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Article

Path Design for Improving English Learners' Discourse Organization Skills Using Transfer Learning Models

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Abstract: This paper takes “transfer learning” as the research theme. Focusing on the issue of “learners' discourse organization ability”, it reveals the process of English transfer and innovative learning in the light of the teaching objectives, the transfer learning model and the concept of innovative thinking. Through the questionnaire survey and regression analysis, we explore the influence of English transfer and innovative learning model on English learners' discourse organization ability in the development of English teaching. The study shows that the standardized regression coefficients of the three measures of discourse organization (the number of small sentences in the reason explicative discourse step, the number of small sentences in the evaluative discourse step, and the discourse markers) in the English Transfer Innovative Learning Mode are 0.705, 0.256, and 0.188, respectively, which are highly correlated with the speaking performance. Moreover, it showed a significant difference ($p < 0.05$) between the high, medium and low subgroups.

Keywords: transfer learning; creative thinking; regression coefficient; degree of correlation; questionnaire survey

1. Introduction

As one of the five skills of English learning, the development of writing skills has always occupied an important position in English writing teaching [1]. However, English writing is a complex and difficult process, which reflects not only students' expressive and thinking skills, but also their discourse organization skills [2]. Most researchers have done multiple studies on English writing from vocabulary, grammar, syntax, and native language transfer, etc. Traditional writing instruction often focuses only on modifying students' linguistic and grammatical errors, while little research has been done on the relationship between native language writing proficiency and English writing ability, especially in the area of discourse organization [3-6]. As a result, although many Chinese students' essays are basically flawless in terms of sentence expression and grammatical application, they lack contextual coherence, have a confusing chapter structure, and lack the ability to establish the logical structure and layout of discourse patterns in English subjects [7-8].

In the course of research on ELLs' discourse organization skills it has been found that the theory of transfer learning model is more suitable for understanding the transfer of learning of meaningful declarative knowledge and better understanding of transfer of learning of skills [9]. Thus, the theory suggests that the transfer between two tasks varies with the number of generative tenses they share, and the more generative tenses overlap, the greater the amount of transfer [10]. Many researchers have viewed this phenomenon simply as a result of the negative influence of the native language, believing that students are disturbed by their native language thinking during the writing process in order to write texts with disorganized chapter structures [11-12]. However, the author believes that any language has the ability of deep sharing, which tends to play a facilitating role when certain features are similar or identical to the target language. Therefore, learners' discourse organization skills not only guide native language writing, but also transform them into favorable factors in second language writing thus guiding students' English writing [13-15].

This paper firstly introduces the theoretical foundation of transfer learning model and innovative



thinking, refines the basic idea of transfer learning, combines the idea and theory of transfer learning with innovative teaching by analyzing the actual problems of English teaching, and finally puts forward a new model of English transfer innovative learning. Taking 70 non-English majors who are Chinese native speakers in the class of 2024 of a university as the research sample, questionnaires were distributed, the survey results were analyzed and organized, and the effects of English transfer innovative learning model on English learners' discourse organization ability were explored by combining Pearson's correlation and post-hoc multiple comparative analyses.

2. Innovative Learning Model for English Language Transfer

2.1. Theoretical Foundations

2.1.1. Migration Learning Models

In educational psychology, migration, or the transfer of learning, has the basic meaning of the influence of previously learned knowledge and skills on the learning and acquisition of new knowledge and skills. Or the influence of experience acquired from one kind of learning on other learning, and some scholars define migration as some kind of influence of prior learning on subsequent learning. The learning transfer involved in this study mainly refers to the use of prior knowledge in new learning situations, i.e., it emphasizes how existing concepts and learning principles can be used in new situations. The nature of education determines the necessity and importance of learning transfer. Migration is the ability of learners to effectively apply the results of their learning in their future lives and careers, i.e., the changing use of knowledge, skills, concepts, methods, or principles and attitudes. It can be seen that the law of transfer is one of the most important laws of learning that affects psychological development. It can be said that migration is the continuation and consolidation of learning, and learning is improved and deepened by narrowing the border, so learning and migration are inseparable psychological phenomena of learning. The only difference between the two is that learning takes place in the same task, whereas transfer takes place between different tasks. Strictly speaking, there are no two tasks that are absolutely the same, and each task occurs in a specific time and situation. In fact, the manipulation of the same task at different times can sometimes be called "self-migration". The phenomenon of learning transfer is diverse and has been classified differently by different researchers according to different classification criteria, emphasizing different aspects of transfer [16].

