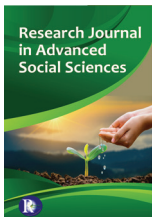

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Examining the challenges experienced by trainee teachers in use of transitional devices to achieve cohesion in writing in St. Francis and St. Teresa's Colleges of Education, Ghana

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Abstract
Transitional devices are crucial in achieving cohesion inwritten communication. This study was conducted to investigate the challenges trainee teachers experience with using these transitional devices to achieve cohesion in writing in St. Francis and St. Teresa's Colleges of Education. The study used thematic analyses to examine data collected from two hundred and forty trainee teachers and eleven tutors from the two colleges using essays and semi-structured interviews. Sampling was done using simple random sampling and purposive technique to select the trainees and census sampling for the lecturers. The findings showed that the trainee teachers have problems with the use of transitional devices because they misplace the transitions, omit the transitions in certain instances, use nonstandard forms of the devices, wrongly spell the devices, and use them incorrectly in terms of grammar.

Keywords: challenges, cohesion, trainee teachers, transitional devises

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1.0 Introduction

Studies have proved that writing is indispensable to civic and academic life, that cohesion plays a very important role in writing and that the use of transitional devices is one main ways by which cohesion and coherence can be achieved in various writing forms. Some of these researchers have looked at the factors that influence students' use of transitional devices (Aidinlou and Reshadi, 2014; Hinkel, 2001; Mohamed-Sayidina, 2010), the problems students face in the use of transitional devices, the problems students face in using transitional devices (Darweesh & Kadhim, 2016; Schleppegrell, 1996), the causes of students' problems with the use of transitional devices (Almaden, 2006; Astanti, Rozimela & Fitrawati, 2016; Elahi & Badeleh, 2013) and the measures that need to be put in place to improve students' use of transitional devices (Andayani, Seken & Marjohan, 2014; Astanti et al., 2016; Mahendra & Dewi, 2017).

Key among the problems that students have with writing is the problem of the lack of cohesion and coherence in their essays (Ahmed, 2010), a problem that results from the failure to use cohesive devices such as transitional devices (Schleppegrell, 1996). It has been found that students misplace the transitional devices, especially cause and effect and comparison, contrast and contradiction transitions (Darweesh & Kadhim, 2016; Cumming, Lai, & Cho, 2016). Other studies have also found that students overuse transitional devices (Charkitey, 2016; Meisuo, 2000) while other studies have reported that students mainly underuse transitional devices in their essays (Mensah, 2014; Sattayatham & Ratanapinyowong, 2008). It is clear from the aforementioned that research works have to some extent established that using transitional devices to achieve cohesion and coherence is one of the major writing problems that students are confronted with in their development of effective writing skills. Trainee teachers' challenges with the use of transitional devices is even more worrying because their level of competence in the use of the devices will affect the quality of their delivery as teachers after school.

It has been noted that by using transition signals properly and correctly, cohesion in writing can be achieved. In spite of the magnitude of the contributions transitions make in fostering the writing of cohesive essays, it has been noted that students mostly have problems with their use. Studies have found that students have significant problems with the use of transitional devices such as wrong use, overuse and underuse. One way in which students have been found to struggle with the use of transitional devices is that they wrongly use the devices. Darweesh (2016) points out the misuse of transitional devices is one of the major problems that learners have with conjunctions. If for instance, instead of the use of however to indicate contrast between a point earlier state and a point to be stated later, a student uses again or furthermore, that student has wrongly used those devices. In such instances, the spellings of the devices are accurate, the grammatical elements such as semi-colons and commas have been appropriately used but the position of the device is inappropriate. It is mainly this situation that is referred to as wrong use. Indeed, the proper use of transitional devices has been found as a challenge that most ESL/EFL learners face. For example, Cumming, Lai, and Cho (2016) investigated the use of discourse connectors or transitional devices in the writing of Taiwanese EFL undergraduate writers. The author employed the mixed-methods design to analyse 120 essays written by 25 skilled and 26 unskilled learners using Halliday and Hasan's (1976) theory of cohesive devices. The findings showed that even though both groups used conjunctions appropriately, they committed errors in utilizing some conjunctions including furthermore, in other words besides, on the contrary, nevertheless, by contrast, hence, therefore, and because.

