A Comparison of the Constructions *Make / Take a Decision* in Malaysian English with the Supervarieties

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This study aims to compare the structures of light verb constructions (LVCs) taking *decision* as the deverbal noun in Malaysian English, British English and American English. A general corpus made up of Internet forum threads from Lowyat.Net, was created to represent Malaysian English while the British National Corpus (BNC) and Corpus of Contemporary American English (COCA) were used to represent the supervarieties. Light verbs *make* and *take* are found to be heading deverbal noun *decision*. Differences are observed in the use of articles. The frequency of Malaysian English LVCs without article is the highest while supervarieties LVCs prefer indefinite article. The high occurrences of LVCs without articles in Malaysian English can be attributed to the influence from Malaysian substrate languages. Findings also show that descriptive adjective is the most frequently used modifier in all three varieties of English. This suggests the standard LVC structure, comprising a light verb, the indefinite article, and a deverbal noun is no longer rigidly adhered to even among the native speakers of English.

Keywords: Light Verb Constructions, Structural Patterns, Malaysian English, British English, American English

1. Introduction

This study explores a multi-word construction named light verb construction (LVC), wherein its lexical and grammar features are intertwined. Unlike conventional verbs, light verbs are also referred to as lexically empty verbs (Live, 1973) as they have little or no semantic content in the constructions they head (Algeo, 1999; Hoffmann, Hundt, & Mukherjee, 2011; Mehl, 2019; Sinclair & Fox, 1990). To Brugman (2001), Dixon (2005), and Wierzbicka (1982), light verbs possess semantic properties which are very delicate. Typically, an LVC is a "verb-object construction, i.e. the verb holds a broad semantic sense while the object has more precise semantic context" (Algeo, 1999, p. 204). This implies the object, instead of the main verb, provides the primary meaning for the construction.

Finding out LVCs unique to Malaysian English (MalE) can be interesting. The presence of several substrate languages, including Malay, Chinese, and Tamil, which serve as the native languages for many Malaysians may lead to different structures of LVCs. Also, the Malay language being the main medium of instruction of all national schools may influence the use of LVCs. There is a considerable amount of research conducted on LVCs in various languages including the Malay language (Omrah Hassan & Ab Halim, 2014) and Chinese language (Xu, Jiang, Lin, & Huang, 2020). For instance: i) in Malay, *memberi galakan* 'give encouragement' and *membuat siasatan* 'make investigation' are interchangeable with *menggalakkan* 'encourage' and *menyiasat* 'investigate' respectively; ii) in Chinese, 进行研究 (*jìn xíng yán jiū*) 'conduct research' is interchangeable with simplex verb 研究 (*yán jiū*) 'research'. *Make* and *give*, which are listed as common English light verbs (Huddleston & Pullum, 2002), can be used as light verbs too in the Malay language (*membuat* and *memberi* preceding a noun

complement); they are proven to be quite similar to English LVCs in terms of their interchangeability with simplex verbs (Omrah Hassan & Ab Halim, 2014). Since the primary local languages in Malaysia have LVCs, their influence on the use of English LVCs among Malaysians is inevitable.

Furthermore, structural nativisation in MalE has been under-studied, unlike research in nativised MalE lexis (cf. Hajar, 2014). Coined by Kachru (1981), nativisation is defined as a result of constant contact between English and local languages used intranationally by non-native speakers who develop new linguistic conventions which are then accepted into their English language system. Only a corpus-based research conducted by Tan (2013) examining prepositional verbs, that adopted a lexico-grammar approach, is somewhat similar to this study. From a broader view within the grammar perspective, Newbrook (2006) identified ten grammatical patterns which are uniquely Malaysian while Ho-Abdullah (2010) discovered the use of prepositions in MalE differs slightly from BrE and New Zealand English (NZE). It is therefore timely to explore structural LVC variants unique to MalE.

As this study is interested in the structures of LVCs and their regional variation, the components of LVCs should be given attention to. The standard structure of an LVC is shown in Figure 1.

Light verb +	**Article** +	**Deverbal Noun** (verb root)
have, give, take, make, do	*a / an*	*e.g. look, dance, walk, visit*

Figure 1. The Standard LVC Structure

Investigation of two or more light verbs combined with similar deverbal nouns (defined as a noun that is identical with the verb stem (Huddleston & Pullum, 2002), e.g. 'shower' in *take a shower*) is not one of a kind. For instance, Hoche and Shahrokny-Prehn (2013, p. 174) analysed light verbs *have, take*, and *give* with verb stems categorised into "three verb classes: ingestion (e.g. *drink*), motion (e.g. *stroll*), and perception (e.g. *listen*)"; Giparaite (2017) examined light verbs *have, get, give* taking deverbal noun *laugh*; Leech, Hundt, Mair, and Smith (2009) investigated five verb roots (i.e. *bath, shower, drink, look,* and *walk*) that are preceded by light verbs *have* and *take*. These studies share a similarity, i.e. all of them analyse LVCs taking deverbal nouns in verb root, also known as isomorphic nouns. Isomorphic noun refers to the plain verb heading a noun phrase that comes after the light verbs (Dixon, 2005). It is the most fundamental criterion that makes up the standard LVC structure.

A more inclusive LVC structure has been acknowledged by many. The non-isomorphic nouns or nominalised verbs, referring to nouns deriving from verbs through affixation (Huddleston & Pullum, 2002), definite and zero articles (cf. Dixon, 2005; Hoffmann, et al., 2011; Mehl, 2019), one or two adjectives that can be changed into adverbs (cf. Dixon, 2005; Shahrokny-Prehn & Hoche, 2011) and multiple adjectives (cf. Mehl, 2019) are the non-standard variants of an LVC. Figure 2 shows a more inclusive LVC structure that accepts all types of articles, modifiers, and non-isomorphic nouns in addition to its standard components.

