



Locus of Conjunctions in Academic Writing: A Corpus-Driven Approach to Developing Writing among EFL Learners

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Received: July 20, 2021 Accepted: November 05, 2021 Online: November 07, 2021 Keywords: Additive, Adversative, Causal Cohesion, Conjunctions, Temporal	A unified texture of a text is the salient feature of a mature text. Following the Hallidayan approach, this paper explored the worth of conjunctions in academic writing. Corpus-driven comparative research was conducted with a view to investigating the frequency and concordance of conjunctions in academic writings between native and non-native young learners. Four types of conjunctions were extracted from the corpora of 400 essays compiled from ICNALE. The frequency of each type of linking marker was compared with the help of corpus tools, n-gram of AntConc software. The concordance of these markers was analyzed and compared to assess the coherence between the writings of both learners. The findings suggest that the EFL learners need to master the mechanics of text connection through conjunctions; and recommend extra efforts on the part of teachers to make more classroom practices to enhance the proficiency level of the learners.
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Introduction

All the linguistic elements that occur in larger units of grammar as in clauses or sentences contribute to the message that needs to be communicated properly. The tie that holds these units together makes the text understandable and comprehensible, eventually, a single sense can be produced with appropriate use of linguistic and paralinguistic features of a particular language. A number of factors help to understand this unity in a text. The factors under reference, to a great degree, depend on writers' preference to preserve their meaning or the structures they use recurrently to maintain meaningful unity among the larger units of text. This phenomenon generates the idea of cohesion in the text as a part of discourse analysis

that addresses units larger than sentences. Cohesion serves a critical function in the text to maintain unity and also makes the text comprehensible.

Cohesive devices are the main constituents that contribute to the overall quality of writing in terms of creating connections actualizing transitions and linking ideas. As they connect paragraph phrases and clauses, these connecting devices also have the same significance as coherent devices. The logical relationships between propositions and signal text structure are created by conjunctions. Conjunctions are called cohesive devices that are very critical. L1 research literature has been studied to show that masterful and less competent readers vary in the degree to which they use implicit logical relationship symbols (i.e. conjunctions) in text and in the degree to which they infer implicit relationships (Of, In, & Chinese, 2016). Mature reading and efficient writing are skills of significant importance for academic achievement for EFL students. Still, at the advanced level of English language research, this feature often remains an elusive target. Most of the EFL learners regulate the grammar of the foreign language not enough to develop an appropriate tie among the larger units of the language. Apart from the knowledge of semantics and syntax of the target language, they seem incompetent to create logical coherence in the compositions of the target language (Santana, 1974). Awoniji (1986), Ubahakwe (1976), Komal (2001) and Rasheed (2007) have already proved the worth of conjunctions in their research studies. Further, Banjo in Jowitt (1991: vii) reports that the general complaint is that "the level of proficiency in the English language within and outside the educational system has been failing and with it the general level of education." Many factors attribute to this failure. Evaluators often find that "foreign learners who have mastered syntactic structures are still unable to compose coherent themes, term papers, theses, and dissertations" (Kaplan, 1972 p. 296). Conjunctions have been shown to play an important role in the development of discourse by adult EFL learners, but not sufficiently to develop extended discourse (Mohammed, 2015). In addition, the degree of subject matter expertise is expressed in the applicable and correct usage of connectors in writing. It was conducted with a selected specialization in the employment of connectives during the Turkish ELT Department environment (Karahan, 2015). The research was also carried out to examine the quality of argumentative essays composed by Iranian EFL learners based on cohesion theory propounded by Halliday and Hassan (1976), this research focused to investigate the occurrences and frequencies of conjunction devices in the text produced by EFL learners in Iran (Dastjerdi, 2011). Mohammad, 2014 also worked linking markers such as conjunctions in the writings of EFL learners and found significant relevance among four types of conjunctions discussed by Halliday and Hassan (1976) conjunction test to retain coherence in writing (Mohammed, 2015). Current research is very much inspired by the aforementioned research works, in which researchers investigated the uniformity and regularity of connection devices, the occurrences and frequencies of connection devices, and explored the texture of the text through conjunctive items.

