CONJUNCTION ERROR ANALYSIS ON INDONESIAN EFL UNIVERSITY STUDENTS' WRITTEN COMPOSITIONS: A QUALITATIVE STUDY

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ABSTRAK

Conjunction adalah kata atau kelompok kata yang berfungsi menghubungkan dua konstruksi gramatikal yang sama yaitu: kata, frasa, atau klausa, sehingga berperan dalam membangun kohesi dari suatu tulisan. Namun, penggunaan conjuction bagi siswa EFL dan ESL masih dianggap sulit dan problematik. Beberapa masalah yang ditemui mencakup salah penggunaan (misuse), terlalu berlebihan dalam penggunaanya (overuse) dan kurang digunakan (underuse). Beberapa hasil penelitian juga menemukan kesalahan penggunaan conjunction pada konteks Bahasa Indonesia. Studi ini bertujuan untuk mengkaji kesalahan-kesalah penggunaan conjuction yang dilakukan oleh mahasiswa EFL di Indonesia pada komposisi tulisan.

Kata kunci: conjuction, analisis kesalahan, komposisi tulisan

ABSTRACT

It has been widely agreed that conjunction constitutes one important aspect in building cohesion. Despite the fact, the use of conjunction in both EFL and ESL students' writings is deemed problematic. Some problems found by quantitative researchers cover misuse, overuse and underuse. Some others revealed by qualitative researchers involve misuses but with specific aspects like meaning and register. The types of errors mentioned were also found in Indonesian context. This study aims at investigating qualitatively the conjunction errors committed by Indonesian EFL university students in their written compositions. This study revealed that distraction, wrong relation and semantic incompletion are respectively the most frequently committed errors. Further research examining the major problems constituting the main cause of the error occurrences need to be conducted.

Keywords: conjunction, error analysis, written compositions.

Introduction

The use of conjunction in a text is considered important since it constitutes one component that helps build cohesion. Cohesion itself is an aspect which is inseparable from a text. It is because cohesion is the element that differentiates a text from what is not a text, as claimed by Halliday and Hasan (1976). They add that cohesion is a semantic relation produced by the existence of two cohesively related items, and further, defines it as a text. A writer might understand their intentions well, but sometimes the readers need further and complete explanation in order to grasp the ideas presented in a text. It is in line with the statement of Crewe (1990) that writers might understand their sentences well, but the possibility that the readers might not think the same way will make the transfer of information quite problematic. Here, the use of cohesive devices, not to mention conjunction, helps a writer build a unified text which is reader-friendly. Cox, Shanahan and Sulzby (1990) proposed that cohesion is crucial to enable the writer to make a text that can be easily comprehended, and the reader to understand the meaning of a text.

Despite the importance of conjunction, its use in the EFL students' written compositions seems quite problematic. It is because based on the findings of some researchers, there were found several types of mistakes students committed. They are overuse, underuse and misuse, with overuse as the major one (Zhang, 2014; Yin, 2015; and Meisuo, 2000). In overusing, the students were inclined to use the same conjunction like in the work of Appel (2018) and Li (2009), and the underuse is the other way around. In committing the misuse type, the students use inappropriate conjunctions to connect two sentences like in the work of Lee (2013). There are a number of misuse patterns found by the researchers. For example, Yeung (2009) found that the uses of *besides* in EFL learners' writings differ from those in the expert corpora.

Some Indonesian researchers have conducted studies scrutinizing the mistakes done by EFL students. Rahman (2017) and Nilopa et al (2017) found that in using cohesive devices, conjunction is the most problematic; gaining the highest percentage of error occurrences. Further, Rahman revealed that the use of cohesive devices in the students' written compositions is monotonous and Nilopa et al added that the students' texts failed to achieve cohesion. At last, one of the researches that contribute comprehensive findings is from Rahayu and Cahyono (2015) in which they investigate

the use of all conjunction, the use of each type of conjunction and the appropriate and appropriate use of conjunction. They involved a quantitative analysis on the frequency of conjunctions and qualitative one on the meaning of the texts.

