

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 indispensable 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