific moments and locations. In the Filipino language, at, in, and on is equivalent to only one preposition: sa. This makes the prepositions of time and location at, in, and on difficult for Filipino students to learn, and more difficult for Filipino teachers to teach. Using a corpus of written essays in English, this study described the ways Filipino students use prepositions of time and location at, in, and on. The analysis revealed that there is limited room for diversity and localization and idiosyncrasy in Filipino students' utility of prepositions of time and location at, in, and on. Results of the study, however, may be used as models in teaching prepositions of time and location at, in, and on to further strengthen Filipino students' proficiency in using these lexical items in written communication.*

**Keywords:** Philippine English, prepositions of time and location, corpus-based analysis

### INTRODUCTION

English is an Asian language (Kachru, 1998) as much as it is an ASEAN language. The 'transplantation' (Gonzalez, 2008) of English in the continent had been long enough (Kachru [1998] estimates this to be 'almost 200 years' in various parts of Asia) to consider that it is not just a language that is *in* Asia with an immigrant status, but it is a language *of* Asia. Kachru (1998: 91) writes,

... English, in one way or another, has indeed a presence in the most vital aspects of Asian lives - our cultures, our languages, our interactional patterns, our discourse, our economies and indeed in our politics. But above all, in transforming our identities, as individuals and societies, and the identities of our languages.

Likewise, in Southeast Asia, the English language serves as the sole working language of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) ("Article 34," The ASEAN Charter, 2008: 29) since its foundation in 1967. ASEAN is composed of ten member-states: Brunei, Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Myanmar, Singapore,

Thailand, Vietnam, and the Philippines. The role of English in the region endures even with its 1,234 living languages (Simons and Fennig, 2017; however, the section on “South-Eastern Asia” languages include East Timor that is not a member of the ASEAN [East Timor has 21 languages: 20 of these are living and 1 is extinct]). Sagoo, McLellan, and Wood (2015:7) claim that the status of English-as-official-language in the ASEAN is ascribed to its ‘colonial heritage,’ as well as the ‘political alignment’ and economic conditions of its member states.

Among the ten member-states of ASEAN, English functions as an official language in at least four contexts: Brunei, Malaysia, Singapore, and the Philippines. These countries were formerly colonized by either Great Britain or the United States of America. However, it is notable that even among ASEAN member-states that were not former colonies of English-speaking superpowers, English exercises its importance. Cambodia, started learning English in 1989, while Thailand, the only ASEAN member without a colonial past, started much earlier in the seventeenth century (Sagoo, McLellan, and Wood, 2015; Kirkpatrick, 2010). English is likewise taught to schoolchildren in Indonesia, Laos, Myanmar, and Vietnam.

The role of English in the ASEAN is incontestable such that during the 50th ASEAN Summit held in Manila in November 2017, English was utilized in ‘all the proceedings’ (E. Cortez, Assistant Regional Director of Philippine Information Agency, National Capital Region, personal communication, 5 December 2017). However, it is quite noticeable (observed through television program coverages of the ASEAN Summit in Manila broadcasted in Philippine channels) how Southeast Asian multilinguals ‘negotiate’ (Kirkpatrick, 2014:426) with the different varieties of English within and beyond the region.

One of these varieties is the English language specifically used in the Philippines where the ASEAN Summit 2017 was held. The variety, called *Philippine English* (abbreviated PE or PhilE in literature), is described by Gonzalez (2008:14) as a ‘transplanted variety of the language [English]... with its distinctive pronunciation, its style of academic writing and an emerging Philippine literature in English.’ For Bautista and Bolton (2008:4), Philippine English is ‘associated with a distinct accent, a localized vocabulary, and even a body of creative writing by Philippine writers in English.’

## A Corpus-Based Analysis of Prepositions of Time and Location in Filipino Students' Written Essays

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The scholarship of Philippine English is quite extensive with both Filipino and foreign scholars writing about its phonology (Flores, 2016; Tayao 2008, 2004; Bautista and Gonzalez, 2006; Gonzalez, Jambalos, and Romero, 2003; Gonzalez, 1997; Llamzon, 1997; Gonzalez, 1983; Gonzalez and Alberca, 1978; Alberca, 1978), lexis (Salazar, 2013; Dayag, 2008; Bautista and Butler, 2000; Bautista, 1997; Cruz and Bautista, 1995; Tabor, 1984; Gonzalez, 1983), and syntax and discourse (Gonzalez, 2008, 1997, 1983; Gonzalez, Jambalos, and Romero, 2003; Bautista and Gonzalez, 2006; Bautista, 2000; 1997; Cruz and Bautista, 1995; Llamzon, 1969) across geographical, sociohistorical, and sociolectal domains.