Most of the quantitative studies involved a considerable number of subjects and the qualitative ones observed limited number of conjunctive elements. It can be said that there have been hardly conducted a qualitative research that includes a considerable number of conjunctions, while it might make a significant contribution which is obtaining a clearer depiction of the conjunction errors committed by the EFL students. On account of this, this study aims at finding the core problems that the students face in using conjunction in their written compositions. The research question is formulated as follows:

1. What are the types of errors committed by Indonesian EFL university students in using conjunctions?

Literatur Review

Conjunction has a number of names like cohesive device (Halliday & Hasan, 1976), transitions (Winterowd, 1970), logical connectors (Quirk & Greenbaum, 1973) and metadiscoursal markers (Vande Kopple, 2002). And studies on the use of this linguistic class have a considerable number, indicating that its use in students' written compositions is significant yet quite troublesome. McClure and Steffensen (1980) stated that that conjunctions are signals that emphasize on the connection between sentences and that make them explicit.

Halliday and Hasan (1976) divided conjunctions into four main types. They cover additive, adversative, causal and temporal. The meaning brought by the additive conjunctions is 'there is something more to be said' and by the adversative ones is 'contrary to expectations. The causal conjunctions indicate cause-and-effect relationship between sentences and the temporal ones show time relations between them. Furthermore, Halliday and Hasan also divided ach main category into severam subcategories in which each of them brings their own specific meanings. The types of conjunctions by Halliday and Hasan (1976) are tabulated in Table 1.

The study of Kao and Chen (2011) divided conjunction errors into six types which are (1) wrong relation, (2) semantic incompletion, (3) connective overuse, (4) non-equivalent exchange, (5) distraction and (6) surface logicality. The definitions of each type of errors are provided on the Table 2.

The concept of conjunction postulated by Halliday and Hasan (1976) and the misuse patterns proposed by Kao and Chen (2011) were used to decide the appropriateness of conjunction uses. Any uses which are not in line with the theories were perceived as errors.

Table 1. Types of Conjunctions by Halliday and Hasan (1976)

	External/internal	Internal (unless otherwise specified)		
Additive	Additive, simple: Additive: *and, and also* Negative: *nor, and ... not* Alternative: *or, or else*	Complex, emphatic: Additive: *furthermore, in addition, besides* Alternative: *alternatively* Complex, de-emphatic: *incidentally* Afterthought: *by the way*	Apposition: Expository: *that is, I mean, in other words* Exemplificatory: *for instance, thus*	Comparison: Similar: *likewise, similarly, in the same way* Dissimilar: *on the other hand, by contrast*

	External/internal	Internal (unless otherwise specified)		
Adversa-tive	Adversative 'proper': Simple: *yet, though, only* Containing 'and': *but* Emphatic: *however, nevertheless, despite this*	Contrastive: Avowal: *in fact, actually, as a matter of fact* Contrastive (external): Simple: *but, and* Emphatic: *however, on the other hand, at the same time*	Correction: Of meaning : *instead, rather, on the contrary* Of wording: *at least, rather, I mean*	Dismissal: Closed: *in any case, in either case, whichever way it is* Open-ended: *in any case, anyhow, at any rate, however it is*
Causal	Causal, general: Simple: *so, then, hence, therefore* Emphatic: *consequently, because of this* Causal, specific: Reason: *for this reason, on account of this* Result: *as a result, in consequence* Purpose: *for this purpose, with this in mind*	Reversed causal: Simple: *for, because* Causal, specific: Reason: *it follows, on this basis* Result: *arising out of this* Purpose: *to this end*	Conditional (also external) Simple: *then* Emphatic: *in that case, in such an event, that being so* Generalized: *under the circumstances* Reversed polarity: *otherwise, under other circumstances*	Respective: Direct: *in this respect, in this regard, with reference to this* Reversed polarity: *otherwise, in other respects, aside from this*
Temporal	Temporal, simple (external only): Sequential: *then, next, after that* Simultaneous: *just then, at the same time* Preceding: *previously, before that* Conclusive: Simple: *finally, at least* Correlative forms: Sequential: *first ... then* Conclusive: *at first ... in the end*	Complex (external only): Immediate: *at once, thereupon* Interrupted: *soon, after a time* Repetitive: *next time, on another occasion* Specific: *next day, an hour later* Durative: *meanwhile* Terminal: *until then* Punctiliar: *at this moment*	Internal temporal: Sequential: *then, next, secondly* Conclusive: *finally, in conclusion* Correlative forms: Sequential: *first ... next* Conclusive: *... finally*	'Here and Now': Past: *up to now, hitherto* Present: *at this point, here* Future: *from now on, henceforward* Summary: Summarizing: *to sum up, in short, briefly* Resumptive: *to resume, to return to the point*