Also, Schleppegrell (1996) compared strategies in the use of transitional devices in

spoken and written discourse. Transitions and clause combining strategies were examined in the essays of ESL students, showing how they sometimes draw on registers that are more appropriate for genres of international speech. The paper claims that spoken English uses because clauses for functions which are typically different in academic writing. It describes the use of clause combining strategies which are rather appropriate for spoken communication in written genres, in which other strategies for clause combining are expected, as infelicitous. The paper concludes that ESL writers lack experience with the appropriate choice of the linguistic resources of transitional devices. Finally, where a student is not expected to use a transitional device because its use is needless but does, that device is deemed as wrongly used. In one study by Darweesh and Kadhim (2016) to examine how learners used transition words in spoken paragraphs, they found that students mostly used them wrongly.

Another problem that has been found with students' use of transitional devices is the problem of overuse. The overuse of transitional devices refers to instances where writers make use of too many transitional devices at the same position which defeats the very purpose for which they are used, thereby making the essay difficult to read (Mackiewicz & Thompson, 2018). In a study by Meisuo (2000), the researchers investigated the use of cohesive devices in expository compositions written by Chinese second-year English major students, using both quantitative and qualitative methods. One hundred and seven essays were collected from the students of two universities in China. Halliday and Hasan's (1976) taxonomy of cohesive devices and their framework for analysis were used. Pertaining to conjunctions such as cohesive devices, the findings spelled out that the students were inclined to overuse and misuse a variety of additives and, also, besides, in addition, moreover, furthermore and temporals first, first of all, secondly, thirdly, finally. Another problem that has been found with students' use of transitional devices is the problem of underuse. Students have been found to be particular about the use of certain devices and used other devices either minimally or do not use these devices at all. In a study by Granger and Tyson (1996) the use of transitional devices in the English essays of French students was investigated. The authors used a qualitative approach in their study employing Quirk et al's (1995) classifications of conjunctions as their framework. The findings of the study revealed that although students' use of transitional devices in general is adequate, they underused devices such as however, instead, though, yet, hence, therefore, thus and then.

A similar study by Carthy (1978) showed that students lacked the ability to use a wide range of transitions. In the use of transitional devices to add points to existing ones, the author found that and was used up to 93% of the time. However, other forms of transitions in this category such as in addition, more so and furthermore were rarely used. Another important finding was that transitional devices such as consequently, this and hence were either not used at all or rarely used. In another study by Sattayatham and Ratanapinyowong (2008), the authors sought to examine the categories of errors that students make in paragraph writing in English language. The participants of the study were 134 medical students from four medical schools at a university. They were made to write an opinion paragraph on medical ethics based on a passage they had chosen from the Internet. The findings showed that although the students made errors in the areas of poor organisation, lack of main ideas and lack of topic sentences among others, errors in the area of omission of transitional devices were the highest number of errors that the students made. The authors also found out that students' failure to achieve coherence in their essays was among one of the most pressing problems in their essays.

In a similar study, Wikborg (1990) found that students lacked the ability to use linking devices to create enough connection or relation between the ideas they generate in their essays

which results in breaks in coherence. Finally, Mudhhi and Hussein (2014) also studied how Kuwaiti EFL learners use transitional devices, precisely, additives and causals. The results of the research showed that Kuwaiti EFL learners overuse certain conjunctive adjuncts such as in addition, for, and but and underuse other conjunctive adjuncts such as however, though and also. The study also reported that the arbitrary way in which transitional devices were used is one of the main factors that hinder non-native speakers' ability to master the use of transitional devices.

