Intralingual Translation: A Study of Regular English and VOA Special English

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Abstract

Intralingual translation is mainly motivated by the intention to modify the text to facilitate the listener's understanding. The present study attempts to examine the differences between VOA Special English and Regular English due to intralingual translation at the levels of phonology, lexicon, and syntax. To this end, 36 samples of passages of varying lengths dealing with academic discourse from non-modified (Regular English) and VOA's modified (Special English) corpora were randomly selected and analyzed. The comparative analysis showed a significant difference between the modified and non-modified corpora in speech rate, syntax, and lexicon. Further investigation revealed that Special English was characterized by slower readings, increased pauses and tone units, more frequent and limited words, no idioms, repetitive and unmarked nominal clauses, and impersonal subjects in active voice structures. The findings of the study have implications for English teachers and material developers.

Keywords: Intralingual Translation; Modification; Regular English; VOA Special English

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1. Introduction

Due to the preoccupation of translation scholars with Interlingual translation in the past decades, the Cinderella discipline of intralingual translation as a fledgling domain has not enjoyed a very rich literature. Expressing concern over the lack of robust literature on intralingual translation, Baker (1998, p. xvii) noted that:

> […] intralingual translation is not such a minor issue as the existing literature on translation might suggest…I know of no research that looks specifically at the phenomena of intralingual or intersemiotic translation. We do have classifications such as Jakobson's, which alert us to the possibility of such things as intersemiotic and intralingual translation, but we do not make any genuine use of such classifications in our research.

In a similar vein, Zethsen (2009) and Albachten (2013) assert that although intralingual translation has been traditionally introduced as one of the main subcategories of translation, it has been kept highly 'peripheral' to Translation Studies and has not enjoyed the actual status it deserves. They argue that despite the widespread use of intralingual translation, the researchers have narrowly conceived the translation activity as merely interlingual either deliberately or *de facto* and considered the other modalities, including intralingual translation, of no real relevance to the discipline of Translation Studies.

In Translation Studies and ELT (English Language Teaching), VOA Special English is globally used as a helpful resource for teaching and learning purposes. Teachers of English in dozens of countries, including China, Japan, Vietnam, Iran, Cuba, Russia, Nepal, and Nigeria, use Special English. Universities and private companies in many countries produce packages of Special English materials for student use. Lewis (1999) contends that Special English scripts on the history of medicine have been used as teaching materials at Beijing Medical University and Jiangxi Medical College in China. In the Iranian context, L2 learners consider VOA Special English as a helpful learning source to enrich their language and cultural background (Karimi Alavijeh & Marandi, 2019).

The reason behind the appeal of VOA Special English as a widely embraced source at the teachers and learners' disposal is self-evident; it uses simpler syntax and "a limited vocabulary delivered at dictation speed for those with only a beginner's grasp of the language" (Cull, 2008, p. 2). For many learners, being able to read or listen to the news without too much difficulty is the holy grail of language acquisition. According to Wagner and Toth (2017), novice learners view listening to simplified texts as 'more appealing' than authentic texts, in part due to ease of comprehension. Wang and Fan (2015) recommend that teachers use VOA Special News for low-proficiency students because it is less threatening

and warn that exposing the elementary or intermediate students to fast spoken passages may ruin their motivation and self-efficacy.

In English as a Second/Foreign Language (ESL/EFL) contexts, language communicators deem it essential to tailor their language to the proficiency levels of their interlocutors. There are several occasions in which the use of simplified forms of language is felt incumbent. For example, when a native speaker converses with a foreigner, he adopts a foreigner talk; when a mother talks to her child, she adopts a motherese language; when a teacher speaks to their students, she adopts a teacher talk or teacherese. The use of such learner-tailored versions of language denotes that modifying and adjusting the language to meet the linguistic demands of learners is essential for securing mutual intelligibility (Saito, & van Poeteren, 2012). It is posited that the provision of modified input helps expedite L2 acquisition, and techniques such as repetition, paraphrasing, simplification of original utterances, and slower speech rate can reduce the cognitive load and increase comprehensibility (Crossley, Allen & McNamara, 2012; Long, 2020). Drawing on Schmidt's (1990) noticing hypothesis, the slow delivery rate of input can grant the learner enough time to pay attention to the linguistic features and meaning of the heard text.

