

Mode and Proficiency Effects in EFL Learner Production: A Corpus-Based Comparison of Written Essays and Spoken Monologues in ICNALE

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Abstract

This empirical corpus-based TESOL study examines mode and proficiency effects in EFL learner production through a planned comparison of written essays and spoken monologues in the International Corpus Network of Asian Learners of English (ICNALE). The study focuses on how lexical, grammatical, and selected discourse features vary across written and spoken learner output, and how these patterns interact with proficiency level. Using a quantitative comparative corpus design, the study will analyze measures such as word count, lexical density, lexical diversity, academic vocabulary use, syntactic complexity, discourse markers, stance markers, and selected fluency-related transcript features where available. At this draft stage, the final ICNALE sample, feature counts, statistical outputs, and figures have not yet been supplied; therefore, all numerical findings are marked for author completion and verification. The manuscript is structured to allow the author to insert verified values after registering for ICNALE access, selecting comparable prompts, cleaning the dataset, and completing the analysis. The expected contribution is a mode-sensitive account of learner production that may inform integrated TESOL writing and speaking instruction, proficiency-sensitive assessment, and corpus-informed materials development. The paper differs from corpus-literacy or teacher-education review work by focusing on empirical learner-language evidence rather than teachers' corpus-use knowledge.

Keywords: learner corpus; ICNALE; EFL writing; spoken monologues; proficiency; lexical density; TESOL pedagogy

1. Introduction

Writing and speaking are often treated as separate areas of language instruction and assessment in TESOL programs, yet learners draw on overlapping linguistic resources when they produce both written and spoken texts. In writing, learners normally have more time to plan, revise, and monitor their language choices. In spoken monologues, they must formulate ideas under stronger real-time processing pressure, which may affect fluency, repetition, grammatical complexity, lexical choice, and stance expression. These differences create an important problem for TESOL: teachers need to support both skills, but they also need evidence about how learner language actually varies across mode and proficiency level.

Corpus-based analysis offers a useful way to address this problem because it allows researchers to examine large sets of learner texts systematically rather than relying only on classroom impressions or isolated examples. Learner corpus research has shown that learner production can be analyzed through recurring lexical, grammatical, and discourse patterns, and that these patterns may differ according to proficiency, task type, first-language background, and mode of production (Gilquin, 2015; Granger, 2015; Granger et al., 2015). For a study of writing and speaking, a controlled learner corpus is particularly valuable because it can reduce the noise created by unrelated topics, inconsistent tasks, or unbalanced learner profiles.

The International Corpus Network of Asian Learners of English (ICNALE) is especially relevant for this purpose because it was designed to support contrastive interlanguage analysis of Asian learners' English and includes written and spoken components that can be used for mode-sensitive comparisons (Ishikawa, 2013, 2014, 2023). The present manuscript is therefore framed as an empirical corpus-based study comparing ICNALE written essays and spoken monologues. The study focuses on lexical and grammatical features, selected discourse markers, stance expressions, and, where transcript quality permits, features associated with spoken fluency.

The research gap addressed in this paper is twofold. First, although register and mode differences between speech and writing have long been recognized in corpus linguistics (Biber, 1988, 2006), TESOL programs still need learner-specific evidence showing how such differences appear in EFL production across proficiency levels. Second, although complexity, accuracy, fluency, and lexis are widely discussed in second language acquisition and performance research (Housen & Kuiken, 2009; Skehan, 2009), classroom applications sometimes treat writing and speaking development as parallel without carefully identifying which features are mode-specific and which reflect broader interlanguage development. A learner-corpus comparison can help clarify this issue.

The aim of the study is to examine how written essays and spoken monologues differ in selected linguistic features and how these differences vary across learner proficiency levels. The study is guided by the following research questions: (1) How do lexical and grammatical features differ between EFL learners' written essays and spoken monologues? (2) How does proficiency level affect learner production in writing and speaking? (3) Which features are more strongly associated with writing, and which are more strongly associated with speech? (4) Do higher-proficiency learners show more mode-sensitive language use than lower-proficiency learners? (5) What implications do the findings have for integrated TESOL writing and speaking instruction?