2.0 Designs and Methods

The researchers adopted a qualitative research approach to contextualize, interpret and understand the actor's perspectives. A case study research design was used enabling the researchers to analyze data closely (Zainal, 2007). The study was done in two public but faith-based Catholic colleges in Volta Region of Ghana- St. Francis' and St. Teresa's Colleges of Education, both in Hohoe. The researchers targeted trainee teachers and their tutors in the two colleges. St. Teresa's Education College has five hundred and twenty-three (523) while St. Francis' Colleges of Education seven hundred and eighty-three (783). The researchers targeted students studying English course. In total of 12 English lectures, six from each college were also targeted. Sampling was done using random sampling procedures was used to select 240 students from the two education colleges. Random sampling technique was done using folded pieces of papers where only 60 papers were inscribed with the word 'IN' and the rest with the words 'OUT' which were then issued to the two levels in each college. The students who picked 'IN' were included in the study and the rest were excluded. In total, sixty students were sampled from each level making a total of 240 from all the levels as displayed in table 1.

Institution	**Level**	**Number of Trainees**	**Percentage**
St. Francis' College of Education	Year One	60	25.0
	Year two	60	25.0
St. Teresa's College of Education	Year One	60	25.0
	Year two	60	25.0
Total		**240**	**100**

Data collection was done using essays and interviews. The student essays were in form of narratives, descriptive argumentative and expository essay. They were asked to choose three questions and answer them. The questions are presented in table 2 below.

Table 2: Essay Questions

Essay Type	**Question**
Narrative	You were present at a polling station during an election when violence broke out and people were severely injured. Narrate what happened.
Descriptive	Describe an interesting journey you have made recently to a tourist site in the country
Argumentative	As a principal speaker in an inter colleges debate competition, write your argument for or against the motion that 'Teachers are responsible for the challenges in our education sector in Ghana'.

Expository	Write a letter to your friend who hails from another tribe in your country telling him/her about how a traditional festival is celebrated in your area.

The students were given an official paper and asked to answer any two of the questions in the table. In total 480 essays were produced. Interviews were conducted targeting 11 trainees (the researchers was a lecture and was excluded from the study) and the top six best students and the six bottom students based on the essays submitted. The interviews sought to determine the reasons for the errors made. These discussions were audio-recorded and transcribed for analysis. Analysis was done using after the interviews were transcribed and coded.

3.0 Findings and Discussion

The findings of the research showed that the students had several challenges with the use of transitional devices. These challenges recorded were categorised into misplacement, omission, spelling, nonstandard forms, grammatical incorrectness and others. In all there were 3,592 instances of these challenges in the use of transitional devices.

Misplacement

The first challenge identified in the students' use of transitional devices was the misplacement of transitional devices. Misplacement here refers to instances where the students provided correctly-spelt transitional devices at points in the essays (where transitional devices were required) where the devices provided were different from what would have been expected in such contexts. It also refers to instances where devices are used in places where they are not needed. The highest number of transitions misplaced is 136. Addition transitions were misplaced 263 times representing 32.1%. This was followed by time transitions which were misplaced 136 times representing 16.6%. Third were contrast and comparison transitions which were misplaced 126 times representing 15.5%; and maiden point transitions which were misplaced 107 times representing 13.1%. The fifth were conclusion transitions which were misplaced 68 times representing 8.3%. Sixth were cause and effect transitions which were misplaced 51 times representing 6.2%. Seventh were place transitions which were misplaced 39 times representing 4.7%, and finally, the eight were example transitions which were misplaced 29 times representing 3.5%. Specific examples of cases in which the various transitions enumerated in the preceding lines were misplaced by the students are outlined and explained in the following extracts.

Extract 36: *Anyway, it was a nice family trip because we all did some fun things, which included swimming in the sea, enjoying a speed boat ride, taking a family picture.* (ED 21, 1SF 44)

Extract 37: The Ga language is spoken among a very limited population of the Gold Coast. However (instead of moreover), what the Gas lack is numbers and extent of territory. (EE 29, 1SF44)

Extract 38: The tourist site offers shaded seating beverages, a nice gift shop and flush toilets. Even (Intrusive) other artisans often display their work outside. (ED 24, 2SF48)

Extract 39: The main motive that I am writing this letter is that, I want to tell you how the festival is celebrate in our area. Firstly, the festival is been celebrate among the Ashanti's in Ghana (EE 84, 1P22).