Methods

1. Research Design

This study employs a qualitative-descriptive design in which the researcher described the errors committed by the EFL students by using the theories of conjunction. Lambert and Lambert (2012) stated that the aim of a qualitative-descriptive research is to describe a phenomenon directly. They added that it is appropriate for studies that seek for the answer of what was involved, who were involved and where things happened in an event.

2. Data Collection

The data were collected from the written compositions of the third-semester students at a university in Malang. The type of writing chosen was exemplification essay because according to Rahayu and Cahyono (2015), the exemplification essay is less complex than the other types of expository essays. And it is chosen because the researcher would like to conduct a comprehensive study regarding the conjunction errors committed in the writings. At first, in collecting the data, the researcher was co-teaching with the lecturer and after that, she asked the students to send their work via e-mail.

Table 2. Error Patterns of Conjunctions (Kao & Chen, 2011)

No	Type of errors	Definition
1	Non-equivalent exchange	The use of conjunctions that express the same textual relation in an interchangeable manner when they do not.
2	Connective overuse	The use of conjunctions with high density in short texts.
3	Surface logicality	The use of conjunctive items to connect two supposedly related sentences when there is no deep logicality in texts.
4	Wrong relation	The use of conjunctions to express certain textual relation that it does not express.
5	Semantic incompletion	The context where conjunctions used needs further elaboration to make the conjunctive items functional.
6	Distraction	The preceding and following sentences would be coherent themselves without the use of conjunctions.

3. Research Instruments

The instruments of this study are, first, misuse patterns proposed by Kao and Chen (2011). It is because the instrument has been proven effective to map students' conjunction errors in their compositions. the other instrument is the researcher who interpreted the sentences based on the

conjunction theory of Halliday and Hasan (1976). In collecting the conjunctive elements data, the researcher was helped by a software concordance program called AntConc 3.4.4w.

4. Data Analysis

In analyzing the data, firstly, the researcher listed the sentences containing conjunctions by using AntConc 3.4.4.w. After that, she analyzed the conjunctive aspects in the excerpts by applying the conjunction theory by Halliday and Hasan (1976). Finally, the researcher decided whether the use of conjunctions are correct and put them based on the classification offered by Kao and Chen (2011).

Findings

There were found a number of errors in the use of some conjunctions which are *and, also, in addition, for example, for instance, but, however, actually, here, so* and *then.* The conjunctions which are not included below were considered used correctly.

1) And

(1a) Sunset between stones and white sand is proper to photographer or traveler who wants to visit there. **And** if you want to stay there for having night, there has a standart home stay for a while. It also serves a dinner for free.

(1b) After arriving at the Pasir Putih Beach, we will be treated with two kilometers beach that has beautiful white sand and green sea water. **And** do not forget to bring lots of food and drinks, because this island is uninhabited and it is difficult to meet the local people.

In excerpt (1a), the type of error committed is *non-equivalent exchange*. It is because the two sentences do not have the same subject. Next, in excerpt (1b), the error is considered as *distraction*, since without the conjunction, the sentences will be cohesive by themselves. In using the conjunctive element *and,* the students have committed *non-equivalent* exchange and *distraction* errors.

2) Also

(2a) Actually, Lampion Garden is nott only perfect for you and your family to visit, but it is also a romantic spot to hangout. **Also**, there are a few tables and chairs by the lake and if the seats are available, you can sit, relax, and enjoy this magnificient garden.

(2b) Most of the students like it because the design of this application is really simple. **Also**, it has two main menus which are class and calendar.