Light verb +	**Article** +	**Modifier** + (adj / adverb)	**Deverbal Noun** (verb root / norminalised verb)
have, give, take,	*a / an / the /*	*e.g. brief,*	*e.g. drink, visit, comparison,*

Figure 2. The More Inclusive LVC Structure

Focusing on deverbal nouns, thus far, only Giparaite and Balciute (2018), who analysed the semantic and syntactic properties of British English (BrE) LVCs taking three deverbal nouns, *chat, talk*, and *conversation*, accepted a non-isomorphic noun in their research. Deverbal nouns stemming from the derivational processes such as *announcement, conversation, investigation* in *make a / an announcement, conversation, investigation* are known as non-isomorphic nouns. With regard to regional variation, most past studies explore the native varieties of English and identify LVCs that are typical to a particular region. For instance, Leech et al. (2009 – BrE and American English (AmE)), Smith (2009 – AusE, NZE, BrE), Giparaite (2015 – BrE), and Giparaite and Balciute (2018 – BrE). Mehl (2019) conducted onomasiological analysis of LVCs and their related verb alternatives in SgE, HKE, and BrE. Although a couple of studies have investigated LVCs in the English as a second language (ESL) variety, the use and structural variants of MalE LVCs should be looked into. It is high time to pay attention to lexicogrammatical characteristics of MalE because it is one of the established postcolonial Englishes just like SgE, IndE, and HKE.

This study aims to address the following research questions:

a) How does the use of articles in MalE LVCs differ from BrE and AmE LVCs?
b) What are the similarities and differences in the use and distribution of modifiers between MalE LVCs and the two supervarieties of English?

It will help to shed light on how different or similar MalE is with BrE, its historical input variety (Mair, 2013) and with AmE, a highly influential variety in the world (Van Rooy, 2019) which are also recognised as the supervarieties. To contribute to research on the grammar of MalE, light verbs *make* and *take* heading deverbal noun, *decision* are the focus of this study. These two are identical to a certain extent because both light verbs specify an active role by the subject which can be seen in examples (1) and (2).

(1)   Alan **made** **a decision** to leave his home on his 18th birthday.
(2)   The manager **takes** **a decision** to resign after an unforeseeable mishap.

It is obvious that the subjects, in examples (1), *Alan* and (2), *the manager* are the ones in control who perform the deciding action. As highlighted by Dixon (2005), constructions with *take* foreground the physical effort of the human agent. Usually light verbs *take* and *have* are analysed at the same time because they can co-occur with similar deverbal nouns without altering the construction's meaning like *have/take* a *bath* and *have/take a rest* (Giparaite, 2015) and *have/take* a *walk* and *a break* (Smith, 2009). Emphasis should be given to light verbs *make* and *take* with synonymous deverbal nouns because the meaning of these LVCs do not deviate much too just like LVCs taking similar deverbal nouns headed by light verbs *have* and *take*.

2. Literature Review

Since the present study focuses primarily on the LVC structural variants in MalE, studies on LVCs in different varieties of English will be reviewed in this section. All past studies adopted corpus-based method by depending on renowned language corpora such as the International Corpus of English (ICE), British National Corpus (BNC), Corpus of Contemporary American English (COCA), and Global Web-Based English (GloWbE) to identify variants of LVCs unique to the respective varieties of English. The review of literature on LVCs will begin with BrE and AmE LVCs which are regarded as the standard English LVCs. Subsequently, variants of LVCs that emerge in the ESL or postcolonial varieties are discussed.

2.1. LVCs in Different Varieties of English

One of the initial investigations conducted by Stein (1991) explored three LVCs governed by light verbs *have*, *give*, and *take* in 15 contemporary English novels, aiming to discover their distinct grammatical and semantic characteristics. In addition to identifying instances of LVCs modified by an adjective, particularly those governed by light verb *give*, Stein's study disproved Wierzbicka's (1982) assertions regarding LVCs implying intentional or volitional actions, instead, it demonstrated how each structure conveys a distinct meaning that is solely determined by the light verb (1991).

Algeo (1995) investigated the use of five light verbs, namely *make, have, give, take*, and *do*, in the Brown and LOB corpora, representing AmE and BrE, respectively. The analysis revealed that LOB contains a higher frequency of LVC occurrences compared to the Brown corpus. The preference for light verb *have* is more prominent in BrE while light verb *do* is more frequently used in AmE. Other light verbs show slight differences between the two native varieties (Algeo, 1995). Taking the entire Brown corpus family into account, Leech, et al. (2009) analysed *have/give/take* to explore regional and diachronic variations. The findings revealed that LVCs are more commonly employed in spoken language, particularly in colloquial speech, compared to written form. Additionally, LVCs were found to be quite prevalent in BrE. Regarding the preference for specific light verbs, similar to Algeo's (1995) study, the British tend to favour light verb *have*, while Americans lean towards light verb *take* (Leech et al., 2009). The diachronic analysis of the two language varieties did not yield significant results, as the use of LVCs demonstrated a slight increase in the Frown corpus but a slight decrease in the FLOB corpus during the 1990s (Leech et al., 2009).

More recently, Sundquist (2020) conducted a diachronic analysis of AmE LVCs between 1810 and 2009 represented by COHA. Evidence from the corpus has proven that highly productive light verbs like *give, take,* and *make* show significant increase over time and they are also seen to co-occur with a wide range of deverbal nouns (Sundquist, 2020).

Focusing on LVCs in ESL varieties, the studies reviewed below investigated corpora representing English used in postcolonial countries. Firstly, Borlongan and Dita (2015) conducted a diachronic analysis of PhilE LVCs used in the 1960s to the 1990s. The Phil-Brown corpus and ICE-PH were used to represent the two time periods. Despite recording a slight increase in the use of LVCs throughout the three decades, PhilE LVCs have been more commonly used in fictional and conversational texts compared to AmE in the 1990s. The pattern of PhilE in the 1990s appears to align with the BrE preference for *have* LVCs, resulting in a frequency closer to the occurrence of BrE LVCs during the same period.

Mehl's (2019) analysis of light verbs *make*, *take* and *give* in three varieties of English represented by ICE-Singapore, ICE-Hong Kong and ICE-GB, suggest that there is no obvious evidence of innovation and regional differences but all three Englishes depict relatively similar preferences for certain LVCs (e.g. *take action* and *give/provide information*) compared to their simplex verbs (e.g. *act* and *inform*). The consistency across HKE, SgE, and BrE LVCs (except for a few creative constructions in the postcolonial varieties) is probably because LVCs are restricted largely by collocational norms (Mehl, 2019). The features of LVCs therefore tend to resemble those from the native speaker variety.