Extract 40: Voting then ended in peace. However (not contrasting anything) after the vote cast, sorting and counting continued. (EN 109, 1P08).

It is shown from Extracts 36, 37, 38, 39 and 40 that the students misplaced transitional devices. In Extract 36, Student 1SF44 was starting the last paragraph of her description in

which she had discussed exciting experiences she had with her family at the beach. In doing this, she used the transition anyway which means nevertheless or besides. This kind of transition would have been appropriate if the essay had been about a horrible experience, she had with her family but which ended in a nice way because of some change in events. What was needed in this case was therefore an addition transition. Also, in Extract 37, the student indicated that very few people in the Gold Coast speak the Ga language, which is a negative feature. The second sentence also contains another negative quality of the Ga ethnic group. Therefore, just like in the case of Extract 36, it would have been appropriate to use an addition transition such as moreover or furthermore. Unfortunately, the student used however which is inappropriate for the context.

Moreover, Student 2SF48 (as shown in Extract 38) used a contrast transition when there was no indication of how the display of the works of the artisans contradicts the shaded seating, beverages, a nice gift shop and flush toilets that could be found at the tourist site. This is another clear case of the misplacement of transitional devices. Similarly, Student 1P08 used a contrast transitional device however to link the incidents that occurred after the votes had been counted to how the vote cast ended peacefully, although there was no need for such a device. Finally, in Extract 40, the student used the maiden point transition firstly to link the first paragraph in the body of her exposition to the introduction. Since there were no list of points or items the student intended to enumerate on, there was no need for the use of this maiden point transition. These show clearly that misplacement errors were prevalent in the essays the student-teachers wrote. The findings confirm those of Darweesh (2016) who reported that students lack the ability to differentiate between transitional devices. He further shows that instead of using a transition like whether, they rather use however and, in some instances, they use even to wrongly mean even if.

Omission

The second challenge with the use of transitional devices bothered on the omission of the devices. In these instances, there were spots in the essays where 96 transitional devices should have been used but were completely absent. With omission, there were a total of 956 instances. Out of these, there were 273 time and logical division transition errors making 28.6%, 156 addition transition errors making 16.3%, 136 new point transition errors constituting 14.3%, 116 place transition errors making up 12.2%, 89 conclusion errors making up 9.4%, 84 cause and effects transition errors making up 8.8%, 78 contrast and contradiction transition errors making 8.2% and 21 example transition errors totalling 2.3%. The following extract show examples of instances in which students omitted the use of the various transition devices in their essays:

Excerpt 41: We all taught [sic] that was going to be a stop to the act, (However) they continue and went ahead to house by house [sic]. (EN 08,1SF51)

Excerpt 42: The queen mothers prepare a traditional food called kpokpoi and spread it through the transitional area. (After that) The Ga mantse gives his annual speech… (EE 27, 1SF42)

Excerpt 43: We had a chance to swim in the water which was so interesting. We (also) had the opportunity to spend some nice time just driving and visiting some of the local places around the tourist site. (ED 52, 2SF01)

Excerpt 44: In the midst of all these falsehoods, I thereby present why teachers rather are to be exonerated in the following lines. Mr. Chairman, (firstly, there is) failure on the part of curriculum developers thoroughly consult teachers before planning school curriculum and syllabus. (EA 19, 2SF14)