2.1.2. Innovative Thinking

According to the new English standard, English migration innovative learning activities are a series of learning activities in which the teacher guides the learners to develop logical reasoning and argumentation based on the values behind the content of the discourse or the attitude of the author, to further deepen their understanding of the thematic meaning by appreciating the stylistic features and rhetorical techniques of the meaning of the discourse, exploring its relationship with the thematic meaning, and critically commenting on the author's viewpoints, etc., so as to enable the learners in a brand-new situation, through a new knowledge structure, adopt independent, cooperative and inquiry learning methods, make full use of language skills, carry out diversified thinking, creatively deal with new problems in unfamiliar environments, and carry out in-depth practice, so as to promote the transformation of language skills into literacy. It mainly includes learning activities beyond discourse such as reasoning and argumentation, criticism and evaluation, imagination and creation.

Combined with the emphasis on transfer innovation in the English curriculum standard, in the light of the actual situation and according to psychological research, transfer innovation needs to be defined. First of all, transfer refers to the use of knowledge that has been learned in a new situation, that is, the influence of existing knowledge on solving new topics. This phenomenon is prevalent in the learning of knowledge, skills and behavioral norms and has attracted widespread attention. The migration process is mainly composed of reviewing, associating, analyzing, analogizing and other interrelated and mutually constraining knowledge components, first of all, need to produce an initial impression of the problem, and then activate the brain through the impression of the relevant knowledge structure, and then unify to analyze the internal connection between the new problem and the old knowledge, to attribute the specific problem to the original knowledge structure, and then to produce a generalization of associations, unified The new problem is dealt with in a unified way, constituting a complete migration. Secondly, innovation is a variant application based on the original general application, which is a creative use of knowledge directed to real-life situations. Problem solving and innovation here are concepts of the same nature. Problem solving is not a simple application of already mastered concepts and principles (or rules), but the process of discovery must be included in the process of solving, and the result of which must be the formation of an innovative finished product of thinking.

2.2. English Transfer Innovation Learning Process

2.2.1. The General Process of Learning English

Authoritative representatives of second language acquisition divide English learning activities into three parts: input (absorption), processing (handling) and output (utilization). Language is an important tool for interpersonal communication, and the ultimate goal of language mastery is to realize interpersonal communication to some extent, i.e., to effectively master and apply the language in actual use. This is the teaching guideline that needs to be adhered to in language teaching. Therefore, when we talk about English learning activities, we should emphasize output (utilization) activities. The so-called output is the meaningful language output of the learners. According to Prof. Swain, output has the following four main functions in language acquisition: firstly, it improves expressive fluency, secondly, it helps learners who need to notice the distance between what they want to say and what they can say when they use the language, thirdly, it gives the opportunity to validate the comprehensibility of linguistic expressions and to monitor the accuracy of utterances, and fourthly, it helps learners to acquire the meta-linguistic knowledge of the target language. Although output improves the learner's control over the language, this control is not about whether the knowledge expressed can be reproduced, but rather about the learner's ability to use and transfer the knowledge received in the classroom, as well as the ability to communicate in the actual language, and the learner's ability to have a better idea of how well he/she has mastered the grammatical points of the words and what problems he/she still has, and what kind of learning is more beneficial to him/her, and so on.