This paper is intentionally different from the author's earlier corpus-literacy and TESOL teacher-education paper. That previous work focused on research trends, pedagogical integration, and implementation challenges related to corpus literacy. The present paper, by contrast, is designed as an empirical learner-corpus study. Its contribution will come from analyzing learner production directly and interpreting the resulting patterns for mode-sensitive TESOL instruction. Any final empirical claims, however, must be based only on the verified ICNALE sample and completed analysis; therefore, all missing data points in this draft are explicitly marked for author completion.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Learner Corpus Research and Contrastive Interlanguage Analysis

Learner corpus research provides a methodological basis for examining systematic features of second language production. Rather than treating learner errors or performance patterns as isolated classroom incidents, learner corpora allow researchers to identify recurrent linguistic features across texts and speakers. This makes them useful for both second language acquisition research and TESOL practice. Contrastive interlanguage analysis, as developed and reappraised in learner corpus research, is concerned with comparing learner language across groups, proficiency levels, task types, and reference norms while avoiding simplistic deficit interpretations of learner output (Granger, 2015).

For the present study, contrastive interlanguage analysis is relevant because the planned comparison is not limited to one set of written texts. Instead, it compares two modes of learner production: essays and spoken monologues. This allows the analysis to ask whether differences in lexis, grammar, and discourse features are attributable mainly to proficiency, mode, or the interaction between both. Such a design is useful for TESOL because it helps instructors avoid assuming that improvement in writing automatically produces the same kinds of improvement

in speaking, or that oral performance can be evaluated using the same expectations as written performance.

Gilquin (2015) emphasizes that learner corpus design requires careful decisions about data collection, learner metadata, task comparability, and representativeness. These concerns are directly relevant to ICNALE-based research because the validity of the comparison depends on selecting comparable prompts, maintaining clear proficiency groupings, and documenting any exclusions. The present manuscript therefore treats corpus selection and cleaning as central methodological steps rather than technical details.

2.2 Written and Spoken Register Differences

A central assumption of the study is that writing and speaking differ in predictable ways because they place different communicative and processing demands on language users. Corpus-based register research has shown that speech and writing differ in density, explicitness, interpersonal marking, information packaging, and grammatical patterning (Biber, 1988, 2006). Written academic texts typically allow more planning and revision, while spoken production often includes features related to online formulation, such as repetition, hesitation, and a stronger reliance on frequent lexical and grammatical patterns.

In learner production, these register differences may be amplified by limited linguistic resources. A learner may be able to produce lexically dense and syntactically elaborated sentences in writing but rely on shorter clauses and repeated phrases in speech. Conversely, spoken monologues may reveal pragmatic or stance patterns that are less visible in written essays. Therefore, a comparison of learner writing and speaking should not simply rank one mode as more advanced than the other. It should identify which features are appropriate, expected, or constrained in each mode.

This register perspective is important for TESOL assessment. If written and spoken tasks differ in planning time and processing pressure, then identical rubrics may not fairly capture learner performance. A mode-sensitive framework can help teachers distinguish between general proficiency problems and mode-specific production demands. The present study applies this perspective by comparing selected lexical, grammatical, and discourse features across ICNALE writing and speech.

2.3 Complexity, Accuracy, Fluency, and Lexis in L2 Production

Research on second language performance often organizes learner development around complexity, accuracy, and fluency, with lexis increasingly treated as a crucial component of performance (Housen & Kuiken, 2009; Skehan, 2009). Complexity may include syntactic elaboration, phrasal sophistication, or lexical diversity. Fluency is especially relevant to speech, although fluency-related features may also be indirectly visible in written task conditions when planning time is controlled. Accuracy is important but is not the primary focus of the present draft unless the author later adds an error analysis component.

The distinction between planned and real-time production is particularly relevant to writing-speaking comparisons. Ellis and Yuan (2004) show that planning can affect fluency, complexity, and accuracy in L2 writing. Although their study is not a direct ICNALE analysis, its logic supports the idea that production conditions matter. Written essays may display more careful lexical selection and greater grammatical elaboration, whereas spoken monologues may contain shorter clauses, repetitions, or a stronger reliance on high-frequency discourse routines.

Automated analysis has become common in studies of learner complexity and lexical development. Lu (2010), for example, demonstrates the value of automatic syntactic complexity analysis in second language writing. For the present study, automated tools can support consistent measurement of features such as sentence length, clause-based complexity, lexical density, and lexical diversity. However, automated results must be interpreted cautiously, especially when comparing spoken transcripts with written essays because

transcription conventions may affect tokenization, sentence segmentation, and the identification of fillers or repetitions.