In addition to research on LVCs in the outer varieties of English represented by ICE, a specialised corpus made up of English newspapers from four different countries in South Asia was built by Hoffmann, et al. (2011) to find out whether Indian English serves as the leading model of Bangladesh, Pakistan and Sri Lanka Englishes in the use of LVCs. The results of the study show irregularities in the distributions of light verbs *give, have* and *take* with deverbal noun *look* compared to the native English speaker newspaper corpus from the BNC. Also, they found that Bangladeshi English has the most zero article LVCs, followed by Pakistani English while Sri Lankan and Indian English have fewer instances of zero article LVCs compared to BrE. They associate the occurrence of zero article LVCs to influence of substrate languages because articles are non-existent in local languages spoken in India.

Another study of LVCs in the outer circle variety of English is Giparaite (2016) who analysed the frequency and complementation patterns of five light verbs and a deverbal noun, *laugh* in twenty varieties of English from GloWbE. She discovered that LVCs *have / get / give laugh* are common in all twenty varieties while LVCs *do / make laugh* are more commonly used by the native speakers and ESL speakers based in countries which may have progressed beyond the nativisation phase (i.e. IndE, SgE and PhilE) according to Schneider's (2003) evolutionary model. As for the complementation pattern, all five light verbs accept *at + NP* while four light verbs except light verb *do* accepts *about + NP*. This shows different light verbs may co-occur with the same complementation patterns.

In summary, findings from past studies show dissimilarities with regard to the occurrences of LVCs (Borlongan & Dita, 2015; Hoffmann, et al., 2011), the use of zero article (Hoffmann, et al., 2011), and complementation patterns (Giparaite, 2016) in postcolonial Englishes contrary to the native variety usually represented by the BrE. Even among the supervarieties, the use of light verbs differs in BrE and AmE (Algeo, 1995; Leech, et al., 2009), i.e. certain light verb is commonly used in a variety but it is infrequent in another variety. These suggest different varieties of English tend to exhibit different uses of LVCs. For this reason, the investigation of LVCs in MalE is compared against two native speaker corpora in the present research to justify whether or not MalE is still undergoing the nativisation process.

3. Methodology

The data used in this study, made up of three different corpora representing MalE, AmE, and BrE, are described in this section. Then, the process of analysing *make* and *take decision* LVCs is explained.

3.1. Data

A mixed-method design using the fundamentals of corpus linguistics methodology was adopted to reveal similarities and/or differences of structural variants between MalE and the supervarieties LVCs. Representing MalE is the Corpus of Malaysian English Forum (CMEF). It comprises threads sourced from Lowyat.Net, an active Malaysian Internet forum which allows discussions about computers, careers, properties, politics, pets, sports and many other topics relevant to Malaysians.

Table 1. CMEF Corpus Design

Main sections	Number of words
Front desk	654, 993
Computers	6, 586, 224
Special interest	6, 108, 921
Roundtable discussions	47, 515, 484
Entertainment	5, 202, 453
Lifestyle	27, 677, 934
LYN community projects	316, 838
Classifieds	944, 831
Trade zone	3, 911, 564
Total	98, 919, 242

The BNC and COCA were used to represent the BrE and AmE respectively as they are not only freely available but they are also the two most recognised corpora of native varieties of English. CMEF is the only corpus in this study made up of 100% web sources. Its characteristics match the mesolectal variety of MalE and according to Platt, Weber and Ho (1984), it is nationally intelligible and extensively used

by Malaysians on a daily basis to interact with one another. This means CMEF contains more than 90% informal language made up of computer mediated communication. The nature of data from an Internet forum corresponds to Bolander and Locher's (2014) description of computer-mediated communication retrieved from web-based platforms depicting social interaction and content sharing features and that social interaction is presumed to contain informal language. Besides CMEF, both native speaker corpora also meet the requirement of having a fair share of informal language in corpora for World Englishes research (Davies & Fuchs, 2015). Despite their different compositions and differing time frame when their data were collected (BNC late 20th century; COCA 1990-2019; CMEF early 21st century), they would be useful in shedding light on lexico-grammar studies. This is because changes in English grammar patterns do not show significant difference over a period of 30 years, proven in Smith and Leech's (2014) analysis of verb structures focusing on modal, passive, and progressive forms from 1931 to 2006.

3.2. Data Analysis Process

The data analysis procedure encompasses a combination of qualitative and quantitative analyses to answer both research questions. To distinguish the structural patterns of LVC along with their possible variants from the three regional varieties, the qualitative method was used. To identify the preferred structures of *take* and *make decision* in MalE, AmE, and BrE, the quantitative method was adopted to find out the most frequently occurring types of articles and modifiers.

To begin, CMEF was uploaded to the Sketch Engine so that data can be collected using its online text analysis tool, specifically the concordance tool. It was employed to generate concordance lists for *take* and *make decision* LVCs. This tool presents all instances of an LVC in the middle accompanied by some context to the left and right which is also known as Keyword in Context view. It must be noted that inflectional morpheme that pluralises the deverbal noun (i.e. *decisions*) in the data was disregarded as non-isomorphic noun accepted here only included derivational morpheme that assists in nominalisation. From the downloaded concordance lines, the structural patterns of LVCs were identified. They were exclusively categorised according to their respective characteristics. It must be noted that an LVC in one concordance line could appear twice in both article and modifier structural patterns. As for AmE and BrE, *make_decision* and *take_decision* alongside their lemma forms were queried with wildcards in COCA and BNC online corpora. Their concordance lists were saved in spreadsheets for analysis.

The concordance lines with *make* and *take* light verbs followed by *decision* in all three corpora were analysed qualitatively to identify emerging LVC variants. As the sizes of the corpora representing AmE, BrE, and MalE vary from a hundred million words to a billion words, their occurrences were normalised to per million words (pmw) before they were compared and contrasted. Because this study examined one synonymous deverbal noun, *decision* headed by two light verbs, analysis of LVC structural variants would solely focus on acceptance of differing articles and modifiers.