Speech modification has been claimed to be conducive not only to the development of comprehension abilities but also to different aspects of production ability such as pronunciation, fluency, and vocabulary (Saito & Hanzawa, 2018; Saito & Akiyama, 2018; Monteiro & Kim, 2020). As an attempt to analyze the speech modification patterns, Chaudron (1988) summarized the research on EFL classroom discourse and sketched the following as inherent features of teacher talk:

1. Rates of speech appear to be slower.

2. Pauses, which may be evidence of the speaker planning more, are possibly more frequent and lengthier.

3. Pronunciation tends to be exaggerated and simplified.

4. Vocabulary use is more basic.

5. Degree of subordination is lower.

6. More declarative sentences are used than questions.

7. Teachers may self-repeat more frequently.

Quite coterminously, Saito and van Poeteren (2012) contend that in EFL classes, the teacher resorts to a wide range of simplification strategies to establish

successful communication. For instance, the teachers use less complex syntactic structures, fewer pronouns, higher-frequency vocabulary items, repetitions, referential questions, negotiation for meaning, negotiation of form, and proactive procedures (i.e., emphasizing specific structures through higher pitch and louder voice). They also express an acute need for designing teacher education programs to incorporate such strategies.

Despite the existing claims about the tremendous potential of simplified language in L2 learning and using VOA Special English as a useful L2 material, no scientific analysis, to the best of the researchers' knowledge, has been reported to date to investigate the phonological, lexical, and syntactic features of VOA Special English through the lens of Translation Studies. Hence, as a response to the aforementioned recurring calls in the related developing literature and an attempt to bridge the existing theoretical gap, the present corpus-based study was conducted to unveil the phonological, lexical, and syntactic properties of VOA Special English by analyzing samples of modified and non-modified passages of VOA programs. To meet these purposes, we formulated the following research question:

RQ: What is the difference between Special English programs as modified and Regular English programs as non-modified audio materials?

2. Literature Review

Referring to Pierce's theory of signs and meaning, Jakobson (2012) noted that "the meaning of any linguistic sign is its translation into some further, alternative sign" (p. 114). He suggests the following tripartite typology as the most prevalent types of translation:

(a) *intralingual translation* or rewording, i.e. an interpretation of verbal signs using other signs of the same language;

(b) *interlingual translation* or translation proper, i.e. an interpretation of verbal signs using some other language;

(c) *intersemiotic translation* or transmutation, i.e. an interpretation of verbal signs using signs of nonverbal sign systems.

Authors have discussed various motives behind intralingual translation, namely 'cultural policy' (Brems, 2018), 'modernization' (Albachten, 2013), 'popularization' (Gotti, 2016; Santamaria, Bassols, & Torrent, 2011), and 'decrease-in-technicality' (Hill-Madsen, 2019). Zethsen and Hill-Madsen (2016) categorized various functions of intralingual translation contending that intralingual translation is realized in either of the following formats:

(a) dialectical (social/regional) INTRA: rewriting between different varieties of the same language e.g., subtitling of geographically peripheral dialects in the standard variety;

(b) diachronic (temporal) INTRA: rewriting between diachronic varieties e.g., modern-language versions of pre-modern literature such as Shakespeare or Chaucer; and

(c) intergeneric (functional) INTRA: the rewriting of specialized LSP texts for a lay readership e.g., summarizing for a new target audience.

