Explication of Conjunction Errors in A Corpus of Written Discourse by Sudanese English Majors

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Abstract
Cohesion is deemed to be an indispensible aspect of all written discourse and, hence, this study is intended to explore the employment of the cohesion subset of conjunctions by Sudanese final-year English majors at a large governmental university. The corpus comprises fifty argumentative and narrative essays, and Halliday and Hasan's (1976) taxonomy of conjunctions was utilized as a model for analysis. It was revealed that the corpus was replete with inappropriate conjunction use and it was difficult to dissociate these errors from the students' overall poor writing quality. Yet, on the whole, additives constituted half of the entire errors, followed by causals and adversatives. Concerning additives, and addition proved to be the most problematic, as students tended to transfer both the pervasive use of and and its multiple semantic functions in Arabic into the altogether different English discourse. Among causal conjunctions, because and so misuses together formed the bulk of errors, since the students were apt to confuse result and cause relations in English. Finally, but and although misuse accounted for two thirds of all adversatives errors, largely due to the students superimposing conventions of Arabic discourse, where double- marked subordination is permissible., on English where such a practice is regarded as erroneous. The analysis is accompanied by numerous examples to illustrate the (erroneous) employment of conjunctions in the corpus.
Keywords: Cohesion, Conjunctions, , Discourse, Errors, Language Transfer

Introduction

The ubiquity of the influence of English as the lingua franca of the 21st century can be little doubted. It is the global language of commercial transactions, international communication both in formal settings such as electronic media and at the popular levels of creoles. The hegemony of English extends to the academia where, as Hyland (2007) asserts, English is the predominant medium of instruction in post-graduate domains even where it does not hold a formal status. Within research, English is the undisputed language or *Tyrannosaurus Rex (S*wales,1997) of publication , particularly in the realm of science and technology. It can thus be concluded that the mastery of English is crucial to personal, professional and academic success in our contemporary world. This entails competence in both spoken and written discourse in both transactional and interactional aspects of the language. As a communicative skill, writing has a diversity of forms such as argumentative texts, expository prose, narrative compositions, academic discourse, etc. Indeed, according to Grabe and Kaplan (1996), in their everyday life, people engage in many types of writing, and the use of writing in our increasingly literate world is more pervasive than is normally acknowledged. Yet, many scholars such as Richards and Renandya (2002) concede that, of all language skills , writing is the most accomplished and, hence, the most challenging for EFL students and native speakers alike. The primary difficulty of writing emanates from the dual need to generate and organize ideas and to translate them into readable texts (Prommas and Simwongsuwats, 2011). Moreover, writing is a peculiar and solitary form of communication addressed to an absent addressee and lacking the aid of extra-textual elements such as physical contact or verbal signs. This necessitates, in the view of Crystal (2000), a level of formality and comprehensiveness of devices and complexity alien to other language skills. The composing process involves combining structural sentence units (words, phrases and clauses) into cohesive and coherent larger structures as opposed to shopping lists, for instance. One of the most important characteristics distinguishing writing involving composing is the presence of surface features (cohesive devices) holding together discourse (Halliday and Hasan, 1976) as well as an underlying logic of organization (coherence) which is more than the mere sum of sentences . In other words, mastering the techniques of effective writing entails familiarity with the underlying principles of English discourse. Of the two above interlocking terms , the present research will concentrate on the employment of *cohesion* by a sample of Sudanese English majors.

Literature Review

The Notion of Cohesion

In any serious discussion of cohesion, Halliday and Hasan's ground-breaking book *Cohesion in English* (1976) is the place to begin. In line with their functional linguistics, the authors assume the unit of *text* to be the building block of language and, hence, assert that *A text has a texture and this is what distinguishes it from something that is not a text* (ibid:3). They also point out that cohesion is one of the linguistic system's major resources for text construction. In fact, cohesion embodies the existence of overt textual cues rendering it possible for readers to sense the semantic relations within it in order to enhance the semantic potentials in the text.

Halliday and Hasan's (1976) taxonomy of cohesion included four categories. These comprise *reference* (i.e., the indication of preceding information such as pronominal, demonstratives, definite articles, comparatives) ; *substitution* (i.e., the replacement of one component by another including nouns, predicates and adverbials) ; *ellipsis* (i.e., the omission of a component such as noun phrases, predications and adverbials) ; *conjunctions* (i.e., the indication of specific meaning

which presupposes existing items in discourse, such as additives, adversatives, causals and temporals) and, finally, *lexical cohesion* (i.e., the repetition or variation of the same lexical items), as seen in the semantic interplay within (an imagined) text of such items as *The Amazon Basin, rainforest, transpiration, equatorial zone, precipitation, flora and fauna* and *relative humidity.* . Since the use of cohesive devices in a certain written text is so abundant as to render a detailed investigation of them all a difficult task, the present research will be confined to a substantial part of cohesive devices, namely conjunctives.

Halliday and Hasan's Taxonomy of Conjunctions

Conjunctions are variously known as *conjunctives* by Halliday and Hasan; *connectors* by Zamel (1983) ; *discourse connectors* by Parrot (1990) and *discourse markers* by Cowan (2008). Unlike other cohesive devices such as ellipsis, conjunctions are not cohesive in themselves but by virtue of their specific meanings (Halliday and Hasan, 1976; 226). Instead of reaching out to the preceding or following text; they express certain meanings which presuppose other components in discourse. Moreover, in contrast to the aforementioned cohesion types, the semantic relations specify that what follows is systematically connected to what has gone. This implies, according to Halliday and Hasan (1976:227) that conjunctions do not require a specifiable element in a context for their interpretation. Conjunctions are crucial in pinpointing logical relations in written text and, hence, enhancing its readability, since they allow the anticipation of what follows (Martinez, 2004).