2.4 ICNALE and Controlled Learner Corpus Design

ICNALE was developed to support contrastive interlanguage analysis of Asian learners' English and has been used for research comparing learner groups, proficiency levels, and task-based production (Ishikawa, 2013, 2023). The spoken component was designed to extend ICNALE into multimodal and oral learner production analysis (Ishikawa, 2014). For the present paper, ICNALE is appropriate because it offers a principled corpus environment in which written and spoken learner production can be compared with attention to proficiency and learner background variables.

The corpus design also imposes methodological responsibilities. The author must register for access in her own name, follow ICNALE citation and copyright requirements, and document which modules were downloaded and analyzed. The selected dataset must be described precisely, including the ICNALE version, selected modules, proficiency bands, L1 groups, topics, inclusion and exclusion criteria, and any cleaning decisions. Without this information, the study would not be replicable.

The present draft assumes that the author will compare ICNALE Written Essays and ICNALE Spoken Monologues. If the final study uses written essays only, the research questions, title, method, results, discussion, and implications must be revised accordingly. If the study includes both modes, the final manuscript must state whether the written and spoken samples are paired by participant, matched by group, or compared as separate but comparable subcorpora. This distinction affects the statistical analysis and the strength of the conclusions.

2.5 Pedagogical Implications for Integrated TESOL Skills Instruction

Corpus use in language learning and teaching has been associated with benefits for noticing, data-driven learning, and evidence-based materials design (Boulton & Cobb, 2017). In the context of writing and speaking, corpus evidence can help teachers show learners how language choices shift by mode. For example, learners may compare how stance is expressed in an essay with how it is expressed in an oral monologue. They may also compare written connectors, such as however and therefore, with spoken discourse routines, such as I think, maybe, and because.

A mode-sensitive corpus study can therefore support integrated skills instruction without collapsing the difference between skills. Integrated instruction does not mean teaching writing and speaking as identical. Rather, it means helping learners transfer ideas and vocabulary across modes while adjusting grammatical complexity, lexical density, discourse markers, and stance expressions to the communicative situation. The pedagogical value of the present study will depend on how clearly the final results identify such mode-specific and proficiency-sensitive patterns.

Because the empirical results are not yet available in this draft, the pedagogical implications are written cautiously. They should be revised after the author completes the analysis and identifies the actual linguistic features that distinguish written and spoken ICNALE production. The strongest implications will be those directly traceable to the final tables and figures.

3. Methodology

3.1 Research Design

The study uses a quantitative corpus-based comparative design. It compares learner production across two modes: written essays and spoken monologues. The design also examines proficiency-related variation and the possible interaction between mode and proficiency. The study is non-experimental and uses secondary corpus data. Its purpose is descriptive and interpretive: it identifies patterns in learner output and discusses their implications for TESOL instruction and assessment.

The main independent variables are mode and proficiency level. Mode is coded as written essay or spoken monologue. Proficiency level is coded according to the ICNALE metadata selected for the final dataset, such as CEFR-related bands or ICNALE proficiency categories [VERIFY DATA]. The dependent variables include lexical, grammatical, and discourse measures selected for the final analysis.

3.2 Corpus and Data Source

The primary data source is ICNALE, specifically the written essay and spoken monologue modules [AUTHOR TO VERIFY MODULE VERSION AND ACCESS DATE]. ICNALE is suitable for this study because it was designed to support learner corpus research and contrastive interlanguage analysis (Ishikawa, 2013, 2023). The spoken module extends the corpus to oral learner production and enables comparisons between written and spoken performance (Ishikawa, 2014).

The final manuscript must report the exact version of each module used, the date of download, and the citation instructions provided by ICNALE at the time of access. It must also state whether the analysis uses all available L1 groups or a selected subset. If only selected groups are analyzed, the selection must be justified in relation to the research questions and sample balance.

3.3 Sample Selection

The target sample consists of ICNALE written essays and spoken monologues selected to allow comparison across mode and proficiency. The final selection will include [AUTHOR TO COMPLETE] written texts and [AUTHOR TO COMPLETE] spoken monologues produced by [AUTHOR TO COMPLETE] learners. The sample will be organized by proficiency band and, where relevant, L1 group and topic. If written and spoken samples are available from the same individuals, the study may use a paired design. If not, the study should use a matched group design and explicitly state that the comparison is between comparable subcorpora rather than the same participants.

