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Analysis of English Registers in Pilates Practice

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to analyze the use of English language registers in Pilates practice, particularly in interactions between instructors and participants. This research was conducted to examine the application of English language registers used in Pilates activities, especially during interactions between instructors and participants. The scope of the study includes the forms of these registers, their linguistic functions, and the situational contexts that influence their use. A descriptive qualitative approach was employed as the research method, utilizing observation and discourse analysis techniques, while the data collected consisted of utterances by Pilates instructors containing technical and instructional terms in English. The study reveals that anatomical terms, muscle activation, movement instructions, and breathing instructions dominate the use of these registers. These terms serve to provide guidance, ensure safety during each movement, and enhance the overall efficiency of the exercise.

Key Words**: **register, English, Pilates, discourse analysis, linguistics

INTRODUCTION

Humans use language as a communication tool to convey information,

ideas and experiences in various life situations. Diverse language variations arise due to differences in communication situations and purposes, as well as the social environments in which the language is used; thus, these variations become the subject of study in sociolinguistics. This branch of linguistics, which examines the relationship between language and society, places language variation as one of its primary focuses.

Register is one of the topics frequently examined in sociolinguistic studies. This form of language variation, known as register, is used

by a group of people within a specific field or activity, giving rise to unique vocabulary and expressions. The use of register enables efficient communication because its users share a common understanding of the terms used in a given situation.

According to Halliday (1978), register is defined as a variation in language shaped by situational context, involving three key elements: field, which refers to the specific area of activity taking place; tenor, which relates to the relationships among communication participants; and mode, which refers to the medium or form of communication used. These three elements result in the selection of vocabulary, sentence structure, and style being adapted to the communication demands of a specific activity, so that each professional field has a distinct register based on its characteristics and communication objectives.

Pilates practice is one area that demonstrates the distinctive use of register, as this physical exercise method emphasizes strengthening the body's core muscles, along with flexibility, balance, movement coordination, and breath control. In line with the global growth of the fitness industry, the use of English in Pilates exercise instructions has become increasingly common. Pilates instructors frequently use terms such as "core" and "engage," "neutral spine" and "alignment," "inhale" and "exhale," "pelvic tilt," and "stability" when giving instructions to participants; these terms carry highly specific technical meanings and are not always understood by the general public outside the Pilates community.

The use of English terms in Pilates practice is an interesting topic for research because it demonstrates the existence of a specific register that functions as a communication tool in a professional context. This register not only plays a role in providing instructions regarding movements but also helps establish a shared understanding between instructors and participants. In the context of sports and fitness, the selection of accurate terminology is crucial for supporting the effectiveness of exercises and reducing the likelihood of movement errors that could potentially lead to injury.

The selection of this research topic is motivated by the surging popularity of Pilates in Indonesia and the predominant use of English terminology during training sessions. Although the majority of participants use Indonesian in their daily interactions, technical terms in Pilates are consistently maintained in English because they are viewed as more universal and aligned with global standards. This phenomenon demonstrates a connection between language, profession, and social practice, making it

it warrants examination through a sociolinguistic lens.

Wijayanti and Fatimah (2022) conducted an investigation into registers found in the sports domain through a study titled "Registers in Sportfishing Announcer Talk on Trans7's Mancing Mania Program." The aim of this research was to describe the various registers used in communication during fishing activities, particularly in the remarks made by the host. The findings of that study indicate that the sports register contains specialized vocabulary related to the activity, techniques, location, equipment, and the specific sport being discussed, while the function of using this register is to facilitate the delivery of technical information to viewers and to build the identity of a particular sports community.

The focus of Wijayanti and Fatimah's study, which examined the language used by sports broadcasters on television, differs fundamentally from this study. While both examine registers in a sports context, this study specifically focuses on the use of English registers in face-to-face interactions between Pilates instructors and participants. The form, function, and context of the use of technical English terms in Pilates have not been extensively studied, as research on register in Pilates practice remains very limited. The research gap evident in this situation serves as a key rationale for why this study needs to be conducted.

This study is designed to identify and examine the varieties of English registers used in Pilates activities and to describe their roles and usage contexts during communication between instructors and participants. It is hoped that the findings of this study will contribute theoretically to the development of sociolinguistic studies, particularly regarding register in the fields of sports and fitness. This study is also expected to provide practical benefits for Pilates instructors in understanding how to use specialized terms more efficiently during the teaching and training process. Thus, the main topics of discussion in this study include: (1) What forms of register are present in Pilates practice;
(2) What are the functions of these registers; and (3) How does context influence the use of registers in Pilates. Through this study, it is hoped that contributions—both theoretical and practical—will be made toward improving the quality of English register use in Pilates practice.