Among studies on Philippine English grammar, a topic that receives much attention is the use of prepositions, especially the prepositions of time and location *at*, *in*, and *on* (Bautista and Gonzalez, 2006; Bautista, 2000, 1997; Cruz and Bautista, 1995; Gonzalez, 1983). Gonzalez (1983: 177) writes that even for American English speakers, the use of prepositions does not always follow the doctrine [if there is such],

*The most frequent lexical items which seem anomalous to an American English speaker are prepositions, including verb plus preposition combination (two- and three-word verbs). In many cases, the anomalies arise from the fact that until TESOL came to the Philippines in the late 1950s, these combinations were never formally included in the syllabi and had to be learned by most Filipinos on their own. [Emphasis mine]*

Studies on prepositions in Philippine English (both oral and written) would often show variation even among the educated elite or acrolect variety speakers (see Llamzon, 1997 for three types of Philippine English speakers: acrolect, mesolect, and basilect variety speakers) such that scholars like Bautista (2000: 79) would note that 'prepositional choice will probably be idiosyncratic in Standard Philippine English,' and Gonzalez (1983:179) would claim that '...prepositional usage, collocations and verb plus preposition combinations seem to be quite arbitrary and are not predictable from the semantic features of the root; ... here, there is room for diversity and localization.' Martin (2016) claims that teaching such prepositions to Filipino students would often pose a challenge because of the interference of the local languages. The prepositions *at*, *in*, and *on* is, in fact, equivalent to only one Filipino preposition, '*sa*'. More often, instances of

variation in using prepositions *at*, *in*, and *on* in Philippine English do not significantly (if not at all) affect effective communication.

This study intends to provide empirical data (through corpus-based analysis) to assess these claims by describing the ways Filipino students use the prepositions of time and location *at*, *in*, and *on* in a corpus of written essays in English. The following sections will provide details through a brief review of available literature on Philippine English, and prepositions in Philippine English; a description of the research data and methodology; analysis and interpretation of data; and conclusions.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

Central to the study of the diffusion of English in the world is Braj B. Kachru's World Englishes paradigm. The term 'World Englishes' (WE henceforth) was initially used by Kachru and Larry E. Smith in 1985 while editing a journal that bears the same name until today. WE, defined by Smith (2014), pertains to 'the different forms and varieties of English used in various sociolinguistic contexts in different parts of the world.' It argues for the multiplicity and pluricentricity and inclusivity of the English language. Not very long after its birth, scholarship in, *on*, and *for* WE have exploded in the world that in literature, it is perceived as a discipline ready for 'direct and productive interaction with linguistic theory' (Flippula, Klemola and Sharma, 2017: 3).

Kachru's WE framework (in his work in 1988) is presented using three overlapping circles of varying sizes: the smallest circle, or the inner circle, represents contexts where English is spoken as a first language (Great Britain, United States, Australia, Canada, New Zealand) and are norm-providing; the mid-size circle, the outer circle, is where English-as-a-second-language contexts are found (Singapore, Malaysia, India, Pakistan, the Philippines, etc.) and are norm-developing; the largest circle, the expanding circle, are English-as-a-foreign-language contexts (Cambodia, Thailand, Taiwan, Japan, South Korea, etc.) and are norm-dependent. The size of the circles shows the distribution of the number of speakers of English in the world.

While Kachru's (1988) 'concentric circles' model still enjoys its authority and influence in the scholarship of the linguistic variation of Englishes in the world, scholars

**A Corpus-Based Analysis of Prepositions of Time and Location in Filipino Students' Written Essays**

DOI: 10.30575/2017/IJLRES-2020010401

have started to extend the boundaries of the framework applying more critical lenses and perspectives (see Bruthiaux. 2003; Tupas and Rubdy, 2015, *inter alia*).

**Philippine English**

Conveniently located in the outer circle of Kachru's (1988) 'concentric circles' model is the Philippines where English has played an important role in politics, business, education, mass media, and the Filipino life in general since its 'transplantation' (Gonzalez, 2008) in the Philippine soil since 1898.