Texts or transcripts may be excluded if they are incomplete, duplicated, contain insufficient learner production, lack required metadata, or do not correspond to the selected prompts. Exclusion decisions must be recorded in the data cleaning log. Very short or anomalous texts should not be removed without a clear criterion because such exclusions may affect representativeness.

3.4 Data Cleaning and Preparation

The written essays and spoken transcripts will be stored in separate folders before cleaning. Each record will be assigned a unique anonymized ID. The metadata table will include participant ID, mode, proficiency level, L1 group, country or region if used, prompt or topic, word count, and any additional variables required for the research questions. The raw corpus files will be preserved unchanged, and all cleaning decisions will be documented in Appendix A.

Cleaning will include removal of non-learner material such as prompts, headers, file labels, or researcher annotations where applicable. Texts will be converted to a consistent encoding format [AUTHOR TO COMPLETE, e.g., UTF-8]. Tokenization and lemmatization procedures will be documented, including the software or package used. For spoken transcripts, the author must decide whether to retain or remove fillers, repetitions, false starts, and transcription symbols. This decision must align with the features being analyzed. If fluency-related features are part of the study, fillers and repetitions should be preserved and coded rather than removed.

3.5 Linguistic Features Analyzed

The study will analyze a set of lexical, grammatical, and discourse features. Lexical measures include total tokens, mean text length, lexical density, lexical diversity, and academic vocabulary percentage [VERIFY OPERATIONAL DEFINITIONS]. Lexical density will be

calculated as the proportion of content words to total tokens, using a part-of-speech tagging procedure that must be verified for both written texts and spoken transcripts. Lexical diversity may be measured using type-token ratio, moving-average type-token ratio, MTLTD, or another length-sensitive measure [AUTHOR TO SELECT AND JUSTIFY].

Grammatical measures may include mean sentence length, mean clause length, coordinate phrase use, subordination, or syntactic complexity indices generated by an automated tool such as Lu's syntactic complexity analyzer or an equivalent package (Lu, 2010). Because spoken transcripts may not contain sentence boundaries comparable to written essays, the final method must state how units of analysis were defined for speech. If the spoken data are not suitable for automated syntactic parsing, the manuscript should limit claims about grammatical complexity and focus on more reliable transcript-based measures.

Discourse and stance features may include first-person pronouns, stance expressions such as I think, I believe, maybe, and probably, connectors such as however, therefore, because, and also, and spoken fillers or repeated words if available in the transcripts. These features are pedagogically relevant because they may show how learners manage argumentation, interpersonal positioning, and real-time production across modes.

3.6 Tools and Software Used

The final analysis will use [AUTHOR TO COMPLETE: insert software/tool names, versions, and settings]. Possible tools include AntConc for frequency and concordance checks, Python or R for cleaning and statistical analysis, part-of-speech tagging tools for lexical density, and syntactic complexity tools for grammatical features. The author must report versions and settings because different tokenizers, taggers, and parsers may produce different counts.

All scripts and analysis steps should be saved in a reproducible folder structure. If manual coding is used for discourse markers or stance expressions, the coding framework and reliability procedure should be described. If only automated counts are used, the manuscript should acknowledge that automatic identification may misclassify items, especially in spoken transcripts.

3.7 Data Analysis Procedures

The analysis will begin with a descriptive corpus profile, including the number of learners, number of written texts, number of spoken monologues, total tokens by mode, and distribution by proficiency and L1 group. The second stage will compare written and spoken output on lexical and grammatical features. The third stage will examine proficiency-related differences within each mode. The fourth stage will explore whether higher-proficiency learners show greater mode differentiation than lower-proficiency learners.

For each feature, descriptive statistics will be reported by mode and proficiency level. If the data meet assumptions for parametric tests, the author may use t tests, ANOVA, or mixed-effects models depending on the final design. If the data are not normally distributed or if group sizes are unequal, non-parametric alternatives or robust methods should be considered [AUTHOR TO SELECT AFTER DATA INSPECTION]. All p-values, effect sizes, confidence intervals, and model specifications must be inserted only after the analysis has been completed and verified.

Normalized frequencies per 1,000 words will be used for count-based features such as discourse markers, stance markers, and connectors, because written and spoken texts may differ in length. The final manuscript should report both raw and normalized counts when possible. Graphs will be used to show mode differences and proficiency trends only after the numerical values are verified.

3.8 Ethical Considerations and Open-Data/Corpus-Use Limitations

The study uses secondary corpus data. The author must comply with ICNALE access, citation, and copyright requirements. The manuscript should not reproduce large portions of

learner text if corpus terms restrict redistribution. Any examples included in the final paper should be short, anonymized, and used only where necessary to illustrate a documented pattern.

