

The Use of Logical Connectors by Arab EFL University Students: A Performance Analysis

Abdulmoneim Mahmoud

Department of English, Sultan Qaboos University
Muscat 123, Sultanate of Oman
E-mail: amahmoud@squ.edu.om

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Abstract

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. Thus, this study constitutes a departure from the previous studies on cohesion in terms of methodology and findings. 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.

Keywords: Logical Connectors, Performance Analysis, Form-Focused Instruction, Errors, Cognitive Strategies.

1. Introduction

No linguist or language teaching specialist talks about cohesion without direct or indirect reference to Halliday and Hasan's (1976) pioneering publication on the issue. Not only did their book sow the seeds of discourse analysis and text linguistics but it also had a significant impact on language teaching and learning. All of the definitions of the concept of cohesion center around Halliday and Hasan's (ibid, p.25) view that it is " a basic unit of meaning" that signals relationships within and between sentences and paragraphs of a text, (see also Adas, 2012; Al-Jarf, 2001; Leo, 2012). Elsewhere, Halliday and Hasan (1985, p.4) say that "the concept of cohesion is a semantic one; it refers to relations of meaning that exist within the text, and that define it as a text." According to them, cohesive devices include reference, substitution, ellipsis, conjunction and lexical cohesion. The first three are grammatical

whereas conjunction is "on the borderline of grammatical and lexical levels", (Halliday & Hasan, 1976, pp. 5-6).

This study focuses on the use of conjunctions by Arabic-speaking learners of English as a foreign language (EFL). Conjunctions are variously referred to as linking words, signal words, transition words, connecting words, discourse markers, logical connectors, transitional devices, connectives and transitions. They are a closed-class words defined by Celce-Murcia and Larsen-freeman (1983, p.323) as "words or phrases whose function is to show some logical relationship between two or more basic sentences." Some of these linking words are coordinating conjunctions connecting clauses or sentences that are grammatically and syntactically equal; the others are subordinating conjunctions connecting unequal clauses or sentences. The two types show paratactic and hypotactic relationships respectively, (for more information see e.g. Aarts, 2001; Quirk at al., 1985).

Cohesive devices play a crucial role in spoken and written text building (Ball, 1986; Sadighi, 2012). They facilitate comprehension of the text (Adas, 2012; Al-Jarf, 2001; Castro, 2004; Leo, 2012). Celce-Murcia and Larsen-Freeman (1983, p. 323) show the importance of logical connectors in speaking, writing listening and reading for EFL learners. As Tomiyama (1980) says, improper use of linking words results in global errors which may lead to misunderstanding and even communication breakdown. In a similar vein, Oshima and Houge (1991, p.165) talk about the detrimental effect of the first language when it leads to excessive use of coordination which makes EFL students' composition "boring to read and difficult to focus on the ideas expressed." Thus, the text suffers syntactically and semantically if the logical connectors are not used, overused or improperly used.

Many researchers believe that cohesion poses a serious problem to EFL learners. For example, Ahmed (2012), who conducted a perception study with the Egyptian university students, agrees with Leki (1991), Nunan (1999) and Qaddumi (1995) that students have problems in all aspects of cohesion. Similarly, Tangkieng (2010) concludes that Thai students have problems with cohesion even at an advanced level of proficiency in EFL. Adas (2012) reviewed a number of cohesion studies (Khalil, 1989; Olatejn, 2006) to support his view that EFL students are incompetent in cohesion. Al-Jarf (2001) and Sadighi (2012) studied the use of cohesion by Arab and Iranian EFL students respectively. Unlike Ahmed (ibid) and Tangkieng (ibid) who investigated cohesion in general, Al-Jarf and Sadighi rank ordered the different aspects of cohesion according to their difficulty levels. According to Al-Jarf, substitution was the most difficult whereas Sadighi found reference to be the most difficult. Both of them agreed that conjunctions were the easiest. Al-Jarf used a recognition test for data collection whereas Sadighi asked her students to write about one of two topics she had given them.