Framed within Zethsen and Hill-Madsen's triple classification, the present paper assumes that the main reason behind VOA Special English text modification is to realize the intergeneric function of intralingual translation, that is, a translation that involves a change in text genre. Hill-Madsen (2019) calls this function of translation 'diaphasic INTRA' defining it as "a simplification of linguistic register, exemplified in situations where public authorities wish to communicate more effectively with clients or voters by making syntactically complex and expert-sounding texts easier to read for the non-expert" (p. 542).

The issue of fidelity is probably the most basic and widely discussed component of translation quality. Gile (2009) reports that the most apparent problem with fidelity stems from the well-known fact that languages are not isomorphic. In other words, there is no one-to-one correspondence between the lexical elements or linguistic structures, stylistic rules, etc., in any two languages. In intralingual translation, no departure is made from the source language. So the "approximation" made within two dialects of the same language can be more precise than the translation between two different languages with different patterns of thought and reasoning. Furthermore, finding exact equivalence for specialized terminology, which is one of the most disturbing problems in interlingual translation, is removed quickly.

Zethsen (2009) argues that the motivation behind the intralingual translation is multifold. Four factors serve as the primary triggers, namely the *knowledge* (the need to establish expert and novice/layman communication), *time* (the need to establish a connection between the old and new generations), *culture* (the need to bridge the gap in cultural and localized knowledge), and *space* (the need to reduce or extend translations). In his empirical case study of intralingual translation, Zethsen (2009) analyzed four Danish versions of the Bible text and illustrated the micro strategies used by the translators in creating the new texts for different target groups, namely the families (i.e., young people and children), small children (i.e., children from 3 to 5 years old), adults who prefer a traditional, formal version and adults who find the authorized version too difficult or stilted. His scrutiny of the translations revealed that as an attempt to enhance young

people's understanding of the text, the translator used an extended number of words by providing objective and subjective additions and subjective comments. In a few instances, the translator added some pictures to give the necessary background knowledge and, in this way, made the text more understandable and interesting to the readers. In the translation version intended for very young children, the strategies detected were explanations, explications, lexical and syntactical simplification, and omission. The techniques seen in the text for the third target group were lexical changes consisting of synonymous expressions and syntactical changes to make the text more contemporary. Finally, the changes made in the text for the fourth target group were mostly explications without any major additions or paraphrasing.

Albachten (2013) treated intralingual translation as diachronic updates of archaic or older texts belonging to the same language. He argued that the point of departure for undertaking intralingual translation in the Turkish context was the Language Reform movement, after which the 'old' literary works were rewritten not only in the new alphabet but also in the 'new' language so that their language is purified by replacing the 'old' words of Arabic and Persian origin with the 'new' words that are created from Turkish roots. He then provided examples of old Turkish literary texts which have gone through intralingual translation in the form of simplification, Turkification, arrangement, or preparation for publishing. Whyatt (2017) contends that translation either across languages (i.e., interlingual) or within the same language (i.e., intralingual) fulfills the same function, that is, to facilitate the process of interpretation and "make relevant information accessible by removing whatever constitutes a barrier to communication."

Whyatt and Naranowicz (2020) examined intralingual translation as a paraphrasing task. They tested the transfer of subcomponents of paraphrasing from an interlingual translation task to a task of intralingual paraphrasing. They found that in their experimental group, the three metacognitive skills of planning, self-monitoring, and self-revision skills were either completely or partially used in the paraphrasing task.

To realize intralingual translation, authors have reported several techniques to modify and disambiguate the discourse in a way that becomes intelligible to the target language community, namely elaboration (Baker, 1989), illustration, redundancy (Nida & Taber, 1969), and simplification (Rossetti & O'Brien, 2019). Due to its relevance, the last technique is brought to light here for further scrutiny. Simplification is considered a universal feature of translation during which the translators simplify the language or message or both (Alva-Manchego, Scarton, & Specia, 2020; Kajzer-Wietrzny, Whyatt & Stachowiak, 2016; Sikka, Singh, Pink, & Mago, 2020). Simplification can occur at the levels of phonology, syntax, or lexicon as explained below:

