

An effective Use of Text features in improving writing quality

A case study of M.A English language students, college of languages, Sudan University of Science and Technology

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Abstract:

The purpose of this study is to investigate M.A Students of English language in using discourse knowledge and use of discourse features and its role in improving writing quality by examining (30) M.A Students to know to what extend those students are aware of using discourse features hence , ideational , interpersonal and textual .A descriptive analytical method was used in the study .Data were collected through diagnostic test for M.A students and was analyzed through semantic analysis , in addition to questionnaire for experts of English language from different Sudanese universities .The findings have showed that M.A students are weak in linguistic knowledge exhibit in their writing production .

It's recommend that M.A Students should strive to understand various features of texts are the best ways for students to use discourse and genres styles.

Key words: Discourse features, ideational features, Discourse knowledge .Use of Text features

المستخلص:

الغرض من هذه الدراسة هو تفصي معرفة واستخدام الخطاب ودور وظائف الخطاب في بناء القدرات الكتابية لدى طلاب الدراسات العليا. وشملت هذه الدراسة ثلاثون طالبا(30) من جامعة السودان للعلوم والتكنولوجيا لمعرفة المامهم بخصائص وسمات النص الكامل. واتبعت هذه الدراسة المنهج الوصفي التحليلي وجمعت البيانات باستخدام اداتين هما الاختبار التشخيصي لطلاب ماجستير اللغة الانجليزية واستبيان للأساتذة المختصين في مجال اللغة الانجليزية من مختلف الجامعات السودانية .

واختتمت الدراسة بعدد من النتائج اهما عدم ادراك هذه الخصائص وتفسيرها بشكل ايجابي لعدم ممارسة تحليل الخطاب أو النص كجانب من عملية التعلم

اوصت الدراسة بضرورة ممارسة وظائف النص التي لها دور في بناء قدرات الدارسين كما اوصت بتكثيف سمنارات وحلقات نقاش بصورة منتظمة لرفع المستوي المعرفي لدى الطلاب في المجال المعني .

الكلمات المفتاحية: سمات النص, تفصي معرفة وظائف النص , استخدام النص

Introduction:

Discourse analysis is study of language in use which extends beyond sentences boundaries hence adventuring to explore the structure and purpose of the whole

text the implicates of the practice of discourse analysis of the features yet Ideational , interpersonal ,and textual the main components of any discourse since text is basic unit of analysis .



User of language have to make sense of text as well as they have to Produce them. According to Thorn bury (2005), this is as true for second language users as it is for first language users. Kress (1985) states that 'language always happens as text and not as isolated words or sentences- from an aesthetic, social or educational perspectives; it is the text which is significant unit of language. Hence, adventuring to explore the structure and purposes the whole texts implication or implicates the practice of discourse analysis of features and uses of text has begun to play a crucial role in language learning as they allow a rich resource to be examined and explored in pursuit of getting some kind of sense from them and have access to the language and the culture, of which the text is realization. Learners of English face different challenges when confronted with a text, and so they mobilize a variety of text attack strategies as Scott (Ibid) calls them. These challenges entail both learners respond to text and creating texts.

This study presents a systemic functional linguistic analysis of two ways in turns it focuses on linguistic features utilized as receptive and productive i.e. the features that will present in this study in turns create a text of register. The study describes grammatical resources which are functional for expository writing which are divided under three main categories textual, interpersonal, and ideational resources. Hence, the three configuration are constitute text of register and result genres which attempts to describe how texts are structures, but it tries to account for these structures in terms of sociocultural force that shaped

them. Yet language develops through social experience M.A Students need to experience with kind of writing task an genres that will be required of them.

Grammatical features include the textual resource of thematic choice and development, clause – combing strategies (connectors and lexical cohesion, interpersonal sources metaphors, modality an ideational resources of nominalization and abstractions ideational. According to, (2010 ;) McCarthy, (1991) and Mohan, Lenung and Slater,(2010) who encourage language teachers to use a discourse rather than sentence level. Hence at discourse level evaluation EFL writing can be examined from different viewpoints in the field of applied linguistic one of the possible approach is discourse analysis (DA which "focuses on knowledge about language beyond the word, clauses, and sentences" (Paltridge, 2006, p2), thus it views language at the level of texts" (p.6). DA helps language teachers' focuses on the relationship between sentences rather than treating them as isolated pieces.