In the excerpt (2a), the ideas presented in the first and second sentence are not quite similar in which the former discussed a romantic spot to hang out, while the latter talked about tables and chairs. Here, the

student is considered committing *non-equivalent exchange* error. In excerpt (2b), the student did not provide the information in relation to the 'favorite' aspect of *class and calendar*. The sentence would make more sense if the writer added more related information. On account of this, the error committed by the student is called as *semantic incompletion*. In using *also* as a conjunctive element, the students have made *non-equivalent exchange* and *semantic incompletion* errors.

3) *In addition*

(3a) For the surface of the see is not too deep, many people want to dive, swim, or submerged. *In addition*, the location is not too far from Sedanau city.

(3b) Some of Wardah's products include skin treatments such as lightening facial scrub, essential facial wash, luminous face powder, night cream, and day cream. *In addition*, cleanser and make-up removers, eye and lip treatment, moisturizers, BB and CC cream, sun protection, and other make up products.

Excerpt (3a), the student did not provide the specific information regarding Sedanau city. If people hardly knew about the place, the idea would possibly be perceived as it is not should be. For example, people might think that it is another tourism object. Since the

information is not quite complete, the error committed by the student is categorized as *semantic incompletion*. In except (3b), the student does not connect one sentence to another one. Rather, she links it to a noun phrase. And this kind of error is categorized as *semantic incompletion*. In employing the conjunction *in addition,* the students have made semantic incompletion error.

4) *For example*

(4a) It means that this location is full of cloves and it makes a beautiful view to be looked at. ***For example***, the beautiful Cloves plant's picture are always taken by people.

(4b) In Indonesia, we also can find several ice cream places with different menu of each places. ***For example***, 3 famous ice cream places in Malang are Bvgil Gelato, Bunchbead, and Ice Ah!.

In excerpt (4a), the second sentence is better defined as the effect of the *beautiful view* made by the huge amount of cloves. Thus, the appropriate type of conjunction to be employed is a causal one like *so, hence,* or *thus*. By making the mistake, the student is said to have committed *wrong relation* error. In excerpt (4b), the second sentence constitutes an independent fact regarding ice cream cafes. It is because in the first sentence, the students explained ice cream cafes in Indonesia, while in the second one

she mentioned the ice cream cafes in Malang. Without any conjunction between both sentences, the reader might have already understood the ideas. Here, the student has committed *distraction* error. In using *for example,* the students have made *wrong relation* and *distraction* errors.

5) *For instance*

(5a) You can explore your knowledge while you play with animals. ***For instance***, there is a Savannah. It is like a cave, but the wall of the cave is from the glass.

(5b) They also cannot forget the unique scenery of alif stone park. ***For instance***, people cannot easily forget the beautiful thousand stones that stand there.

In excerpt (5a), the example provided in the sentence following the conjunction does not satisfy the idea of the previous sentence in which the student did not provide the explanation of what Savanah is. Hence, the student is considered committing *semantic incompletion* error. In excerpt (5b), the second sentence sounds more like the restatement of the previous one in which the student only elaborated the *Alif stone park* by stating *beautiful thousand stones that stand there* as explained earlier in the paragraph. On account of this, the student had better not use a conjunction to connect both sentences because they have already been cohesively related. At last, the error she committed is

called *distraction.* In using *for instance,* there are two types of errors which are *semantic incompletion* and *distraction.*

6) *But*

(6a) Because the beautiful coral and pure water many oversea visitors come there. ***But*** for you who want there, don\x92t forget to bring fishing rod.

(6b) It takes a half of day to go this place from the capital of Riau. ***But*** it is near from Ranai city and takes ten or fifteen minutes only.

In excerpt (6a) the second sentence can be categorized as further information in relation to the first sentence. However, the student used a conjunction that indicates contradiction between the two. Here, the student has committed the *wrong relation* error. In excerpt (6b) the provision of the information of Ranai city might help the reader to figure out the object place. However, it will be problematic if the readers have no idea about the place. So, it is better for the student to provide complete explanation to avoid confusion. By doing so, the student is said committing *semantic incompletion* error. In using *but,* the students have made two kinds of errors which are *wrong relation* and *semantic incompletion.*

7) *However*

(7a) Second, we do not have to install the application because it can be

accessed from internet. *However*, its speed depends on our connection.

(7b) They always keep the view of alif stone park in their memory of mind and memory of their camera. *However*, even if they have come to this place, they will want to come again and again because of its beautiful view.

