

INVESTIGATING EFL COLLEGE LEARNERS' ATTITUDES AND DIFFICULTIES IN MASTERY TRANSITIONAL EXPRESSIONS IN WRITING SKILLS

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Abstract

This study aims at Identifying the constructions in which learners face difficulty in recognizing and producing transition expressions to help them master the difficulty they encounter and improve their performance in writing paragraphs. To achieve the aims of the study, null hypotheses have been put on after being subjected to experiment. The population of this study consists of all the MA linguistics students of the Department of English, at the College of Education / Misan University for the academic year 2018-2019. The total number of those students is (20)male and female . Fifteen students are randomly chosen as the sample of this study. The sample is randomly distributed as follow: (10) students for the purpose of experimental group, and (5) students for the purpose of pilot study form Basra University. during the second term of the academic year 2017-2018. The result of this research shows that there is a difference of the output of group, during the administration of the test (Pre-test and Posttest).

Introduction

1. The Problem and its Significance

Transition words can be divided into several categories, based on the type of transition you want to make. There are often several words available for one transition. Sometimes they mean exactly the same, sometimes there are slight

differences. If you're not a native speaker or struggle with language in general, you'll have to study and practice these transition words. That's the only way to understand which transition words fit which situations. Dealing with Transition words needs attention and thorough investigation as it represents a pedagogical problem for the advanced Iraqi learners of English as a foreign language. The present study attempts to investigate the advanced Iraqi EFL learners' mastery of Transition Words . To achieve this aim, the present study addresses the question are the EFL face problems in using transition words (recognition). Students often complain that they face difficulty in recognizing and using various types of transition expressions , a problem which needs due consideration. Some argue that the grammar textbooks used in colleges provide adequate discussion of these constructions while others maintain that the problem lies in teaching where less interest was given to these important areas in grammar. The present study tackles this problem through addressing the following research questions:

1. What aspects of transition expression are the most difficult ones for the advanced Iraqi EFL learners?
2. Are they facing difficulty in recognition the transition expression or in production, or both?

1.2 Hypotheses:

According to the research questions mentioned above, the review of literature, and the intuition, the current study hypothesizes that:

1. Advanced Iraqi EFL learners find more difficulty in using rather than recognizing Transition expressions.
2. Advanced Iraqi EFL learners find more difficulty phrasal transition expressions(to demonstrate this) more than individual words transition expressions(therefore).

1.3 Aims of the Study:

This study aims at:

3. Identifying the constructions in which learners face difficulty in recognizing and producing transition expressions to help them master the difficulty they encounter and improve their performance in writing paragraphs.

1.4. Limits of the Study:

This study is limited to a sample of MA students at the departments of English, College of Education for Humanities, University of Misan, During the academic year 2018-2019.

1.5 Value of the Study:

The present study is to

1. Predict to be helpful for the MA students of Linguistics since it focuses on certain problems they most often have in writing paragraphs.
2. It provides students with some knowledge which will contribute to make the students recognize and produce transition expressions more efficiently. The current

study tackles one of the most important problems in teaching grammar. It is hoped that the results and recommendations will be useful for teachers, syllabus designers, and textbook writers who are particularly concerned with this problematic area.

2. Theoretical Background and Review of Literature

2.1 Placement of Transition Words

Transition words can be used within a single sentence, between two different sentences or even between paragraphs. See how the writing below can be improved by adding transition words in each of these situations.

Original: Susan spoke, thinking of the right answer.

With Transitions: Susan spoke only after thinking of the right answer.

In this case, the transition words are used to connect two parts of a single sentence. This transition highlights chronology, or the order in which events occurred.

Original: Michael didn't have enough money to buy his mom flowers. He wasn't old enough to get a job. He felt sad on Mother's Day.

With transitions: Michael didn't have enough money to buy his mom flowers because he wasn't old enough to get a job. Nevertheless, he felt sad on Mother's Day.

The example above combines two sentences into one and helps a third sentence flow logically from the one before it. Adding these transition words shows how three disjointed sentences are related to each other, which otherwise might not be obvious to the reader.