Speech can be modified at various levels of language. In terms of listening comprehension, speech rate has been identified as one of the major factors contributing to its easiness or difficulty level. It has long been proposed as an important factor affecting communication between native and non-native speakers of a language (Chaudron, 1983). Many studies have tested the positive effect of slow speech rate on L2 listening comprehension (Griffiths, 1992; Zhao, 2005). In the L2 context, Hayati (2010) compared the effect of slow (VOA Special English) speech rate with the natural (Standard English) speech rate on the students' listening comprehension. He found that the students exposed to the slow speech rate materials gained improvement and performed rather similarly to the students who received the listening materials played at a natural rate. Compared with the previous studies, Hayati's research was innovative because he worked on the authentic VOA Special English resources whose speech rates were naturally slow and not the ones being artificially slowed down. However, his study stopped short of providing empirical evidence to explain the phonological features of VOA Special English texts.

From among the diverse linguistic aspects of VOA Special English text, we focused on its phonological, lexical, and syntactic properties to see any modification involved. Before discussing the methods, a sketch of the subcomponents of each linguistic domain and how modification/simplification might occur seems pertinent.

Quirk, Greenbaum, Leech, and Svartvik (1985) propose the following sources of syntactic complexity:

(1) Combined and subordinated devices within a sentence,

(2) Positions of subordination clauses (initial, medial, or at the end of their superordinate clause. Right-branching clauses are the easiest to comprehend; however, comprehension becomes more difficult as the complexity of left-branching increases),

(3) Self-embedding,

(4) Subordination versus coordination (coordination is the kind of link used for optimum ease of comprehension),

(5) Structural ambiguity,

(6) A change in word order (foreign readers are most familiar with their L1

word order, so when their expectations are violated in the foreign language, their fluency is disrupted, and comprehension hindered).

Lexical simplification is "the process and/or result of making do with fewer words" (Blum-Kulka & Levenston, 1983, p. 119). Authors like Ellis (1995), Beck (1995), and Katsuta and Yamamoto (2020) suggested the following as the sources of lexical complexity:

(1) frequency: the probability of occurrence in a text;

(2) length: refers to the number of syllables of a word;

(3) morphological complexity: is indicated by the number of prefixes, suffixes, and infixes added to a basic morpheme;

(4) conceptual complexity: is the students' knowledge about the concept that the word represents;

(5) degree of contextual support: refers to whether or not the context in which the word appears helps clarify the meaning of the word;

(6) range: the number of samples or texts in which an item is found.

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3. Methodology

3.1. Design

To fulfill the main objectives of the present study and detect the linguistic modifications involved in the intralingual translation of VOA Special English, we employed a descriptive design. We conducted a contrastive analysis of some linguistically modified materials (VOA Special English) and non-modified media releases (Regular English).

3.2. Materials

3.2.1. Modified Corpus

In this study, 20 passages containing 10659 words from Special English short and long features were randomly selected from features dealing with topics in natural science. Since intralingual translation is mainly concerned with the modification of the transactional type of speech and academic discourse, only features dealing with academic discourse were chosen for analyses. Therefore, Science Reports, Science in the news, Environment Reports, and Agriculture Reports dealing with the most recent research findings and issues on Medicine, Environment, Biology, and Agriculture were collected. The passages were selected from the VOA Special English official website (https://learningenglish.voanews.com/), where VOA's multimedia sources of news and information are available for English language learners worldwide.

3.2.2. Non-modified Corpus

Non-modified corpora (16 passages with a total of 11743 words) were adopted from a wide variety of media sources based on thematic unity with Special English features. Voice of America's Special English Department did not supply the researchers with the source passages out of which the Special English features were developed. Therefore, non-modified passages were taken from other media sources. The researchers tried to find non-modified media passages of the same length that dealt with the same topic or theme. In addition, since most of the Special English passages were research reports and news stories on the latest findings in science and technology, efforts were undertaken to find the announcement of the same findings in unmodified media reports on the Internet. The original passages were taken mainly from Nature and Scientific American online journals, BBC, Associated Press, Online Science and Techno News, and Medical Science bulletin on the Web.

