

Lexical Repetition and Written Text's Unity from Gender Perspective: A Case of Languages and Translation Students at the University of Tabuk

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ABSTRACT: This research aims at investigating lexical repetition and written composition's unity produced by 60 Male and female students studying Languages and Translation at the University of Tabuk in Saudi Arabia for the academic year 2018 / 2019. The sample of the study was selected randomly. This study involves two research instruments are; Hoey's (1991) Matrix of Lexical Cohesion and a Semi-structured Interview. The findings indicated that lexical repetition plays a great role in the unity and coherence of the students' written compositions. This research recommends that further research be conducted to investigate other types of dialogues.

I. INTRODUCTION

English is one of the most commonly used languages in the world in which learning English as a second or foreign language is very significant. English language is used by about 328 million speakers worldwide (Lewis, 2009). In fact, the significance of learning English language is highly emphasized throughout different cultures and array of people that make up our global speech community. English language, nowadays, is the key for participating in the global communication and creating a sphere for modern life. It has a dominant position in science including technology, medicine and computer. English is the most widely used language in sectors such as business, trade, diplomacy, international organizations and companies, mass media and journalism, sport and youth life, music, education systems and most importantly in foreign language teaching. It is through all the means above that English language has found its way into many cultures (Mugglestone, 2006). In this connection, it is obvious that Arabic is the official language in Saudi Arabia where English is used as a foreign language for many purposes. English language in Saudi Arabia is commonly communicated in business, administrative, and political sectors and metropolitan sections of the country. It is sometimes informally spoken by the elite and educated populations throughout the country (Klebanov and Shamir 2006). But with regards to the academic environment in Saudi schools and universities, the significance of English language is limited to the process of enabling students to pass school exams and universities' entrance selection criteria. That is, teaching English as foreign language (EFL, hereafter) in Saudi Arabia has also undergone transformation just like other similar countries that consider the teaching of EFL as an educational and instrumental language that is necessary in all folks of life (Hyland, 2004b, 2004c).

Zheng (1999) demonstrates that learning the writing skill appears to be more protracted and stipulating compared to other language skills. So, the only motive for EFL students in different parts in the world to practice and exercise writing is to pass examination or to get a good grade in the writing class. Thus, this approach of students is to emphasise only on passing the examinations provides them no common sense of writing purpose. This results in the weakness and poor written academic literacy. Research has shown that English as a foreign language learners face problems not only in learning new vocabulary, words, phrases, syntactic patterns, and phonology, but also in acquiring discourse competence, sociolinguistic competence, interactional competence, and strategic competence (Diab, 1996). Consequently, the researcher concurs with different scholars such as Riegenbach (1999) who affirms that English as a foreign language learners should be given the prospect to investigate the systematicity of language at diverse levels including writing, particularly at the discursive level. Therefore, discourse analysis (DA, hereafter) as an approach had been established as more than a random set of utterances and displays interrelatedness (Sanders and Maat, 2001). Due to the relevance of writing skills to discourse analysis, varied models of discourse analysis have been proposed, outlined and

evaluated in terms of discovering the connectedness of the text (Tahaineh, 2009). In other words, discourse analysis can be used to confirm word sets that not only concentrate on the target content vocabulary, but that can also be used to show how coherence, cohesion and unity are generated in the written text (Halliday and Hasan, 1989). Essentially, there are proposals that facilitate English language learners to write more successfully and consistently if they are assigned in different activities supported by varied learning writing strategies. Victori (1999) proposes that EFL students should be taught strategies relevant to their writing tasks such as planning, organizing ideas and evaluating the unity of the written. Another significant and successful strategy to develop students writing is revising accompanied by focus on issues such as idea elaboration, coherence and cohesion (Gunning, 2000).

II. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

English is taught in Saudi Arabia as a foreign language whereby language learners at colleges and universities are expected to learn all the language skills basically reading, listening, speaking, and writing (Paltridge, 2006). But, most of EFL learners face difficulties producing coherent and meaningful sentence when they attempt to produce any piece of writing. One of the major problems is to write cohesively. These students who have undergone many years of studying writing at university level are still incompetent and unable to write coherently and create unified written text. EFL teacher demonstrate that the most common problem that their students complain about the inability to create cohesive written texts. In this regard, the researchers aim to adopt Hoey's (1991) framework to investigate the relationship between writing and speaking skills as a case study of English as a foreign language students at the Department of Languages and Translation at the University Of Tabuk, KSA and put forward some recommendations and suggestions to enable university students in Saudi Arabia to improve their writing quality and speaking skill performance.

III. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The main goal of this research study is to acquire data on lexical repetition and written text's unity from gender perspective by 60 male and female students at the Department of Languages and Translation at the University of Tabuk. In relation to this issue, this study aims to achieve the following objectives. i. To investigate the different kinds of lexical repetitions frequently used by male and female students in their written text. ii. To analyse how lexical repetition contribute towards the unity of students' written texts. iii. To examine the role of gender in using lexical repetition in written texts.

IV. RESEARCH QUESTIONS

In order to achieve the objectives of this research study, the present study aims at addressing the following research questions: i. What are the different kinds of lexical repetitions frequently used by male and female students in their written text? ii. How does lexical repetition contribute towards the unity of students' written texts? iii. What is the role of gender in using lexical repetition in written texts?

V. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Research on linguistic issues at discourse level has developed rapidly over the past two decades. Investigation of cohesion and coherence relations in writing at discourse level is one of the more specific areas that have gained prominence (Wang, 1998; Hyland, 2004b, 2004c). This significance of such studies cannot be denied as linguistic knowledge can be a helpful insight to provide solutions to language based-problems (Mourtaga, 2004). Bati (2012) conducted a study on relexicalisation that, as he asserted, intricately associated to the Kashmiri culture, and form a major portion of the Kashmiri cultural lexicon with reference to the categories as mentioned below: 1. Kinship terminology. 2. Modes of greetings. 3. Food. 4. Clothing. 5. Furnishing. 6 Structure of Houses. Bati asserted that relexicalisation is the process which signifies the process of language change. He states that there is a large list in the Kashmiri cultural lexicon consisting of new words and concepts that are used in place of the old ones. He found that Relexicalisation is an important process in the cultural lexicon of Kashmiri that helps to meet the challenges and demands of the contemporary times. The renamed (relexicalized) terms, as Bati (2012) mentioned in his study, make it possible to ease the way leading towards successful communication which was acceptable to the majority of people by avoiding obsolete terms and deficiencies. As a result for this study, Bati concluded that the process of relexicalisation had affected different spheres and a whole range of new terms had entered and enriched different spheres of culture. As was evident a good number of new terms had found place in food, clothing, greetings and kinship etc.

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