The purpose of this corpus-driven investigation is to find the usage of four types of conjunction namely additive, adversative, temporal and causal as defined by Halliday & Hasan (1976) making a classification between native and non-native young learners. The comparison between the frequencies and concordance of these connecting markers has made explicit evidence that the more comprehensibility of text depends on the proper usage of the conjunctions. 200 argumentative essays have been selected from ICNALE (The International Corpus Network of Asian Learners of English) and 200 argumentative essays from native learners. The corpora were tagged and then the frequencies and concordance of the required lexical items were found through AntConc software. The unity of the text was measured through a benchmark study based on the theory propounded by (Halliday, 1976). Before undertaking the research work detailed literature regarding cohesion and cohesive devices was reviewed to make strong theoretical grounds.

Literature Review

Two significant textual elements, cohesion and coherence (Halliday and Hasan, 1976, 2000), have long been recognized as significant features of "good" writing. Coherence refers to the internal elements of a text, relevant to cohesion and register, in the definition of Halliday and Hasan: 'A text is a discourse passage which is coherent in these two respects: it is coherent in relation to the context of the situation and, therefore, consistent in the register; and it is coherent in relation to itself and, therefore, cohesive' (p. 23). In other words, cohesion can be defined as linguistic devices, referring to the relationships of meaning that exist within a text. Which are used to connect one part of a text to another. The language user uses cohesive devices to singal texture, and his audience responds to him according to his desired perception; he should use these devices as a criterion for understanding the boundaries of the text.

There are certain devices for cohesion including reference, substitution, ellipsis, conjunction and lexical connectivity. The classification is based on linguistic form, these are the categories of cohesion that can be recognized in the lexico-grammatical system. Reference, substitution, ellipsis are grammatical, in that they involve closed systems. Lexical cohesion involves an open-ended type of choice, the selection of lexical items that are related in some way to one that has occurred before. As far as conjunctions are concerned, apart from the grammatical and lexical line, in terms of system, some conjunctive expressions include a systematic selection of moment, for example, moment in from that moment on.

Halliday and Hasan (1976) classify these connecting devices into four categories: Additive, Adversative, Causal and Temporal. As is mentioned earlier, this study adopts a scheme of four sub-categories of conjunctions; a brief description of each category is described in the following paragraphs.

Additive Conjunction

In a unified relationship, The two forms used structurally in the context of teamwork, the 'and' type and the 'or' type are grouped under the heading of additive conjunctions. The distinction between both of them is not of primary significance for the texture of a text; and, in any event, it is not the same as that which is found in synchronization between them. As for connecting devices, the words 'and', 'or', 'but' are classified as additive conjunctions. The correlative pairs, both... and, either... or and neither... nor, occur with coherent structure in general; they are confined within the sentence to structural coordination. This is because, in any higher structure, a coordinate pair behaves as a single entity, and can thus be considered a constituent.

The NEGATIVE form in the context of additive relationship is the use of 'nor'. Besides, there are many expressions with more or less meaning of 'not' (if; or else as an expression of, or as below; and.....not, not....either, and.....not.....either...; and neither and.....none of the types. Here is an instance with a simple external definition, the being of the form and... not... either.

The extended forms are likely to have an extra aspect of explicitness in them, a sense of 'and what's more.' This will be an aspect of internal meaning, in our words, because it is an indication of the reaction of the speaker to or evaluation of what he is saying. In this context, the above example may perhaps be a mixture of both external and internal relations. The positive 'and' relationship has parallel forms, namely and also, and... too: Example:

'In order to be able to see nobody, and in the distance, too.'