Although ICNALE is designed for research use, the author remains responsible for ethical handling of the data. No attempt should be made to identify individual learners. The author must also acknowledge limitations associated with using a secondary corpus: the researcher did not control the original task administration, participant recruitment, proficiency assessment, or transcription conventions. These limitations affect the strength and generalizability of the findings.

4. Results

This section is prepared as a completion-ready results section. Because the current dataset workbook does not include final ICNALE sample counts, token totals, feature values, statistical outputs, or figures, no empirical numerical findings are reported in this draft. The author must complete the tables and figures after downloading the selected ICNALE modules, cleaning the data, and running the analysis. No results should be printed or submitted while any [AUTHOR TO COMPLETE] or [VERIFY DATA] markers remain.

4.1 Description of the Selected Corpus Sample

Table 1 will report the final sample used in the study. The table should indicate whether the comparison is paired by participant or matched by group. It should also report the selected L1 groups, proficiency bands, prompts, number of written essays, number of spoken monologues, total tokens, and mean tokens per text or transcript.

Table 1

ICNALE Sample Selected for the Study

Mode	Proficiency band	L1 group(s)	N participants	N texts/transcripts	Total tokens	Mean tokens
Written essays	[AUTHOR TO COMPLETE]	[AUTHOR TO COMPLETE]	[AUTHOR TO COMPLETE]	[AUTHOR TO COMPLETE]	[AUTHOR TO COMPLETE]	[AUTHOR TO COMPLETE]
Spoken monologues	[AUTHOR TO COMPLETE]	[AUTHOR TO COMPLETE]	[AUTHOR TO COMPLETE]	[AUTHOR TO COMPLETE]	[AUTHOR TO COMPLETE]	[AUTHOR TO COMPLETE]
Total	[AUTHOR TO COMPLETE]	[AUTHOR TO COMPLETE]	[AUTHOR TO COMPLETE]	[AUTHOR TO COMPLETE]	[AUTHOR TO COMPLETE]	[AUTHOR TO COMPLETE]

Note. Replace all placeholders with verified ICNALE counts after final sample selection. Do not estimate missing values.

4.2 Mode Differences: Writing Versus Speaking

Table 2 will compare written essays and spoken monologues in terms of word count, lexical density, lexical diversity, and academic vocabulary percentage. The results should be described objectively. For example, the author may write that written essays showed higher lexical density than spoken monologues only if the verified table supports that statement. If differences are small or inconsistent, the discussion should report that cautiously.

Table 2
Word Count and Lexical Density by Mode

Mode	N	Mean tokens	SD	Lexical density (%)	Lexical diversity	Academic vocabulary (%)
Written essays	[AUTHOR TO COMPLETE]	[AUTHOR TO COMPLETE]	[AUTHOR TO COMPLETE]	[AUTHOR TO COMPLETE]	[AUTHOR TO COMPLETE]	[AUTHOR TO COMPLETE]
Spoken monologues	[AUTHOR TO COMPLETE]	[AUTHOR TO COMPLETE]	[AUTHOR TO COMPLETE]	[AUTHOR TO COMPLETE]	[AUTHOR TO COMPLETE]	[AUTHOR TO COMPLETE]

Note. Add mean, standard deviation, normalized values, and significance tests only after the final analysis is complete.

4.3 Proficiency-Related Differences

Table 3 will show whether lexical diversity and related measures increase with proficiency within each mode. The author should avoid assuming a linear pattern unless the verified results show one. If the final analysis includes multiple proficiency bands, the table should present each band separately. If the sample is collapsed into lower and higher proficiency groups, the reason for collapsing should be stated in the methodology section.

Table 3
Lexical Diversity by Mode and Proficiency

Mode	Proficiency band	N	Lexical diversity measure	Mean	SD	Interpretive note
Written	Lower	[AUTHOR TO COMPLETE]	[AUTHOR TO COMPLETE]	[AUTHOR TO COMPLETE]	[AUTHOR TO COMPLETE]	[AUTHOR TO COMPLETE]
Written	Higher	[AUTHOR TO COMPLETE]	[AUTHOR TO COMPLETE]	[AUTHOR TO COMPLETE]	[AUTHOR TO COMPLETE]	[AUTHOR TO COMPLETE]
Spoken	Lower	[AUTHOR TO COMPLETE]	[AUTHOR TO COMPLETE]	[AUTHOR TO COMPLETE]	[AUTHOR TO COMPLETE]	[AUTHOR TO COMPLETE]
Spoken	Higher	[AUTHOR TO COMPLETE]	[AUTHOR TO COMPLETE]	[AUTHOR TO COMPLETE]	[AUTHOR TO COMPLETE]	[AUTHOR TO COMPLETE]

Note. Use one lexical diversity measure consistently and report why it was selected.