As shown in Excerpts 41, 42, 43 and 44, the students omitted transitional devices in all the essays they wrote. In Extract 41 for instance, the student tried to show in the second sentence that the continuation of the acts of the followers of the sitting member of parliament of the area was contrary to her and other inhabitants' expectations. With this, she should have provided a contrast and contradiction transition such as however or on the contrary. However, she continued with the second sentence without using any transition device at all. Also, in Excerpt 42, Student 1SF42 narrates events that occur during the celebration of the Ga Homowo festival. As such the second sentence The Ga mantse gives his annual speech should have been linked to the first the queen mothers prepare a traditional food called kpokpoi and spread it through the transitional area with a time and logical division transition such as after that or soon after. Furthermore, in Excerpt 43, Student 2SF01 mentions the set of activities they undertook during the excursion he had with his friends. After We had a chance to swim in the water which was so interesting, he should have continued the second set of events We had the opportunity to spend some nice time just driving and visiting some of the local places around the tourist site with an addition transition such as also or moreover. Finally, in Excerpt 44, Student 2SF14 wanted to state the first of the reasons for his stance against the motion. However, he started this without using any maiden point transition. This instance, just like the instance of misplacement use, was also prevalent in most of the essays analysed. As a result of the failure of students to use transition markers where they should have used them, as illustrated in the excerpts, the essays they wrote lacked cohesion in most of 98 parts and therefore made critical reading and understanding of their points very difficult. These findings agree with the findings of Witborg (1990) that students lack the ability to use transitional devices to create enough links between the ideas in their essay and are as result unable to facilitate the continues flow of coherence in their writings. Furthermore, the findings consolidate those of Sattayatham and Ratanapinyowong (2008) who found that omission errors were prevalent in the essays of medical students in Mahidol University.

Spelling errors

The students furthermore committed spelling errors in their use of the transitional devices. These spelling errors were found in the use of all the types of transition signals with time and logical division of ideas recording the highest number of cases of errors. There were a total of 489 instances of these spelling errors with time transitions recording 117 cases representing 23.9%, cause and effect transitions recording 88 cases representing 17.9%, contrast and comparison recording 81 cases representing 16.6%, maiden point transitions recording 63 cases representing 12.9%, place transitions recording 39 cases representing 8.1%, addition transitions recording 26 representing 5.2%, example transitions recording 19 cases representing 3.9% and conclusion transitions recording 56 cases representing 11.5%. In the following extracts, specific examples of the misspelling of the various transition types in essays are shown:

Excerpt 45: Not hesistating [for hesitating] to waste much time, I started exploring the place to have a feel of how wonderful nature surrounding us is. (ED 20, 1SF43)

Excerpt 46: One (instead of on) the fifth day, both the old and the young ones go to the river side where they get their source of water to grow the rice to swim and have fun over there. (EE 28, 1SF43)

Excerpt 47: In addiction, some schools are not having enough teaches or the country as a whole is not having enough. (EA 25, 2SF23)

Excerpt 48: Additionally, Mr. Chairman, teachers [sic] behaviors are indirectly copied as a result of they being role models to students. (EA 17, 1P45) Excerpt 49 Moreover, Mr.

Chairman, sex for grade is the next reason why teachers must be blamed for the challenges in our education sector in Ghana. (EA 12, 1P34)

Excerpt 50: The other candidates who could not lost begun another fight. Infact, the fight was so fierce that everybody started running for his or her life. (EN20, 1P12)

From Extracts 45 to 50, it can be seen that words such as hesitating, on, additionally, moreover and in fact were wrongly spelled as *hesistating, one, additionaly, more over* and *infact*. The first category of spelling errors found were those in which there were insertion of additional letters like in the case of *hesistating* 100 in Extract 45. Some other words that fell into this category were *neverthelless* (insertion of l), definetelly (insertion of l), *shurely* (insertion of h) and *seccondly* (insertion of c). The next category of spelling errors as illustrated in Excerpt 46 were those in which there were addition of letters. For example, the insertion of e to on in Excerpt 46 makes the transition on the fifth day become one the fifth day, making the entire transition meaningless. Others were the addition of n to in in inn the morning, the addition of e to foremost and further in first and *foremoste* and *furthere* respectively and the addition of t to though in thought we were late. Another category of spelling errors as shown in Excerpt 47 was errors in which letters were replaced with other letters, either rendering the word wrong or changing it into another word. Addition for instance, was spelled as addiction in Excerpt 47 because the *i* was replaced with c. Also, there were instances where these letters were completely omitted. For example, additionally in Excerpt 48 had the letter l omitted, just like other words such as moreover in which e was omitted, notwithstanding in which h was omitted, and opposite in which p was omitted. The last two categories of errors as exemplified in Excerpts 49 and 50 were spelling errors that bothered on word amalgamation. Words such as moreover spelt as more over in Excerpt 49, furthermore spelt as *furthermore,* nowadays spelt as *now adays* and thereafter spelt as *thereafter* were some examples of misspelled words. The resultant effect of this is that such words, although were transition devices, were spelt wrongly, leading to spelling errors in the use of these words.

