



Lexical and Grammatical Cohesive Ties on Elementary, Intermediate, and Advanced Iranian English Language University Students in Argumentative and Expository Writings

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Abstract

As far as the communicative essence of writing is important, cohesion is attended as a basic textual part both in developing organized texts and presenting the content realizable to the reader. Many scholars have sought the relation between the use of cohesive devices (CDs) and the students' proficiency level. To obtain more comprehension into this scope, this study reviewed some studies centralizing the use of CDs and the connection between the number of CDs and the students' proficiency level in argumentative and expository writings. The resolution of obtained data from several scholars of EFL/ESL has exhibited that there is somewhat connection between proficiency levels of students and the extent of using CDs in their writings. The aim of the current research is to study the amount of CDs used in argumentative and expository genres of writing constructed by university students and the relationship between the extent of using CDs and students' proficiency levels. The participants were native speakers of Farsi between 23 to 26 years old, studying English as a foreign language in universities of Ilam, Ahvaz, and Yasuj, Iran. The sample contained 18 male and 18 female students. They were asked to perform the Oxford Placement Test (OPT) in the first session and after a week they are asked to compose either argumentative or expository writing. The results displayed that the university students use more CDs in argumentative writings compared to expository writings. Likewise, the findings of the study have illustrated that the proficiency level has had a significant role in the extent of using CDs. That is, advanced students used more CDs in their writings compared to intermediate and elementary students and intermediate students have used more CDs in their writings than that of elementary students.

Keywords: Writing; argumentative writing; expository writing; cohesion; proficiency level

1. Introduction

Writing is known as a productive skill that the students can give their thoughts, opinions and impressions to readers. Because of it, students should arrange the language system well until to be perceived. In addition, the basic assertion of teaching writing skill has been expanding capability in developing a good writing. As stated by Caswell and Mahler (2004, p. 3) [1], the writing skill has been considered as the instrument for connection and a skill adopted in all perspectives of life. But, it is regarded a difficult process in the first language and even more sophisticated in the second language. Writing has been described as a process of putting thoughts into words to the target reader in mind (Byrne, 1988) [2]. According to McDonough and Shaw (1993) writing is noted as preliminary message oriented [3]. Hence, Mastering-writing skill has been very difficult and time consuming because of its nature and several factors linked to it. As stated by Grabe and Kaplan (1996) [4], unlike writing which is mastered through learning, speaking can be learned either in formal or informal situations. It is clarified that efficient writing needs a number of things. These are a high degree of formation in the extension of opinions, a high degree of precision to prevent ambiguity, the use of sophisticated structural ties for affirmation a careful selection of vocabulary (Hedge, 1988) [5]. Celce- Murcia and Olshtain (2000) [6] have argued that cohesion and coherence are two main attributes of well-written text that should be inspected in writing a text. Halliday (1994) has described cohesion as set of sources in making the connections in discourse which go beyond grammatical structure [7]. In addition, it is discussed that cohesion is a piece of investigation of the texture which considers the relation between the cohesion and other perspectives of text dependency (Martin, 2003) [8]. It is attempted to compare the inner