Conjunctions fall into the four subcategories of *additive, adversative, causal* , and *temporal.* Regarding additives, Additives introduce discourse unite which reiterate or enhance cardinal points or add up pertinent new information to previously mentioned statements.   It is mainly expressed by such expressions as *and, or, also, furthermore, additionally, etc.*The category of additive conjunctions is structurally used to coordinate through accumulating information to a presupposed item in the text. Concerning adversative conjunctives, they include such expressions as *but, yet ,nonetheless* and *conversely* and they highlight the contrast or concession in light of new information. With regards to causal conjunctions, they are employed to express reason or purpose they include expressions the likes of *so, thus, as a result of* and *with respect to,* and they present information logically following or are a consequent of preceding discourse. Temporal conjunctions can be instantiated by *at first, finally, next* and *concurrently* and they ae utilized to connect two discourse units with either previous, simultaneous or subsequent textual segments.

Error Analysis Hypothesis

Error analysis is regarded by James (1998: 1) as the process of determining the incidence, nature, causes and consequences of unsuccessful language. This subfield hinges on the concept of *error,* viewed by Corder (1975) as *a noticeable deviation from the adult grammar of a native speaker reflects the competence of the learner,* unlike the related concept of *mistake* which refers to *a performance error that is either random guess or a slip in that it is a failure to utilize a known system correcty.* One of the most important contributions of error analysis to the field of foreign/second language acquisition is its dealing with learners' errors as a guide to the inner workings of the learning process, rather than undesirable phenomena as seen in the former Contrastive Analysis Hypothesis (Ellis, 1985: 53; James (1998: 1) emphasizes that making errors is one of the characteristics associated with human and distinguishing them from animals and artifacts. She maintains: *error is likewise unique to humans, who are not only sapiens and*

loquens, but also homo errnas. Not only is to err human, but there is none other than human error (ibid: 1). She further explains that speaking a language and making errors at speaking are both parts of our humanity.

Corder (1967, 1975, 1981) is the first to advocate the significance of error in the language learning process. He claims that learner's errors provide evidence of the system of the language he/she is using. He (ibid) counts three different ways in which errors are important:

> (1) To the teacher: they tell him how far towards the goal the learner has progressed and what remains for him to learn.
> (2) To the researcher: they provide him evidence of how language is learned and what strategies the learner employs when tries to communicate in the target language.
> (3) To the learner: making errors is a device he/she uses in order to learn (Corder, 1967 ,in Ellis, 1985: 25).

These views are supported by Selinker (1972) when he points out that there are two highly important contributions Corder made in the field of second language acquisition: (a) errors of learners are not random, rather they are systematic and (b) errors are not negative or interfering, in any way, with learning a target language, but a necessary positive factor of testing hypotheses. Likewise, Dulay et al. (1982) acknowledge the importance of learners' errors indicating that analyzing the learners' errors serves two main purposes: First, it provides significant information from which inferences about the language learning process can be made. Second, it shows which parts of the target language are difficult to learn and then delay the learners' ability to communicate correctly.

Types of Errors
In Error Analysis paradigm, learners' errors are classified into two main types: *interlingual* and *intralingual* or *developmental* errors, as follows:

Interlingual Errors
According to Richards (1971 – quoted in Freeman and H Long, 1991: 58), interlingual errors are the ones that can be traced to learners' first language interference. They are also considered as *errors similar in structure to semantically equivalent phrases or sentences in the learner's native language* (Dulay et al., 1982: 171). The identification and analysis of interlingual errors has traditionally been the concern of the study of bilingualism (Richards, 1971 – cited in Richards, 1974: 172). He views the process of interference as the intrusion of features of one language into another in the speech of bilinguals. It is postulated thatone of major concern of Contrastive Analysis Hypothesis is contrasting the systems of two contact languages in order to predict the learning difficulties. And there is a great consensus among the advocates of the CAH that *those elements that are similar to the learners' native language will be simple for him, and these areas that are different will be difficult* (Richards, 1974: 172). Therefore, interlingual transfer is of two types: positive and negative transfer.

According to Ellis (1985: 22), transfer is negative when there is proactive inhibition, which means the way in which previous learning prevents or inhibits the learner of new habits. That is why transfer is commonly known as 'interference' and it causes learning difficulties, resulting in errors. Positive transfer, in contrast, takes place when the first and the second language habits are

the same. In this case, errors do not occur. Therefore, positive (unlike negative) transfer facilitates the language learning process.

Intralingual/Developmental Errors

Intralingual errors are defined as "*similar errors committed by SL learners, regardless of their first language*" (Freeman and .long, 1991:58). They are also known as developmental errors being defined as "errors similar to those made by children learning the target language as their first language (Dulay et al, 1982:195). Richards (1974: 174) views intralingual errors as those reflecting aspects of rule learning instantiated by incomplete mastery of rules and failure to learn in the first place. He further explains that these developmental errors occur when the learner tries to build up hypotheses about the English language on the basis of his limited experience in the classroom or textbook. According to the sorts of strategies employed by the learner, Richard (ibid) puts developmental errors into four main groups: (1) overgeneralization, (2) Ignorance of rule restrictions, (3) incomplete application of rules, and (4) False concepts hypothesized.

Previous Studies

Zamel (1983) points out the importance of conjunctions to interpretation of ideas, since they prepare readers to anticipate the ideas that follow. It logically follows, according to McCarthy (1991), that the mastery of use of conjunctions is an essential skill for EFL students to write effectively. Consequently, a plethora of studies has been devoted to the investigation of the use of cohesive devices by EFL students (e.g. Ostler, 1987; Hamoushi,1999; Khuweileh and Al-Shoumali,2000; Ting, 2003; Olateju, 2006; Mohammed-Sayidina, 2011). More specifically, some international studies have inquired into the mastery of conjunctions by EFL students (e.g. Crewe, 1990; Field and Yip, 1992; Khuwaileh and Al Shoumali, 2000; Chen, 2006; Heino, 2010). On account of lack of space, due mention will be made of only a few studies that, like our study, deal with problems of conjunctions faced by Arab learners.