Nonstandard forms

Furthermore, there were cases in which students formed transitional words and expressions which were alien to the English language, and therefore considered as 101 nonstandard forms. Under these forms, there were a total of 166 cases of these errors. None of these errors occurred in the use of *contrast and contradiction transitions*, *time transitions* and *place transitions*. However, there were 62 of these errors in the use of maiden points transitions representing 37.5%, 52 *conclusion* transition errors representing 31.5%, 41 *addition* transition errors representing 24.9%, 7 *cause and effects transition* errors representing 3.9% and 4 *example* transition errors making 2.2%. Excerpts 51-54 contain specific examples of some of these errors that were regarded as nonstandard forms.

Excerpt 51: **To finish with**, I took some walk with my colleagues to a museum, where I saw beautiful fishes in the rivers. (ED 24, 1SF48)

Excerpt 52: **On that faithful day**, the Adowa and Kete dancers also started their dance by the instrumental set up for them. (EE 54, P19)

Excerpt 53: **In first places**, I took some walk with my colleagues to a museum, where I saw beautiful fishes in the rivers. (ED 24, 1SF48)

Excerpt 54: On a note of commencement, Mr Chairman, my fellow debaters will agree with me that it is an open truth in our country that education is key to the sustenance of the economy. (EA 25, 2SF23)

As shown in the extracts, some of the nonstandard devices that the students used were to *finish with, last but not the least, in first places* and *on a note of commencement*. These may

be as a result of the fact that although the student knew about some transitional devices, they probably did not pay attention to their specific constructions and were therefore forced to construct them their own way as found in the extracts. In *to finish with* and *last but not the least* for instance, the writers may be aware of how to conclude using last but not least. Also, *in first places* and *on a note of commencement*, it can be argued that the students were probably trying to begin their essays *with in the first place* and *to commence* and were probably unsure of their real forms. These show that students are largely limited in their knowledge and use of transitional devices.

Grammatical incorrectness

Grammatical problems were also identified in the use of transitional devices that the students utilized. These were problems which could not be attributed to the transitions themselves, but to the surrounding grammatical elements that make their use appropriate. In total, there were 1165 counts of expressions that bothered on grammatical incorrectness. Of these, 301 representing 25.8% were time and logical division transition errors, 243 representing 20.8% were addition errors, 223 representing 19.1% were cause and effect errors, 116 representing 9.9% were contrast and contradiction errors, 107 representing 9.2% were maiden point errors, 49 representing 4.2% were example transition errors and 29 representing 2.5% were place transitions errors. The final grammatical incorrectness were the conclusion errors which has 97 errors representing 8.3%. Some examples are shown as follows:

Excerpt 55: The winner uses the fund donated to solve a community problem. For instance (without a comma) the winner of the last year contestant registered one thousand children and pregnant women on the National Health Insurance Scheme. (EE 60, 1P27)

Excerpt 56: After that (without a comma), the youth organise a trip for the town to visit place like the mountain afadzato to have fun. (EE 31, 1SF47)

Excerpt 57: Because of the bad road, we couldn't reached [sic] there early. by (instead of By) the time we reached [sic] there, it was exactly 12:00. (ED 42, 1P32)

Excerpt 58: A mysterious event erupted where a person was shot dead, and four injured. And (wrong sentence starter) were refered [sic] to the reginal [sic] hospital in Tamale. (EN 08, 1SF42)