2.2.2. The Basic Process of English Migration Innovation

After analyzing the general process of English learning, we can deeply explore the basic process of high school English transfer and innovation, which is specifically divided into knowledge mastery, knowledge adaptation and knowledge application, and in terms of knowledge information processing process, they correspond to the input, processing and output processes respectively, specifically referring to the learner's proficiency in English knowledge in the context of texts, the continuous adaptation of English knowledge in the context of regeneration, and the general application and creative application of English knowledge in problem situations [17]. The basic process of English transfer innovation is shown in Figure 1.

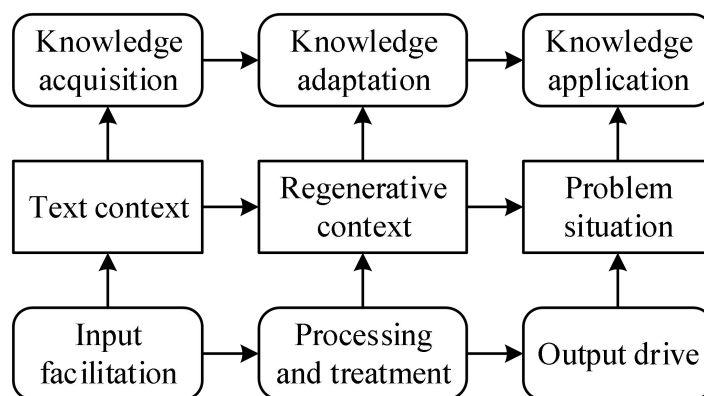


Figure 1. The Basic process of English transfer innovation.

2.3. Teaching Objectives

2.3.1. Developing Students' Positive Transfer Skills

Transfer of learning, that is, the influence of one kind of learning on another kind of learning, which is realized by the learners using the existing cognitive structure, based on the analysis and generalization of new knowledge. As long as there is learning, there is migration. Migration is not only the continuation and consolidation of learning, but also the conditions for improving and deepening learning, learning and migration are inseparable. Positive transfer ability is the comprehensive quality of applying learned knowledge to new situations and solving new problems. In the process of English teaching, if teachers are good at cultivating students' positive transfer ability, students' English learning will get twice the result with half the effort.

2.3.2. Cultivating Students' Motivation, Attitude, and Ideology in English Learning

In foreign language learning, psychological barriers are common: sometimes the motivation to learn is not correct; sometimes the perseverance is relatively lack of, feel that the foreign language is difficult to learn; do not dare to communicate with others in a foreign language, for fear of making a mistake and being laughed at; in the process of learning, sometimes the attention is not too focused. Self-confidence is sometimes insufficient; some students are not too interested in foreign language learning. If students don't have positive and correct learning attitude, they can't learn English well. Therefore, we should first change students' viewpoints, guide them correctly and make them clear about the importance of learning English.

2.3.3. Developing students' SKILLS in Learning Methods

Students used to learn English by memorizing words and texts, not thinking at all and relying on their own rote learning. Therefore, we need to teach students the right way to learn. The psychology of foreign language education points out that different learners can use different ways to accomplish learning tasks. When it comes to students' learning styles, they are categorized into thoughtful and impulsive, context-dependent and context-independent. Impulsive students rush to answer questions, respond quickly, and like to use their hunches to guess when there is no correct answer; deep-thinking students pay attention to the breadth of the situation and appear calm and self-assured, but they cannot do their homework properly, are easily distracted, and cannot concentrate on their studies for a long period of time. In foreign language learning, context-independent students are good at consciously learning the language form of a foreign language; context-dependent students are good at subconsciously learning a foreign language in the natural environment of communication. Therefore, teachers should guide students to adopt suitable learning methods according to their cognitive characteristics and teaching contents.