Moreover, the EMPHATIC forms of 'and' relationship that exist only in an internal context, that of 'there is yet another argument to be taken along with the previous one.' This reality is the sense that the 'and' relationship takes on when it is a form of inner conjunction. For instance:

"My client says he does not know this witness. In addition, he denies ever having seen her or spoken to her".

Alternatively, 'or' is perhaps an emphatic variant of the 'or' relationship, whereby the language user stresses the alternative, similarly, he emphasizes additionally with the 'and' relationship.

Adversative Conjunctions

The basic sense of the ADVERSATIVE relation is contrary to expectation. The expectation can be extracted from the content of what is being said or from the context phase, the speaker-hearer situation, showing that harmony exists on both the external and internal planes, just as it does in the additive (Halliday and Hasan, 1976; 250).

The word *yet*, which appears first in the sentence, expresses an EXTERNAL adversative relation in its simplest form: Many of the estimates were right because they had been double-checked. Despite this, the total came out inaccurate. But 'however', and 'though' are very similar to *yet* in this role. The term, on the other hand, has a new meaning. Unlike 'yet' and 'but', 'however', it is possible for it to appear later in the sentence (when it will co-occur with *initial* and or *but* not with *yet*): On the other hand, adversity words like *nevertheless* and *even*, as well as presupposition phrases like 'in spite of this, are typically entirely accented, and tonic words like *nevertheless* are commonly used (Halliday and Hasan, 1976; 251).

At the same time, *but* and *however* have a similar but slightly different context, which we can call CONTRASTIVE. On the other side (but never in its correlative forms on the other hand..... on the other hand), they share. *Yet* does not occur in this way, as can be seen in the following example by substituting it for *but* and *however*: She was unable to succeed. She has, however, given it up all. Rather 'despite' can be used in such terms as it means that despite her best efforts, she still failed. The adversative relationship has an INTERNAL dimension as well. The underlying sense is indeed 'contrary to expectation,' but the root of the expectation is the actual speaker-hearer arrangement, the point reached in the contact process, as we discussed above (Halliday and Hasan, 1976; 252). For example: '.....you could catch a bat, which is quite similar to a mouse, you know.' But, I'm curious, do cats eat bats?' In this case, Alice acknowledges that, while her advice is meant to be beneficial, it might not necessarily be of any benefit (Halliday and Hasan, 1976; 253).

DISMISSIVE expressions include *any/either*, *case/event*, *any/either way*, *whatever happens*, *whether.... or not* (Halliday and Hasan, 1976; 254). The same meaning is expanded upon. 'No matter what, i.e. no matter what circumstances, still.....' has been generalized to cover an entirely open-ended set of possibilities.

Temporal Conjunctions

The relation between two successive sentences is expressed as a temporal relation. The temporal relation in its simplest form can be expressed by then: Ali was knocking on the door; then he came back to work. Temporal relations also have SEQUENTIAL sense, we not only have *then* but also have other expressions *afterwards*, *next*, *subsequently*, *after that*, and a number of other expressions. With the presence of an additional component in the meaning, the temporal relation has been made more specific for *immediately*, *after an interval*, and *repetition of specific time interval*.

In this sense of SIMULTANEOUS in time or even previous in time there are some expressions: *just*, *then*, *simultaneously*, *at the same time*; there is also simple time relation that some accompanied by some other components, for instance: *meanwhile*, *all this time*, *this time on*, *this occasion*, *at this point*, *at this moment* and so on. For instance: First I should record the lecture. Then, I will forward it to all. The

strong propensity to predict a series is demonstrated by the use of cataphoric conjunctive first in the enumeration of points in the preceding example.

HERE and NOW are the types of internal temporal conjunctions which are, usually, discussed in relation to what is being said to a particular stage which the communication process has reached. There may be past, present, future forms.

Finally, we should include the meaning of returning to the point where the speaker suggests that he is resuming the communication's main objective as a further extension. Of course, this RESUMPTIVE relationship is internal as well, and it is conveyed by words and phrases like anyway, resume, and return to the stage.

