THE STUDY OF REGISTER DIFFERENTIATION
OF
TWO TYPES OF PRESS TEXT: OPINION ARTICLE
&
FEATURE NEWS

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ABSTRACT

The aim of this dissertation is to explore whether there is the register differentiation of the press texts, namely opinion articles and feature news by means of linguistic analysis of lexical density, frequency of content words and grammatical intricacy with Halliday’s systemic-functional grammar theory.

Linguistically, register is the term which describes the relationship between a type of language and its use in a particular situational context (Morley, 1985). The situational context can be examined on three parameters: field, mode and tenor. In this study, ten Sars press texts sharing the same topic are used for the research so that the field is kept constant. The tenor of these two types of press texts is the same. Therefore, this paper focuses on the examination of mode.

The results of this research show that only lexical density but not grammatical intricacy can be concordant with Halliday’s theory. However, frequency of content words, which has never been used for linguistic analysis before, is the most powerful tool in this research to contribute for the register differentiation of the press types.
It is hoped that the study may give some insight for people who are interested to teach
and learn English so as to improve their standard of using the language for
educational and journalistic training purposes.
摘要

本論文採用韓禮德（Halliday）的「系統功能語法」（Systemic-Functional Grammar）的「語域理論」（Register Theory），以分析英文南華早報的社論（Opinion Articles）及特寫新聞（Feature News）在「語域」（registry）方面的差異。論文的結果有助學生和報界從業員進一步了解上述兩類文體的語言特徵，從而改善有關的寫作。

「語域理論」給我們揭示了所用的語言會隨著語境的不同而有變易。影響語境的因素，包括「語場」（Field）、「語旨」（Tenor）和「語式」（Mode）。

「語場」（Field）主要指談話的話題，本論文在這方面作出控制，所研究的素材都以「非典型肺炎」（Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome）（簡稱 SARS）為主題。

「語旨」（Tenor）指參與者和作者之間的關係，包括參與者的社會地位，以及他們的角色關係。本文作者認爲上述兩類文體的閱讀對象都同是外籍及本地有較高教育程度的讀者，因此本論文假定兩類文體，在「語旨」方面也一樣。

由於已控制了兩個因素，如果上述兩類文體在語域方面有差異的話，則應在「語式」（Mode）方面受影響。探究語式，可通過「實詞密度」（lexical density of content words）、「實詞頻率」（frequency of content words）及「語法複雜度」（grammatical intricacy）三種工具去進行。

本論文以上述三種工具分析社論和特寫新聞後，結果證明「實詞頻率」，在
分辨語域方面，為一強有力的工具，而「實詞密度」則勉強有效，至於「語法複
雜度」則未見用處。這跟兩類文體同是書面語文章，而非一類為口語，另一類為
書面語文章有關。
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