The present study focuses on the use of conjunctions by EFL university students. It is intended to constitute a departure from the above mentioned studies in terms of data elicitation and analysis. First, it aims to control the variables which might have affected the reliability of their findings. Second, it aims to focus exclusively on the use of the logical connectors through a performance analysis – an analysis of the correctly used as well as the incorrectly used conjunctions – in order to see the magnitude of the problem compared to the correct production within the same aspect, not in comparison with other aspects of cohesion. Thus, performance analysis constitutes another point of departure from the studies where researchers compared conjunction errors with those committed in the other aspects of cohesion. A performance analysis was conducted by El-Gazzar (2006) but it focused on the use of lexical cohesion by Arab EFL university students. The present study is intended to give a complete picture of EFL students' performance in the use of logical connectors when data collection variables are controlled. It also seeks to present a deeper and more detailed analysis of the errors in this area.

As stated earlier, this study gained impetus from the data elicitation tools and procedures used in some relevant previous studies and the findings reported in them. Kharma (1985), for example, based his findings on the predictions of a contrastive analysis of English and Arabic which may not reflect the students' actual errors. Ahmed (2012) used a questionnaire to gauge the students' views rather than scrutinizing their written production. Al-Jarf (2001) used a recognition test. A production test would have reflected the students' actual competence in using the cohesive devices. Othman (2004) used translation where the style, structure and other text building elements of the target text could be influenced by those of the source text. Sadighi (2012) used a writing task where the students had to choose one of three given topics. Since the students were not involved in the selection of the topics, their background knowledge might have affected their linguistic performance. The same applies to Tangkieng (2010) who provided feedback on the students' written work. Pearson (2005, p.261) collected his data from "the first course assignment" written by students of sociology who "had no specific course-related language instruction."

2. Methodology

To avoid such drawbacks, the present researcher collected composition topics from the students themselves. They were 60 Arabic-speaking third-semester EFL university students taking a post-intermediate essay writing course as part of the requirements for a bachelor degree in English. The class would meet twice a week (two two-hour sessions). The essays were written as an in-class assignment in the second session. The students had already studied two writing courses: paragraph writing in the first semester and essay writing in the second semester. In the third semester course, the students were required to write mostly argumentative essays using the various modes of writing they had studied in previous two semesters (description, definition, comparison and contrast, analysis, etc.). The first four to six weeks were devoted to (1) revision of writing thesis statements and topic sentences, and (2) revising, teaching and practicing the cohesive devices. The rest of the semester (10 – 12 weeks) was spent on (1) suggestion and discussion of topics and preparation of outlines in the first two-hour session, and (2) writing the essay and provision of feedback on the common problems in previous essay in the second session.

Following a learner-centered approach to process-oriented writing, the students were asked to suggest topics and choose the most common ones to write about. The students were grouped according to the topics they selected in order to discuss the main points as a brainstorming activity. Each student would then prepare a detailed outline to be developed into an essay in the second two-hour session. Most of the essays were one and half to two double-spaced pages in length. No length limit was imposed. The students were advised to write an essay that was long enough to clearly present and support the main points and to assess and refute some of the most important opposing views. Regarding the essays used in this study, 40 students chose to write about the pros and cons of mobile phones; the others chose to evaluate one of the courses they had studied in the university. Generally, the course evaluation essays were longer than the mobile phone essays most probably because of transfer of training. The university would administer a course and teaching evaluation questionnaire at the end of each semester. The questionnaire consisted of objective multiple-choice items and open-ended questions covering the course contents, teaching materials, teaching style and techniques, and tests and examinations. Hence, the students had already evaluated the courses they wrote about (in this study) when they studied them in the previous semesters. Because it was a process-oriented writing course, the students were encouraged to use electronic and paper dictionaries and to consult their peers to solve their spelling and vocabulary problems.

The completed essays were photocopied; the original copies were corrected and returned to the students for feedback. Copies were given to two writing instructors one of whom was a native speaker of English. They were requested to indicate both the correct and incorrect

coordinating and subordinating conjunctions. A third native speaker of English was consulted for verification in case of disagreement. Instances of repetition of the same connector with the same sentences and ideas in the same essay were counted as one usage. In each essay, both the correct and incorrect connectors were counted.

