



## Restricted collocations and world Englishes: The case of *look*, *see* and *find* in student argumentative writing

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### The study

- This study will investigate the use of the verbs *look*, *see* and *find* in restricted collocations in student writing.
- Using computer-assisted methods, the written production of three groups of English language users will be compared.
- Although restricted collocations exhibit a wide variety of syntactic patterns, this study will focus on the use of the high-frequency verbs *look*, *see* and *find* in the verbal pattern transitive verb + object (+adverb).

## Why this study?

“Language use is a balance between routine and creativity.” (Stubbs 2002:242)

- Many corpus studies have shown the way repeated co-occurrences of words form significant patterns. Meaning is often held not by individual words but by larger units beyond the word.
- In language production, the use of multi-word units such as collocations contributes to both accuracy and fluency.

## Why this study?

- Studies of learner corpora have given evidence of EFL learners’ non-native-like use of collocations (Altenberg and Granger 2001; Nesselhauf 2003).
- In studies of different varieties of English, it has been found that structures that belong to the borderline area between grammar and lexicon, such as co-occurrence and collocational tendencies of words, lead to variable usage that can later be conventionalized according to the options preferred in a given variety (Schneider 2004).

## Collocations

- Different researchers have used different criteria to differentiate collocations from other types of word combinations, given the fact that collocations are not clearly delimitable.
- Nesselhauf (2003) mentions **arbitrary restriction on substitutability** as a widely accepted defining criterion of collocations.

## Collocations

Howarth (1996), provides the following criteria for identifying what he terms **restricted collocations**:

- one component is used in a specialized sense and
- there are varying degrees of limitation on the substitution of one element without affecting the meaning of the other.

## The corpora

Three corpora will be compared in this study.

- A 200,000-word sample from the *Louvain Corpus of Native English Essays* (LOCNESS), which contains argumentative essays written by native-speaker American students.

## The corpora

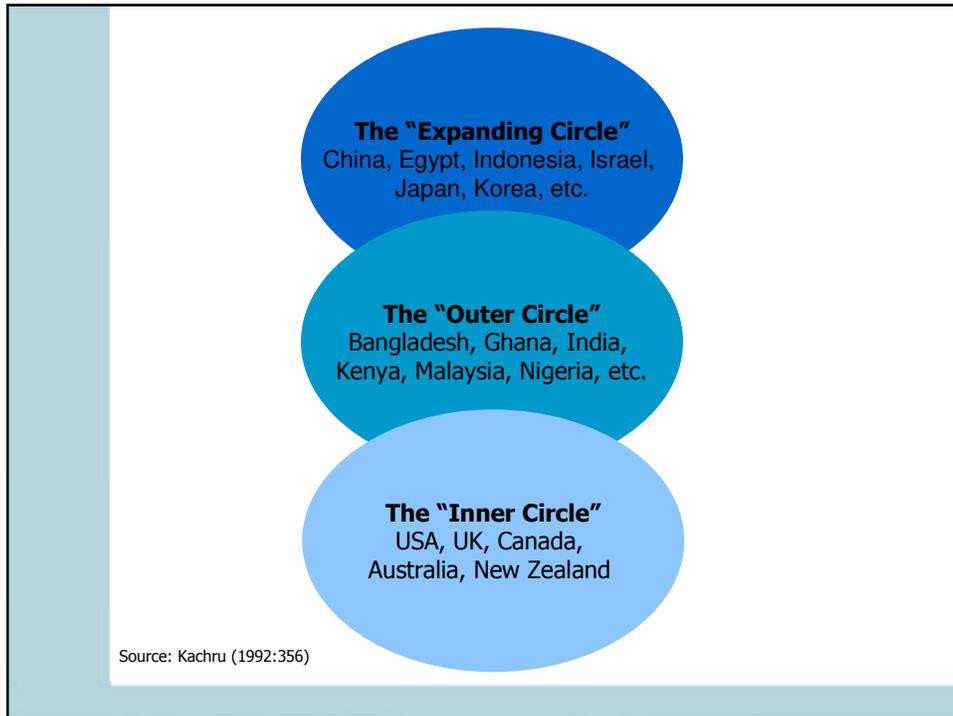
- A 200,000-word corpus of argumentative essays written in English by Filipino students that will be collected using the same guidelines used in the collection of the LOCNESS sample.
- The participants will be students of the University of the Philippines, a large state university located in Metro Manila.