4. Results

To find out the structural variants of LVCs taking *decision* as the deverbal noun headed by *make* and *take* light verbs, only the modifier slot was scrutinized. The analyses are categorised into two sections focusing on: i) the types of articles and; ii) the modifiers preceding the deverbal noun decision in all three regional varieties. Besides their frequency counts, example of sentences with LVCs showing the mentioned characteristics from all three corpora are presented.

4.1. Articles in LVCs

The frequencies of indefinite, definite, and zero articles accepted by LVCs *make/take_decision* in AmE, BrE, and MalE can be seen in Table 2. It is unsurprising to see high occurrences of LVCs headed by *make* and *take* taking indefinite articles across all three Englishes especially the supervarieties. This could be associated with the fact that the indefinite article is part of the standard LVC structure (see Figure 1). Also, as mentioned by Huddleston and Pullum (2002), indefinite article is the most usual determiner to co-occur with English light verbs.

Table 2. Indefinite, Definite, and Zero Articles of LVCs *Make/Take* D*ec*ision (pmw)

Types of Article	AmE (pmw)	BrE (pmw)	MalE (pmw)
	Make_Decision	*Make_Decision*	*Make_Decision*
Indefinite	6.61	3.76	3.63
Definite	4.76	2.04	3.93
Zero	0.08	0.03	3.67
	Take_Decision	*Take_Decision*	*Take_Decision*
Indefinite	0.1	0.28	0.08
Definite	0.15	0.19	0.16
Zero	0.02	0	0.07

Examples (3) to (6) depict AmE and BrE LVCs taking the indefinite article.

(3)   But the Football Association are unlikely to **make *a* decision** on his three-year reign until they return from the trip to America (BNC)

(4)   O'Rourke has his official launch and Joe Biden faces new scrutiny as he **makes *a* decision** whether to run. (COCA)

(5)   The government is expected to **take *a* decision** on whether the plant will be allowed to open within a month (BNC)

(6)   They will never **take *a* decision** that could make young Muslims angry? (COCA)

As verified by Huddleston and Pullum (2002), indefinite article can certainly precede isomorphic and non-isomorphic nouns. In this study, the latter is the case and that deverbal noun, *decision* is a countable noun which is compatible with the indefinite article.

The ranking of article occurrences in MalE is dissimilar from the supervarieties. MalE *make* LVCs co-occurring with all types of articles seem to be quite well-distributed. The most common occurrences are observed in both *make* and *take* LVCs when they are accompanied by the definite article. This is followed by instances with zero article in the case of the former, and with indefinite article in the case of the latter. It is also observable in Table 2 that MalE LVCs accepting definite article are the most prominent in MalE and they are exemplified below:

(7)   We call them the "lost generation", because their parents **made the decision** to abandon the Chinese language to grind out a future with English in a globalized economy. (CMEF)

(8)   he (Arumugam) had been receiving threats since March 2008 and fearing for his and his family's safety, he **took the decision** to resign," he said. (CMEF)

Ridwan's (2013) claim about postcolonial Englishes overusing definite articles may be a reason of *make/take the decision* recording relatively high frequency counts in MalE. However, this assertion must be carefully treated because the study examined several postcolonial varieties of English including MalE and LVCs were not the primary focus of the investigation. LVCs taking definite articles

in the BrE and AmE are quite frequent too especially *take the decision* of the latter. The relatively high occurrences of LVCs with definite article could be attributed to the tendency of having countable deverbal noun like *decision* to be headed by light verb *take* or it is referring to a known or specific *decision.*

Also shown in Table 2, instances of MalE LVCs without article are exceptionally frequent compared to the supervarieties. They can be seen in examples (9) to (12). Similar to definite article, zero article is also a recognisable characteristic in MalE. Baskaran (1994) and Newbrook (2006) in their analyses of real conversations and corpus of news articles in MalE also reported absence of articles.

(9)   If solely rely on computer feedback to **make decision**, then the plane might crash.
(10) the best way is to pay a visit to these colleges, talk to their counsellors, or perhaps lecturers in order to help u **make decision**
(11) then u can leave him 4 gud n carry on wit ur life.. gals need to **take decision** like this sumtimes towards guys like ur BF (no offence guys)
(12) what i cooked is follow my hometown, my mum recipe, for sure different. but he will not appreciate, somehow i have **taken decision** that i will not cook anymore

The influence of substrate languages could have led to the overuse of LVCs without articles. Articles are either not apparent or non-existing in Malaysian substrate languages, namely the Malay language, Tamil and Chinese dialects. The LVC *make a decision* in the Malay language is *membuat keputusan* and in the Chinese language is 做决定 (*zuò jué dìng*); the absence of article in the Malaysian substrate languages is apparent. Therefore, Malaysians have higher tendency to use LVCs without article due to the influence from their mother tongues.

4.2. Modifiers in LVCs

The modifier slot in LVCs is interesting given the differing claims made. Some researchers only acknowledge modifiers that can be transformed into adverbs in the simplex verb constructions (cf. Dixon, 2005; Shahrokny-Prehn & Hoche, 2011) while others accept descriptive adjectives describing the quality of deverbal nouns (Bonial & Pollard, 2020; Brugman, 2001; Leech, et al. 2009; Gradecak-Erdeljic, 2009; Giparaite, 2017). The former is named processual adjective because it "maintains a highly processual character of the action" whereas the latter, i.e. descriptive adjective denotes "the quality of a concrete object" which is in the form of isomorphic or non-isomorphic deverbal noun (Shahrokny-Prehn & Hoche, 2011, p. 241).

Table 3. Descriptive, Processual, Determiner, and other Modifiers Preceding *Decision* (in pmw)

Types of Modifier	AmE (pmw)	BrE (pmw)	MalE (pmw)
	Make_Decision	*Make_Decision*	*Make_Decision*
Descriptive	6.58	5.21	5.68
Processual	1.19	1.14	0.75
Determiner	3.59	1.74	2.49
Other (descriptive-processual)	0.64	0.58	1.73
	Take_Decision	*Take_Decision*	*Take_Decision*
Descriptive	0.16	0.13	0.1
Processual	0.03	0.09	0.02
Determiner	0.09	0.09	0.05
Other (descriptive-processual)	0.02	0.03	0.05

As mentioned earlier, this study adopted a more inclusive approach (see Figure 2) in which any adjectival modifications are acceptable, similar to Bonial and Pollard's (2020) research. In addition to processual adjectives and descriptive adjectives, two new forms of modifiers, named 'determiner' and 'other (descriptive-processual)' are found in the data. Table 3 depicts four types of modifiers identified in this study.