METHOD

This study employs a qualitative approach using a descriptive method. The qualitative approach was chosen as the primary method in this study because the research aims to describe

and analyze the use of English registers in Pilates practice in detail based on the specific contexts in which they are used. The descriptive method was applied to present the various forms of register identified without any interference with the research subjects, so that all data were presented naturally and objectively.

The data sources used in this study were derived from English utterances

spoken by instructors while guiding Pilates exercise sessions. Words, phrases, and expressions containing registers specific to the field of Pilates constitute the data for this study; for example, terms related to body anatomy, muscle activation, Pilates movements, and breathing techniques, as well as instructions and corrections given to participants.

Data collection was conducted by directly observing Pilates exercise sessions and applying note-taking methods. The researcher observed the interactions between the instructor and participants during the exercise process and recorded the English terms that appeared in instructions, guidance, and movement corrections. The data were documented in the form of field notes by the researcher to facilitate the identification and classification of the registers observed.

The primary instrument in this study was the researcher themselves, who served as a human instrument to observe, record, identify, and interpret the data. Observation sheets and field notes containing a list of terms and their contextual usage during training sessions were used as tools to support the data collection process.

The data analysis procedure was conducted using a qualitative analysis model consisting of three steps: data reduction, data presentation, and drawing conclusions. In the data reduction step, the researcher selected and grouped English terms classified under the Pilates register. The data were then presented in categories based on the types of registers identified, such as terms related to body anatomy and muscle activation, followed by movements, breathing, and instructor corrections. In the final step, the researcher analyzed the function and context of these registers' usage by referring to Halliday's (1978) register theory, which encompasses the aspects of field, tenor, and mode.

The researcher cross-checked the results of the data recording and classification to ensure the validity of the data so that it aligns with the context of term usage in Pilates practice. It is hoped that the results of this study will provide an accurate picture of the

form, function, and context of English register usage in Pilates practice.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Forms of English Register in Pilates Practice

The results of the study show that the English language registers used in Pilates practice can be grouped into several categories based on their function and context of use. This categorization indicates that the language used by instructors is not general in nature but consists of technical terms related to body anatomy, movements, breathing, and exercise instructions. In accordance with Halliday's (1978) register theory, the use of these terms is influenced by the field (Pilates activities), tenor (the relationship between instructors and participants), and mode (oral communication during exercise sessions).

a. Anatomical and Body Position Terms

The first category consists of terms used to describe body parts and positions that must be maintained during exercise.

Term Meaning Function in Pilates
Core The body's core muscles, which include the abdominal muscles, lower back, and pelvis Serves as the center of stability and balance during movement
Spine Spine Maintains body posture during exercise
Neutral spine The spine's natural position Reduces pressure on the back and prevents injury
Pelvis Pelvis Maintains body balance and movement alignment
Imprint Lower back pressed against the mat Helps with stability during basic exercises
Rib cage Ribs Controls breathing and body posture
Shoulder girdle Shoulder area and arm connections Maintains upper body stability
Lengthen Lengthening the body or muscles Helping to create good posture

These terms help participants understand which body parts to focus on during exercises. The use of anatomical terminology indicates that communication in Pilates has scientific and technical characteristics related to the structure of the human body.

b. Muscle Activation (Core Engagement) Terms

The second category consists of terms used to activate muscles during exercise.

Term Meaning Function in Pilates
Engage core Activate the body's core muscles To stabilize the body before moving
Draw in Pull the abdominal muscles inward Helps tighten the abdominal area
Scoop the abs Tighten your lower abdominal muscles as if "sucking" them inward Maintain control of the movement
Stabilize Maintain body stability Minimize unnecessary movement unnecessary
Activate muscles Activate specific muscles Ensure muscles work optimally

The use of this register indicates that the instructor not only gives commands but also guides participants to understand the body's mechanisms during exercise.

c. Pilates Movement Terms

The third category includes the names of movements commonly used in Pilates.

Term Meaning Movement Description
Roll Up Rolling the body upward Movement from a lying position to a sitting position
Roll Down Rolling the body downward Movement back to a lying position
Bridge Bridge Lifting the hips while lying down
Plank Plank Holding the body in a straight position
Teaser V-shaped balance exercise Trains balance and core strength
Hundred One Hundred Breathing exercise with 100 hand movements

The use of English terms for exercise names indicates the existence of international standards used within the Pilates community across various countries.

d. Control and Movement Quality

The next category relates to the quality of movement execution.

Terms	Meaning	Function in Pilates
Control	Control	Performing conscious and purposeful movements
Precision	Accuracy	Ensuring movements are performed correctly
Flow	Flow of movement	Maintaining the continuity of movement
Isolation	Isolation of movement	Moving a specific part of the body
Balance	Balance	Maintaining body stability during exercise

These terms indicate that Pilates focuses not only on movement but also on the quality of its execution.

e. Breathing

Breathing is one of the main principles of Pilates.