4.4 Interaction Between Mode and Proficiency

Figure 1 and Figure 2 should display whether mode differences become stronger, weaker, or more differentiated at higher proficiency levels. This subsection should be completed only after the author chooses the statistical procedure. If a two-way ANOVA or mixed-effects model is used, the interaction term should be reported with exact test values,

effect size, and p-value. If a descriptive approach is used, the section should avoid inferential language.

Figure 1

Feature Comparison by Mode and Proficiency

Placeholder
Chart to be inserted after verified analysis.
<i>[AUTHOR TO COMPLETE: Insert bar chart or line chart showing one selected feature, such as lexical density or lexical diversity, by mode and proficiency.]</i>

Figure 2

Mode-Proficiency Interaction in Selected Linguistic Features

Placeholder
Chart to be inserted after verified analysis.
<i>[AUTHOR TO COMPLETE: Insert chart only if the analysis supports an interaction pattern. Otherwise remove this figure.]</i>

4.5 Discourse and Stance Markers

Table 4 and Table 5 will report academic vocabulary and stance or discourse marker patterns across modes. These measures should be normalized per 1,000 words to allow comparison between written and spoken output. The author should also inspect concordance lines before interpreting markers such as I think, because the same surface form may serve different functions depending on context.

Table 4

Academic Vocabulary Use in Writing and Speaking

Mode	Academic vocabulary measure	Raw count	Per 1,000 words	Mean per text	Comment
Written essays	[AUTHOR TO COMPLETE]	[AUTHOR TO COMPLETE]	[AUTHOR TO COMPLETE]	[AUTHOR TO COMPLETE]	[AUTHOR TO COMPLETE]
Spoken monologues	[AUTHOR TO COMPLETE]	[AUTHOR TO COMPLETE]	[AUTHOR TO COMPLETE]	[AUTHOR TO COMPLETE]	[AUTHOR TO COMPLETE]

Note. Insert raw counts and normalized frequencies only after matching tokens to the selected academic vocabulary list.

Table 5
Common Stance Markers Across Modes

Marker	Written raw	Written per 1,000	Spoken raw	Spoken per 1,000	Interpretation
I think	[AUTHOR TO COMPLETE]	[AUTHOR TO COMPLETE]	[AUTHOR TO COMPLETE]	[AUTHOR TO COMPLETE]	[VERIFY FUNCTION]
I believe	[AUTHOR TO COMPLETE]	[AUTHOR TO COMPLETE]	[AUTHOR TO COMPLETE]	[AUTHOR TO COMPLETE]	[VERIFY FUNCTION]
maybe	[AUTHOR TO COMPLETE]	[AUTHOR TO COMPLETE]	[AUTHOR TO COMPLETE]	[AUTHOR TO COMPLETE]	[VERIFY FUNCTION]
probably	[AUTHOR TO COMPLETE]	[AUTHOR TO COMPLETE]	[AUTHOR TO COMPLETE]	[AUTHOR TO COMPLETE]	[VERIFY FUNCTION]
however	[AUTHOR TO COMPLETE]	[AUTHOR TO COMPLETE]	[AUTHOR TO COMPLETE]	[AUTHOR TO COMPLETE]	[VERIFY FUNCTION]

Note. Include only markers actually counted in the corpus. Do not add examples without concordance verification.

4.6 Summary of Main Trends

[AUTHOR TO COMPLETE: Summarize the main verified patterns in three to five sentences after completing Tables 1–5 and Figures 1–2. This subsection should not introduce interpretations beyond the data. Recommended structure: first summarize mode differences, then proficiency differences, then any interaction, then one or two notable discourse/stance findings.]

5. Discussion

The purpose of this study is to interpret how mode and proficiency shape EFL learner production in ICNALE written essays and spoken monologues. Because the final quantitative results are not yet available, this discussion is written as an interpretation framework. The author must revise each paragraph after inserting the verified results. Claims about the strength, direction, or statistical significance of any pattern should not remain in the final manuscript unless they are supported by the completed tables and analysis outputs.