One of the earliest accounts on Philippine English (Filipino English in this work) is Llamzon's (1969) attempt to describe what he then called 'Standard Filipino English.' He described this as 'the type of English which educated Filipinos speak, and which is acceptable in educated Filipino circles' (Llamzon, 1969: 15). Llamzon (1969), however, abandoned this quest (in Gonzalez, 2008: 21; also in Gonzalez, 1997: 206) later in his scholarship and proceeded to maintaining his lectal variations in Philippine English (acrolect, mesolect, and basilect varieties) that he (1997) adapted from an earlier work of Platt, Weber and Ho (1984). For Llamzon (1997), speakers of Philippine English differ phonologically, with the acrolect variety speakers remaining close to the 'Standard American English' norms, and the basilect variety speakers farthest because of the influence of the 'ethnic tongue[s]'. His work was followed by other scholars who further described Philippine English phonology such as Tayao (2004, 2008), Flores (2016), among others.

Bautista (1997), on the other hand, identified the processes involved in the development of Philippine English lexicon. Bautista's (1997) categories ranges from normal expansion, extensions of meaning, neologisms, up to lexical borrowing. These categories were used in Bautista's contribution to Susan Butler's Macquarie's Asian English Dictionary around 1996. Philippine English lexicons (such as 'kilig') has been adapted by the Oxford English Dictionary (OED) as well. In 2015 alone, about 40 Filipino words and expressions has started to appear in OED.

Locally, dictionaries on Philippine English begun as early as the late 20th century with Tabor's (1984) Filipino-English mini-dictionary, Cruz and Bautista's (1995) Dictionary of Philippine English, and Bautista and Butler's (2000) Anvil-Macquarie Dictionary of Philippine English for High School.

Works on Philippine English grammar started as early as the late 20th century with Gonzalez (1983) describing the distinctive features of the variety in terms of word order; negation; tense-aspect usage; agreement; categorization and subcategorization of nouns and verbs; and article or determiner system. Bautista (2000), on the other hand, describes subject-and-verb agreement; pronoun-antecedent agreement; articles; tenses; prepositions; and other items such as placement of adverbs, comparison statements, and mass and count nouns in Philippine English. Both Gonzalez (1983) and Bautista (2000) and many other works on Philippine English grammar (such as those published by Bautista and Gonzalez, 2006; Bautista, 1997; Cruz and Bautista, 1995) investigated prepositions in Philippine English.

Prepositions are interesting and quite complex elements of English grammar. Biber, et al. (2007) define prepositions as 'links which introduce prepositional phrases' most typically complemented by noun phrases. This means that prepositions usually function as 'connectors' of noun phrases to other grammatical structures. Biber, et al. (2007) classified two types of prepositions: free and bound. Free prepositions are free from the context where they appear and likewise hold independent meanings. The choice of bound prepositions, on the other hand, is dependent on some of the words on the sentence where they appear. Forms, such as two-word, three-word, up to four word prepositions (simple and complex prepositions in Quirk, et al., 1985) do not matter in this distinction. By rule of thumb, bound prepositions are usually preceded by, or within a dependent clause, while a free preposition is often preceded by, or within an independent clause. Although less common, the function of prepositions can become like that of a noun, like 'ins and outs' (Brinton, 2000).

Gonzalez (1983) writes that prepositions are one of the most 'anomalous' elements of English [in the Philippines] since these items hardly appear in the contents of English courses in the Philippines and are often learned by experience. Even when these items are formally taught, however, Filipinos have trouble in using prepositions, Martin (2016) postulates that these may be brought by the interferences of the local grammars. For instance, the Filipino preposition '*sa*' is one of the most productive Filipino prepositions since it translates to several English equivalents: among, to, into, with, at, in, on. Two-word Filipino prepositions are founded on '*sa*' as well, for instance,

**A Corpus-Based Analysis of Prepositions of Time and Location in Filipino Students’  
Written Essays**

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Table 1. The Filipino Preposition ‘*sa*’ and Some English Parallels

