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A CONTRASTIVE STUDY OF THE SENTENCE CONNECTORS IN RESEARCH ARTICLES OF IRANIAN IN APPLIED LINGUISTICS AND ELECTRICAL ENGINEERING

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ABSTRACT

The present study was intended to compare and contrast the use of sentence connectors in Iranian research articles in two disciplines, Applied Linguistics (AL) and Electrical Engineering (EE). The main objective of this study was to analyze the frequency of connectors and their use across two disciplines (Applied Linguistics and Electrical Engineering) and two sections (abstract and conclusion) of research articles. The specific research areas of interest were: (1) whether sentence connectors are used differently across disciplines of Applied Linguistics and Electrical Engineering; (2) whether sentence connectors are used differently across two sections of articles, abstract and conclusion in two disciplines. The corpus used to answer the intended questions totally consisted of 18545 words in the two disciplines: Applied Linguistics (10946 words) and Electrical Engineering (7599 words). The corpus analysis showed that (a) the two disciplines differed in making use of sentence connectors, and Applied Linguistics connectors used more than Electrical Engineering; (b) connectors were used in different way in two sections of abstracts and conclusions in EE but writers in AL used connectors in the same way. The frequency of sentence connectors in AL articles was higher than that in the EE. It is concluded that writing style is not only a function of disciplinary distinctions but also a reflection of the writers' linguistic backgrounds.

Keywords: *Sentence Connectors, Cohesion, Lexical Reiteration, Collocation*

INTRODUCTION

As difficult as writing is in our first language (L1), writing in the second language (L2) is even more so, requiring the writer to demonstrate mastery of both the form and function of the target language is necessary. Writers not only produce texts, they also try to persuade and convince readers to accept their claims. However, we need to increase our knowledge of form and function in different disciplines, text types and skills among native and non-native writers. By analyzing linguistic features of discourse and by comparative studies across different disciplines we can get familiar with these features of academic discourse. Every academic discipline is regarded as a community whose members are experts and theoreticians of that discipline and they have their special style in selecting technical terms and putting forward the arguments for presenting their ideas. These members use writing as a social activity to communicate with other members and other communities. In the age of communication, writing can be regarded as one of the main issues in the world of EFL.

Many authors have illustrated the complexity of the writing process by attempting to categories the variety of operations involved producing textual cohesive ties. To use these categories such as connectors in appropriately way, writers must possess, beyond semantic and syntactic knowledge of the language, a sensitivity to register as well. Academic writing requires conscious effort and practice in composing, developing, and analyzing ideas. In structuring information, the writer uses various types of knowledge, including discourse knowledge, understanding of audience, and sociolinguistic rules (O'Malley & Chamot, 1990). Organization at both the sentence and the text level is also important for effective communication of meaning, and ultimately, for the quality of the writing product (Scardamalia & Bereiter, 1987).

Corpus linguistics is a method of carrying out linguistic analyses. As it can be used for the investigation of many kinds of linguistic questions and as it has been shown to have the potential to yield highly interesting, fundamental, and often surprising new insights about language, it has become one of the most wide-spread methods of linguistic investigation in recent years. The analysis and description of discourse based on corpora has experienced an important development during the last decade, essentially due to two main factors: (1) on the one hand, the existence of new and more powerful corpus-analysis software and tools for language processing (2) and, on the other, the realization that corpus methods can extend their application to larger fields of interest.

Cohesion in English specifies five major classes of cohesive ties, nineteen sub-classes, and numerous sub-subclasses. The five major classes: (i) reference, (ii) substitution, (iii) ellipsis, (iv) conjunction, and (v) lexical reiteration and collocation; and their respective subclasses are more investigated. The last major class of cohesive ties includes those based on lexical relationships. Lexical cohesion differs from reference cohesion and conjunctive cohesion because every lexical item is potentially cohesive and because nothing in the occurrence of a given lexical item necessarily makes it cohesive. Lexical cohesion is the predominant means of connecting sentences in discourse.

Connectors seem to be one of the most widely researched categories in contemporary text linguistics and discourse analysis. The term 'connectors' has been used extensively in studies of learner language (Granger, 1998). The term 'linking words' and 'sentence connectors' have been common in EFL literature. After study of existing taxonomies of text connectors, we can find variety of classifications of connective categories such as Halliday and Hasan's (1976) additive, adversative, causal and temporal conjunctions; Quirk et al's (1985) listing, summative, appositional , resultive, inferential, contrastive and transitional adverbial connectors; Biber et al's (1999) linking adverbials to denote enumeration, summation, apposition, result, contrast and transition; Martin and Rose's (2003) transitions to express addition, comparison and consequence; Swan's (2005) twenty one of categories of discourse markers; Carter and McCarthy's (2006) additive, resultive, contrastive, time concessive,

Zeinab Azarian[1] , Gholam Reza Zarei[2]

inference, summative, listing and metatextual linking adjuncts and a few others.

