



Tenses in Academic writing

Master 1

2020

Introduction

According to the Writing centre, there are three tenses that make up 98% of the tensed verbs used in academic writing. The most common tense is present simple, followed by past simple and present perfect. These are the main functions that these three tenses have in academic writing.

Present Simple

Present simple is the most common tense in academic writing, and it is usually considered as the “default” unless there is a certain reason to choose another tense (e.g. a sentence contains a past time marker).

The present tense is used to :

- To frame a paper. It is used in introductions to state what is already known about the topic, and in conclusions to say what is now known

Critical Discourse Analysis of the Image of Arabs

Chapter One

Introduction

This chapter provides an overview of the study. It starts with highlighting the importance of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) as a linguistic research tool. Then, the problem of research is illustrated followed by a description of the context in which this study has taken place and an explanation of why it is needed. This chapter also offers an account of questions, the objectives, the method of analysis used as well as the limitations of the study. Finally, it offers operational definitions and an overview of the thesis.

5. CONCLUSION

Discourse analysis is a relatively new scientific paradigm for the study of language, and all of its components at a level higher than that of the individual sentence — the level of discourse. To attempt to define it in a few words would be an impossible task. An uninitiated reader of our two issues might well find themselves in the same position as the blind men in Saxe’s famous poem about the elephant. The answer to the question: *What is Discourse Analysis?* depends entirely on what part of it one approaches for the first time; what specific tool one picks up and attempts to use on discourse.

As the papers collected in these two volumes amply demonstrate, Discourse Analysis is a rich and diverse field of research, capable of uncovering important insights, across a broad range of academic disciplines. Within its bounds, it encompasses many heterogeneous approaches to discourse, many analytical tools and methodologies. It comprises many schools of thought that have evolved over time, some of which have disappeared but left crucial traces for their successors to inherit and incorporate in their own approaches. Increasingly, as has been pointed out above, Discourse Analysis is a multidisciplinary scientific field; it is not confined to Linguistics but has been adopted by other

➤ To point out the focus, main argument, or aim of the current paper

a. Purpose

CDA of the three selected articles aims at analyzing the lexical, syntactic, and semantic features exhibiting the writers' ideologies towards / against Arabs and therefore determining the Arab picture portrayed. In addition, the image of Arabs reached by a group of readers through their impressionistic reading is compared to the image reached by the CDA towards finding the significance of the CDA in exploring the hidden meanings and ideologies that shape the pictures portrayed in the discourse of the press. In this way, the objectivity of the results obtained is ensured by the use of various analytical techniques: the scientific method of analysis (Critical Discourse Analysis) used by the researcher, the impressionistic reading / meaning reached by the readers.

b. Instruments

a. Purpose/s

The purpose of conducting such analysis is to find out whether the impressionistic reading done by the ordinary readers in real life situations (authentic contexts) provides the same results of meaning (image of Arabs) as those of the analytical reading done by the researcher. The rationale for using readers is based on Hillier and Stubbs (2004) who believe that readers are involved especially with those controversial texts tackling politically biased matters to provide the appropriate support/ guidance/ protection against the ideological bias that the researcher might fall into. Their judgments are made sense of by referring back to the language of the text.

- To make general statements, conclusions, and interpretations about findings
- To refer to tables or figures.

It can be said based on the results reached in the above table that the image of Arabs in both The Washington Post and Newsweek is negative (13 out of 14 articles showed a negative image) as the writers' attitude is mostly against Arabs (8 out of 14 articles). Even when one writer is in favor of Arabs (for Arabs) and four are neutral in their illustration of the topic,, the overall image of Arabs in the four articles is still negative. The following table summarizes the results of the content analysis as follows:

Table 43: A summary of the findings of the content analysis:

The Linguistic features	<u>The Washington Post</u>	<u>Newsweek</u>
Themes	Bias against Arabs	
Context	Political and Social	Political and Religious
Sources	American / indirect quoting and Arab /	Arab / indirect quoting

The Past Simple Tense

Generally, past simple is used to refer to actions completed in the past. Some specific functions this tense has in academic writing include:

- To report specific findings of a previous study (usually with the authors' names in the sentence) to support a general statement.

The Problem of Research

Arabs were portrayed in negative light in the media long before the attacks of September 11, 2001 on the World Trade Center which gave news organizations a giant story to cover. An overwhelming majority of the American public turned to their newspapers and magazines for information and explanations relating to the attacks. Arabs who replaced other minorities and ethnic groups e.g. blacks and Jews as subjects of the discourse of the press before the events were considered the suspected doers of these events. The current study seeks to explore the effect of the September 11, 2001 events on the old portrayed image of Arabs by the critical analysis of the discourse of specified article published in Newsweek and The Washington Post immediately after the events to see if the image has changed or remained as it was.