(7c) Ice cream is a sweetened frozen food typically eaten as a snak or dessert. *However*, ice cream in Malang has three best places there are Bvgil, Bunchbead, and Ice Ah.

(7d) The second best place of ice cream in Malang is Ice Ah in 'Soehat' Soekarno Hatta street. The price of ice cream Rp. 10.000/scoop. *However*, Ice Ah have different menu for ice cream there is waffle.

(7e) Ice Ah open at 11 a.m- 10 p.m it make you can get your spend time more. *However*, Ice Ah is similarities with another it doesn\x92t makes people will get bored to visit in Ice Ah.

In excerpt (7a), the student has made *semantic incompletion* error since she did not explain the negative sides of the application's dependency on the connection. Secondly, in excerpt (7b), the second sentence can be considered as the elaboration or further information in relation to the idea of the first sentence. However, the student used a conjunction that shows contradiction. Thus, the student

is considered committing *distraction* error. The error committed in excerpt (7c) is *semantic incompletion*. It is because the ideas presented in the first and second sentences would be more logical if the student provided additional information that can connect the both ideas. In excerpt (7d), the error committed by the students is *distraction* the preceding and following sentence are already cohesive without the use of the conjunction. In excerpt (7e), the type of error that occurred is also *distraction* since both sentences have been cohesive by themselves. In employing *however,* the students have made three types of error covering *semantic incompletion, distraction* and *wrong relation.*

8) Actually

(8a) Jatim Park is appropriate for family recreation. *Actually*, Jatim Park is special tourism object in Malang because besides offering a recreation place, we will get some kind of new knowledge.

(8b) The most popular attraction in Batu Night Spectacular is the lampion garden. *Actually*, Lampion Garden is nott only perfect for you and your family to visit, but it is also a romantic spot to hangout.

(8c) Who does not know Sariayu? In indonesia, this product is very popular. *Actually* Sariayu raised the concept of Indonesia\x92s

natural ingredients, so it is safe for the skin.

In excerpt (8a), the second sentence constitutes further information regarding the information of the first sentence. But, she used a conjunction which is not commonly used in connecting a preceding sentence with the following one that contains additional information. On account of this, the student has made *wrong relation* error. In excerpt (8b), the second sentence is better taken as the elaboration of the previous sentence. Thus, the use of *actually* is not necessary. The student had better use an elaborative of additive conjunction or a pronoun *it;* without conjunction, to connect both sentences. In excerpt (8c), the type of error is *distraction* in which the subject is better changed into a reference *it.* In employing *actually* conjunction, there are two types of errors which are *distraction* and *wrong relation.*

9) Here

  (9a) You will know how the transportations look like that were used by our heroes in the past, the gun or another stuff look like, and also who are our heroes and the information about that. **Here**, you can have fun or enjoy the unique things that is presented for you and increase your knowledge about the history all at once.

  (9b) The third place that cannot be found in other places is Batu Secret Zoo. For those who love animals, this is the right place to go. **Here**, you can meet a lot of animals come from all over the world.

In excerpt 9a and 9b, the student used the word here to connect the second sentence to the previous one. However, she used it not as a conjunction but as an adverb of place. And this act might cause ambiguity. The student had better eliminate the word or change it into a phrasal expression like *at this place.* Here, the student has committed *distraction* error.

10) So

  (10a) Indeed, cosmetic is important for the woman to cover their face. **So**, I think it is better for us to choose the local brand cosmetics.

  (10b) The thousands same plants of cloves looks so good in a frame. **So**, it makes this place is always full of the visitors.

  (10c) As we all had known, the majority of Indonesia are Muslim. **So** most of woman chooses wardah as their favorite product, because it has been labelled halal.

  (10d) But for going up to the glass bridge, people don't have to pay, they just need to show their ticket. **So**, if you want to travel around Malang, you should try Kampung Warna and you won't regret seeing lots of beautiful spots and views from this place.

(10e)   Not only that, milk also makes the skin smoother and brighter. *So* it's no wonder many spas use this ingredient.