Descriptive adjectives co-occur particularly frequent with *make/take_decision* in all three regional varieties. As shown in Appendix 1, there are 140, 177 and 74 types of descriptive adjectives co-occurring with *make* LVCs while there are 9, 11, and 77 types with *take* LVCs in the CMEF, BNC, and COCA respectively. The adjectives used in examples (13) to (18) LVCs describe the quality of *decision*.

(13) After 7 years of flying and clocked 4500 flying hours I think i have **made the right decision** to turn 360 degree of my career. (CMEF)

(14) Following his advice, the company then **made a disastrous decision** to decline the investment opportunity. (BNC)

(15) Sounds to me like Biden is predicting Obama to fold under pressure and **make an unpopular decision**, (COCA)

(16) They have procrastinated for too long on **taking the difficult decision**, narrowing what choices are now left to a painful few (CMEF)

(17) When they are given a chance to **take a big decision** about reform they tend to make the right — meaning the most reformist — decision. (BNC)

(18) But I think we were very lucky that the government **took the right decision**, and things began to calm down (COCA)

These adjectives – *right, disastrous, unpopular, difficult,* and *big* do not have corresponding adverbs, which means the LVCs in examples (13) to (18) are not interchangeable with their simplex verb constructions. It is odd to accept constructions such as *?#rightly decide*, *?#disastrously decide*, *?#unpopularly decide*. Although descriptive adjectives are not acceptable in several past LVC research (cf. Algeo, 1995; Dixon, 2005; Hoffmann, et al., 2011), this study alongside with Bonial and Pollard (2020) and Giparaite (2017) reported high occurrences of descriptive adjectives preceding deverbal nouns in LVC. This is because they describe the features of a concrete object, which means the deverbal nouns in LVCs are treated as the lexicalised noun variant (Shahrokny-Prehn & Hoche, 2011). The analysis proves LVCs with descriptive modifiers could express unlimited meaning (Bonial & Pollard, 2020) and provide detailed descriptions (Gradecak-Erdeljic, 2009) to the construction. This modifier is not only extensively used in the CMEF, but also the supervarieties corpora as it records the highest occurrence across the board. This shows the "adverb/adjective correspondence" restriction (Dixon, 2005, p. 464) may be invalid to explain the ever-evolving English language.

LVCs taking determiners are quite dominant in this study as they are the second most acceptable modifier in all three varieties of English. Although determiners are not one of the modifiers in the acceptable standard structure of LVCs or the more inclusive structure, they are not entirely novel. Bergs (2005) and Stein (1991) note the prominence of determiners, especially quantifiers, when analysing LVCs in novels and Paston letters respectively. Quantifier, negative, and demonstrative are determiners that co-occur with LVCs in this study. Examples (19) to (21) show the use of a popular demonstrative which is highly frequent in LVCs headed by *make* in all three varieties of English.

(19) your *parents* sacrificed all the sweat and love they poured into you when you **made that decision** to abandon them for god. they lost the most. you gain a new "love" (CMEF)

(20) the individual to file for bankruptcy. before **making that decision**, there are particular facts you need to think about. (COCA)

(21) Software for Free has been written especially to help you **make that decision** without having to plough through mountains of Shareware and Public Domain Software (BNC)

MalE LVCs tend to co-occur with quantifier too as exemplified below:

(22) In view of this, the Kelantan menteri besar called on his "first mate" to consult him before **making any decision** on forming a unity government with Barisan Nasional. (CMEF)

The use of determiner in the modifier slot of MalE LVCs is rather prominent, same goes to the supervarieties in the present study; their occurrences are so much higher than the processual adjectives. Bonial and Pollard (2020) who analyse LVCs and their simplex verb construction counterpart in PropBank also discover referential determiners and quantifiers and the former is exceptionally frequent.

Focusing on processual adjectives in LVCs, BrE LVCs co-occurring with them are fairly frequent in contrast to AmE and MalE LVCs. It should be emphasised that this type of modifier is normally preferred in the supervarieties (Algeo, 1995; Dixon, 2005; Leech, et al., 2009; Shahrokney-Prehn & Hoche, 2011). Examples (23) to (26) show BrE LVCs headed by *make* and *take* accepting processual adjectives in the modifier slot. However, processual modifier is the least favoured in MalE as only 17 and 2 types of such adjectives are found to co-occur with *make* and *take* LVCs as depicted in Appendix 2.

(23) Having left Ardis and applied for a job here, you then **made a conscious decision** to dress down your looks and conceal your figure, (BNC)
(24) You do not have to **make an immediate decision**. You can transfer your pension scheme at any time, (BNC)
(25) There seem to be three main reasons why employers **take a deliberate decision** not to consult. (BNC)
(26) the recipient to evaluate the opportunity against his acquisition criteria and to **take an instant decision** to reject or proceed with the opportunity. (BNC)

These LVCs can be glossed as to *consciously decide, immediately decide, deliberately decide* and *instantly decide* denoting the equivalent simple verb forms and highlighting when the deverbal noun takes on the function of a simplex verb. As explained by Dixon (2005), LVCs with processual adjectives have simplex form counterparts that can co-occur with an adverbial phrase and its meaning is unaffected. This is why processual adjectives are accepted and regarded as a primary criterion for an LVC that takes a modifier in past studies (cf. Hoffmann, et al. 2011; Shahrokney-Prehn & Hoche, 2011). The infrequency of processual adjectives in AmE and BrE LVCs compared to descriptive adjectives should be acknowledged as a sign that the standard variants of LVCs may be too rigid.

Apart from the three types of modifier discussed above, another modifier that encompasses the properties of both processual and descriptive adjectives is found to be relatively frequent in MalE LVCs. Consider examples (27) to (30) from CMEF. More examples of such modifier can be seen in Appendix 3. This type of modifier has not been highlighted in other studies investigating English LVCs.