Filipino/Tagalog prepositions	English prepositions
<i>tungkol sa</i>	about
<i>sa itaas</i>	above
<i>sa kabila</i>	across
<i>laban sa</i>	against
<i>sa paligid</i>	around
<i>sa likod ng</i>	behind
<i>sa ibaba</i>	below
<i>sa ilalim</i>	beneath, under, via
<i>sa tabi</i>	beside
<i>sa pagitan ng</i>	between
<i>sa pamamagitan ng</i>	by, through
<i>sa kabila ng</i>	despite
<i>sa panahon ng</i>	during
<i>para sa</i>	for
<i>mula sa</i>	from
<i>sa loob</i>	inside, within
<i>malapit sa</i>	near
<i>sa labas</i>	outside
<i>mahigit sa</i>	over
<i>ayon sa</i>	according to
<i>dahil sa</i>	because of, due to
<i>malapit sa</i>	close to
<i>maliban sa</i>	except for
<i>malayo sa</i>	far from
<i>sa loob ng</i>	inside of
<i>sa halip ng</i>	instead of
<i>sa tabi</i>	next to
<i>sa labas ng</i>	outside of

*Data from Tagalog Prepositions (2015)*

The use of ‘*sa*’ extends up to some three-word prepositions like ‘*sa harap ng*’ that is ‘in front of’ in English; and ‘*sa ibabaw ng*’ is ‘on top of’.

Studies on prepositions in the Philippines and in other ESL contexts often pay close attention to prepositions of time and location *at*, *in*, and *on* (as seen on the works of Gonzalez, 1983; Bautista, 2000, 1997; Bautista and Gonzalez, 2006 among Filipino scholars; and Arjan, Abdullah, and Roslim, 2013; Loke, Ali, and Anthony, 2013; and

Onen, 2015 in other contexts). The interest in these prepositions come from the difficulty in using these prepositions (Carillo, 2009, in Arjan, Abdullah, and Roslim, 2013) on one hand, while highlighting their significance in both oral and written discourses (see previous paragraphs).

Simply put, rules in using prepositions of time and location *at*, *in*, and *on* are often illustrated using an inverted pyramid to indicate the degree to which each pertain to specific items (nouns) in the sentence. For instance, *in* that appears within the largest segment of the inverted pyramid is used for more general items such as countries, cities, and districts, and contained objects (place) and centuries, decades, years, months, weeks, seasons, and parts of the day other than noon, night, and midnight (time); *on* located within the middle segment of the inverted pyramid is used for more specific items such as streets and avenues, and surfaces (place), and days (time); and *at* located within the bottom of the inverted pyramid is used for general vicinities (place) and hours of the day (time) (Berry, et al., 2017).

This study investigated how Filipino students use prepositions of time and location *at*, *in*, and *on* from the lenses of the World Englishes paradigm, invoking Nelson's (2011) framework for intelligibility (that she adapted from the tri-partite model of Smith, 1992, in Nelson, 2011: 21) and Bautista's (2000) categorical and variable rules in Philippine English.

Nelson's (2011: 23) 'intelligibility-in-general' framework begins with 'understanding' in the level of pronunciation – *intelligibility*. Successful communication often begins when interlocutors make sense, if not share, of each other's ways of pronouncing words in a language. For example, the 'attenuation' (Gonzalez, 1997: 23) of some vowel sounds in Philippine English, i.e. [i] versus [ɪ], may be unintelligible among speakers of other varieties of English, and may even appear funny even among speakers of the same variety. The second level, *comprehensibility*, pertains to understanding in the level of lexis. Successful communication also relies on the ways interlocutors define the meanings of the lexes used in conversation. For example, some lexes in Philippine English are defined differently compared with their exact counterparts in other varieties of English. A classic example, *salvage*, means 'to murder in cold blood' in Philippine English, very far from its 'to save' definition in other varieties of English. Finally,

## A Corpus-Based Analysis of Prepositions of Time and Location in Filipino Students' Written Essays

DOI: 10.30575/2017/IJLRES-2020010401

successful communication likewise considers the 'motivations or purposes of utterances' (Nelson, 2011: 24), or the *interpretability* of utterances. Philippine English, for example, would answer the casual greeting 'How are you?' very seriously, often discerning for the appropriate answer, whereas, 'How are you?' in other varieties of English, or other contexts, will simply mean 'Hello' that does not really require anything longer than 'Fine' as response. Through this framework, Nelson (2011, and Smith as well) was able to clearly show the complexity of the notion of 'understanding,' especially in linguistic variation.