Khuwaileh and Shoumali (2000) conducted a study about the writing skills of Jordanian academic students in Arabic and English.They depended on text-analysis of students in both languages. They found out that the students who wrote a poor composition in English have the same poor writing in their mother tongue since their writing lacks coherence and cohesion. One of the reasons of this deficiency was that the poor texts lack the logical connectors or conjunctive adjuncts, as 36% of students did not use signal words to guide the discussion of their arguments in English, though they had good ideas.

Hinkel (2001) calculated the median frequency rates of explicit cohesive devices employed in academic texts of native and non-native speakers who spoke different mother tongues (Japanese, Korean, Indonesian and Arabic). She used corpus-based comparative study and found out that linking adverbials or sentence transitions are used by all non-native groups at significantly higher median frequency rates more than those of native speakers. Non-native speakers 22 overused these adverbials and they did not use them effectively as advanced learners. This was due to "the focus on transitions in writing and composition instructions for university level students."

Abusharkh (2012) studied the use of conjunctive adjuncts among three groups of Palestinian students at the college level. He used Halliday and Hasan's (1976) cohesion theory in his analysis of argumentative essays of the students. He found that additive adjuncts 23 were overused by the beginners and intermediate learners, especially the additive 'and'. He also found that the least used conjunctive adjuncts were causal and temporal among the three groups. They also underused other conjunctive adjuncts. Adopting a performance analysis approach, this study focuses on EFL learners' use of conjunctions. A total of 60 essays written by Arabic-speaking

second-year university English majors were scrutinized. Out of 2936 logical connectors used, 2672 (91%) were judged to be correct, a finding which runs counter to those reported by other researchers. The correct production of most of the connectors was most probably due to systematic form-focused instruction, practice and feedback since they are closed-class words and most of them have equivalents in Arabic. A three-dimensional analysis of the 264 errors detected indicated that they were mostly selection and insertion errors committed for interlingual and intralingual reasons. Form-focused instruction can be made more effective and learner-centered by taking into account the cognitive strategies underlying the most common errors. Further rigorous performance analyses are needed in other aspects of cohesion before passing single-minded judgments about EFL students' competence in the use of cohesive devices based on unreliable data collection tools such as perception questionnaires, predictive contrastive analysis, recognition tests and teacher-imposed composition topics.

The final and most pertinent study to us is Muftah (2013) investigate the use of conjunctions in argumentative essays written by English as a Foreign Language fourth-year undergraduate Libyan students majoring in English at Omar Al-Mukhtar University in Libya. A corpus of 32 argumentative essays was collected from a sample of 16students in order to be investigated in terms of Halliday and Hassan's (1976) taxonomy of conjunction. Findings showed that the Libyan EFL students used the conjunctions inappropriately, and that the adversative conjunctions posed the most difficulty for the learners, followed by additives and causals. Of the adversatives, on the other hand was the most difficult conjunction for the participants, followed by but and in fact. With the use of additive conjunctions, moreover was the most problematic, followed by and and furthermore. Among the causals, the conjunction so was the most challenging, followed by because. The difficulties encountered by participants in employing the conjunctions can be attributed to three reasons: 1) first language (Arabic) negative transfer; 2) overgeneralisation in the second language (English) and 3) the presentation of conjunctions in lists in ESL/EFL textbooks without showing the subtle difference between them in terms of semantic function. These findings are discussed in this paper with implications for teaching the use of conjunctions in the Libyan context.

Within the Sudanese context, studies on the mastery of cohesive devices and its relation to writing quality are few and far between (e.g. Braima, 1996; Abdallah, 2000; Arabi, 2010) and are mainly directed at overall textual properties rather than an in- depth investigation of cohesive categories including , for example, the use of conjunctions, as will be attempted in the present study.

Questions of the Study
The study seeks to find answers to the following questions:
   1- How well does this sample of Sudanese English majors handle conjunctions in their written discourse?
   2- Based on The Contrastive Hypothesis and Interlanguage Theory, what are the underlying reasons for conjunction errors in the corpus?

Methodology

   Participants
The subjects of the present study are fifty fourth year English majors who were about to graduate with a B.A. degree in English from the Department of English, Faculty of Arts, Al Neelain

University, Sudan. The main rationale for choosing this sample is their homogeneity, since they are all Sudanese nationals who have been learning English as a *foreign language under the same syllabus for eleven years: seven at Basic and Higher Secondary Schools and four as a major university subject.*

Instrument

The instrument of this study is 50 answer sheets randomly chosen from the Final Examinations of the academic year 2012-2013. The choice of the researchers fell on the examination written production for two reasons, the first of which is that under such condition the attendance is complete and so ensuring a wide and representative research sample. Second, in examinations students perform at their best in the knowledge that the assessment of their answers will be incorporated in their final grades. Consequently, the type of written samples they produce will embody such textual aspects as conjunctions. One such an ideal environment is a course entitled *Advanced Essay Writing* (one of nine courses prerequisite for fourth year students). In the final examination of this course, the students were required to develop a topic sentence namely, *It is interesting to have a job that involves travelling* into a coherent paragraph. In a second question, the students were provided with the option of developing one of the following thesis statements into a coherent and well- organized essay:
  a) *Banning smoking in public places protects people's health.*
  b) *Learning a foreign language is important for every student*
The body of writing produced in answer to the above questions furnished the setting for the conjunctions analyzed in this study.