## The corpora

- A sub-corpus from the *International Corpus of Learner English* containing around 200,000 words of essay writing by advanced learners of English whose native language is Spanish.

## Why these corpora?

- The three corpora were selected in light of recent studies on emerging varieties of English.
- The choice of corpora to be studied is in accordance with Kachru's (1992) influential model of the global spread of English.
- This model divides the different Englishes spoken in the world into three concentric circles.



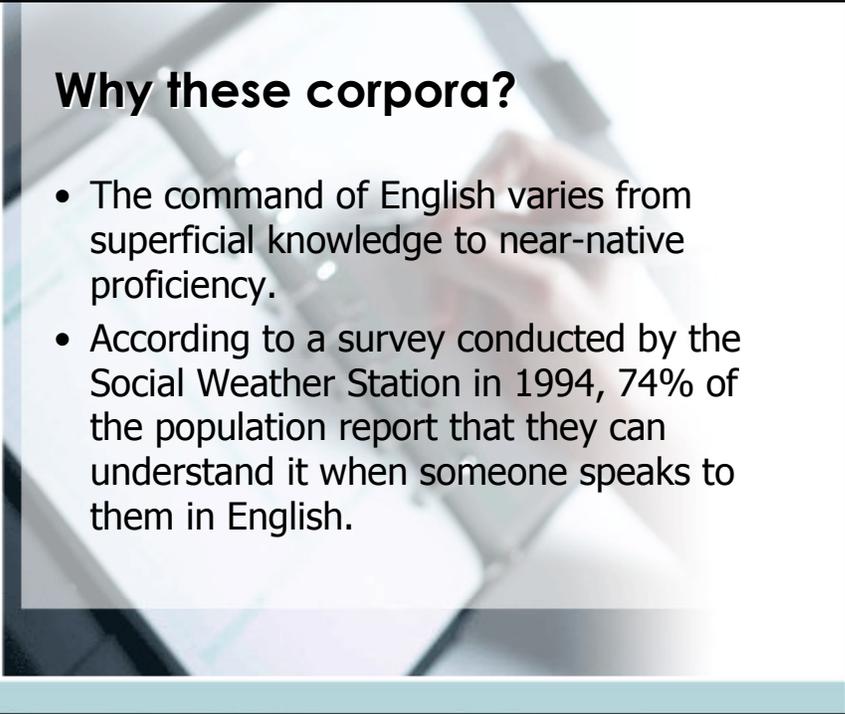
- ## Why these corpora?
- The LOCNESS sample represents the English of the United States, a country in the Inner Circle.
  - The Filipino sample represents the English of the Philippines, a country in the Outer Circle.
  - The ICLE Spanish sub-corpus represents the English of ESL learners in Spain, a country in the Expanding Circle.

## Why these corpora?

- The United States is one of the countries where English is historically the first language to be spoken, countries Kachru (1992: 356) referred to as “the traditional cultural and linguistic bases of English”.

## Why these corpora?

- In the Philippines, English is the official language, but it shares this status with the national language, Filipino. It also coexists with over 100 indigenous languages.
- English is used in the country mainly as a language of science, business, academic discourse and diplomacy. It is also used in the domains of government, law, education, newspapers, electronic media, music, entertainment, and Philippine literature.



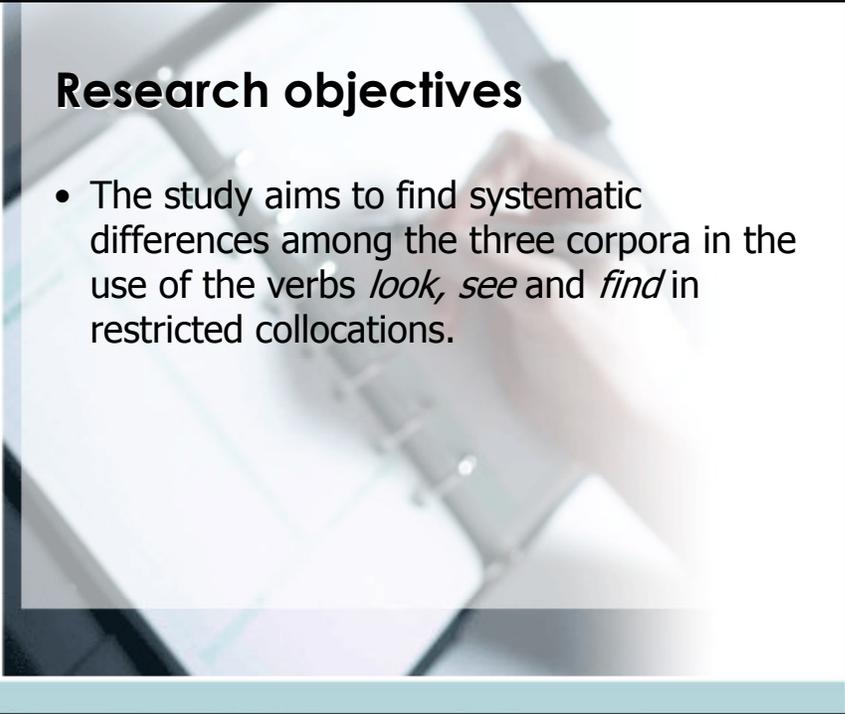
## Why these corpora?