Bautista (2000), on the other hand, distinguishes between categorical rules and variable rules in Philippine English. Some variations, like the phonemic distinction between [ɔ] and [ʊ], or rules for subject-and-verb-agreement, in Philippine English, when flouted, may cause misunderstanding among interlocutors. Therefore, categorical rules that involve the previous examples must be given enough attention in English language teaching. Variable rules refer to aspects of variation that do not necessarily impede comprehensibility and interpretability, and in fact, may open room for diversity and localization (Gonzalez, 1983).

It is through these frameworks that Bautista's (2000) claim on the idiosyncrasy of prepositional choice in Philippine English, and Gonzalez' (1983) claim for diversity and localization in prepositional usage, limited into prepositions of time and location *at*, *in*, and *on* in Filipino students written essays in this study, are investigated. Specifically, this study answered these questions:

1. How do Filipino students use prepositions of time and location *at*, *in*, and *on* in written essays?
2. What is the extent to which common departures from specific parameters in using prepositions of time and location *at*, *in*, and *on* creatively used by Filipino learners of English impede intelligibility of written discourse?

### METHODOLOGY

The shift in the system of basic education in the Philippines from the old Ten-year Basic Education System to the new K-to-12 Basic Education Program (via Republic Act 10533 of the 'Enhanced Basic Education Act of 2013') brought numerous structural changes in the ways English language is taught to Filipino students. For example, the

additional two years of basic education, grades 11 and 12, or senior high school (SHS), added three English courses: Oral Communication, and Reading and Writing in grade 11, and English for academic and professional purposes in grade 12 across tracks and strands. However, English courses in the tertiary level, from an average of nine units, was reduced to three, i.e. Purposive Communication/*Malayuning Komunikasyon* (that may be taught in either English or Filipino, the national language, according to Commission on Higher Education [CHED] Order No. 20, series of 2013 - the implementation of the latter means there will not be any English courses in the tertiary level). Education experts rationalize this condition by pointing out that enough English courses are offered in the SHS. Whether this will contribute to the decline in English language proficiency among Filipinos is yet to be observed as the first batch of K-to-12 graduates will begin tertiary education in June 2018.

In the future, structures of English language teaching in the Philippines will no longer be a local issue but a concern of the whole ASEAN region. For example, the implementation of the policies of ASEAN Integration that will allow the free flow of students and skilled workers in the region (Gutierrez, 2017) will likely be directly affected by the English proficiency of the ASEAN member-states.

This study aimed to provide baseline data for English teachers in the SHS and tertiary levels in reviewing basic English grammar to their students using the lenses of World Englishes. The output of this research addresses the limited time, and even absence of a specific grammar skills class, in any of the mandated English courses in the SHS and university-level instruction. This study used a researcher-compiled learner corpus gathered from written essays of the pioneer batch (Academic Year 2016-2017) of grade 11 students in the course Reading and Writing in a state university in Manila, Philippines that offers the following tracks: (a) Academic Track that includes General Academic Strand (GAS); Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) strand; Accountancy, Business and Management (ABM) strand; and Humanities and Social Studies (HUMSS) strand; (b) Arts and Design Track (ADT); (c) Technical, Vocational and Livelihood Track (TVLT) that includes Tourism, Home Economics; Industrial Arts; and Information and Communication Technology (ICT). The corpus running size is 301,524 words from 715 essays divided in 18 datasets gathered across all

## A Corpus-Based Analysis of Prepositions of Time and Location in Filipino Students' Written Essays

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tracks and strands. All the teachers assigned to teach Reading and Writing were distributed letters of request to participate in this study, however, not everyone shared copies of their students' final written output in the course. The students and their teachers were no longer required to fill out and affix signatures on ethics forms since no direct contact between the researcher and the participants took place. At the same time, the teachers were assured of the strict nondisclosure of their identities and that of their students on any portion of this paper.

This study was limited to the analysis of how Filipino students use prepositions of time and location *at*, *in*, and *on*, in written essays. However, the corpus generated from this study can serve to investigate other aspects of Philippine English grammar in the written domain like subject-and-verb agreement, tense aspect and sequence, cohesion, among others. Furthermore, results of this study, as well as other studies that will use the corpus made for this research, may be applied to curriculum design, materials design, and classroom methodology (Botley and Dillah, 2007) in both SHS and tertiary English instruction.