Procedures

To empirically find answers to the research question of *What conjunction features pose the greatest challenges to this student sample*, each of the fifty sheets was first tagged with a card containing the abbreviation of the type of writing - AW (Argumentative Writing) or NW (Narrative Writing) together with the serial number of the writing script (1,2,3, etc). Subsequently, each erroneous *F- unit* is written out on the sampling card. In this study the *F- unit* is employed as the basic textual unit, rather than the orthographic sentence, since it includes all the main and dependent clauses operating at the textual level, which are treated as separate textual units from this perspective. This will allow for the analysis of conjunctions which operate within and across sentences. A component in each *F- unit* containing a conjunction error and its category is then underlined alongside the target correct form written between two brackets. For analysis purposes, conjunctions are semantically divided into four categories: *additive, adversative, causal* and *temporal*. For instance, the following text portion *I sat at the last place, so no one on it,* is dealt with as below:

Table 1. *Conjunction Error-sampling Card*

24/NW Conjunction errors	
Error	Type
I sat *at the last place, <u>so</u> no one on it.	Causal conjunction misuse

Discussion and Analysis

Cohesive relations, as used in the present study, are based on the categorization set forth by Halliday and Hasan (1976). An initial survey of the distribution of the four cohesion types revealed conjunction to be the most widely employed category. Indeed, on average, each of the fifty students commits almost seven errors of this type. This could be attributed to the prevalence of grammar and structural linguistics in teaching English in Sudan, as pointed out by Noureen (2002).

Statistics below first provide figures on the distribution of each type, followed by a deeper consideration of each category and the possible explanations. Due to space constraints and their relatively insignificant distribution, temporal cohesive devices will not be dealt with separately. It is hoped that explanations of the other categories will illuminate the functions of this type. It is to be noted that asterisks will be used to mark the ungrammatical sentences in the corpus.

Table 2. *Types of Conjunction Errors*

Type of Conjunction	No. of Errors	Percentage	Mean
1. additive	172	50.29%	3.44
2. causal	88	25.73%	1.76
3. adversative	48	14.03%	0.96
4. temporal	34	9.94%	0.68
Total	**342**	**100%**	**6.84**

Additive Conjunction Errors

Table [2] below shows this type of errors to be the most prominent among conjunction errors detected in the examined written discourse. The errors of this category, alone, account for half of the entire errors relating to conjunctions. Additive errors are further sub-classified into four smaller-groups (addition, misuse, replacement and omission) in accordance with what process a certain group of errors entails. The following table shows the frequency of occurrence of the groups in the corpus.

Table 3. *Types of Additive Conjunction Errors*

Type of conjunction	No. of Errors	Percentage	Mean
a- addition	118	68.9%	2.36
b- misuse	33	18.9%	0.66
c- replacement	19	11.1%	0.38
d- omission	2	1.1%	0.04
Total	**172**	**100%**	**3.44**

The conjunction errors of the addition subcategory entail using a particular conjunction in sentence positions where it is not applied. They include the following conjunctions: *and*, *or*, *also*, *in addition*, *add to this*, *even* and *as well*. The statistics reveal addition errors including *and*, *or* and *also* as the most frequent conjunctions. Moreover, among the three, *and* is the highest in

prominence scoring 76 of the 118 or 64.5% of all addition errors. The last four types (*in addition*, *add to this*, *even* and *as well*) are neglected for being insignificant in numbers.

The typical embodiment of addition errors is when students unnecessarily insert '*and*' in the contexts where it does not apply. Below are some examples:

[1] *At last, it is interesting to have a job that you enjoy* *it <u>and</u> like* *it provide you* *an opportunity to travel to see many places and to see or   know   many people you do not know* *them.*   [34/AW]

The above – cited sentence reveals an excessive use of and, which is exacerbated by the repeated ideas the writer uses to argue for his/her point. For example, the text portions you enjoy it and like it', and 'to see many places – to see many people are tautologous versions of the same items. Swan (1980: 130) argues that words for repeated ideas can often be left out. Therefore, the repeated words to see many (in the second clause joined by and) can be dispensed with. Hence, the part of the sentence becomes you can travel to see many places and people. Turning now to the issue of this subsection, additive and, is not free from repetition. Surprisingly, it is reiterated three times in only one sentence, adding nothing important to the first clauses it conjoins. But, it is interesting that the overuse of additive and has been noted by other researchers such as Khalil (1989) and Khuwaileh and Al Shoumali (2000), among others.

When *and* is used alone as a cohesive item (as distinct from *and then*) it often seems to have the sense of 'there is something more to be said' (Halliday and Hasan, 1976).

Another example embodying '*and*' redundant insertions is presented in the following text:

[2] … *when it got out from* *this mouth something as a football with red* *coulor,   <u>and</u> produced strange sound <u>and</u>* *he attacked me <u>and</u> lied me on the earth <u>and</u> approach to kill me, but* ….   [28/NW]

Regardless of the syntactical and spelling errors, the structure of the above – sentence is marred by additive (ands). Four (ands) in only one sentence is an indication of the students' unfamiliarity with the conventions of English conjunctions. De Beaugrande and Dressler (1981: 71) argue against this way of using *and,* commenting that:

> *There is no motive to place 'and', 'also', 'in addition', etc between all*
> *clauses or sentences; in fact, such a practice renders the text dull.*

The pervasive errors of *and* are ascribable to two main factors. The first *(intralingual)* is related to the nature of and occurrence in different English sentence positions together with the complex, semantic relationships it establishes. Van Dijk (1980: 58) explains that one of the problems in semantics of natural connectives is their possible ambiguity. i.e. the same connective may express different types of connection, and one type of connection may be expressed by various connectives. He further specifies that 'and' may be used to express a conjunction, as well as, conditionals, casuals, temporals and local connectives. The second factor (*interlingual*) is associated with the learners' mother tongue interference (Arabic in the present case). Unlike English, widespread use of 'and' is allowed in Arabic. i.e. if two or more items (of sequential or additive nature) are joined together by / *wa* / *wa* / / واو (the Arabic equivalent of 'and'), each item can be preceded by 'واو'. Taking the above-cited example of Halliday and Hasan: *men*, *women* and *children*, the Arabic equivalent is 'الرجال والنساء والأطفال' / *al-rijaal wa al- nisaa wa al- atfaal* /. This Arabic convention of using 'and' may negatively influence the way Arab learners of English use English additive 'and'.