Since part of this study is concerned with phonology and speech rate, several programs from VOA's Special English (20 minutes) and Regular English programs (20 minutes) were recorded and transcribed too. Table 1 below presents the details of the entire corpus used in this study.

Table 1

Description of corpus

Program	Number of words		Number of passages	
	written	audio	written	audio
Regular English	8763	2980	16	4

VOA English	Special	8763	1896	12	4
Total		17526	4876	28	8

As Table 1 illustrates, the entire corpus consisted of written and audio texts for both Regular English and VOA Special English programs. The written corpus for Regular English comprised 8763 words and 16 passages, and the written corpus for VOA Special English had the same number of words with 12 passages. The written corpus was used for lexical and syntactic analysis. The audio corpus for each program included 20 minutes of recordings which were used for phonological analysis.

3.3. Procedure

After collecting thematically similar corpora of non-modified and modified texts, a contrastive study was conducted between modified and non-modified discourse. Quantitative methods were employed for the analyses of corpora. We didn't undertake the analysis passage by passage but treated each set of data as a single corpus. The corpora were investigated in terms of phonology, lexicon, and syntax.

In the case of phonology, 40-minute programs of Regular English and VOA's Special series were recorded and transcribed. The researchers tried to record a representative sample of programs by four announcers from Special (20min) and four announcers from Regular science programs (20min). Next, the speech rate for both programs was computed by dividing the number of uttered words per minute.

To assess the lexical complexity of the modified and non-modified corpora, we used the type-token ratio (TTR), which is taken as a measure of the 'lexical diversity' of texts (Richards, 1987). This measurement is based on the assumption that the larger the resulting TTR, the higher the lexical variation of the text. In other words, the texts with a high frequency of repeated words would yield a low TTR index. The TTR is obtained by dividing the total number of *types* (i.e., the 'unique' or 'different' words in the sample) by the total number of *tokens* (i.e., the running words in the text) (Hollo & Wehby, 2017). It is calculated through the following formula:

$$TTR = (\text{number of types}/\text{number of tokens}) \times 100$$

According to Richards (1987, pp. 201-202), "if a speech sample contains 20 words and they are all different, we obtain the 'ideal' TTR: 20/20 = 1.00. On the other hand, the sample in which the same word is repeated 20 times yields a figure

of 1/20 = 0.05." To calculate the TTR, two web-based textual analysis software programs, Voyant Tools and Plain Text Editor, were used.

To analyze the texts syntactically, we chose the relative features reported in the literature which contribute to text difficulty, and then, counted and tallied their frequency in modified and non-modified passages. These features include (a) Subordination, (b) Compounding, (c) Modals, and voice. Since subject-position relative clauses and adverbial clauses are reducible in English, the corpora were also analyzed in terms of reduced or non-reduced relative and adverbial clauses.

4. Results

The present study was primarily concerned with intralingual translation and its realization in VOA's Special English Programs. As mentioned in the preceding section, Special English features dealing with topics in Natural Science were selected and compared with related news and research report releases on the native-used media. This section reports the findings of the study and discusses them.

4.1. Phonology

The rate of speech in Regular English and VOA's Special programs was computed and presented in Table 2 below.

Table 2

Speech rate in Regular English and VOA Special English

	Regular English Programs	VOA's Special Programs
Counted words/time	2980 words in 20min	1896 words in 20min
WPM	149	95

The results show that *Special English* has a lower speech rate in comparison with Regular English programs. To determine if there is a meaningful difference between Special English and Regular English programs in their speech rate, we performed the chi-square test of independence. The results revealed a significant difference (i.e., χ^2 (1, N = 244) = 11.94, p< .01).