The prepositions of time and location *at*, *in*, and *on* in the corpus was processed using AntConc, a freeware concordance program developed by Prof. Laurence Anthony of Waseda University in Japan. Parameters for the functions of prepositions of time and location *at*, *in*, and *on* followed the descriptions of Berry, et al. (2017) discussed previously. The parameters are presented in the following sections as follows:

Table 2. Parameters for Prepositions of Time and Location *at*, *in*, and *on*

	at	in	on
Parameter 1 (time)	More specific times like hours of the day, and noon, night, and midnight; holidays without the word 'Day'	General, longer periods of time such as centuries, decades, years, months, weeks, seasons, and parts of the day (except noon, night, and midnight)	Days (including weeks and months), dates, holidays (with the word 'Day')
Parameter 2 (place)	More specific places (exact	General places (countries, cities,	Streets and avenues

	addresses, intersections)	districts, neighborhoods)	
Parameter 3 (place)	Points	Contained objects	Surfaces

## FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The corpus generated the following occurrences of prepositions of time and location: *at* with 578 occurrences; *in* with 5,716 occurrences; and *on* with 1,599 occurrences. A sample screenshot of AntConc showing the keyword, the preposition *in*, in context (or KWIC that means keyword in context) is shown below.

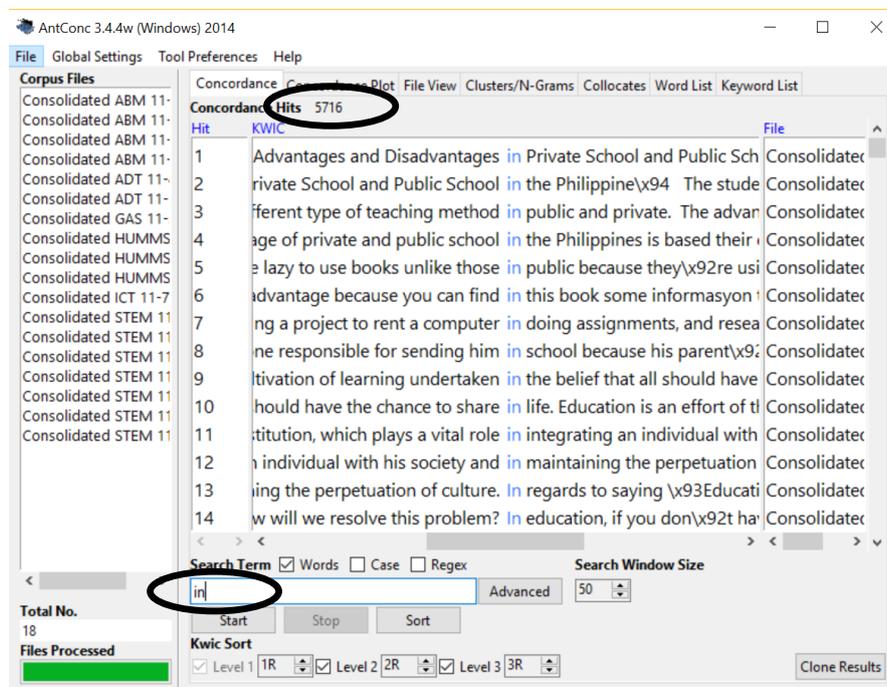


Figure 1. Sample KWIC Screenshot from AntConc

Using corpus data, however, does not always necessarily require the analysis of all datasets at once. Therefore, for this paper, analysis was limited only to essays written by students enrolled in one strand. The researcher selected the essays written by the students enrolled in the HUMSS strand (117 essays or 16.36% of the datasets; 13.16% of the corpus). Students in this strand are more likely to enroll in teacher education programs (for ESL and/or EFL instruction), degrees in the humanities and the arts, and

**A Corpus-Based Analysis of Prepositions of Time and Location in Filipino Students' Written Essays**

DOI: 10.30575/2017/IJLRES-2020010401

communication studies in the tertiary level, thus the significance of examining the language performance of these students.