Causal Conjunctions

So, thus, hence, therefore, consequently, accordingly, and some expressions like _____ as _____ a result (of that), in consequence (of that), because of and that are simple forms of Causal relations, for example, I did not have my breakfast today, so I am really hungry now.

The specific ones of RESULT, REASON and PURPOSE are included under the heading of causal relations. For example, as a result of this, for this reason, and this purpose is not differentiated in the simplest type of speech. They prefer to be distinct when expressed as prepositional words, on the other hand (Halliday and Hasan, 1976).

The distinction between external and internal forms of cohesion is less obvious in the sense of causal relations than it is in other contexts, given the fact that the concept of the cause already requires some understanding by the speaker. Despite this, the difference is always discernible. The SIMPLE forms, therefore, thus, and hence all appear frequently in an INTERNAL context, suggesting some kind of reasoning statement from a premise: phrases like emerging out of this, following from this, and we may include locutions like it follows that, from this, it appears that, we may infer that, and the like are all found in the same meaning. The word so has an internal sense that is shared with 'then'; it is a statement about the speaker's reasoning processes to conclude from what is being said (or from other evidence)'. Halliday and Hasan (Halliday and Hasan, 1976: 257).

The study then attempts to contribute to answering the intriguing question of what is the difference between the frequencies of four types of conjunctions present between native and non-native produced text and their relevance in maintaining the texture of the language in use.

Material and Methods

Following the corpus-driven approach, the current study does not involve participants. The study made use of 400 argumentative essays, 200 each composed by native and non-native learners compiled from LOCNESS (The Louvain Corpus of Native English Essays) and ICNALE (International Corpus Network of Asian Learners of English) respectively.

The data was first converted into Html files then it was tagged with C.7 tagset of PoS CLAWS tagger through online sources.

University_NN1 should_VM not_XX just_RR be_VBI about_II book-learning_NN1, it_PPH1 should_VM be_VBI used_VVN as_II an_AT1 opportunity_NN1 to_TO expand_VVI horizons_NN2 and_CC gain_VVI real_JJ world_NN1 experience_NN1 . _

Then, the data was processed with AntConc (software) to find the type-token ratio and frequencies of the required conjunctions through the n-gram tool of the software (Anthony L, 2005). The relevant tagged file was opened in the software and the code of *_C** was given to the search key; then the command of n-gram was operated to find the frequencies of the conjunctions present in the compiled text. To find the concordance of the most frequent conjunction the untagged file was opened and got the concordance plot of frequently occurring conjunctions with the help of AntConc tools.

The output (as shown in appendix-A) from the software was saved in a new folder with the name 'results'. The results were imported and got the hard form of the document to separate the various categories of the conjunctions manually through personal identification following the underpinning theory of the investigation propounded by Halliday & Hessian (1976). A benchmark technique was used while identifying the four categories of conjunctions defined by Halliday and Hasan (1976). The frequencies of the conjunctions were calculated in both corpora to answer the first research question. Then the concordance of the extracted conjunctions will be observed with the help of the AntConc tool. Moreover, the comparison of the local, global and text cohesion was measured with the help of TAACO 1.5.2, an automated text cohesion tool (Crossley, Kyle, & McNamara, 2016). The results are presented and elaborated in the following segments.

Results and Discussion

The interpretation was based on the underpinning theory propounded by Halliday & Hasan (2004), where he claims that the presence of explicit conjunctions is one of the principal variables in text discourse. Thus, the appropriate use of conjunctive markers plays an important role to make a text textured. The type of discourse is expository which requires the writer to argue and defend a point of view

succinctly using the expository method of text development. This type of writing, according to Hedge (1998), is highly structured and necessitates good organization as well as good sentence and paragraph relationships. As a result, expect to see a lot of connectives here, which will tightly link one sentence to the next and move the argument forward. The present investigation is some of the observations in light of this phenomenon. The following conclusions can be drawn after quantifying the data in the following table 1