3. Results and Analysis

The total number of the connectors used in 60 essays was 2936 at an average of 49 connectors per essay. The two tables below show the number, percentage and means of correct and incorrect connectors

Table 1: Number and Percentage of Correct and Incorrect Connectors Used in 60 Essays

Total Used	Correct		Incorrect	
2936	2672	91%	264	9%

Table 2: Means and Percentages of Correct and Incorrect Connectors per Essay

Used	Correct		Incorrect	
49	45	91.8%	4	8.2%

Tables 1 and 2 above show that the students used a remarkable number of linking words, among other cohesive devices, to achieve cohesion. The correctly used connectors (91%) were far more than the incorrectly used ones (9%). This finding cautions us against making sweeping generalizations about the difficulty of cohesion in learning EFL such as those made by Adas (2012), Aziz (2012), Pearson (2005) and Tangkieng (2010). The results concur with those of Al-Jarf (2001) and Sadighi (2012) who found the use of conjunctions to be the easiest of all aspects of cohesion (reference, substitution, ellipsis, etc.). However, as stated earlier, Al-Jarf and Sadighi did not conduct a performance analysis; they focused only on the errors and compared conjunction errors with the errors made in the use of other cohesive devices.

The students in this study used various types of logical connectors expressing at least 15 different relationships (addition, emphasis, similarity, exemplification, cause, result, condition, sequence, manner, transition to a new point, choice, opinion, stating the obvious, summary, conclusion). They used both coordinating and subordinating conjunctions within and between sentences and paragraphs. The essays typically started with a brief introduction including the thesis statement which often contained a concessive sentence such as *'Although the mobile phone is a useful device, it causes many problems'* and *'Some students think this course is useless and boring but I believe it is one of the most interesting courses in the department'*. The thesis statement was then developed by using various rhetorical modes such as enumeration, sequence, description, cause and effect, comparison and contrast, conclusion and recommendation.

The findings of this study show that even the students who had problems with vocabulary and grammar used most of the linking words correctly, (see Appendix 1 for a sample essay). This is in line with Sadighi's (2012, p.260) finding that "good and poor essays did not differ significantly in cohesive devices." In the face of such findings, researchers' (e.g. Ahmed, 2012) assumption that cohesion problems are due to low proficiency level in EFL does not hold water in all cases. Some researchers (e.g., Ahmed, 2012; Mohamed, 2010) believe that Arab learners of EFL overuse coordination due to interlingual transfer from their first language. However, the findings of this study show that coordinating conjunctions, especially *'and'*, were not as excessive as reported by researchers. According to Kharma (1985) this

could be attributed to increased proficiency in the language. It is worth mentioning here that 'and' in English and 'wa' in Arabic share at least seven functions: sequence, contrast, concession, addition, condition, resumption, comment and simultaneity, (for more information see e.g. Fareh, 1998). Instead of expressing addition by 'and', many students used multi-word connectors such as 'not only ... but also'. Some even used idiomatic expressions such as 'To add fuel to the flame'. Not only did the students use semantically correct connectors but they also selected the appropriate ones from a set of connectors expressing the same relationship, (e.g. *because* vs *since* – *yet* vs *but*). In almost all essays, the concluding paragraph started with the appropriate connector (*In brief, Briefly, To conclude, To sum up, In conclusion, In a nut shell, etc.*). In seven essays there were no conjunction errors.

The large number of correctly used connectors (91%) could be due to systematic form-focused instruction, revision, practice and feedback on cohesion in the third semester. The students might have studied and practiced cohesion also in their previous writing courses in the first and second semester. Related to the issue of instruction is the fact that the language learners' cognitive development is usually ahead of their linguistic development. Since conjunctions express semantic and logical relationships between facts and ideas in a text, foreign language learners, by virtue of their cognitive maturity, can understand and express such relationships. This may explain EFL students' ability to use logical connectors correctly even if their grammar and vocabulary lag behind. The large number of correctly used connectors could also be due to positive transfer from the first language (Arabic). Overuse of 'and' Arab EFL students is attributed to negative interlingual transfer (Kharma, 1985; Mohammed, 2010). Existence of negative interlingual transfer presupposes existence of positive transfer, especially in case of logical connectors – a closed-class of about 200 words. In many cases there is one-to-one correspondence between Arabic and English connectors, (Aziz, 2012; Kharma, 1985). However, detection of the positive influence of the first language is not as easy as the detection of its negative effects. Correct production of a linguistic form or structure may be due to other intralingual reasons such as implicit acquisition through exposure to the language or positive transfer from the target language itself (Mahmoud, 2005, 2012). Thus, the correct use of the logical connectors could be attributed to (1) systematic form-focused instruction, practice, revision and feedback, (2) cognitive maturity, (3) positive interlingual transfer, (4) acquisition through exposure to the language, and (4) positive intralingual transfer.