In relation to the first research question, the study is expected to clarify how lexical and grammatical features differ between writing and speech. Register theory suggests that written production may display denser information packaging and more explicit organization, whereas spoken monologues may show features associated with online production and interpersonal stance (Biber, 1988, 2006). However, the final paper should not assume that all written texts are more complex or more sophisticated than all spoken transcripts. Learner proficiency, task topic, and corpus design may produce more nuanced patterns.

In relation to the second research question, proficiency is likely to affect both written and spoken production, but possibly in different ways. Research on complexity, accuracy, fluency, and lexis suggests that development may not proceed evenly across all dimensions (Housen & Kuiken, 2009; Skehan, 2009). A higher-proficiency learner may show increased lexical range in writing but only modest changes in spoken fluency, or may show stronger stance control in speech but limited academic vocabulary in essays. The discussion should therefore explain which features appear most sensitive to proficiency in the actual ICNALE sample.

The third research question concerns mode association. Features such as lexical density, academic vocabulary, and certain formal connectors may be more strongly associated with written essays, while first-person stance markers, repeated words, fillers, or high-frequency discourse routines may be more common in spoken monologues. If the final results support this pattern, the paper can argue that TESOL instruction should help learners recognize how the same communicative purpose, such as expressing an opinion, is realized differently in written and spoken form. If the results do not support this pattern, the paper should discuss why the ICNALE task design or learner profile may have reduced mode differences.

The fourth research question asks whether higher-proficiency learners show more mode-sensitive language use than lower-proficiency learners. This is potentially one of the most important contributions of the paper. If higher-proficiency learners differentiate writing and speaking more clearly, this may indicate that proficiency includes not only more language, but better control over register and communicative mode. If lower- and higher-proficiency learners show similar mode differences, the paper may instead suggest that task mode exerts a strong influence even at earlier stages of development. Either interpretation would be useful for TESOL, but it must be grounded in verified results.

The findings should also be related to learner corpus methodology. ICNALE-based analysis can show how controlled corpus data support practical questions in TESOL. At the same time, the study must acknowledge that corpus evidence does not automatically explain why learners made particular choices. Interpretation requires caution, concordance checking, and awareness of task design. Corpus findings can reveal patterns, but pedagogical conclusions should be presented as implications rather than causal claims.

Overall, the discussion should emphasize that writing and speaking should be connected in instruction but not assessed as if they were identical. A learner who performs differently across modes may not be inconsistent; rather, the learner may be responding to different cognitive and communicative demands. The final contribution of this study will be strongest if it identifies specific features that teachers can target through integrated writing-speaking activities.

6. Pedagogical Implications

The pedagogical implications of the study should be based on the final verified patterns. At this draft stage, the following implications are proposed as a framework for revision. The author should retain only those implications that are supported by the completed results.

First, TESOL lecturers can use parallel writing-speaking tasks to help learners notice mode differences. For example, students may first write a short argumentative paragraph and then deliver a spoken monologue on the same topic. Corpus-based findings from ICNALE can be used to show how sentence length, lexical density, stance expressions, and connectors change across modes. This approach supports integrated skills instruction while still respecting the distinct demands of writing and speech.

Second, EFL writing teachers can use the findings to teach academic expression more explicitly. If the final results show that written essays contain more academic vocabulary or formal connectors, teachers can develop activities that help learners use these features appropriately in writing without forcing spoken monologues to sound unnaturally written. Students can compare examples of written argumentation with spoken opinion-giving and discuss why different linguistic resources are used.

Third, speaking teachers can use the results to design fluency and stance activities. If spoken monologues show more repetition, first-person stance markers, or informal connectors, teachers can help learners manage these features rather than simply eliminate them. Learners may practice replacing excessive repetition with clearer oral organization, or expanding a basic expression such as I think into more varied stance expressions appropriate for oral academic discussion.

Fourth, curriculum designers can use mode-sensitive evidence to sequence skill development. Lower-proficiency learners may need support with basic idea organization and high-frequency language across both modes, while higher-proficiency learners may need instruction in register control, academic stance, and mode-appropriate complexity. The final corpus findings can help decide which features belong in writing courses, speaking courses, or integrated academic communication modules.