Table 1
Frequency Differences of the Conjunctive Markers

Types of Conjunctions	Native Corpus	Non-Native Corpus
Additive Conjunctions	1197	793
Adversative Conjunctions	224	193
Causal Conjunctions	308	213
Temporal Conjunctions	79	56
Total	1808	1255

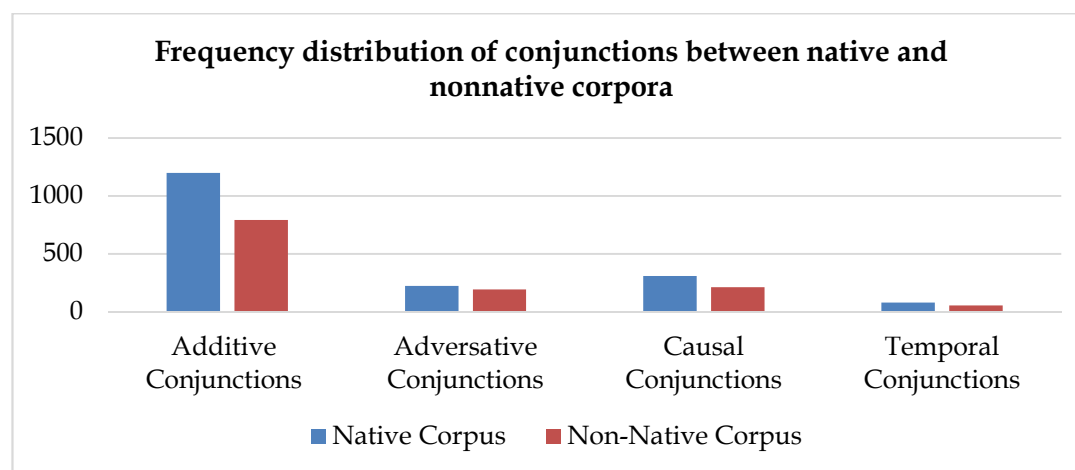


Figure 1: Frequency distribution of conjunctions between native and nonnative corpora

The results show that the native learners use more conjunctions as compared with the nonnatives; there is a vivid difference between the usage of four types of conjunctions defined by Halliday and Hassan (1976).

Table 1 shows that both learners use additive conjunctions most frequently to add information emphatically or both in explicit or implicit terms. The frequency of all types of conjunction used by native learners are greater than that of the nonnatives; it shows that the text produced by native learners are more coherent than that of nonnatives.

The native learners have used 'that' in temporal, sequential, and causal senses frequently whereas the nonnative learners have excessively used 'and' to show the unified relationships, both of the two forms that occur structurally in the same context. In general terms, the native has used subordinate conjunction 'that' excessively as compared to the nonnative who used coordinate conjunction 'and' most frequently. It shows that nonnative use more simple structures than native ones.

The concordance hits of adversative conjunction 'but' show that there are 122 hits in nonnative data and 84 hits in native data. Mostly the nonnative learners have used 'but' as additive rather than adversative conjunction as shown in figure 2. Similarly, the concordance hits of 'so' in the nonnative learners' data is 130 and that of native ones is 90. Mostly the natives have used 'so' as causal conjunction in the general sense but the nonnatives have excessively used it in the sense of emphatic. Certain anomalies have been found in the case of 'if and 'then'.