Excerpt 59: On the second day, Tuesday: the whole of Accra start to prepare for the general Homowo Harvest Festival. (EE 29, 1SF44)

Excerpt 55 and 56 show examples of the omission or wrong use of punctuation marks after the use of transitional devices. Here, there should have been commas after *after that* and *also* but they were not provided. Also, in Excerpt 57, Student 1P32 failed to properly capitalise the preposition *by* in the transition *by the time we reached there*. Excerpt 58 is an instance of the use of transitions as wrong sentence starters. Transitions derived from coordinating conjunctions such as and and 104 but were wrongly used to start sentences although their purpose was to join clauses. Finally, in Excerpt 59 also, there is an example of the wrong use of punctuations. The punctuation mark that should have followed the transitional expression *on the second day*, Tuesday should have been a comma. However, the student used a colon. The table below provides a summary of the category of transitional devices wrongly used by trainee teachers.

Table 1: Rank of Errors in Trainee Teachers' Use of Transitional Devices

Error Category	Transition type								Total
	Time	Addition	Cause-effect	Contrast & Comparison	Place	1st/ New point	Exmpl	Concl.	
Spelling errors	117 (23.9%	26 (5.2%)	88 (17.9%	81 (16.6)	39 (8.1%	63 (12.9%)	19 (3.9%	56 (11.5%)	**489**
Omission	273 (28.6%)	156 (16.3%)	84 (8.8%)	78 (8.2%)	116 (12.2%	136 (14.3%)	21 (2.3%)	89 (9.3%)	**953**
Misplaced	136 (16.6%)	263 (32.1%)	51 (6.2%)	126 (15.5%)	39 (4.7%)	107 (13.1%)	29 (3.5%)	68 (8.3%)	**819**
Non-Standard	0 (00)	41 (24.9%)	7 (3.9%)	0 (00)	0 (00)	62 (37.5%)	4 (2.2%)	52 (31.5%)	**166**
Grammar	301 (25.8%)	243 (20.8%)	223 (19.1%)	116 (9.9%)	29 (2.5)	107 (9.2%)	49 (4.3%)	97 (8.4%)	**1165**
Total	**827**	**729**	**453**	**401**	**223**	**475**	**122**	**362**	**3,592**

For a more visual impression of the challenges, the graph below ranks the results of transitional errors in trainee-teachers writing.

Lack of variety

The final challenge that the researchers discovered in students' use of transitional devices was the lack of variety that characterized the use of all the types of devices. In all the transitional devices, the students made use of only a few of the types, completely neglecting others. Apart from the cases of *maiden* and *conclusion transitions*, in which they were able to use a good number of the devices as found in the analytical framework used for the study, the trainees were unable to use half of the devices in the other categories such as additions, examples, contrasts and comparisons, time relationship and logical division of ideas, place and cause and effects. In other instances, in a single essay, the same devices were used in inter and intra-paragraph positions instead of using some others. In Table 4.1, there is a list of the devices used and those neglected.

Type	Forms Used	Forms Neglected
Maiden points	To start with, in the first place, to begin with, firstly, to set the ball rolling	First and foremost, to commence, one
Additions	Moreover, secondly, additionally, furthermore, as if this was not enough, again, also	In fact, to put it another way, in other words, further, another, too, besides, similarly, just as important, as well as,
Examples	For example, including, namely, such as, example, for instance	To illustrate, to be specific, except, in particular, that is, in case, unless, if, include