4.2. Lexicon

As for lexicon, we assessed the lexical diversity of the Regular English and VOA Special English in randomly selected passages of 17526 words. As explained earlier, the TTR was used to measure the lexical diversity of the corpora. Table 3 below displays the results:

Table 3

The Type-token ratio of the Regular English and VOA Special English

Corpora	Tokens	Types	TTR
Regular English	8763	2578	29.41
VOA Special English	8763	2010	22.93

We can see that the TTR ratio of Regular English (29.41) is more significant than that of *Special English* (22.93), which indicates that Regular English enjoys a higher lexical diversity and avoids repetitive vocabulary usage. Conversely, *Special English* uses a limited range of vocabulary to describe objects, actions, or emotions. The observation of lower TTR in VOA *Special English* is in line with the studies on child language (Richards, 1987) and teacher talk (Chaudron, 1988), which reported similar results.

4.3. Syntax

Compounding

To demonstrate the relative use of compounding elements in modified and non-modified passages, we tallied the frequency of intrasentential compound connectors, i.e., *and, but, so, or, nor, yet, not only, but also, either or, neither nor, both and,* and *as well as*. The results are summarized below:

Table 4

Frequency of compound connectors

Compound connector	Modified	Non-modified
Total	141	234

The results of the chi-square test showed that there is a significant difference between modified and non-modified corpora in their use of compounding clauses

(i.e., χ^2 (1, N = 375) = 23.06, p< .01). Non-modified corpora had significantly more compound sentences than modified corpora. This finding supports the notion that simplified codes such as foreigner talk, motherese, and teacher talk try to use more simple clauses.

4.4. Subordination

Modified and Non-modified corpora were also investigated in terms of their relative use of subordinate clauses. Table 5 describes the frequency of nominal, relative, and adverbial clauses.

4.5. Nominalization

The results of the chi-square test showed that the difference between modified and non-modified corpora in the frequency of nominal clauses is not significant (i.e., χ^2 (1, N = 387) = 1.61, p< .01). This finding is in sharp contrast with the previous research findings indicating fewer nominal clauses in modified language.

Table 5

Frequency of nominal clauses

Nominal Connector	Modified	Non-modified
That	146	134
What/-ever	16	18
When/-ever	2	4
Where/-ever	0	2
How	15	22
Who/-ever	0	3
Which/-ever	0	5
If/whether	2	18
Total	181	206

The quantitative analysis of modified and non-modified data gave strong reasons why Special English passages are simple to understand. At the same time, they use as many nominal clauses as non-modified materials. The analyses of the type of nominal clauses found that Special English uses nominal clauses in a very limited manner while non-modified data make extensive use of nominal clauses in a wide variety of contexts. Most of the nominal clauses in modified corpora were merely found to come after the verb **SAY**, e.g., *The researchers say (that)…* Moreover, Special English was never found to use nominal clauses functioning as the subject or in an object of preposition position. Therefore, one can argue that Special English uses nominalization as much as non-modified materials but narrows it down to some highly repetitive and unmarked contexts. This sense of repetition and predictability facilitates the task of its listeners in decoding nominal structure.

4.6. Relativization

Table 6 summarizes and describes the frequency of relative clauses, and then table 7 shows the frequency and percentage of reduced and non-reduced relative clauses.

Table 6

Frequency of relative clauses

Relative connector	Modified	Non-modified
That	171	128
Who	73	68
Whom	0	4
Which	27	75
Whose	5	11
Where	17	19
When	0	2
Total	293	307

The results of the chi-square test showed that there is not a statistically meaningful difference between modified and non-modified corpora in their use of relative clauses (i.e., χ^2 (1, N = 600) = 0.32, p< .01). In other words, both analyzed data enjoyed the same frequency of relative clauses.