Or is the second most predominant errors of additive conjunction type with 19 cases (16%). According to Halliday and Hasan (1976: 246), the basic meaning of *or* relation is alternative. That means it is commonly used not to add new information (like additive *and*), but rather to express another possible opinion or explanation, etc. in the place of the one just given. For instance

> *Perhaps she missed her train.* <u>Or</u> *else she's changed her mind*   (quoted in Halliday and Hasan, ibid p. 247).

Or indicates that either the first event will take place or the second and not both. In other words, the sentence is acceptable if the speaker intends to carry out either the first act or the second in some time in the future. As far as the present study is concerned, the surveyed written texts reveal unnecessary insertion of conjunction *'or'*, to the extent that, the text patterns connected by *or* seem to be ornamental rather than alternative. Below are examples demonstrating the case:

[3] *I tried to* [*]*ride this bus* <u>or</u> *find place in bus.*   [40/ NW]

[4] *Smoking* [*]*it's very bad habits and very shameful when somebody* [*]*smoke   among the people especially in the common places* <u>or</u> *in the public places.*   [46/AW]

While it is evident that the expression *rid**e** a bus* is a miscollocation of *take a bus*, the second clause *find place in bus* is not an alternative act to the first. On the contrary, the two clauses are identical in meaning. Therefore, the use of *or* and the second clause (it joins) are redundant altogether. The same holds true of the second sentence since there is no difference in meaning between *the common places* and *public places*. Like *and*, alternative, *or*- addition errors are bedeviled with the content-repetition characterizing the subjects' writing. The subjects believe that repetition of the same idea reinforces it. Another reason for redundant use of *or* could be the students' ignorance of the complex nature of grammatical and semantic conventions governing the occurrence of or in different textural contexts.

Conjunction addition errors involving *also* come third in frequency with 15 occurrences (12.9%). They involve using the additive *also* in the textual context where it is not required, as shown in the coming examples.

[5]… *the governments* [*]*is direct their* [*]*sitizens to* [*]*let* [*]*that habit in public places, but unfortunately after all these directions,* <u>also</u> *there are persons never take care about this bad habit.*   [28/AW]

[6] *And* <u>also</u> *if we read books that* [*]*speak* [*]*about health,* <u>also</u> *we will find most of* [*]*talk* [*]*about it.*   [39/AW]

As explained in the previous section, students base their argumentation on repeating themselves in multiple contexts. For instance, instead of developing an idea through more explanation, examples, evidence, justification , etc, they keep beating round the same notion. This is evident in the repetitive, even obsessive, use of some words. Sentence (5), for example, comprises three clauses that are difficult to control, especially for EFL students. Therefore, it ought to be split into three simple sentences. In this sentence alone, the writer uses four conjunctive words: *but*, *unfortunately*, *after*, and *also*. Therefore, the sentence would have been more manageable had he split it into three simple sentences, as in

The government has issued directions forbidding smoking in publics. Unfortunately, nobody abide by them. Moreover some smokers do not care about non-smokers' health…

With reference to *also*, it is redundant in the first part of the third clause, because it is not common in English to connect two clauses by more than one conjunction. Swan (1980: 130) maintains that: *one conjunction is enough to join two clauses – we do not normally use two*. He provides the following example to illustrate the point: 'Although she was tired, but she went to work'. Such a sentence is rejected for the conjunction *but* being redundant as the contrast is already maintained by *although*. The same is true of the second example where the writer places *also* in the second clause, though the first one begins with *and also*..Arabic interference is the most plausible cause of the subjects' problems inherent in the redundant use of *also*. It is common in Arabic (the Sudanese colloquial in particular) to double-mark subordinate sentences; one at the beginning of subordinate (dependent) clause, and another at the beginning of the main (independent) clause. For example, the Arabic equivalent of the same example as above is

" ... ولكن لسؤ الحظ بعد كلَّ التوجيهات دِي بِرضو في بعض الناس ما بخطوا بِألهُّم للعادة الضارة دي" .

/ laakin lisuu ai- hadh ba3d kul al- tawjiihaat di bardu fi ba3d al- naas maa bikhutu baalun lil al- 3aada al- daara di /.

The underlined words are Arabic equivalent to the English conjunctions *but*, *unfortunately* and *also*, respectively. This sentence should be re-written in English as:

After all these directions, some people practise this bad habitt

The two clauses are joined together with only one subordinating conjunction: *after*.

Additive   conjunction   misuse errors involve using a conjunctive in an inappropriate textual context. In other words, it is incorrectly employed in a context where its function does not apply. Additive misuse comes second in frequency, with 33 occurences (18.9%). The errors are further broken down into smaller classes due to a conjunctive word each class includes (*and*, *or*, *also*, *in addition to*, and *for example*).

Once again, 17 or 52.9% of all additives inappropriately used involve *and*. This underscores the fact that (as in 'additive additions') students have far more problems with *and*   than with other conjunctions. There are some contexts in the students' written corpus where 'and' is either vague in its meaning or incorrectly used to join two items of different grammatical status. Errors of this type are embodied in the following examples.

 [6] *The place was full of boys and girls all friends <u>and</u> have the same ages* [21/AW]

[7] *Student themselves require *take a foreign language for various reasons <u>and</u> broaden their education.* [18 /AW]

In the first example, *and* is incorrect or at least vague since the relation between the presupposing text segment '*have the same age*' and the presupposed one (the segment that went before) is not additive in nature, rather it is referential. It can be revised as:

   The place was full of friends (boys and girls) with the same ages..

: Or, better still, as:

   *The place was full of friends (bys and girls) of the same age*s.

In the second example, *and* joins two text segments of different grammatical status: the noun phrase *various reasons* and verb phrase *to broaden*. Another problem is that even if the verbal phrase is changed into a noun (broadening), the segment needs some modifications to allow using additive 'and', otherwise it can be deleted altogether as in

Students, themselves, require taking a foreign language for
various reasons such as …,and broadening their education.

                (*and* is correct here)

Or

Students, themselves, require taking a foreign language for   *various reasons, including broadening their education*
         (and is omitted altogether).