Most of the researchers who analyzed the cohesion errors of Arabic-speaking university students (e.g. Kharma, 1985; Mohammed, 2010; Othman, 2004) underscored the excessive use of coordination by using 'and' as the most frequent error. However, the relatively small number of conjunction errors found in the present performance analysis (9%) include both coordinating and subordinating conjunctions. Effective teaching techniques need to take into consideration the most common problems that learners face which calls for a detailed classification and a deeper analysis of the most frequent errors. Teachers need to know the interlingual and intralingual cognitive strategies underlying such errors. Some errors could be attributed to learner-external factors such as inadequate explanation or excessive correction by the teacher. This could lead to confusion and misunderstanding resulting in instruction-induced errors. Another reason for the analysis of errors in this study is that the examples clearly show students' grammar and vocabulary problems which were more serious than their cohesion problems as stated earlier.

Accordingly, the 264 errors detected in this study were classified and quantified according to the main manifestations of error: selection, insertion and omission (Table 3). In each of these categories, the errors were classified according to the various logical relationships that the students intended to express. A third and important dimension was added to the analysis by further classification of the errors with the aim of arriving at their possible psycholinguistic explanations. Error analysis usually acquires a psycho-cognitive dimension through classification of the errors in terms of selection, insertion and so forth since these are the

manifestations of the various underlying learning and communication strategies used by the language learners (Mahmoud, 2012). Compound errors and ambiguous errors were ignored because they were very few; they constituted only 2.3% and 1.1% of the total number of errors made respectively.

Table 3: Number and Percentage of Selection, Insertion and Omission Errors

	Selection	Insertion	Omission	Total
Number	138	104	13	255
%	52.3	39.4	4.9	96.6

3.1 Selection

Table (3) above shows that most of the errors were due to the use of formally or semantically incorrect connectors, (i.e. selection errors). These were made in various types of logical relationships (addition, concession, cause & effect, sequence, etc.). They could be divided into the following three main types:

3.1.1 Incorrect Connector for a Correct Relationship

- * The mobile phone is connected with other phones so that permit other people to access it.
- * It is very useful that it facilitates our lives.
- * Mobile phones determine our way of living so that they are a major part of our everyday life.
- * First people used it just for calls but then phone experts improve it so that people send messages also.
- * Even though of these disadvantages, there are many advantages.
- * It causes pain in the ear also the hand.
- * It is helpful in need. In contrast, it causes bad effects.
- * I interest in buying every new style because they are very useful. On the other hand, some people started misusing them.
- * Although of many advantages, still the mobile phone has disadvantages.
- * These courses help the learner to comprehend the language. On the other hand, some students will not be qualified for taking these courses.
- * Some people use the mobile phone like organizer for their works.
- * As other inventions, the mobile phone has benefit and hazards.

In the examples above, the student used an incorrect connector from a set of connectors expressing a particular relationship. In other words, this type of selection error was committed when the student correctly figured out the logical relationship between facts and ideas (e.g. concession) but failed to choose the contextually or syntactically appropriate connector from among those which express that relationship (e.g. *though*, *even though*, *however*, *but*, *even so*, *yet*, *still*, *while*, *nevertheless*, *regardless of*, *despite*, *in spite of*). This could be due to interlingual transfer from Arabic where one connector stands for two or more connectors in English (e.g. '*raghm*' = *although*, *even though*, *despite*, *in spite of*). The same applies to the use of '*like*' and '*as*' in the last two examples where Arabic uses '*ka*' for both. It could also be due to an intralingual problem related to the construction of the sentence (e.g. the use of intensifiers '*very*' and '*so ... that*' in the first two examples above). In the examples listed in the study, the other errors (grammar, vocabulary, etc.) were not corrected to give the reader a clear picture of the students' level of proficiency in EFL. Another reason is that some conjunction errors might have been induced by problems in vocabulary or structure.