Contrasts and comparisons	But, although, however, notwithstanding, by the way, yet	by comparison, in the like manner, rather than, unlike, in contrast, conversely, for all that, strangely enough, but, in spite of this, ironically, instead, instead of, regardless, on the other hand, nonetheless, nevertheless, on the contrary, in contrast, whereas, even though, even, in spite of, despite, either...or... neither...nor...
Time relationship and logical division of ideas	As soon as, on the first day, on the second day, on the third day, on the fourth day, on the fifth day, on the sixth day, on the seventh day, on the day of the trip, in the morning, in the afternoon, in the evening, on Monday, on Tuesday, on Wednesday, on Thursday, on Friday, on Saturday, on Sunday, now, next, after that, in time later, finally, since, soon, the next day, then, eventually, at first (second, third, last), next, afterward, finally, later, last, lastly, at last, now, subsequently, then, when, soon, thereafter, after a short time, the next week (month, day, etc.), a minute later, in the meantime, meanwhile, at length, ultimately, presently, after, meanwhile, until and till 1 on that fateful day, since, on the following day	now, next, after that, in time later, finally, since, soon, the next day, then, eventually, at first (second, third, last), next, afterward, finally, later, last, lastly, at last, now, subsequently, then, when, soon, thereafter, after a short time, the next week (month, day, etc.), a minute later, in the meantime, meanwhile, at length, ultimately, presently, after, meanwhile, until and till, developed countries, at the community centre, behind, below, beyond, here, there, to
Place	On our way, at the polling station, in Ghana,	the right (left), nearby, opposite, on the other side, in the background, directly ahead, along the wall, as you turn right, at the tip, across the hall, at this point, adjacent to
Cause and Effect	Because it was a holiday, as a result, since, therefore, hence, thus,	for, as, as a result, so, as a consequence, consequently, for that (this) reason, as, to this end, for this purpose, with this in mind, for these reasons, subsequently and accordingly
Conclusion	Lastly, finally, in the end, last, in conclusion, to conclude	in summary, in brief, in short, thus, to summarize, to sum up,

As shown in Table 4.1, the students showed a lack of versatility and variation in their use of the transitional devices. Across all the essays analysed, there was the repetition of the same types of transitional devices as shown in *Forms used* with none of the three hundred and eighty-nine essays using any of the devices displayed in the 2 column labelled *Forms neglected*. Also,

although there were some brilliant students whose essays contained unpopular examples such as *notwithstanding, as this was not enough, namely, including* and *hence*, these were very few. On the contrary, a large majority of the students overused the same popular forms such as *firstly, secondly, thirdly, moreover, furthermore, therefore, finally* and in conclusion in their essays. This clearly indicates that the students had limited knowledge of the examples of the various types of transitional devices. There were also instances in which the students were unable to choose other varieties in inter- and intra-paragraph positions, making their use of the devices monotonous and their essays generally uninteresting to read. Again, it is expected that at the tertiary level, students would demonstrate use of a wide range of transitional devices because they are at one of the most advanced stages of education. Secondly, at the College of Education, where the students are trained to become teachers, it is expected that they would have a wider repertoire of transitional devices to choose from. This is because their limitation in knowledge regarding the use of transitional devices would definitely mark a limitation in the way they teach them once they find themselves in the world of work. These findings confirm those of Carthy (1978) that students lacked the ability to use a wide range of transitional devices in their essays. Specifically, Carthy (1978) found that students used the same and up to 93% of the times in their attempts to add new points while neglecting all the other types whose use could have made their essays more sophisticated. Furthermore, Cathy found that in showing cause and effect, the transition hence is rarely used by students, and this has also been confirmed in the present study.

4.0 Conclusion

Several challenges were identified and these challenges can be argued to mirror the situation in all other Colleges of Education across Ghana. It revealed that in spite of the fact that students at the Colleges of Education are able to use transitional devices to some extent in achieving cohesion and coherence, the challenges they face are three times the successes they chalk in the use of these devices. The challenges that were recorded were in the areas of the misplacement of the devices, the omission of transitions at places in the essays where there were needs for such devices, the use of nonstandard forms that were alien to the English language, the grammatical incorrectness of the various devices, wrong spelling of the devices, and the lack of variety. These challenges militate against the students' attempts to achieve cohesion and coherence in their essays, confirming the findings of Almaden (2006) that students' inability to use transitional words effectively affects the achievement of cohesion in their essays and reduces their texts to plain writing, making less sense.

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