- The command of English varies from superficial knowledge to near-native proficiency.
- According to a survey conducted by the Social Weather Station in 1994, 74% of the population report that they can understand it when someone speaks to them in English.



## Why these corpora?

- In Spain, English is learned as a foreign language. Spaniards learn the language in order to communicate with native speakers in the US and UK, though they are now increasingly likely to use it for communication with other non-native speakers.



## Research objectives

- The study aims to find systematic differences among the three corpora in the use of the verbs *look*, *see* and *find* in restricted collocations.



## Research objectives

These differences can be in terms of:

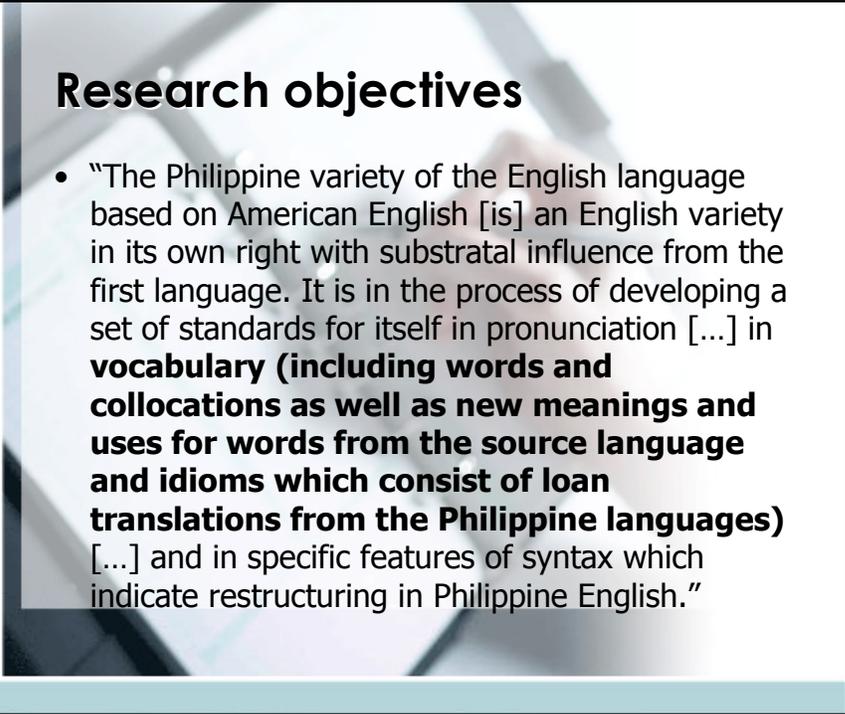
- incidence and frequency of use
- structural behavior
- formal and semantic creativity

## Research objectives

- This study will also investigate the role of the first language (in the case of the Philippine and Spanish corpora) and the cultural context in the development of these variations.

## Research objectives

- The results of this study may also lead us to reassess the notion of error and find that deviations from traditional Inner Circle native-speaker production are not only simple errors but also possible evidence of the development of variety-specific properties.
- These results can provide evidence for the following statement by Filipino sociolinguist Andrew Bautista (1998):



## Research objectives

- “The Philippine variety of the English language based on American English [is] an English variety in its own right with substratal influence from the first language. It is in the process of developing a set of standards for itself in pronunciation [...] in **vocabulary (including words and collocations as well as new meanings and uses for words from the source language and idioms which consist of loan translations from the Philippine languages)** [...] and in specific features of syntax which indicate restructuring in Philippine English.”



Thank you  
Salamat  
Gracias