And misuse errors of this type may be put down to the language users' ignorance of the target language syntax and semantic systems governing the use of additive conjunction 'and', rather than mother tongue interference (Arabic)

Addition replacement conjunction errors are comparatively smaller in number (amounting to 10 cases or 11%) . It entails placing one additive conjunction in text positions where another is appropriate. The most obvious conjunctions involved in the errors are: *and*, *in addition* and *moreover*. Like addition and misuse errors, *and* is the most problematic among other additive conjunction errors involving replacement. This is clearly demonstrable, since errors associated with *and* include 60% of all additive conjunction replacements. In the corpus, *and* is uncovered as being replaced by *or*, *also*, *regardless*, and *in addition*. Furthermore, 50% of *an*-replacements occur with alternative-additive *or*. The remaining conjunctions (*also*, *regardless* and *in addition*) are alike in frequency (16.7 each). Below are some examples to illustrate the errors involving 'and/or'-replacement:

[8] *... how to treat with computer <u>or</u> (and) internet …* [15/AW]

[9] *...since the methods in the schools <u>or</u> (and universities involve* [25/AW]

In these two sentences, *or* is used in the semantic contexts where additive *and* is obligatory. This is necessitated by the fact that the meaning relationship between the pair of clauses in each sentence is not alternative; rather it is additive. The second constituent (internet) of the first sentence is not an alternation to 'computer,' since it cannot be accessed without knowing how to operate computers. The same argument applies to the second example. Drawing on the context, *methods at universities* (the one that is linked by *or* in the second example) does not alter the *methods at schools*; rather it is added to it. The main reasons behind such *and*/*or* replacement errors could be intralingual. The writers are not sufficiently acquainted with the grammar and semantic nature of *or* in English, as seen below

[10] *Our duty [*]to stand beside the government, to fight against his habit,* also *(and) to [*]advice the coming generation from the dangerous of smoking …* [15/AW]

From the context, the writer of the above sentence, most likely, intends to enumerate his/her duties toward making people stop smoking. He/she does this in succession as indicated by parallel verbal phrases *to stand*, *to fight* and *to advise*. he replacement error takes place when the writer uses *also* (before the last enumerated duty *to advise*) instead of *and*. Another example is provided below:

[11]- *… Improving heir education, and extending the scope of [*]knowledgement (knowledge), <u>in addition to</u> (and) increasing their culture ...* [24/AW]The writer of the above-sentence commits two errors involving *and*. The first occurs when he/she predicates the second clause (one of three clauses found in succession) with *and* instead of a comma; and the second when placing *in addition to* immediately before the last clause (standing for the last enumerated benefits of learning a foreign language) in lieu of *and*.

Causal Conjunction Errors

Table.4 *Types of Causal Conjunction Errors*

Type of Errors	No. of Errors	Percentage	Mean
a) misuse	53	60.9%	1.06
b) addition	23	26.1%	0.46
c) replacement	10	10.9%	0.2
d) omission	2	2.1%	0.04
Total	**88**	**100%**	**1.76**

Causal conjunction errors come second in frequency, accounting for 22.4%, following additive conjunctions. Like additives, causal conjunction errors are sub-classified into four major types: addition, replacement, misuse and omission. Table [4] reveals that the causal conjunction errors involving misuse are the highest in frequency, comprising 53 occurrences or 60.9%. To find out which causal conjunction poses the greatest difficulty for the subjects of this study, the errors are further put into the following smaller groups according to the conjunction each group subsumes. Misuse errors including *because* and *so* are the most prominent, having the same frequency of 31 occurrences (35.7% each).

With regards to causal *because*, errors take place when students use it in textual contexts where its meaning / function does not apply. The following sentences displays *because* misuse errors.

[12] *…if he *study *the law in Arabic, he *failure, and he*come back to his   country* <u>becaus</u>*e the lack of foreign language.*   [29 / AW]

Apart from the serious syntactic problems in example , a sentence containing four clauses is probably too difficult to command, particularly for EFL students. Before identifying the causal conjunction error, it is important to explain that the writer expresses the importance of learning a foreign language (especially, English) for Arab students. Generally speaking, the way the writer forms subordinate clauses (together with numerous syntactic errors his/her sentence contains) impedes the coherent flow of meanings, if not break down the communication altogether.

Using *because* to link the segment *the lack of foreign language* to the previous part of sentence seems to be incorrect. This is due to th fact that the constituent *the lack of foreign language* is not the cause of *failing to study law in Arabic* since there is no relation between *studying law in Arabic*' and *learning a foreign language*.

Another incorrect use of *because* is illustrated by the following:

 [13] *through the revolution of communication, so all the world becomes like or need to speak one language, <u>because</u> of the direct link of all world countries.* [31/ AW]

It is difficult to find out what the writer wishes to convey, not only due to the incorrect use of causal conjunction *because*, but also because of the redundant use of *so*, *or* and *through*; all compounded by the syntactically and semantically incorrect manner of encoding the intended

meanings.. The meaning of conjunctive expression *because*, in the last part of the sentence, is not congruous, as *the direct link between the world countries* is not the reason for the need to speak one language. On the contrary, *the direct link …* is established by virtue of the revolution in communication technology as shown in the revised version, underneath.

Due to (because of) revolution in communication technology, the whole world has become one community speaking one language. Therefore, it is important for any member to learn that language.

     Being equal in frequency of occurrence to *because so* misuses stan out as the most prominent causal conjunction errors, (35.7%). The conjunction *so* is regarded as the simple form of causal relation markers, besides *thus*, *hence*, *therefore*, *consequently*, *accordingly*, etc. (Halliday and Hasan, 1976: 256). Furthermore, it occurs only initially, unless following *and* (Halliday and Hasan, ibid). The errors involve using *so* in a textual context where its meaning does not hold. Below are some examples (extracted from students' written texts).