(27) but you would feel silly esp since you already **made the correct decision** to buy an old house in PJ S17.
(28) Last night i can see lots of ppl begging Sultan Azlan to **make a wise decision** by having a snap election....
(29) That's why I **took the bold decision** to tender(soon) first, even though I haven't found a new job.
(30) assumed even we **take the wrong decision** in making product, the rules will save us.

These adjectives – *correct, wise, bold,* and *wrong* have corresponding adverb forms if they are rewritten in simplex verb forms (i.e. *correctly decide, wisely decide, boldly decide, wrongly decide*). It is due to the presence of adverbial phrases in which the said adjectives can be easily turned into adverbs.
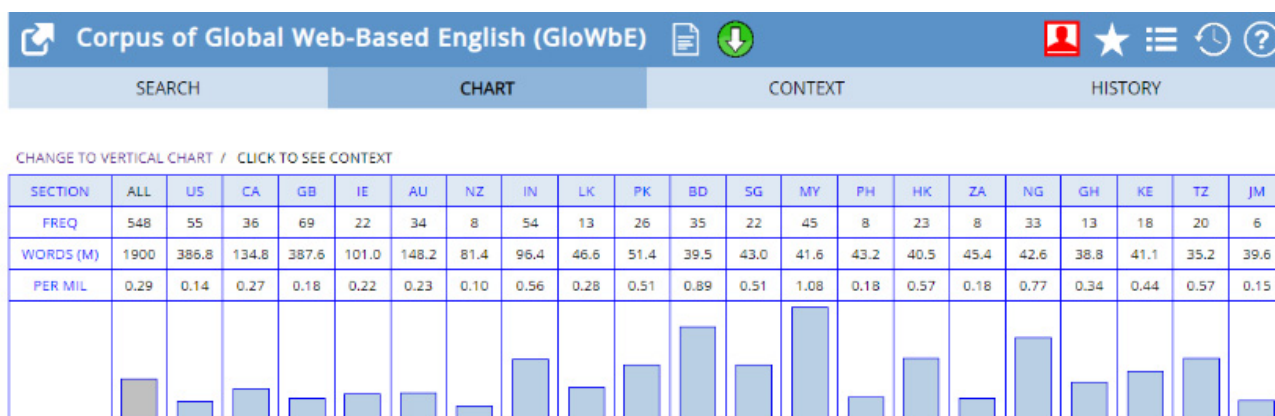
Named descriptive-processual modifiers, they are unique because on one hand, they describe the process of deciding, on the other hand, they explain the characteristics of the deverbal noun, *decision.* In other words, this newly identified single modifier can conjure both processual and object quality interpretations. It is argued that using adverbs (e.*g. wrongly decide*) instead of adjectives to modify verbs is odd (Brinton as cited in Ronan, 2019; Sinclair & Fox, 1990). Moreover, Sinclair and Fox (1999) stress that it is unnatural to use an adverb to explain the main meaning of a construction. Because of the rare and awkward adverbial form in the simplex verb constructions, LVCs co-occurring with descriptive adjectives are more commonly used.

The preference for modified LVCs is not only prominent in the present study but also in Giparaite (2017), Mehl (2019), Ronan (2019) who investigated ESL varieties and native varieties of English. As "the structure and schematic nature of LVCs provide a convenient mechanism for eliciting novel combinations" (Gradecak-Erdeljic, 2009, p. 12), it allows English users to provide detailed descriptions of the event encoded by the deverbal nouns. This shows the structure of LVCs is flexible enough to accept various modifiers.

5. Discussion

In general, MalE LVCs do not seem to follow the standard structure (as shown in Figure 1) because LVCs without articles are fairly frequent and prominent. The preference for descriptive adjectives in AmE, BrE, and MalE LVCs must be noted and given attention to.

A possible reason to explain the high occurrences of LVCs without article in MalE is influence from substrate languages. The substrate languages namely the Malay, Chinese, and Tamil languages used in Malaysia do not have articles *a, an*, and *the*. LVCs without article are also highly preferred in SgE and HKE (Mehl, 2019) as well as South Asian Englishes (Hoffmann, et al., 2011). A search for the string, *make decision* in the GloWbe corpus as shown in Figure 3 verifies the finding.

SECTION	ALL	US	CA	GB	IE	AU	NZ	IN	LK	PK	BD	SG	MY	PH	HK	ZA	NG	GH	KE	TZ	JM
FREQ	548	55	36	69	22	34	8	54	13	26	35	22	45	8	23	8	33	13	18	20	6
WORDS (M)	1900	386.8	134.8	387.6	101.0	148.2	81.4	96.4	46.6	51.4	39.5	43.0	41.6	43.2	40.5	45.4	42.6	38.8	41.1	35.2	39.6
PER MIL	0.29	0.14	0.27	0.18	0.22	0.23	0.10	0.56	0.28	0.51	0.89	0.51	1.08	0.18	0.57	0.18	0.77	0.34	0.44	0.57	0.15

Figure 3. The Distribution of *Make Ø Decision* in the GloWbE Corpus
(Search String: [Make] Decision)

As is immediately obvious, the zero article LVCs are uncommon in native speaker varieties based on unreliably low per million-word figures (i.e. not more than 0.3 pmw). Certain ESL varieties (i.e. Philippines, South African, and Jamaican English) exhibit lower frequencies while the majority demonstrate notably higher occurrences (i.e. Bangladesh, Nigeria, Tanzania, Hong Kong, India, Singapore, and Pakistan). Considering the speakers of English in these countries share almost similar substrate languages with Malaysians especially the vernacular languages (e.g. Tamil, Telegu, Punjabi, Malayalam Bengali, and Hindi in South Asia, Cantonese in Hong Kong, Malay and Chinese dialects such as Hokkien, Teochew, Hakka, and Cantonese in Singapore), the prominence of zero article LVCs can be

associated to Sharma's (2012) notion of accidental resemblance because their substrates share a common trait (i.e. zero article). The innovative zero article LVCs can therefore be claimed to have become a variant not only in MalE but also a few other postcolonial Englishes.