Table 7

Frequency and percentage of reduced & non-reduced relative clauses

Relative clause	Modified	Non-modified
Non-reduced	256	209
Reduced	37	98
Reduced Percentage	12.62 %	31.92 %

However, drawing on the results of chi-square, we found a meaningful difference between the two corpora in the frequency of reduced and non-reduced adjective clauses. (i.e., χ^2 (1, N = 600) = 27.56, p< .01). This finding shows that Special English uses more non-reduced adjective clauses and tries to use reduced relative clauses less due to its difficulty for the non-native audiences.

4.7. Adverbial clause

Like relative clauses, the frequency of adverbial clauses is first described and statistically compared. Then, the frequency of reduced and non-reduced adverbial clauses is assessed and discussed.

Table 8

Frequency of adverbial clauses

Adverbial Connector	Modified	Non-modified
Time	92	188
Cause	36	76
Condition	14	44
Contrast	3	29

Manner	8	47
Place	5	17
Total	158	401

The results of the chi-square test showed that there is a statistically meaningful difference between modified and non-modified corpora in their use of adverbial clauses (i.e., χ^2 (1, N = 559) = 105.62, p< .01).

Table 9

Frequency and percentage of reduced and non-reduced adverbial clauses

Adverbial clause type	Modified	Non-modified
Non-reduced	148	333
Reduced	16	68
Reduced Percentage	7.59%	16.95%

The results of the chi-square test showed that there is a statistically meaningful difference between modified and non-modified corpora in their use of adverbial clauses (i.e., χ^2 (1, N = 565) = 32.18, p< .01).

The findings show that Special English uses less reduced and non-reduced adverbial clauses. The differences between modified and non-modified were found to be significantly meaningful at the .01 level of significance. In terms of syntax, the whole frequency of compound and complex sentences was statistically compared between modified and non-modified corpora. The results of chi-square test proved a significant difference between two sources of data (i.e., χ^2 (1, N = 1921) = 59.71, p< .01). The conclusion is that Special English tends to use less compound and complex sentences.

4.8. Modality

Modified and non-modified corpora are also analyzed in terms of the frequency of modal verbs. Table 10 summarizes the findings.

Table 10

Frequency of modal verbs

Type &function	Modified	Non-modified
Ability	90	43
Possibility	196	133
Advisability & Necessity	36	26
Obligation	20	11
Intention	47	58
Total	389	271

The results of the chi-square test showed that Special English uses more modal verbs in the production of their programs (i.e., χ^2 (1, N = 660) = 21.08, p< .01). The most frequent modal verbs in both modified and non-modified data were found to be ones showing possibility. This finding on modality contrasts with the theoretical claims made in the literature on modality on foreigner talk. Hatch (1983) indicates that the native speakers, when addressing the non-native, tend to use more lexical items instead of modal verbs to convey modal functions such as ability, possibility, etc.

4.9. Passivization

The last feature investigated in this study is the relative frequency of passive voice in the modified and non-modified corpora. Table 11 shows the descriptive results.

Table 11

Frequency and percentage of active and passive verbs

Voice in (970 finite verbs)	Modified	non-modified
Active	839	786
Passive	131 (13.5 %)	184 (18.96 %)
Proportion active/passive	6.40	4.27

The results of the chi-square test showed a significant difference between Special English programs and non-modified corpora in their use of passive structures (i.e., χ^2 (1, N = 2035) = 17.25, p< .01).

The descriptive and inferential results show Special English used less passive structures while talking on purely scientific topics. The quantitative analysis of active voice sentences showed that Special English uses predominantly impersonal subjects or pronouns when introducing new findings and studies in science and technology. Many sentences were starting with impersonal subjects such as *scientists* and *researchers*. One can postulate that these impersonal subjects in active voice syntactically simplify a passage for non-native readers and listeners. The non-native understands these utterances while they do not attribute a focal role to the subject, as is expected out of passive structures in science used predominantly in non-modified texts.

5. Discussion and Conclusion

The present study revealed that there is generally a significant difference between *Special English* programs and Regular English corpora. The differences were in most cases found to be statistically meaningful at the levels of speech rate, syntax, and lexicon. The results suggest that *Special English* programs are developed with the following characteristics. These features hand in hand contribute to the global linguistic accessibility of these materials to non-native listeners.