3.1.2 Formally Incorrect Connector

This second category includes errors related to the form of the connector. The logical relationship between ideas and the choice of the linking word were both correct. Thus, the errors could be due to low proficiency level in the language. They were mainly vocabulary and orthography errors.

- * All at all (All in all)
- * On the other side (On the other hand)
- * As the same time (at the same time)
- * Beside (Besides)
- * Moretheless (Moreover)
- * In briefly (In brief – Briefly)
- * Latest but not the least (Last but not least)
- * Than (Then)
- * Further more (Furthermore)
- * Where ever (Wherever)

3.1.3 Incorrect Logical Relationship

Unlike the errors in the previous two categories where the logical relationship between ideas and facts was correct, in this third category the connector does not express the correct relationship. This could be attributed to the students' inability to logically link the sentences; it could also be due to the students' ignorance of the meaning of the linking word.

3.1.3.1 Addition

- * By using mobile phone, it will be easy for the people to talk to their families. On the other hand, if there is any emergency it is very easy to ask for help.
- * The teacher does not satisfy by these materials ... but she asks students to study the presentations ... and memorize quotations.
- * This course encourages studying the other educational subjects. However, this course helps students to interpret other's behavior.
- * There were multiple-choice questions, essay questions, and true and false questions.

3.1.3.2 Cause and Effect

- * Can you imagine life without phone? Most people will say no and they need it as they need water and food.
- * The mobile phone is more helpful in emergency conditions, so you can phone any helper to help you.
- * Linguistic courses in the foundation stage will be more beneficial than in the advancing studies. Moreover, these courses enable the students to know the base of this language in early stages.
- * Also some people put it beside their head when they are sleeping and it affects their brain.

3.2 Insertion

Cases of redundant conjunctions amounted to 104 (39.4%). These could be divided into three main types.

3.2.1 Duplication of Meaning

Most of these errors were due to the repetition of the meaning by using a synonymous word, phrase or sentence which could be attributed to the influence of Arabic whose style is characterized by repetition and over-statement, (for more information see e.g. Aziz, 2012; Kharma, 1985; Mohammed, 2010; Ong, 2003).

- * Mobile phone was constructed and designed by
- * Some people ... like to own and have
- * I think it is dangerous and not safe because ...
- * Human beings are able to make and manufacture many machines.
- * All these materials are helpful and useful and play a role ...
- * Students are taught in a lab including all tools and equipments needed ...
- * The mobile phone has clear and obvious advantages.
- * Most of courses do not require students to do any assignment because they are introducing courses. As a result, there is no any assignment to do.
- * In fact mobile phones are made to use in the right way and not to misuse them. Using them correctly is what I hope. Furthermore, I want and wish that every person who has a mobile can benefit and use it accurately.
- * Most of the students, as it were, copy and paste the articles found in the internet and submit it because they are aware of their teacher's negligence and they know he does not bother to read their assignments.

3.2.2 Duplication of the Connector

In this category, the logical relationship between two ideas was expressed by two synonymous connectors. Such an error could originally be due to an error in the first language carried over to the foreign language. The students might duplicate the linking words in Arabic as a result of the negative influence of the phenomenon of repetition discussed above. This negative intralingual transfer may, in turn, be interlingually transferred to EFL. Thus, an intralingual error becomes an interlingual one.

- * Though the students enjoy the course itself, but this feature makes it
- * In addition, doing creative projects is another type of assessment.
- * In addition, he is not only flexible but also tolerant.
- * Furthermore, the teacher does not only teach but rather she is a sister who cares ...
- * Apart from the mid-term exam, students are required to do group presentations that carry 20% as well.

3.2.3 Use of a Connector Where None is Required

Another type of insertion error was the use of a linking word where none was required. Like selection errors, this could be due to failure to recognize the logical relationship between ideas or due to the ignorance of the meaning of the connector or cases of its usage. Redundant connectors could also be instruction-induced. They could be due to incomplete or inadequate explanations leading to confusion or misunderstanding on the part of the students. The teacher's exclusive focus on conjunctions at the expense of the other aspects of cohesion (repetition, substitution, ellipsis, etc.) may lead to their excessive use. Insisting on cohesion when teaching or proving feedback may be misunderstood by the students and result in such a single-minded view of cohesion. This study revealed cases where the students unnecessarily and indiscriminately used linking words within and between sentences and paragraphs. The following are examples of such redundant connectors.