The selected section of the corpus (HUMSS dataset, thereafter) yields 67 occurrences of the preposition *at* (11.59% of all occurrences); 730 occurrences of the preposition *in* (12.77% of all occurrences); and 232 occurrences of the preposition *on* (14.51% of all occurrences). However, not all of these occurrences of the prepositions *at*, *in*, and *on* were used in the HUMMS dataset to refer to time and location. Among the 67 occurrences of the preposition *at*, only 30 refer to time and place: 11 refer to specific moments and 19 were used for locations. The remaining occurrences of the preposition *at* function as discourse markers like 'at the same time' (three occurrences), 'at first' (three occurrences), 'at any rate' (one occurrence), etc.; or idiomatic expressions like 'at the end of the day' (two occurrences). The distribution of the preposition *at* examined against the parameters is presented below:

Table 3. Distribution of the Preposition *at* in the HUMMS Dataset

	time		place	
	f	%	f	%
Parameter 1	9	30.00%		
Parameter 2			10	33.33%
Parameter 3			3	10.00%
Beyond the parameters	2	6.67%	6	20.00%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>36.67%</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>63.33%</b>
	30 = 100%			

The phrase 'beyond the parameters' was used to refer to the occurrences of the preposition *at* that refer to time and place but do not apply any of the parameters set previously (see table 2). These occurrences are possible instances where Bautista's (2000) claim on the idiosyncrasy of prepositional choice in Philippine English, and Gonzalez' (1983) claim for diversity and localization in prepositional use may apply.

Meanwhile, there are 287 out of 730 occurrences of the preposition *in* that refer to time and place. Occurrences of the preposition *in* that do not function at a marker of time and place are often discourse markers such as 'in my own opinion' (five occurrences), 'in fact' (four occurrences), 'in conclusion' and 'in generalization' (five total occurrences). There are idiomatic uses as well like 'in a higher place' (referring to power

or authority), 'in the right path,' 'in the right side' (appropriate or desirable), etc. Table 4 shows the distribution examined against the parameters.

Table 4. Distribution of the Preposition *in* in the HUMMS Dataset

	time		place	
	f	%	f	%
Parameter 1	67	23.34%		
Parameter 2			144	50.17%
Parameter 3			63	21.95%
Beyond the parameters	4	1.39%	9	3.14%
TOTAL	71	24.73%	216	75.26%
	287 = 100%			

Finally, out of 232 occurrences of the preposition *on*, only 30 refer to time and place: 23 were used to identify location, and seven were used to indicate time. Among the three prepositions of time and location, *on* scores the most when lexical creativity is considered. For example, phrases such as 'should be imposed on' or 'but when they are on the hiring' that require zero preposition still appear with the preposition *on*. There were also occurrences of verb plus preposition combinations such as 'pertains on,' 'due on,' '[when it] come on' included in what Gonzalez (1983) claimed to be anomalous use of prepositions. Still, other occurrences not included in the tally are discourse markers such as 'on the other hand' (seven occurrences), and the more creative ways to use language like 'on the flip side' and 'on my own definition' (three occurrences for the latter). The following table shows the distribution of the preposition *on* used to indicate time and place:

Table 5. Distribution of the Preposition *on* in the HUMMS Dataset

	time		place	
	f	%	f	%
Parameter 1	5	16.67%		
Parameter 2			0	0.00%
Parameter 3			11	36.67%
Beyond the parameters	2	6.67%	12	40.00%
TOTAL	7	23.34%	23	76.67%
	30 = 100%			

## CONCLUSION

## A Corpus-Based Analysis of Prepositions of Time and Location in Filipino Students' Written Essays

DOI: 10.30575/2017/IJLRES-2020010401

While many other outcomes may appear using the other datasets in the researcher-compiled learner corpus used in this study, at least for the HUMMS dataset, there may be little room for diversity and localization and idiosyncrasy in using prepositions of time and location *at*, *in*, and *on* in Philippine English. Data gathered and collated from the HUMMS dataset reveal Filipino students' ability to apply parameters in using prepositions of time and location *at*, *in*, and *on*, and the ample chance to master the parameters in written discourse to facilitate clear communication across contexts. This study likewise shows that even though prepositions such as the items analyzed in this study pose a challenge in ESL instruction (Martin, 2016), there is still much to celebrate in Filipino students' possession of the English language evident not only in the occurrences of prepositions of time and location that fall within certain parameters but likewise the instances of creative uses that break normative perspectives on language use, making English truly an Asian and a Philippine language.

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**A Corpus-Based Analysis of Prepositions of Time and Location in Filipino Students' Written Essays**

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