3. Impact of the Innovative Learning Model of English Language Transfer on Students' Discourse Organization Skills

3.1. Purpose and Methodology of the Study

The purpose of this study is to analyze the writing test (a set of Chinese compositions and English compositions with the same topic written by Chinese students) in order to explore the effect of the innovative learning model of English transfer on English learners' discourse organization ability, and apply it to the practice of teaching English in college, whose experiments have validity and feasibility. It is expected that this study can provide Chinese college English teachers with some methods of teaching English writing, and urge more teachers not to neglect the improvement of students' chapter construction ability in addition to emphasizing grammar and syntax in writing teaching.

The above questions are mainly to verify and further explore the previous research. The participants in this study were 100 non-English majors whose native Chinese is spoken in 2024 from a university. In order to better understand the English writing ability of non-English major college students, so as to adjust the teaching strategy in the future writing teaching, firstly, according to the writing ability requirements of college students in the College English Teaching Syllabus, the "English Writing Survey of College Students" was compiled. A total of 80 questionnaires were distributed and 80 valid questionnaires were collected, mainly from three aspects: students' use of Chinese in English writing, whether they are clear about the differences between mother tongue and English discourse organization, and the application of mother tongue strategies in English writing. In order to increase the reliability and validity of the writing test, the questions of this test were derived from the CET4 test questions, called "Positive and Negative Factors of Exercise" and "Limiting the Use of Single-Use Plastic Bags", and the fifteen-point scale was converted to a 100-point scale for the purpose of calculation. First, they were asked to write an essay of at least 600 words on the topic in Chinese, and two weeks later they were asked to write an essay of at least 200 words on the same topic in English. The same essay title is used to avoid affecting the quality and length of the essay due to different topics. Subjects will be divided into high and low groups based on their Chinese writing scores. In order to reduce the subjectivity in the grading process, the teachers of the two Chinese language and literature majors and the two English majors will score according to the grading rules and take the average of them. The scoring rules of CET4 and the composition scoring rules of the Chinese test paper of the adult college entrance examination will be revised from three aspects related to the perspective of discourse organization, namely content, discourse mode and cohesion, and the scoring criteria of this test will be used, with content and discourse mode accounting for 30% of the total score, and cohesion words and grammar accounting for 20% of the total score. Table 1 lists the statistics of test descriptions.

Table 1. Test description statistics.

			N	Full distance	Min	Max	Mean	SD
First group	Chinese writing test	High group (group 1)	40	35	64	96	76.80	10.025
	English writing test		40	38	64	98	78.12	9.005
	Chinese writing test	Low group (group 2)	40	44	35	78	51.36	9.612
	English writing test		40	48	15	62	42.68	10.574
Second group	Chinese writing test	High group (group 1)	40	32	67	97	80.46	8.447
	English writing test		40	28	70	97	81.47	8.296
	Chinese writing test	Low group (group 2)	40	56	36	90	55.98	10.034
	English writing test		40	44	27	65	50.36	9.027

3.2. Data Collection and Analysis

According to the survey on the current situation of college students' English writing, it is found that all the college students participating in the survey will use Chinese to review and conceptualize the topic in English writing, and most of them will use Chinese to check whether the sentences are clearly expressed or to organize the articulation and coherence of the parts of speech, and they hold a positive attitude towards the strategy of using Chinese in English writing. However, few students consciously think about the differences between English and Chinese parts of speech and the differences between the use of English and Chinese articulators in English writing. Accordingly, we can see that Chinese language has a great influence on non-English majors in the process of English writing, and most of the students rely heavily on the English transfer of innovative learning modes, especially the use of language generation and language transformation is unavoidable. There is also a certain correlation between students' individual differences and the use of native language strategies, and there are gender differences in students' use of the English Transfer Innovative Learning Mode, with male students relying more on the use of the English Transfer Innovative Learning Mode, and students with poor English grades preferring the use of the English Transfer Innovative Learning Mode in the process of English writing than their counterparts with good grades.