 [14] *Finally if we *stoped *the smoking in public places, we can save *or   *protects our health form the harm of smoking.* <u>So</u> *we must protects our heads.* [19/AW]
.[[15] *I sat *at the last place, <u>so</u> no one on it*   [25/NW]

What is unconventional with *so* in both examples is that its meaning is completely reversed. The reversal stems from the fact that *so* is used to mark the 'result' and not the 'cause' as is customary in English. In the first text portion, for example, it is the 'health protection' that entails 'stopping smoking in public places', not the opposite (as the writer has done). Note the revised version:

Finally, if we want to protect our health, we must stop smoking, especially in public places.

The same holds true of the second example. The manner in which the writer uses *so* in the second clause literally means that he/she sat on the last seat, as a result it was empty (there was nobody sitting on it). In fact, the writer intends to convey the opposite.

    I found a free seat in the corner. <u>So</u> *I sat on it*

Even this way of using *so* is not acceptable in discourse analysis/ pragmatics, since the meaning added after *so* is implied in the sense that it can be understood by the addressee from the context, depending on his *schema* knowledge. To put it another way, one looks for a chair, conventionally to sit on, not to dance or stand on. The subjects of the present study write in formal English in the same digressive manner they chat in colloquial Arabic Compare the original Arabic version of the same second example , from which literal translation into English is rendered.

أنا قَعَدْت في المقعد الأخير <u>لأنه</u> ما كان فيه زول/ana *qa3adata fii al- maq3ad al- akhiir lanahuu maa kaan fiihu zool /.*   The underlined word (*/ lanahu /* لأنه) is incorrectly analogized with English *so,* a process that reverses the meaning of 'cause – result' in English.

    Addition is the second most predominant type of causal conjunction errors with 23 cases (26.1%), following the ones involving misuse processes. It takes the form of unnecessary insertion of a particular causal conjunction in contexts where it is not obligatory. Of these causal conjunctions, *so*, *if* and *so as* are the most problematic. The subjects' written corpus reveal certain positions where the causal conjunction *so* is superfluously used. There are 10 cases of *so* additions (41.7%). Two instances will suffice:

[16] *.. the sun is shining, the sky is cloudy,* <u>so</u> *my friends *are advanced and I   promise to meet them*   [16/NW]

 [17]-*When I got home he was watching T.V. <u>so</u> joined him I sat on the chair….* [18/NW]

Regardless of the meaning contradictions shown in the two clauses of the first sentence (How on Earth can the sun shine in the cloudy sky!), the causal conjunction *so* is redundant (ornamental) rather than denoting a causal relation, which is originally denied between the two text components. Similarly, the relationship holding between the first clause of the example and the second is not causal – result in nature. Therefore, the presence of **so** at the initial position of the last sentence is needless. The addition errors of this type can be put down to the writers' ignorance of causal-conjunction rule restrictions.

Adversative Conjunction Errors

In the corpus, adversative conjunction errors come third in frequency, accounting for 12.2%. They are further put into smaller groups according to the process each group of errors involves (misuse, addition, replacement and omission). The following table statistically shows the distribution of these types of errors in the corpus.

Table.5. *Types of Adversative Conjunction Errors*

Type of Error	No. of Errors	Percentage
a) misuse	23	48%
b) addition	19	40%
c) replacement	4	8%
d) omission	2	4%
Total	**48**	**100%**

Adversative errors involving misuse come first in frequency among other processes, standing for 48%. This group of errors includes *but*, *although* and *on the other hand*. It is observable that most adversative-conjunction misuse errors have *but* (66.7%) or 15 cases. This result denotes that the conjunction *but* poses more difficulties for the subjects than *although* and *on the other hand*. The errors entail using *but* in textual contexts where its meaning or function does not apply. Below are some examples:

[18] *… it will be *also the key to access different *and important knowledge as   *well as enjoy speak it, listen to it on radio, T.V *or use it to read about literature *and art of other area *and people <u>but,</u> a foreign language will be very helpful to broaden you education as *well.* [31/AW]

The writer of this verbose sentence (comprising <u>25</u> words and <u>8</u> conjunctions) argues for the importance of learning a foreign language. The intended idea of the last clause, which is incorrectly punctuated and anticipated by the adversative-relation conjunction *but,* is that learning a foreign language is particularly important for improving one's education. This idea, in fact, is the last one of learning a foreign language advantages mentioned, in succession, by the writer. Accordingly, the relation between the last portion of the sentence (joined by *but*) and the others is additive rather than adversative in nature. Consequently, additive-emphatic conjunctions such as *furthermore*, *in particular*, *moreover* should have been used instead of *but* to antecede the last clause.

The errors related to *although* are comparatively lower in frequency (6 cases). One example will clarify:

 [19] *Because many people become sick and die of smoking <u>although</u> they do no   *smoking even one day in their life, *but breath polluted air that came from bad behaviour of the smokers.* [19/AW]

Generally speaking, the manner in which the writer of this sentence expresses him/herself, along with the redundant words he/she employs to convey his/her messages makes it difficult to trace the intended meanings. Assuming the writer desires to signal causal-relation between this sentence and the previous ones, then attaching another subordination beginning with *although* and ending with redundant *but* is unjustifiable. This type of errors might well provide another instance of the students' florid writing style to be expected from Arabic- speaking writers.Hence, the expression *breath polluted air that came from bad behaviour of the smokers*, can be paraphrased as *passive smoking* as shown in the following revised variant of the whole sentence:

  Because some people die or become sick of passive smoking.

It is evident so far that both *although* and *but* are either misused or unnecessary. Another incorrect use of *although* is evident in the following subordination.

 [20] *... <u>although</u> it is harmful, but smoking in public places must be banned to protect the health of the people ....*   [35/AW]

Example [20] has an error of a dual nature. First, the subordination is double – marked, by *although* (in the first clause) and *but* (in the second clause). Second, the conjunctive *although* itself is misused. Cutting out the redundant *but* from the second clause, the sentence should have been:

   <u>*Although*</u> *it is harmful, smoking in public places must be banned to protect the*
   health of the people ...