The acceptance of various types of modifiers by all three varieties of English in this study implies a deviation from the standard LVC structure. It is unexpected to observe the fairly low occurrences of LVCs taking processual adjectives among the supervarieties. Instead, LVCs accepting descriptive adjectives (as shown in Table 3) appear to be highly frequent followed by determiners across all three varieties. It is attested by Giparaite (2017) who found most LVCs (with deverbal noun *laugh*) in postcolonial Englishes (which include Singaporean, Hong Kong, Philippine, Indian, and Malaysian varieties of English) tend to co-occur with evaluative adjectives (e.g. *good, nice*) and size/extent adjectives (e.g. *big, many, great*). This situation is linked to the fact that "English nouns (also the deverbal nouns in this study) can be modified by adjectives and other nouns, various types of determiners, quantifiers, possessive pronouns and cardinal numbers" (Bonial & Pollard, 2020, p.18). It is also parallel with Brugman (2001) and Gradecak-Erdeljic's (2009) justification emphasising that quantifiers and modifiers in LVCs are adopted to transmit specific information and to ease the information-processing process. Modifiers seem helpful in enhancing clarity, transparency, and expressiveness. One specific LVC, *make/take an informed decision* occurs relatively frequent across all three regional varieties of English. *Informed decision* is an endocentric compound noun, which Malaysian are familiar with. Whether the adjectives should be treated as a modifier or as a part of compound noun requires further investigation. Also, more work is needed to understand the inclusion of different types of modifiers, such research should involve spoken and written data from as many ESL varieties of English as possible.

Variation in the modifier slot of MalE LVCs could be attributed to the simplification process, an effect of second language acquisition. The substitution method defined by Wong (1983, p. 138) as "reducing a more complex system to one that is simpler" could be a possible reason for the excessive use of the descriptive-processual modifier. Its occurrences in MalE LVCs are approximately two times higher than those in AmE and BrE (see Table 3). As highlighted in the previous section, several researchers investigating LVC only consider modifiers that can be converted to adverbial phrases in the corresponding simplex verb constructions (Dixon, 2005; Hoffmann, et al., 2011). It is regarded as an important feature of an LVC but it is not the case in this study. Constructing simplex verb forms may seem too complex among non-native English users. Given that the English language adheres to the subject-verb-object (SVO) sequence, the inherent rhythm of English generally necessitates an object to come after the verb (Gradecak-Erdeljic, 2009). For instance, when the LVC in example 28, *make a wise decision* is rewritten to its simplex verb form, *decide wisely*, the latter sounds incomplete while the former is more acceptable because it corresponds to the SVO sequence. Bonial and Pollard (2020) also state that because of the ease of modification, LVCs are preferred over their corresponding simplex verb forms. Therefore, LVCs co-occurring with descriptive-processual modifiers, which is also simpler and more natural, are favoured by Malaysians.

Findings of this study attest that standard LVC structure made up of light verb, indefinite article, and deverbal noun in isomorphic form may not necessarily be accurate to define English LVCs especially LVCs in the non-native varieties of English. Undeniably, the structural variants of MalE LVCs are more varied compared to the supervarieties specifically in the use of zero article and descriptive-processual modifier. AmE and BrE LVCs are seen to co-occur with definite article and descriptive-processual modifiers albeit not as frequent as those in MalE. This suggests the standard LVC structure is no longer rigidly adhered to even among the native speakers of English.

6. Conclusions

This study reveals that MalE does not conform to the standard LVC structure especially in the use of indefinite article. Instead, *make/take decision* without article are highly preferred in MalE compared to the supervarieties. Similar trend i.e. high occurrence of zero article LVCs is also observed in a few other postcolonial Englishes (Hoffmann, et al., 2011; Mehl, 2019). With regard to the choice of modifiers, MalE LVCs seem to favour descriptive adjectives and determiners. It is observable that even the supervarieties – AmE and BrE accept non-standard variants of LVCs like the descriptive adjective as modifier. Given that LVCs are made up of deverbal nouns, they are compatible with not only adjectives but also various types of determiners and quantifiers (Bonial & Pollard, 2020). This is probably why descriptive adjectives are preferred over processual adjectives (which is supposed to always co-occur with light verbs according to Shahrokny-Prehn and Hoche (2011) because it can be used interchangeably with its corresponding simplex form, e.g. *make an immediate decision* and *immediately decide*). To reiterate, LVCs with descriptive modifiers could offer detailed explanation and/or information in their respective contexts.

Although this study only investigated one synonymous deverbal noun, the commonly used structures of LVC in AmE, BrE, and MalE have been identified. The high occurrences of zero article LVCs and various forms of single modifier in MalE shows nativisation is in progress. Kachru's argument on the inevitable variation in outer circle Englishes due to nativisation (Van Rooy, 2019) is reflected in this study. The mutual influences between English and local languages (as depicted in the structural variants of MalE LVCs) have resulted in linguistic variability. The acceptance of nativised features across different codes in a multilingual setting like Malaysia is taking place. They are also deemed more suitable to be used in the Malaysian context rather than in the ENL contexts. It may also indicate this variety is slowly moving toward endonormativity. Taking into consideration zero article LVCs and LVCs co-occurring with various modifiers as characteristics of MalE lexicogrammar is reasonable but they must be treated with cautions due to the limitation mentioned earlier.

Future researchers are recommended to include and analyse more combinations of light verbs and deverbal nouns to validate the findings of this study. Considering all possible modifiers co-occurring with the deverbal nouns is equally important. Because deverbal nouns possess many formal characteristics of nominals, they can either take "all sorts of determiners, or none and they can be premodified or postmodified" allowing each combination to behave idiosyncratically (Claridge, 2000, p. 78). This study has revealed a number of new (i.e. descriptive-processual adjectives, compound nous) and old (i.e. determiners which include demonstratives, quantifiers, and negatives) modifiers. There are possibly more premodifiers and postmodifiers that have yet to be discovered.