Fifth, materials developers can convert corpus evidence into classroom resources. Concordance lines, short learner examples, and frequency comparisons can be transformed into noticing tasks, rewriting tasks, speaking reformulation activities, and peer feedback checklists. For example, students might compare the use of because, however, and I think across writing and speech and discuss which forms sound natural in each mode. Such activities connect corpus evidence with practical classroom decision-making.

Finally, assessment designers should avoid applying identical expectations to writing and speaking. If the final findings confirm mode-specific patterns, rubrics should reward appropriate development within each mode. Written essays may be evaluated for organization, lexical density, and academic register, while spoken monologues may be evaluated for comprehensibility, fluency, stance management, and spoken coherence. This does not lower standards for speech; rather, it recognizes that effective spoken performance is not simply written academic English delivered aloud.

Table

6

Pedagogical Implications by Feature Type

Feature type	Possible observed pattern	Teaching response	Responsible teaching area
Lexical density	[AUTHOR TO COMPLETE]	Teach mode-appropriate information packaging.	Writing and speaking
Lexical diversity	[AUTHOR TO COMPLETE]	Develop vocabulary range through parallel tasks.	Vocabulary / EAP
Academic vocabulary	[AUTHOR TO COMPLETE]	Teach academic vocabulary in written argumentation and oral presentations.	EAP writing
Stance markers	[AUTHOR TO COMPLETE]	Teach varied stance expressions and context-appropriate use.	Speaking / discourse
Connectors	[AUTHOR TO COMPLETE]	Compare formal written connectors with natural spoken linking.	Integrated skills
Fluency markers	[AUTHOR TO COMPLETE]	Use fluency practice and reformulation tasks.	Speaking

Note. Revise this table after the final results are available so that each implication corresponds to an observed pattern.

7. Limitations

Several limitations must be acknowledged. First, the study uses secondary corpus data. The author did not design the original ICNALE tasks, select participants, administer proficiency measures, or control the original transcription process. This limits the extent to which the analysis can explain the causes of observed patterns.

Second, corpus representativeness must be treated cautiously. ICNALE focuses mainly on Asian learners of English, so the findings should not be generalized automatically to all EFL or ESL learners. If the final sample includes only selected L1 groups, the generalizability will be narrower and should be stated explicitly.

Third, sample selection may affect the results. If written and spoken samples are not produced by the same individuals, the study cannot make strong within-learner claims. A matched-group comparison is still valuable, but it is weaker than a paired design for claims about individual development across modes. The final manuscript must state clearly which design was used.

Fourth, automated analysis can introduce measurement limitations. Tokenization, part-of-speech tagging, sentence segmentation, syntactic parsing, and discourse-marker identification may perform differently on written essays and spoken transcripts. If spoken transcripts include fillers, false starts, or non-standard punctuation, automated tools may misclassify units. The author should check a sample of outputs manually and report any quality-control procedures.

Fifth, the study may not include all variables relevant to learner production. Motivation, instructional background, length of English study, topic familiarity, and task anxiety may influence performance but may not be available or used in the analysis. Missing variables should be acknowledged rather than inferred.

Finally, because this draft currently lacks completed results, all empirical claims must be verified before submission. The manuscript should not be printed for promotion or submitted to a journal until every placeholder has been replaced with verified data, every table has been checked against the analysis files, and every interpretation has been revised to match the actual findings.

8. Conclusion

This study is designed to examine mode and proficiency effects in EFL learner production by comparing ICNALE written essays and spoken monologues. Its aim is to identify how lexical, grammatical, and selected discourse features differ across writing and speaking, and how these differences vary by proficiency level. The study contributes to TESOL by connecting learner corpus evidence with practical questions about integrated writing-speaking instruction, register awareness, and proficiency-sensitive assessment.

At this stage, the manuscript is a completion-ready scholarly draft rather than a finalized empirical article. The ICNALE modules, sample counts, token totals, linguistic measures, statistical results, figures, and final interpretations must be completed by the author. Once these data are inserted and verified, the paper can offer an evidence-based account of how learners manage written and spoken English under different task conditions.

The practical value of the study lies in its potential to help TESOL teachers design instruction that connects writing and speaking without treating them as identical. By identifying which features are mode-specific and which are proficiency-related, the final paper can support more realistic teaching activities, classroom feedback, and assessment rubrics. Future research may extend the analysis to additional learner groups, include qualitative concordance analysis, examine accuracy features, or test corpus-informed teaching interventions based on the patterns identified in the final ICNALE dataset.

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