Discourse analysts have embraced the current linguistic perspective which interprets language as strategic, meaning-making resources.

Eggs, (1994, p.1) in other words, language is seen as a resource for meaning rather than system of rules Mohan and Slater,(2004 p. 255).

This is the systemic functional linguistic (SFL) interpretation of language developed by Halliday (1973, 1985). According to Halliday framework written or oral comprises central meaning or metafunctions, experiential, interpersonal and textual in turns result production text of register.

What Contextual analysis offer to language learners in terms of understanding their writing and reading strength challenges?

This study investigates the level of proficiency of Sudanese EFL university students in reading and writing while depending on discourse analysis, via engaging with text receptively and productivity. Hence, the terms discourse and text have been introduced as a unit of analysis beyond sentence level. McCarthy (1991) points out that discourse analysis has become of great interest to both EFL instructors and researchers for its potentiality to display the features which are more common and appropriate in the analysis and evaluation of written texts. This feature includes the grammatical features and discursal ones which EFL learners to be in need of mastery so as to identify and integrate entire compositions and reading or in comprehension such cohesion and coherence as well components of a text ideational, interpersonal and textual have been identified by Beaugarde and Dresser (1981) as two major standards of textuality. Discourse Analysis as tools or means explore connection between written discourse analysis and reading instruction with particular emphasis on text organization research and its impact on comprehension instruction over the past sixteen years research on discourse analysis demonstrated that text structure awareness has a strong impact or efforts to improve reading instruction. In an early review of the impact of text structures on reading, Pearson and Comperll (1981) at that time however

they rightly pointed out that little was known about use of text structuring for improved instruction fifteen years later, it is possible to report that is now considerable body of research evidence which support the use of discourse analysis and text structure as means for improving reading comprehension. Furthermore, text awareness as genres while reading in same way it displays in written text. Understanding these elements or components which are main features in written text via discourse analysis it raises learners proficiency and competent through realization of text content and features, linguistic choice, the three components of a text which are vital to perceive or realize by learners when they confronted any written text are mainly ideational interpersonal and textual and so on between them. There is confusion around the meaning of discourse analysis, since the term can be used in different ways, depending on the goals of research and depending on various regional schools of discourse research worldwide and depending on the developments of this fields Schiffrin (1994:39) explains the subject of the study discourse analysis is an utterance or text unit or a communicative event that is generally perceived as having a unifying.

The study provides the following questions

Do M.A Students show ability to compensate for their full linguistic competence?

Hypothesis of the study

M.A Students lack ability to compensate for their full linguistic competence.

Objectives of the study

The study tries to realize the following objectives:

The main objectives of the study are to investigate learners awareness of using discourse features and analysis in their learning giving better understanding of text features ,also it raise learners awareness on various discourse features and give the ability of linguistic choice as well as genres structures

Literature Review

Discourse Analysis Movement:

Chiang (1999) points out that focus on isolated sentence is not representative of actual communication. In evaluation of writing quality, writing assessment needs to be beyond sentences boundaries towards inter-sentential connections and discourse features. Discourse analysis, as defined by Crystal (1992, p. 909) is the study of continuous of stretches of language larger than a single sentences.

McCarthy (1990) elaborates that discourse analysis studies the relationship between language and context in which language is used. As it has been mentioned before discourse analysis as a new linguistic movement has been influenced by various disciplines including linguistics. Psychology and sociology. McCarthy (Ibid) explains that discourse analysts are interested in studying spoken and written language in use and this means that discourse analysis is not only concerned with the analysis of spoken form of language as some people may think.

In terms of written language, the work of text grammarians such as De Beaugrand (1980), Halliday and Hassan (1976),

Van Dijk (1972) contributed a great deal to analysis of written discourse, text grammarians as McCarthy (ibid) p.6, says: take the views that texts are language elements structures together in relationships with one another their interests have been in links between grammar and discourse.

With written discourse, analysis focuses their attention on the description and analysis of language, beyond the sentences level and on the context which affects language ion use.

Brown and Yule (1983, p. 190) confirm that discourse analysts are concerned more with the principle of connectivity which bind a text together and force co interpretation. Therefore, they usually try to draw a distinction between the concept of cohesion and coherence in the literature of discourse analysis. According to Richards and Schmidt's, (2002, p.307). In order to clarify the participants, processes and circumstances from the texts from lexico grammatical as "The linguistic resources which learners: drawn on in expressing meaning and communicative consequence depends on how readers views what is written for both English speakers and second language learners. Hence he goes to say EFL learners have to be aware of utilizing of the linguistics resources and grammatical features that are determined their expository writing he asserts that these learners have various background in terms of sociocultural, educational background in sense these different background result challenges in learning as well as utilizing the linguistic features.