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Appendix

Appendix 1. Descriptive Adjectives Accepted by *Make* and *Take Decision* in CMEF, BNC, and COCA

Make_Decision	
CMEF 140 types	admission, adult, bad, best, better, big, breakthrough, basic, bigtime, binding, business, buying, cabinet, controversial, court, clearer, clinical, certain, complicated, crap, creative, crucial, development, distribution, difficult, definite, dramatic, false, fanboy, favorable, final, first, financial, full, easy, economics, everyday, fast, faster, government, great, good, huge, hard, haste, human-level, important, inexplicable, informed, internal, investment, idiot, important, incomprehensible, informative, insensible, intelligence, interesting, juridical, landmark, last, long-term, major, mangkok, medical, mistaken, moral, non-biased, next, new, political, poor, panic, penalty, policy, populist, popular, professional, pro-government, provoking, purchasing, purchase, rationale, real, reasoned, regret, regrettable, regretful, righteous, rush, reasoned, religious, right, risky, shocking, shortsighted, same, sane, silly, selfish, sensible, similar, simple, single, smarter, snap, stupid, categorical, concrete, conscience, last-minute, rash, smart, solid, sound, harsh, illogical, internal, positive, strict, courageous, surprise, skeptical, snappy, stupid, slightest, smartest, ultimate, tough, ultimate, undivided, unethical, unpopular, unitary, unpractical, unwise, vital, weird, wiser, well-informed
BNC 177 types	active, bad, brave, crucial, definite, difficult, disastrous, final, genuine, joint, last-minute, low-quality, major, momentous, new, policy, political, popular, sensible, similar, vital, autonomous, early, erroneous, important, informed, irreversible, understandable, unwise, early, significant, agonising, audacious, best, critical, crucial, difficult, earlier, furnishing, hard, ill-advised, inevitable, irreversible, key, odd, planting, right, same, snap, tough, unselfish, unusual, better, effective, executive, exposed, harsh, realistic, balanced, business, close-run, conference, considered, fresh, given, late, lexical, long-term, perceptual, placement, preliminary, prescriptive, reasoned, selection, single, straightforward, supply, vital, well-informed, arbitrary, big, binding, certain, clear-cut, command, communal, compensating, complex, controversial, countless, critical, crucial, daily, deposit, disastrous, effortless, entrepreneurial, expenditure, facile, far-reaching, financial, fundamental, genuine, good, grand, hard, investment, local, managerial, moral, past, purchase, purchasing, real, basic, large-scale, prosecution, trade-off, treatment, unjust, unreasoned, weeding, planning, risk, eventual, initial, consensus, lending, second, adult, intuitive, investment, budgetary, career, cold, curious, day-to-day, delegated, discretionary, early, economic, erroneous, idealised, management, people, phoneme-monitoring, product-mix, profitable, responsible, risk, secret, stopgap, tactical, challenged, design, huge, unwise, commercial, corporate, intervention, eventual, college, actual, additional, marketing, employment, worst, organisational, land-use, allocation, admission, more-frequent, slower, administrative, bibliographical, particular, judicial, transfer
COCA 74 types	informed, good, better, tough, bad, difficult, important, medical, hard, smart, poor, financial big, better, major, final, instructional educated, snap, key, moral, certain, smarter, political, independent, ethical, unpopular, economic, educational, rash, sensible, stupid, musical, life-and-death, other, evidence, healthy, crucial, great, right, similar, data-based, fateful, calculated, snap, terrible, tactical, simple, reasoned, huge, momentous, horrible, well-informed, last-minute, stunning, life-changing, painful, best, controversial, only, biggest, ultimate, opposite, worst, agonizing, brave, unusual, actual, courageous, initial, fundamental, editorial, momentous, questionable

Take_Decision	
CMEF 9 types	informed, important, rash, stupid, difficult, necessary, right, safest, tough
BNC 11 types	interim, final, responsible, big, unpopular, informed, prickly, actual, policy, early, practical
COCA 77 types	final, right, considered, clear-cut, 20-round, risky, tough, terrible, principled, presidential, one-sided, fundamental, judicial, new, joint, stupid, reliable, political, definitive, definite, bolder, medical, toughest, unprecedented, ultimate, tragic, pragmatic, extraordinary, despicable, controversial, brave, bad, major, active, regrettable, recent, hard, controversial, big, difficult, unpopular, binding, clinical, decisive, simple, key, historical, difficult, death-penalty, certain, visionary, managerial, far-reaching, democratic, complex, artistic, unpopular, straight, social, real, major, human, risky, essential, disastrous, sensible, risky, revolutionary, future, practical, medical, important, historical, definitive, creative, commercial, arbitrary

Appendix 2. Processual Adjectives Accepted by *Make* and *Take Decision* in CMEF, BNC, and COCA

Make_Decision	
CMEF 17 types	collective, consensual, conscious, critical, drastic, firm, hasty, precise, prompt, proper, quick, rational, sincere, swift, thorough, unanimous, immediate
BNC 35 types	clear, conscious, deliberate, firm, hasty, mental, positive, professional, rational, swift, tentative, unanimous, verbal, ultimate, strategic, unconscious, careful, collective, quick, rapid, rational, temporary, explicit, immediate, instant, formal, free, intelligent, judgmental, private, desperate, tentative, creative, hasty, independent
COCA 16 types	wise, rational, intelligent, quick, critical, responsible, strategic, conscious, effective, hasty, firm, collective, clear, deliberate, irrational, mutual
Take_Decision	
CMEF 2 types	conscious, hasty
BNC 4 types	quick, deliberate, rational, instant
COCA 13 types	conscious, firm, strategic, unanimous, quick, unanimous, rapid, deliberate, blind, wise, strategic, rational, immediate

Appendix 3. Descriptive-processual Adjectives Accepted by *Make* and *Take Decision* in CMEF, BNC, and COCA

Make_Decision	
CMEF 15 types	bold, correct, different, fair, legal, unilateral, accurate, direct, reasonable, wise, honest, objective, personal, specific, wrong
BNC 12 types	wrong, specific, necessary, different, reasonable, wise, correct, personal, serious, honest, fair, appropriate
COCA 11 types	different, appropriate, unilateral, personal, correct, bold, reasonable, individual, serious, wrong, fair
Make_Decision	
CMEF 2 types	bold, wrong
BNC 3 types	fair, different, individual
COCA 9 types	bold, unilateral, wrong, appropriate, different, objective, personal, specific, correct

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