Using *although* in the context above is incorrect as the relation between the first and second clauses is *causal – result*, and not adversative. Therefore, one of the causal conjunctions (such as: *because*, *since*, *as*, *for*, *as for*) would be appropriate in the context where *although* is incorrectly used. For example

    Because it is harmful, smoking in public places must be banned .....

The errors such as the ones discussed above, are most likely due to the language users' ignorance of the lexical dimensions of collocation.

  Amounting to 40%, adversative conjunction additions come second in frequency, with 19 occurrences. They involve three adversative conjunctions: *but*, *however*, and *unfortunately*. Furthermore, the addition errors including *but* are the most salient, constituting 80% of all errors of this subcategory. The errors involving *however* and *unfortunately* are alike in frequency of occurrence (each forms 10%). As a result, discussion and analysis are limited to conjunctive word *but*. Below are some examples:

[**21**] *..., some of them aim to be a member in some *country that *speaks a different *language, <u>but</u> *other learn a foreign *language for other purposes such as, *make the opportunity for getting job broader.*   [27/AW]

In example (21), the writer intends to present the reasons for learning a foreign language. With no regards to his/her poor vocabulary, numerous syntactical and spelling problems, the second clause of this sentence, which is erroneously conjoined by the adversative *but*, is not contrary to the first. Rather, it is one of the purposes for learning a foreign language the writer begins to enumerate in the first part of the sentence. Viewing it another way, this part of the sentence *learning a foreign language for help in finding a job* is not antithetical to *learning a foreign language for being able to communicate with the native speakers of the language*, as /expressed by the writer.

But is also found unnecessarily co-occurring with *although* in one sentence. The coming statements illustrate the case.

 [22]… *although they do not smoking even one day in their life, <u>but</u> breath polluted air that came from bad behaviour of the smokers.*   [19/AW]

  [22] *Although it's not easy to acquire a second language, <u>but</u> all students should be required to take a foreign language ...*   [50/AW]

While in English two clauses are not usually connected by two conjunctions, double- marked subordination is common in Arabic and, hence, errors as above will result, as discussed in the earlier part of this study.

Pedagogical Implications

The consideration of cohesion patterns in students 'written production has revealed unduly large stretches of erroneous cohesive relations, and these statistics are the more striking in the light of the fact that the sample students are on the verge of graduating from university. It, hence, seems that most of these errors have been fossilized into their interlingual systems. This calls in for an investigation of the courses offered at this university as a possible indicator of cohesion misuse as symptomatic of larger writing issues. Out of the thirty- seven courses offered, only three are allotted to writing. The first of these is in the first year and the other two are in the second and third year. The courses are entitled *Writing, Writing Composition* and *Expository Writing* respectively. While the titles of these courses hint at rhetorical and current- traditional approaches concerned with the organizing structure and essay patterns of the 1960s and 1970s, no writing course is offered in the fourth and final year. This is significant, since the only contemporary linguistics course, namely *Discourse Analysis* is provided in the fourth year. However, by then it will not instill in the students those textual properties (of which *cohesion* is our concern) and will, consequently, be a mere academic exercise divorced from students' writing already moulded by the environment of structural approaches evidenced in the fact that there are five grammar courses in the syllabus but, yet again, the best of these *Functional Grammar* is offered in the final year. It would be plausible to postulate that much the same conditions exist in other Sudanese universities. The neglect of discoursal aspects was corroborated by a study carried out by Abdullah (2005) on post- graduate writing research in Sudan, and in which he found that the bulk of research was devoted to error analysis of grammatical and spelling mechanical errors at the level of the sentence, disregarding the fact that these errors do not necessarily impinge on writing quality. Even the two studies dealing with cohesion regard it as yet one more element of the paragraph structure as in current- traditional approaches, and cohesion is singled out without consideration of the other textual, contextual and non- linguistic factors making up the text. It is the contention of Abd Allah (and ours too) that any remedy of writing problems presupposes a change of pedagogy through implementing more textually- based paradigms as a framework for teaching writing. In so doing, due consideration will be given to the text as an embodiment of actual language use involving linguistic and non-linguistic elements all of which geared towards the fulfillment of a communicative purposes. Only then can a system for rectifying the above cohesion errors manifested in the present study be feasibly devised.

Conclusion

The subject of cohesion first rose into prominence in the 1970s within post- Chomskyan linguistics in its strands of Hallidayan Systemic Functional Linguistics, Textlinguistics and Discourse Analysis which all, more or less, stressed the *text* as the basic unit of linguistic analysis. Cohesion is one condition that a text has to fulfill to be a text at all. The study of cohesion was given impetus by the publication of Halliday and Hasan's (1976) book *Cohesion in English*, and in the wake of this work, a considerable body of research has been amassed. Taking this cue, the present study investigates the handling of conjunctions within a corpus drawn from fifty Sudanese English majors.

Of Halliday and Hasan's (1976) four semantic categories, additive conjunctions presented the greatest difficulties for the subjects. Errors involving additive conjunctions, alone, stand for 50.29%, followed by causal conjunctive relations (25.27%). Taken together, these two types comprise three- fourth of all errors.. Within additives, the conjunction errors including *and* and *or*, make up for 77% of all additive errors. As for causal conjunctions, the errors relating to *so* and *because* are the most obvious in the subjects' written corpus. Concerning adversative conjunctions, the errors involving *but* over-number other conjunctions (forming 64% of the errors of this type), with *although*, trailing behind *but* in frequency (12%). Temporal conjunction errors, however, are the least in frequency. They constitute 9.94% of the total errors of conjunctive type. All in all, the conjunctive words *and*, *or*, *so*, *because*, *but*, and *although* are considered the most difficult for the subjects to deal with, on grounds of intralingual interference, semantic ambiguity and interlingual confusion. Neither the latter category nor statistics for single items are presented in the study for lack of space. It is hoped that further research will be carried out not only on the rest of cohesive devices but also such aspects as the correlation between cohesion use and lexical dimensions.

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