When transitions are used between paragraphs, they are often in the form of a phrase or clause that refers to the previous information while introducing a new idea. These transitions often come at the beginning of new paragraphs and may use phrases like these:

1. In addition to point A, point B is also important.
2. In conclusion, the thesis is clear.

It follows logically that the answer results from the points made earlier in this paper.(Evan,2013:45;Joshi,2008:6; Jamison ,2012).

Many studies deals with testing writing skills for students such as Al-Obaydi&Al-Mosawi (2019) who study the effect of one type of dictation on students' writing skill.

3. Methodology

1. Experimental Design

In order to achieve the aims of the study (investigating the MA linguistics students mastery of transition words), the" Pre test- Post test Control Group Design", as shown in Table (1) is used as the experimental design needed to carry out the experiment of this study.

Table 1 The Experimental Design

group

Pre Test

Independent Variable

Post Test

2. Population and Sample

The population of this study consists of all the MA linguistics students of the Department of English, at the College of Education / Misan University for the academic year 2017-2018. The total number of those students is (20) male and female . Fifteen students are randomly chosen as the sample of this study. The sample is randomly distributed as follow: (10) students for the purpose of experimental group, and (5) students for the purpose of pilot study form Basra University.

3.1 Description of the Test

To judge the degree of success of the experiment, the researcher constructs a test from (10) items. The test was in the form of multiple choice questions and writing composition.

3.6 The Test Application

After finishing the teaching of the group by their own method, the researcher gave the post- test in 18/1/2018. The researcher herself corrected the test.

3.7 Statistical Tools

SPSS has been used to find the Statistic result as the T-Test and Pearson's Formula.

4. Results, Conclusions, Recommendations

1. The Post Test Scores

The result of this research shows that there is a difference of the output of group, during the administration of the test (Pre- test and Post test). It can be seen in the table (2) below.

Table (2) The Mean Score of Pre-Test and Post- Test of The Group

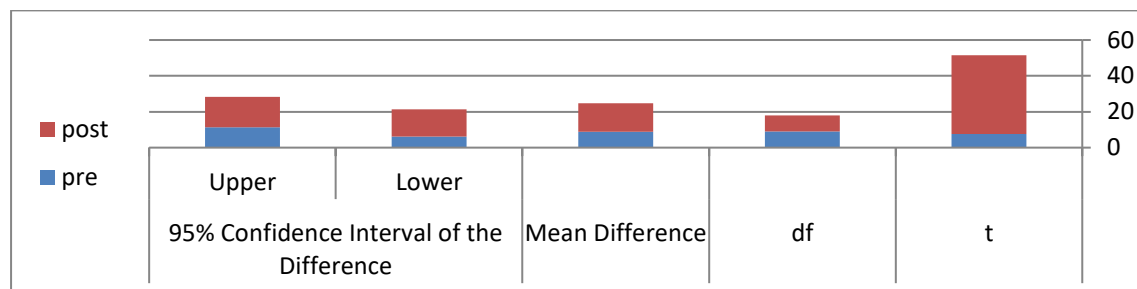
test	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
pre	10	8.80	3.64	1.15
post	10	16.0	1.15	0.36

The calculation shows that the t-observed is higher than t- table ($43.81 > 7.63$) for the degree of freedom df (9) at level of significance $\alpha = 0.05$. Therefore, alternative hypothesis (H_a) is accepted and null hypothesis (H_0) is rejected. It means that “there is a significant effect of applying the strategy to make the M.A Students in using transition words”.

Table(3)

The Results of the T-test Calculation

test	t	df	Mean Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
				Lower	Upper
pre	7.63	9	8.80	6.19	11.40
post	43.81	9	16.0	15.17	16.82



Graphic: The Results of the T-test Calculation

2. Conclusions

It is concluded that:

1. the M.A students are useless in employing transition words in their writing
2. Using strategy in teach the M.A students to employ transition words is effective, it enables the students to be more familiar with using transition words in their writing.

3. Recommendations

1. The M.A instructors should improve their students to use transition words and reduce their errors.
2. The students are recommended to use transition words in order to reduce the errors in their writing, and then the students will be able to determine it easily.
3. Before applying new strategy the instructors should prepare him or her/self and the material well in making students interesting in writing transition words.

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