you to meet new people on the job but also allows you to meet new people when
. I had the same plan as they did but as time went on I found that I
. For others, they may not need to work but by doing so, they can also assist with
many people who do learn sound money management but fail to develop true financial acumen which is
negative aspects to part-time work in college, but for many students it is simply a fact
college students to have a part-time job, but for the sake of argument I will be
fulltime job in begin their careers in earnest, but for the time being I think we should
. Young people who have never worked at all, but have simply been given whatever they wanted, tend
? Sounds like a lot of tosh to me but hey, stranger things have happened. Last I heard,
? Sounds like a lot of tosh to me but hey, stranger things have happened. Last I heard,
it, do make some gains in character building but I also believe that given the right upbringing
money situation has improved, no surprises there but I also don't stress out as much
to go to school and get good grades. But I also think that there are some things
college, I can find a very good job, but I am also worried that with no work
enough time to have a part-time job, but I am way too busy with my schoolwork
not be the ideal thing for everyone else, but I can only say that it is working
job that I wanted when I was travelling. But I could pretty much get a job in
the UK as well as several other countries, but I disagree with them too. Why not allow
. I don't think that it was important but I do think that it is important and
is simply that they may like sucking smoke but I don't and I don't have
work in college really is a personal choice, but I don't feel that college student should
is worthwhile and I will finish my degree but I have also been studying for most of
t is difficult at times, especially during exams, but I have been pretty lucky because I have
of people would disagree with me on this, but I kind of think it is parent's

Figure 2: Concordance of the word 'but'

The results show that there is not only less usage of conjunctions found in nonnative EFL learners' data as compared to the native ones. Moreover, the concordance hits show inappropriate usage of the connectors as defined by Halliday and Hassan (1976), on the part of nonnative learners.

The less employed were the items of temporal conjunctions only 4% of the overall conjunctions used by the native and nonnative writers were the items of temporal conjunctions which maintain the relation between two successive sentences is expressed as a temporal relation. There are more concordance hits of 'then', 'after', 'there', 'here', 'next', 'until' and 'hence' in native data as compared to nonnative one.

The results, therefore, reveal as proved by the previous researchers such as Ventola and Mauranen in Bloor and Bloor (2002), Mohammed (2008), Meisuo (2016), Bahaziq (2016) that the non-native foreign language users need to master the mechanism of connecting devices, particularly, the appropriate use of conjunctions to maintain the text unity and make it more comprehensible. They need to be acquainted with the importance of connective devices as propounded by Halliday and Hassan (1976 & 2004) to develop the texture of the text. The educationists and policymakers should revise the syllabus contents with the incorporation of such contents as appropriate use of conjunctions in mature writing for the development of writing skills among EFL learners.

The hardest skill for nonnative EFL learners is to learn 'writing' it has been found in the previous researches that while inquiring non-native tutors about how they can improve in the skill, the response to this issue appears difficult because he or she cannot still communicate through writing (Shirazi & Mousavi Nadoushani, 2017). The issue could be caused by a number of factors among these factors the non-proficiency or lacking knowledge in coherence impedes the development of mature writing among university undergraduates. The beginner EFL students are not properly taught conjunctions and the roles they play in sustaining text cohesion.

The discrepancy between L1 and L2, as well as the culture-bound characteristics linked with the two, maybe the second explanation for incorrect conjunction use. If conjunctions aren't utilized frequently in the first language and other coherent elements contribute to the text's texture, EFL learners may not notice the difference when writing in the target language. We have seen as EFL teachers that the frequency of occurrence of some conjunctions outnumbers the other types. For example, the Persian equivalents of, however, but, and instead, are so common in Persian speakers' daily speech that you can conclude that their use is due to L1 transfer rather than because they have learnt how to use those conjunctions correctly in the target language. This necessitates a thorough assessment of L1 and L2 so that any conclusions reached are scientifically sound and backed up by both qualitative and quantitative research. Conjunctions exist in the writings of non-native EFL writers, but they are not always found in the appropriate places where they should be, therefore they are not easily recognized in the first place buried or suggested within the lines of text, as the study's title indicates. It is the responsibility of EFL teachers to improve students' awareness of the proper use of conjunctions at the appropriate time and place so that their usage resembles that of native English speakers.

The significance of this study is to make the learner as well as the teacher aware of the correct usage of conjunctions in paragraphs and also acquaint them with the coherence and comprehensiveness in the text because of conjunctions. The awareness of logical connectivity helps the writer and reader to comprehend the main idea. Hence, coherence is the salient feature of logical order that is necessary for comprehension and mature writing.

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