- To describe the methods or data from a completed experiment.

The results of the archive search, which provided a contextualization of the 11th of September, 2001 events by considering the frequency of articles written on Arabs after the events, specifying the sections in Newsweek and The Washington Post with the highest frequency of articles related to Arabs to draw articles from for analysis and determine as well the writers who wrote most on Arabs in Period III, are very important as a preliminary stage in the analysis of articles towards identifying the portrayed image of Arabs. These results are as follows:

- To report results of the current empirical study.

As language learners, the first-year students of English at Biskra University lack motivation, more precisely intrinsic and integrative motivation. Indeed, the students' questionnaire results revealed that students study English mainly for passing exams and not for the sake of learning the language and knowing about its culture and history. Besides

➤ After any past time marker.

these relationships between discourse and society is itself a factor securing power and hegemony.

Power can be exercised in discourse and over discourse especially in the relations between the media and politics. In the power over discourse issue which is a matter of access and which is best exemplified in media, powerful politicians have more access than less powerful ones while most people have no access whatever. In addition, certain powerful politicians are cited as sources and are subjects for interviews while others are not. Similarly, relating the previously mentioned idea to this research, writers in the press have the opportunity/ freedom to choose the topic or event to be tackled, the angle from which it is illustrated and the point/s of view to be highlighted or mitigated.

The Present Perfect

Form:

Have/has + past participle

The Present Perfect

Functions:

According to Writing center, this tense has four functions:

1) To introduce a new topic.

Ex: There **has been** a large body of research regarding the effect of carbon emissions on climate change.

Conclusion

Motivation has been called the neglected heart of language teaching. As teachers, we often forget that all of our learning activities are filtered through our students' motivation. Without it, there is no pulse, no enthusiasm; i.e., no life in class. A great deal of research (since a long time) has been done in the area of motivation and why it is so fundamental to second language learning. The underlying issues related to motivation are complex, but it is clear that every person's motivation to learn is flexible rather than fixed.

The Present Perfect

Functions:

- 2) To summarize previous research with general subjects (such as “researchers have found..”)

Ex: Some studies **have found** that girls have significantly higher fears than boys after trauma (Pfefferbaum et al., 1999; Pine and Cohen, 2002; Shaw, 2003).

Inadequate research has been carried out in the area of collocation. Although some researchers have shown interest in collocations, extensive research still needs to be undertaken to highlight its practical importance in improving EFL learners' overall linguistic competence. The topic of collocation raises many questions concerning the measurement of learners' collocational competence, the best methods to teach collocations, or the types of collocations to emphasise on. In order to be able to answer these questions, it is necessary to, first, identify difficulties in mastering collocations (Nesselhauf, 2003). This

The Present Perfect

Functions:

- 3) To describe previous findings without referring directly to the original paper.

Ex: It **has been shown** that biodiversity is not evenly distributed throughout the world.

The Present Perfect

Functions:

- 4) To point out a “gap” in existing research: how is the past research relevant to the paper’s current research.

Ex: While these measures **have proved** to be reliable and valid predictors of what they are measuring, there is little data on how they relate to each other.

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Less Used Tenses

The future

Generally, the content of a research would refer to something that has already happened, so the future tense is less likely to be used in dissertations:

It is more used in research proposals

- 'going to' future: going to + verb
going to research
- future simple: will + verb
will research
- future continuous: will + be + verb + ing
will be researching
- future perfect: will + verb + past participle
will have

Less Used Tenses

The future

This research will explore these questions in an attempt to bring some clarity to the actual situation of teaching English at the University of Biskra and to the actual roles of the teachers and learners in the teaching-learning process.

7. Structure of the dissertation

In this research-work, we will provide a literary survey on the role of motivation in foreign language learning. We will shed light on the teacher as an agent of change, then we will present the ways of teaching communicative skills through describing some strategies in developing communication. The dissertation consists of four chapters.

... with the development of psychological views and

Less Used Tenses

The Continuous tenses

The continuous tense express something temporary; thus, they are not used often:

- present continuous: is/am/are + verb + ing
are researching
- present perfect continuous: Have/has + been + verb + ing
have been researching
- past perfect continuous: had + verb +ing
had been researching
- future perfect continuous: will + have + been + verb + ing
will have been researching

Less Used Tenses

The past perfect

The past perfect situates one activity in the past before another activity. It is sometimes used in academic writing:

- past perfect: had + past participle
had researched
- past perfect continuous: had + been + verb + ing
had been researching

Notes/Conclusion

- Tenses in citations: the present for **the living** and the past for **the dead**.
- Tenses **must be** constant
- Changes occur when **necessary**

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