- * Lectures are not the only way if teaching but discussion and presentations are also used.
- * In my opinion mobile phone is very necessary in our life. In addition to that it has a lot of advantages and it plays vital roles in our life.
- * Mobiles give us many services such send messages, photos with camera so if we want to do these things in normal way, we need lots of money and time.
- * Every person can use it in a good way or on the other hand in a bad way.
- * In fact mobile phone is a clever invention. So the most important advantage of mobile phone is that it ...
- * Also it makes life easier than before. It connects people with others in everywhere. However, it has clear and obvious advantages.
- * At first people used it just for calls but then phone experts improved it.

In this respect it interesting to refer to the case of a student who chose to evaluate a course. He wrote eight paragraphs and started each of the five middle paragraphs with an addition connector as if he was listing the paragraphs and not the main points. The essay was structured as follows:

Paragraph 1: Introduction

Paragraph 2: Course description

Paragraph 3: *In addition*, (the teacher)

Paragraph 4: *Moreover*, (the teaching material)

Paragraph 5: *Furthermore*, (assignments and presentations)

Paragraph 6: *In addition*, (tests and examinations)

Paragraph 7: *Besides*, (learning outcomes)

Paragraph 8: *In conclusion*, (a recommendation)

This is most probably an instruction-induced problem reflecting a one-sided view of cohesion. The student might have thought of the process of cohesion only in terms of using conjunctions. Therefore, he used an addition word at the beginning of the paragraph to link it with the previous one believing that by doing so he would produce a physically linked group of paragraphs leading to a coherent essay.

3.3 Omission

Out of the 264 conjunctions errors found in this study, only 13 (4.9%) were cases where a required connector was not used. Most of the missing words (7) were addition connectors (*and, also, not only ... but*), two were cause and effect and two were concession connectors. Such omissions could be performance slips. They could also be competence errors resulting from misunderstanding. For instance, students might have over-generalized the use of the comma when listing items in a sentence, thus dropping the linking word '*and*' before the last item on the list as in the first two examples.

- * Also people can use the programs that the phone consists of as calculator, games, calendar.
- * Students will be able to know and understand the nature of education as well as philosophical, social, cultural, economic forces that shape education.
- * Mobile phones, nowadays, are not only used for communication. They are used as dictionaries.
- * Mobile phone is not an equipment which we can use to call others but also, it contains many useful machines.
- * It makes life that is full of mixed situation much easier. For example, it is easy to carry, has a small size.

- * Overall, mobile phones are a very serious item people have to be careful in dealing with them.
- * It enable people to communicate with each other even the distance between is long.
- * Many business men depend on mobile phone because they have relationships in other countries. So it is easy to communicate with them. Some people misuse mobile phone.

For example, some students use it to cheat in exams.

To sum up, the conjunction errors (9%) detected in this study included selection, insertion and omission errors committed for interlingual as well as intralingual reasons. These very reasons, among others, may also account for the correct use of some linking words.

4. Conclusion and Implications

The analysis of the performance of EFL university students in the area of conjunctions revealed that most of the linking words (91%) were correctly used. Error analysis, by definition, would not show what the students were able to do; it would give a one-sided view of their competence. The analysis of errors in all aspects of cohesion (reference, ellipsis, substitution, etc.) may show the relative difficulty level of logical connectors, but it still focuses only on the empty part of the cup. Analyzing the students' performance in all aspects of cohesion was not possible in this study due to limitations of space. Therefore, only the linking words were singled out for investigation. Further studies are needed to shed light on the students' performance – errors and non-errors – in other aspects of cohesion.

Contrary to what some researchers believe, the findings of this study show that the use logical connectors by EFL university students does not pose a serious problem. No doubt, students' proficiency level in the language plays a role in this respect. However, this study revealed that both good and weak students used most of the connectors correctly. This is most probably due to the fact that these connectors are a small group of words (about 200 closed-class words) which can be mastered, among other things, by effective instruction and practice. As Lee (2002, p. 154) said, cohesion can be "understood, taught, learnt and practiced in the classroom." Hence, form-focused instruction and practice together with a rigorous performance analysis are needed before envisaging conjunctions as a serious problem based on the findings of error analysis, perception studies or predictive contrastive analysis. The data for this study was collected following systematic instruction, practice, revision and feedback on cohesion. The drawbacks inherent in the data elicitation tools used in some related studies were avoided by adopting a learner-centered approach to process-oriented writing.

