

Abstract

The purpose of this study is to investigate language features in a corpus of written English produced by male Macao high school students. 120,000 words of both English compositions written by Macao students and American teenagers are used to form two sub-corpora, and 100,000 words of written English by each category of English users from universities of Mainland China, Philippines, India and Singapore and high schools from Hong Kong are used to develop five sub-corpora. The corpus and its sub-corpora are analyzed for lexical and syntactic features. Internal comparison is conducted for Macao students by grade level with the expectation that higher-grade level students will use larger lexicons and have longer sentence length. Cross-referenced comparison is carried out between the Macao learner corpus and six corpora of similar texts written by English users from other contexts in order to investigate differences and similarities. The results inform how English is used by Macao learners, and suggest the direction that future teaching could aim by developing a more suitable curriculum.