Yet, again the importance of grammatical features or linguistic resources which are functional for expository writing are divided under three main categories: textual resources, interpersonal resources and ideational resources, the configuration of grammatical features make up the style of expository writing, furthermore, to clarify these features, and the grammatical features that are determined them i.e. the realizations of item from any written texts. Textual features it includes thematic choices and development strategies i.e. organizing information in written in sense of displaying information as exchanging processes as given information and old information, the first part of information is new information and given ones is old information thus. Further, combing clauses strategies it means the using connectors in expository writing, in addition lexical cohesion i.e. the using variety of meaning in text semantic which is makes texts are coherent i.e. readable and understandable. In easy or simple way to identify the grammatical features in textual in other words organizations of texts by using, words firstly, secondly, thirdly, and eventually or in conclusions. Also using of conjunctions or linkers and lexical cohesions in sense of using synonym, antonym, i.e. semantic features in texts to make it clear and not just random collections of words through a set of classes of words to avoid redundancy i.e. unnecessary information or words. Halliday and Butt (1985, 1994 and 2002). They state that in textual domain, there is must be a point of origin in for the message that is at the heart of the

matter we are concerned with labeled the theme, this forms beginnings of any clause and incorporate every event up to and including the first participants process or circumstances of the experiential meanings. Also the subject the clause this theme said to be marked as opposed to unmarked Butt, (2003) in cases where a clause begins with connectives, conjunctions or modals: these one refers to as typical and interpersonal themes respectively Martin and Rose (2003).

Interpersonal and its grammatical characteristics in texts. According to Halliday, he points out about grammatical features of interpersonal as well as the realizations of it he sorts two ways first, paralinguistic and linguistics tools, paralinguistic refers to body language, voice and linguistic tools here, mood, declarative, imperative and interrogative. It worth mentioning the functions of interpersonal tools for instance in political speech it uses for convening speakers messages like writing support for proposal and by using modality functions as modal verbs in political speech modal verbs can be understood in the way of making promise as high commitment by using verb will, can, also pronounces it shows distance of speakers to his audience you and we it indicates closeness or involvement together and so on. Yet Halliday and Thompson (2000, 2000 p. 57). They state that modality also plays an important role in carrying out interpersonal metafunctions of clauses showing of what degree the propositions is valid, modality refers to speak between yes, no.

the speakers writer opinions and judgment of the probabilities or obligations, involve in what he saying furthermore in written text modality it uses to show distant of writer by using passive forms and scientific text and it makes text clear by lexico-grammatical features.

Nominalizations are the most common form of ideational metaphor e.g. words inflation, gene, offense etc.

Ideational resources and its grammatical characteristics in texts. Nominalization and abstract concepts are the main ideational resources utilized by more successful writer. According to Halliday (1994), speakers of a language recognize "typical ways of saying things" as well as other possibilities which can use by speaker or writer. Typical patterns of wording are what Halliday called congruent. The most common change in meaning is form processes (verbs) where people and concert.

Research methodology

1-Research Method

This study is conducted through an analytical descriptive method as an appropriate way for investigating M.A students English language knowledge and using of discourse features in their learning.

2- Population

The sample of the this study selected randomly from the sample of the study consists of (30) M.A English language students from both , male and female ,for Academic year (2018—2019) at Sudan university of science and technology , college of languages .

3-Tools

In this study two tools were used to collect data. A test was used for M.A English language students , at Sudan university of science and Technology It analyzed statically using tables and figures and questionnaire for experts teachers of language from different Sudanese universities .

Students diagnostic test is first tools of the study which investigate learners ability in utilizing linguistic resources and discourse features the test was check their ability in writing essay how they incorporating the features of writing and analyzed their problems and challenges . The second tool utilized for collecting qualitative data in this study was an expert's questionnaire. It's randomly distributed to (20) English language practitioners from different Sudanese universities they gives their comments and attitudes.