3.3. Results and Discussion

3.3.1. Correlation between English Learners' Discourse Organization Skills and Speaking Performance

Through Pearson correlation analysis, we can derive the correlation coefficients and significance of each measure of discourse organization and speaking scores in the English Transfer Innovative Learning Model. As the results are shown in Table 2, only the reason explanation step among the features of discourse steps reaches a significant correlation with the speaking performance. In the case of pointing and evaluating steps, the correlation with speaking performance was not significant. Among the reasoning steps, the number of steps was moderately positively correlated with speaking performance, while the number of clauses was highly positively correlated with speaking performance. Discourse markers were also significantly positively correlated with speaking performance. The number of steps in the reasoning step represents the number of reasons expounded by the producer of the discourse, whereas the number of clauses included may reflect to some extent the adequacy of the expository discourse on the reasons. Therefore, the number of clauses and the use of discourse markers in the reasoning step largely determine the quality of the step, the discourse, and even the discourse.

Table 2. Correlation coefficient.

Measuring index	Oral performance
A number of words in the sentence	-0.165
The reason explains the step	0.400**
Reason explains the number of words	0.776**
Evaluate the number of words	0.236
Word markup	0.402**

In order to further examine the explanatory or predictive power of each measure of discourse features on speaking performance under the English Transfer Innovative Learning Model, multiple stepwise regression analysis was used to test the variables of discourse step features as independent variables and speaking performance as dependent variables. The results are shown in Table 3. From the R^2 and adjusted R^2 in the table, it can be learned that the model has reasons to explicate the number of small sentences in the talk step, evaluate the number of small sentences in the talk step, and discourse markers three variables entered into the regression model, and together they can explain about 65.8% of the variance of the speaking performance.

Table 3. Regression model summary.

Model	R	R^2	Adjust R^2	Standard estimation error
1	0.774	0.598	0.594	5.2563
2	0.804	0.663	0.635	4.9784
3	0.820	0.675	0.658	4.8154

The values of standardized regression coefficients are shown in Table 4, which shows the explanatory power of the degree of influence of these three independent variables on the dependent variable of speaking achievement, and the standardized regression coefficients of their three variables are 0.705, 0.256, and 0.188, respectively. which are much lower than the standard deviation of speaking achievement, which indicates that the three variables are more accurate in predicting the speaking achievement. From the above correlation and multiple regression analyses, it can be seen that the greatest degree of correlation with speaking achievement is the number of steps in the cause elaboration discourse step, the number of clauses, and the discourse marker language. This indicates that the topicality, adequacy and organization of core steps are the most important factors of speaking quality, and because of the strong generality of the steps and the high degree of homogeneity of the structure of the steps in the same discourse type, the characteristics of the steps in general are not significantly related to the speaking performance. In addition to the greater explanatory power of the number of clauses in the expository step, the number of clauses in the evaluative step also had some explanatory power on speaking performance, suggesting that the completeness of the step is also an important factor influencing raters' scores, especially when the evaluative step is located at the final stage of the speaking output. Unlike “a good start is half the battle”, it may be true that “a good finish is a guarantee of a good grade” in oral output, as the end of the discourse may leave a deeper impression on the rater. Finally, the use of discourse markers enhances the organization of the discourse, and accordingly, the higher the speaking score.

Table 4. The regression coefficient of the index.

Mode 1		Nonnormalized coefficient	Standard coefficient t	Standard coefficient t	t	Sig.	Common linear statistics	
							Tolerance	VIF
1	Constant	46.784	2.386		20.014	0.001		
	Reason explains the number of words	0.785	0.089	0.774	9.263	0.001	1.000	1.000
2	Constant	45.786	2.289		20.163	0.001		
	Reason	0.784	0.080	0.778	9.778	0.001	1.000	1.000

	explains the number of words					1		0
3	Evaluate the number of words	0.820	0.294	0.225	2.847	0.001	1.000	1.000
	Constants	44.251	2.322		20.096	0.001		
	Reason explains the number of words	0.714	0.086	0.705	8.613	0.001	0.874	1.156
	Evaluate the number of words	0.927	0.296	0.256	3.268	0.001	0.970	1.036
	Word markup	0.517	0.268	0.188	2.189	0.001	0.853	1.189