Effective form-focused instruction and practice need to take into account the common problems that the students face. A deeper and more detailed analysis of the most frequent errors may yield useful material to be incorporated in teaching, practicing, revising and providing corrective feedback. In this study, a three-dimensional analysis of errors was conducted. They were classified and analyzed according to (1) types (selection, insertion, omission), (2) the logical relationships (addition, concession, cause & effect, etc.), and (3) the possible reasons (interlingual transfer, intralingual transfer, instruction-induced). Such an analysis can shed light on the possible learning and communication strategies underlying the errors. Knowledge about these strategies may, in turn, help in achieving a learner-centered teaching technique, (Mahmoud, 2012). Awareness of the role of the first language (Arabic) through negative interlingual transfer may explain why Arab students commit errors when using, for example, '*although*' and '*despite*'. In such cases, brief and simple contrastive comparisons between Arabic and English may be an effective technique. A judicious use can be made of the first language to encourage positive transfer and warn against its possible

negative effects. Reference to the first language can be particularly useful in teaching EFL conjunctions since they are closed-class words and many of them have equivalents in Arabic.

Apart from the learner-internal interlingual and intralingual errors, the analysis revealed some possible instruction-induced problems. Cases of overuse of some connectors and the indiscriminate use or omission of some others could be attributed to incomplete explanations or excessive correction. Thus, like bilingual contrastive comparisons, form-focused monolingual instruction, practice, revision and feedback need to be planned and delivered carefully to safeguard against confusion or misunderstanding that may result in such induced errors.

Appendix

Mobile Phone

"I want a mobile phone because all my friends have", I said when I entered to the university, and I did not have mobile phone, but after sometimes my father bought it for me. It was a valuable device that each one must own it before I realize the real disadvantages of it. First of all, it makes you lose your money because if you want to talk, you have to pay. For example, a student in the university loses all of his salary on buying cards and at the middle of every month he sleeps hungry. Second, time is the great thing that we have to ask ourselves about. However, we lose it in chatting and gossiping. How many hours you spend each week talking in mobile phone? Each minute we are responsible to use it, but people do not learn from their experiences. Third, it leads up to a mistake. How many times we heard about people who lose themselves and walk in a wrong way and the reason is a wrong number which develop after sometimes to a deep relation. Every day technologists discover new programmes. I do not deny how do these programmes help to communicate more, but people can connect in others ways which give them peace and safety. These programmes use in a negative way and become like a poison that kill peoples mind and heart. Each one of them is misused by people. For instance, it has Bluetooth and people use it to send virus to others. Moreover, the camera and the video that can photo you without your awaring and publish them in the internet. Also, today there are many new types of mobile phones and you find them in lovely shapes and people are fascinating about them. I saw a man who is addicted in new mobile phones and each time when he sees new mobile phones he buys it. I do not encourage people to buy a new mobiles because they expensive and useless. On the other hand, the mobile phone has some advantages as well several disadvantages. For example, I am in Asia but my friend goes to Europe. How could we keep in touch with each other? How could I know his news and he know mine? Which type of devices could we use to feel that we are together? We have no accurate knowledge of the answers of all such questions. Then, we agree that the mobile phone is the perfect way to keep our relationship goes on. It allows us to talk together no matter how far the distance is. It has several services and each type comes has more than the others. For example, my brothers are in Qatar since June but every four weeks we send them messages which include our photos in order to feel them that they are with us. For that the mobile phone is a source of happiness to my family. In addition, videos is one of the service that it has. For instance, we could save some of great memories that we have such as memories of friendship, celebration of special event and so on. Moreover, it has some games that we could use to enjoy our times and play at the same time and in any place. Really, the mobile is a magnificent tool which is easy to use and useful at the same time. In brief, mobile phone is easy to carry and cheap to buy to make your life perfect. In brief, I believe that mobile phones are a rickful epidemic that threaten our traditional and society every moment.

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