The results demonstrate that *Special English* enjoys a slower speech rate (95 words per minute) in terms of phonology and the lexical diversity of Regular English was more than that of VOA *Special English* (i.e., 29.41 vs. 22.93, respectively). This observation is commensurate with studies on child language (Richards, 1987) and teacher talk (Chaudron, 1988; Hollo & Wehby, 2017). Furthermore, the frequency of simple sentences was far more than the compound and complex sentences in Special English programs. The study also found that the frequency of nominal clauses was not significant in number but was quite distinct in the type and position of nominal clauses. *Special English* never used nominal clauses in the subject and object of preposition position. Nominal clauses were used predominantly in unmarked object position after some relatively easy structures such as *researchers say (that)*. Besides, the study found that relative clauses are judiciously used in Special and non-modified data, but they were different in that Special English avoided relative clause reduction. Both reduced and non-reduced adverbial clauses were less used in the Special English programs as well. In terms of modality, Special English uses modal verbs extensively in the development of its programs. Special English was found to make little use of passive structures. Interestingly, impersonal subjects such as researchers, scientists, etc., are used to convey the most recent scientific and factual information in the active voice. These findings substantiate Templer's (2008)

claims that Special English uses simple sentences, a basic lexicon, and a lower speed of delivery. The instances of simplification detected corroborate the tenets of the structural approach to text simplification (Romanenko, 2017) that considers lexical, syntactic, and phonological features as measures of text readability. The results also agree with the findings of Crossley, Allen, and McNamara (2012) that confirmed significant differences between the news texts simplified for beginners and those prepared for the advanced L2 learners in terms of lexical and syntactic sophistication.

From a Translation Studies standpoint, the results verified the intergeneric function of intralingual translation (Zethsen & Hill-Madsen, 2016) as a tool to simplify the text for boosting layman comprehension.

The findings of this study offer specific implications and applications for the realization of Intralingual Translation in a wide variety of disciplines and educational areas. In the field of translation, Intralingual Translation opens new horizons. It expands the working perspectives of current thought on translation and thus boosts the validity and generalizability power of translation theory. The findings empirically support Jakobson's (2012) theoretical notion of intralingual translation as a change within the same language and introduce VOA *Special English* as a reworded and simplified form of speech.

In terms of the global education system, the goal of developing learner autonomy is a fundamental purpose of education. Autonomy has been defined as the ability to take responsibility for one's learning (Holec, 1979). In autonomous learning settings, there is less reliance on the teacher, and sometimes the learning takes place independent of the teacher. Intralingual translation can help material developers come up with the goal. It can be employed to produce self-directed learning materials usually used outside formal learning settings in the learners' own time (Yang, 2016).

In education, and particularly ELT, there have been growing debates on the distinction between skill-getting vs. skill-using types of exercises in educational settings (Jin, 2011). These discussions led educationalists to the conclusion that any educational program should start with skill-getting or skill-acquiring activities before proceeding to real-life activities. Intralingually modified materials can be utilized in the realization and fulfillment of skill-getting academic programs in education. The VOA *Special English* was empirically found to resemble other simplified forms of language such as teacher speech and foreigner talk. Thus, while reflecting the views of Saito and van Poeteren (2012), Saito and Hanzawa (2018), and Long (2020), the results of our study suggest that VOA *Special English* can provide L2 learners with comprehensible input and support their linguistic development. From Schmidt's (1990) noticing hypothesis standpoint, the VOA *Special English*, which is characterized by reduced delivery rate and simplified

language, can grant the learner adequate time to reflect on different aspects of their L2 online processing.

On practical grounds, this study analyzed samples of *Special English* programs with thematically equivalent non-modified passages at the levels of phonology, syntax, and lexicon. More in-depth studies are needed to explore the discoursal aspects of such programs.

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