Validity and reliability for Students' Test

The first draft of the test was present to supervisor who checked it in addition to Ph.D. holders and assistant professors who helped in proof reading and reviewing , to assure the validity of the test designed for the samples of population at the post graduate level four copies of the test were distributed to professors at Sudanese universities to give their evaluation and comments two of the experts consulted were Ph.D. Holders in status of associate professors and others in assistant professors.

Descriptive analysis of the statements:

Table (3) shows the overall statistical percentage of the hypothesis Hypothesis

Descriptive Statistics				
Statements	N	Mean		Std. Deviation
		Statistic	Statistic	Std. Error
s13	20	2.2500	.19022	.85070
s14	20	2.3000	.16384	.73270
s15	20	2.0000	.19194	.85840
s17	20	2.2500	.22798	1.01955
s18	20	2.4500	.18460	.82558
s19	20	2.2500	.25000	1.01803
Valid N (listwise)	20			

As indicated in the statistical above, in all statements of the hypothesis was greater than the hypothesis arithmetic mean, and this indicate approval of the research sample, all that was stated in

the expression, while the standard deviation ranges between 0.7-1.0,, and this indicates the research sample to be approved by the respondents.

Marks	0--9	10 -20	12--45	25- 50	Total
Number of learners	0	15	9	5	30
Percentage	52.2%	14.7%		29%	100%

Discussion and Results

2- Students Test Results

With reference to the table above it illustrates there are (15) of the respondents with percentage (52.2 %) answered or passed the test, while (14) of the respondents failed to pass the test properly. It's obviously that the number of the respondents who failed to pass test greater than those who successes in passing the test hence , it's clear that due to this result M.A Students of English language are weak in addressing communicative features of language use from this result it possible to say the hypothesis is accepted . Hence, it's clear that due to the result t hypothesis match with first question is accepted

Results of the questionnaire

The questionnaire was conducted to investigate challenges encountered by M.A students in using discourse features in their writing. With regard to first variable dealing with question (Are EFL Learners aware of communicative features of language use as internal part of their learning? All experts agreed that a communicative feature is not address sufficiently covered also agreed that communicative features are taught with less stress on them. This indicates that lack of practicing communicative features the main reason caused challenges for M.A students there for it has negatives impact on them. Another expert adds communicative features should be taught in text learning.



This shows that the first hypothesis (M.A English language students lack ability of using communicative features of language use this means that is approved by experts ideas mention above) Regarding of the variable of the second question) To what extent EFL Learners aware of Ideational, Interpersonal ,and Textual features of learning ? most experts agreed that there are many factors affecting M.A students of English language in using text components in their writing skills a great problem to M.A students one the expert adds that incorporating teaching text components , another expert commented that teachers should draw their attention in teaching discourse features . This, it is possible to say that the second hypothesis which indicates that (M.A English language students lack ability of their combing interpersonal, textual knowledge. With regard to the variables of question three (Do they show ability to compensate their full linguistic competence ? one the expert adds that learners should have competence to help them to deal with English language; or otherwise there is problem in system again he confirms for approving that lack of linguistic knowledge is major problem that is faced them It has been observed that all ideas support third which was (EFL Students lack ability to compensate their full linguistic competence).

Conclusion

As indicated in the statistical above results of the test and different views from experts represents as main challenging for M.A Students to use discourse analysis , as main features of written text ,linguistics resources as basic unit ,hence M.A Students need to be aware of communicative features and discourse

components in their writing from the results above show that M.A students are weak in using communicative features that introduce functions of sentences , establish relations between ideas and events therefor knowledge of language as main components of text is significance for students a great effort should be made by students to master discourse features of text . Hence ideational, interpersonal, and textual features in addition to above M.A Students need to adopt discourse analysis as model for learning English Language so as to enrich students with various features of text that naturally embodied in text because of many text arrived from cultural back ground of writers so as to develop students ability of analysis of larger unit rather than sentences level so it considered old model due to decontextualized text conversely using new model which is steering that language should be used with full context and larger unit. The study came out with M.A Students have showed weak linguistic knowledge and discourse knowledge in their performance. Based on the findings of this study, the following points are recommended:

- 5- M.A students of English language should familiarize themselves in utilizing discourse features and practice.
 - 6- M.A students should learn communicative features of writing in text as whole.
 - 7- Syllabus designers should include learning discourse features of texts as main sources of learning English
- M.A students should strive to understand various features of texts, practicing text features are best ways for students to use discourse and genres styles.



عمادة البحث العلمي
DEANSHIP OF SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH



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