In excerpt (10a), the following sentence also constitutes additional or further information of the idea stated in the previous one. And it is considered as *wrong relation* as well. In excerpt (10b), the student is considered committing *wrong relation* error. It is because both sentences are better connected with an additive conjunction instead of a causal one. The type of error in excerpt (10c) is also *wrong relation* in which an additive conjunction is more appropriate to connect the sentences. In addition, a complex additive conjunction is more favored. Next, in excerpt (10d), the error committed by the student is *non-equivalent exchange* in which the first sentence discussed the glass bridge alone but the following sentence talked about *Kampung Warna* as a whole. The error committed in excerpt (10e) is *non-equivalent exchange* as well in which the first sentence discussed one benefit of milk but the second one talked about the event caused by the whole benefits of milk. In conclusion, in using *so*, the students have committed two types of errors which are *wrong relation* and *non-equivalent exchange*.

11) *Then*

(11a)   They only need to choose which class they are going to open, and they will find other related menus such as assignments. *Then* the students also can check on what day they should submit their assignments using the calendar menu.

(11b)   The folders can be read by every student who has the link, so it is much easier than using class code or e-mail to join. *Then* it is used not only to upload assignments, but also to share learning materials.

(11c)   The User of Google Drive can open this application in two devices (computer and handphone) together. *Then* this application works on all plat forms.

(11d)   All of the favorite classroom application are easy to use. *Then* they can used in different devices (computer and handphone) together.

In excerpt (11a), the error committed by the student is *wrong relation* in which the appropriate conjunction is an additive one. It is because the second sentence constitutes additional information for the previous one. Next, the error in excerpt (11b) is *wrong relation* because the word *then* is better replaced by an additive conjunction. After that, in excerpt (11c), the error committed is also *distraction* in which the second sentence constitutes an

independent fact and both sentences are already cohesive by themselves. Next, in excerpt (11d), the error committed is *wrong relation* in which an additive conjunction should replace the temporal one. In employing *then* as a conjunction, the students have committed *wrong relation* and *distraction* error.

Discussion

In the students' exemplification essays, there are 31 errors committed covering 11 cases of *distraction,* 9 cases of *wrong relation,* 7 cases of *semantic incompletion*, 4 cases of *non-equivalent exchange*. There are several specific types of errors which cannot be defined by the concepts employed in this study. For instance, there are (1) inoperative conjunctions, (2) wrong cohesive devices and (3) ambiguous conjunctive elements. The first specific error is when the conjunctions do not function at all, the second one is when the conjunctions are better replaced by a reference, the third one is when other parts of speech are put in the place of conjunctions; after a full stop. Halliday and Hasan (1976) claimed that the place of conjunction is mainly in the initial part of a sentence or after a full stop. There might be other types of specific errors that cannot be found by the use of the theories in this study. The *surface logicality* and *connective overuse* cannot be covered either due to limited concepts employed. Further, other aspects like the meaning and register cannot be favored in this study. On account of this, further research involving deeper and more comprehensive theories will be beneficial in finding the whole inappropriate aspects regarding conjunctions in students' written compositions. Also, the number of errors found is not considerable which probably will be different if the more comprehensive and broader concepts are used. Here, the researcher suggests Hallidayan cohesion and conjunction theories. Even though according to some researchers such as Carrel (1982), they are not complete due to the absence of coherence concept, they will be able to solve the problem because the coherence aspect is already contained in the concept of cohesion itself.

Conclusions and Suggestion

1. *Conclusion*

There are some new types of mistakes found in the students' writing which are inoperative conjunctions, wrong cohesive device and ambiguous conjunctive elements, and there might be some others that cannot be covered in this study. Further, this study cannot state the possible factors that make the students commit the

errors. This study only result the types of errors committed by the EFL students but it does not analyze the possible causes. However, this study has made a helpful contribution in a form of indication that there are problems in the use of conjunctions in the EFL students' written compositions.

2. Suggestions

Based on the conclusion, it is suggested that further analysis using more comprehensive concepts is needed. The further research could use the theories of Halliday and Hasan (1976) not only because it has been used by many researchers but also because it provides complete explanation that will enrich both teacher's and students' knowledge regarding cohesion and conjunction. It is hoped that the further research could find the core problems faced by EFL students in using conjunction and thus help them compose cohesive texts.

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