3.3.2. The Power of Discourse Organization to Differentiate between High, Medium and Low Subgroups of Ability

In order to find out whether the parameters and measures of discourse organization have discriminatory power on the level of oral performance, the subjects in this study were divided into three groups according to their performance: high and low. The high subgroup consisted of 25 individuals. 25 in the middle subgroup. 30 people in the low subgroup. The results, as shown in Table 5, reached significance ($p < 0.05$) for the tests of the number of steps in the reason elaboration discourse step, the number of clauses in the reason elaboration discourse step, and the discourse markers.

Table 5. Description statistics and variance analysis results.

Index	Total		Scoring group		Medium grouping		Low group		F	P
	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD		
A number of words in the sentence	2.56	1.998	2.26	1.594	2.58	2.140	2.86	2.257	0.396	0.674
The reason explains the step	4.45	1.263	5.13	1.214	4.42	1.046	3.82	1.168	6.594	0.004
Reason explains the number of words	2.45	8.082	34.58	6.657	26.38	5.897	20.39	4.778	30.024	0.001
Evaluate the number of words	1.28	2.225	2.03	3.114	1.37	1.785	0.54	1.210	2.563	0.089
Word markup	6.30	2.884	92	3.112	5.96	2.623	5.12	2.180	6.198	0.005

Further examination of the discourse organization measures across achievement levels results are shown in Table 6, where specific differences in the number of clauses in the explicative discourse step on the high scores were analyzed with post hoc multiple comparisons. Significant differences were presented between the high, medium, and low groups, suggesting that the number of clauses in the explicative discourse step can be used to differentiate between the different achievement level groups. The number of steps in the expository talk step and discourse markers were only significantly different between the high and low subgroups. The other two measures did not show significant differences and

could not be used to distinguish between achievement level groups. These results can be summarized by saying that the number of clauses in the elaborative discourse step has a greater discriminatory power on the level of oral performance. Second language level is the most important factor affecting students' discourse structure awareness and structural integrity of speech samples; the higher the second language level, the stronger the discourse structure awareness, the more structurally complete the utterance step, and the more adequate the output of the utterance step. Finally, as a whole, the illustrative discourse produced by English majors is still loose in structure, and there are still some deficiencies in expository adequacy and discourse markers. It is reasonable to infer that our senior English majors (aged between 20 and 22) and native-speaking adolescents (aged between 13 and 19) perform relatively similarly in terms of discourse organization.

Table 6. Multiple comparison analysis.

Variable	High - medium grouping (adjacent group}	Middle and lower groups (adjacent groups)	High - low group (non-adjacent group)
A number of words in the sentence	-0.302	-0.262	-0.568
The reason explains the step	0.754	0.546	1.293*
Reason explains the number of words	8.154*	5.642*	13.789*
Evaluate the number of words	0.804	0.728	1.536
Word markup	2.003	0.859	2.864

4. Conclusion

This paper combines the theoretical basis of transfer learning model and innovative thinking, gives a proposed new model of English transfer innovative learning, and uses regression analysis and post hoc multiple comparative analysis and other methods to explore the impact of English transfer innovative learning model on English learners' discourse organization ability. The results show:

(1) The number of small sentences in the cause elaboration step, the number of small sentences in the evaluation step and discourse markers have a large degree of correlation with speaking scores, and the English transfer innovation learning mode largely determines the quality of steps, discourse steps, and even discourse parts.

(2) The number of steps in the Reason Elaboration Discourse Step, the number of small sentences in the Reason Elaboration Discourse Step, and the Discourse Marker Language reached significance ($p < 0.05$) for the high, medium, and low group tests.

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