Term	Meaning	Function in Pilates
Inhale	Take a breath	Preparation for the movement
Exhale	Exhale	Helps with muscle contraction
Lateral breathing	Breathing to the the side	Expands the ribs while breathing
Deep breathing	Deep breathing	Increasing oxygen supply
Rhythmic breathing	Rhythmic breathing	Synchronizing breath with movement

This section helps participants coordinate their breathing with each movement, making the exercise more effective.

f. Instructor Correction Terms

The final category consists of cues used by the instructor to correct participants' body positions.

Term	Meaning
Tuck your pelvis	Tilt your pelvis inward
Drop your shoulders	Lower your shoulders
Keep your neck long	Lengthen and relax your neck
Avoid slouching	Avoid a slumped or hunched posture

This cue is used to provide immediate correction to improve the effectiveness of the movement and reduce the risk of injury.

Examples of Real-Life Pilates Instructor Phrases

Based on observations of communication patterns in Pilates classes, several types of speech frequently used by instructors were identified.

Example 1
"Engage your core, inhale deeply, and keep your spine neutral."

Translation:
"Activate your core muscles, take a deep breath, and maintain a neutral spine."

This instruction contains three registers at once: "engage your core," "inhale deeply," and "neutral spine." These three elements serve as technical instructions designed to help maintain the body's balance during the exercise session.

Example 2
"Exhale as you roll up, and keep your shoulders relaxed."

Translation:
"Exhale as you perform the roll-up movement, and keep your shoulders relaxed."

This instruction highlights the connection between breathing patterns and body movement. Through the "exhale" and "roll up" cues, the instructor guides participants to perform the movement correctly and safely.

Draw your abdominal muscles inward while stabilizing your pelvis and avoid a collapsed posture. This instruction serves a corrective and preventive function, allowing the instructor to use technical cues to correct body position while preventing injury during the exercise.

The Functions of English Language Registers in Pilates Practice

Based on the findings of the analysis, there are four important roles of the use of English registers in Pilates activities, including instructive,

clarification, followed by motivational and safety functions, according to existing research.

The use of terms such as “roll up,” “engage core,” and “inhale” indicates an instructional function, while the clarifying function can be observed through terms like “neutral spine” and “stabilize,” which serve to explain the correct technique. Phrases such as “keep going, you can do it” and “good job” convey a motivational function; furthermore, the safety function is evident in corrective instructions like “avoid collapsing” or “drop your shoulders,” which are designed to prevent movement errors and the risk of injury.

How is register used in the context of Pilates practice?

The use of English register in Pilates is heavily influenced by the communication context that occurs during a training session. This communication takes place in a semi-formal yet professional atmosphere, with the instructor serving as the guide and the participant as the recipient of those instructions. The purpose of using this register is to enhance the effectiveness of the workout, clarify movement techniques, and ensure participant safety throughout the training process.

The predominance of English in Pilates demonstrates how international standards influence the fitness world as a whole. A large number of terms are retained in their original language because they are considered more concise and specific, making them easier for the global Pilates community to understand. The English register in Pilates practice functions not merely as a communication tool but also as a professional identity inherent to the fitness field.

CONCLUSION

Based on the research findings, the conclusion that can be drawn is that the use of English language registers in Pilates practice constitutes a form of specialized language variation that emerges in professional contexts within the fitness field. The identified registers can be classified into six main categories, including anatomical terms and body positions; muscle activation or core engagement; Pilates movements; movement control and quality; breathing; and

instructor corrections. These terms have specific technical meanings and are used to support the effective execution of exercises.

The study's findings reveal that in the practice of Pilates, the English language register plays several important roles, including instructional and clarifying functions, as well as. motivational functions, and safety functions. The use of these registers enables instructors to convey clear instructions while helping participants understand accurate movement techniques, boosting morale during exercise sessions, and reducing the likelihood of injury.

The use of register in semi-formal and professional Pilates sessions is influenced by the communicative context, in which the instructor acts as the instructor and participants act as the recipients of instructions. The dominance of English indicates that Pilates terminology has become an international standard in the fitness industry; thus, these terms are retained even when used by speakers from different linguistic backgrounds, and this communicative context ensures that instructions are effective without confusion.

The findings of this study reinforce the views of Halliday's register theory, which posits that language use is heavily influenced by contextual factors such as the field of activity, the relationship between participants in communication (known as tenor), and the medium of communication used (known as mode). Therefore, the English register used in Pilates practice serves not only as a tool for communication but also as a professional means to maintain effectiveness, accuracy, and safety during exercise sessions.

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