Sentence connectors have been shown to help maintain text coherence in academic discourse by researchers such as Halliday and Hasan (1976), Celce-Murcia and Freeman (1983), Quirk et al. (1985) and Achugar and Schleppegrell (2005). More precisely, Swales (1990) studied the use of connectors in academic writing to maintain coherence and, more recently, Lockman and Swales (2010) have compared the different connectors found in the Michigan Corpus of Upper-level Student Papers (MICUSP). The occurrences reported by Lockman and Swales (2010) are similar to those of Hyland and Tse (2004) and Shaw (2009). These studies consider sentence connectors as potentially coherent semantic units that construct knowledge mediated by distinctive patterns of language. Our findings agree with another research by Carrio-Pastor (2013) which focused on sentence connectors in academic English. The occurrences of the categories and of individual connectors were compared in order to determine whether Spanish writers of English and native English writers employed the same categories of sentence connectors to join ideas. The results showed much similarity. Connectors are the parts of discourse which signpost how the text is to be appropriately interpreted, facilitating understanding. In general, Hyland and Tse (2004) and Shaw (2009) contrast the use of different connectors in discourse and in different genres, although factors such as the mother tongue or the cultural background of the writer are not investigated.

Prompted by the potential deviations and differences between disciplines, this study seeks to investigate the use of connectors in two different disciplines in research articles It should be mentioned that every academic discipline has its own technical terms and putting forward the arguments for presenting the ideas, but what is important for this study is using sentence connectors in an appropriate way.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

Based on what was mentioned above, the following research questions can be posed:

- Are sentence connectors used differently across disciplines of Applied Linguistic and Electrical Engineering?
- Are sentence connectors used differently across two parts of articles (abstract & conclusion) in two disciplines?

RESEARCH HYPOTHESES

There is no difference between the two disciplines Applied Linguistics and Electrical Engineering in using sentence connectors in research articles.

There is no difference between two parts of articles in both disciplines.

METHODOLOGY

DATA FOR THE STUDY

The data for this study consisted of 40 research articles, twenty research articles belonging to Applied Linguistics (AL henceforth) and twenty research articles belonging to Electrical Engineering (EE henceforth), too. These two disciplines were selected as representatives of two broad disciplines of Engineering and Social Sciences. Research articles were drawn from the leading journals of Applied Linguistics and Electrical Engineering published during 2010-2014. In this study two parts of articles (abstract and conclusion) are explored.

PROCEDURE OF DATA ANALYSIS

The occurrence of sentence connectors in two disciplines of Applied Linguistics and Electrical Engineering in two sections of articles, abstract and conclusion, was examined. The corpus consisted of 40research articles written in English and published in leading academic journals. To determine the frequency of sentence connectors, Quirk et al.'s (1985) model of sentence connectors was used. The study had two corpora of research articles written in two different disciplines:

Twenty Applied Linguistics articles consisting of 10946 words were selected. Their abstract and conclusion sections were analyzed.

Twenty Electrical Engineering articles consisting of 7599 words were selected and their abstract and conclusion sections were analyzed.

Zeinab Azarian[1] , Gholam Reza Zarei[2]

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The corpus is shown in the following table:

Table 1.The corpus analyzed in this research

Fields	Parts of article	No. of articles	Word count	The total word count
Applied Linguistic	abstract	20	2941	10946
	conclusion		8005	
Electrical Engineering	abstract	20	3776	7599
	conclusion		3823	
Total		40	18545	18545

The words were counted to know the number of the analyzed words. The information related to the size, journal, article outline, authors' names, acknowledgement, and reference part were deleted. Two parts, namely, abstract and conclusion were considered. Then sentence connectors were identified and classified following the taxonomies of Quirk et al. (1985). Quirk et al. taxonomies included connectors occurring both within and beyond the sentential level (Table 2). The words were counted by Ant Conc- 3.4.1. (See Table 1). Then identifying the occurrences found in the corpus, analyzing the most frequent connectors and placing them into the different categories shown in Table 3.

Table 2.Categories of connectors (Quirk et al., 1985)

Categories of Connectors	Connectors
Listing	First, second, firstly, secondly, finally, further, furthermore, in addition, moreover, lastly, last but not least, to begin with, in the first place, in the second place, similarly, for one thing, for another, above all, for a start, in the same way, likewise.
Summative	To sum up, to conclude, in summary, in sum, in short, in brief, in conclusion, overall, all in all, altogether, then.
Appositional	That is, that is to say, in other words, for instance, for example, namely, e.g., i.e.
Resultive	Consequently, hence, therefore, thus, as a result, as a consequence, in consequence, so.
Inferential	Therefore, in that case, otherwise, in other words, if so.
Contrastive	However, although, (even) though, on the other hand, instead, after all, on the contrary, in contrast, besides, nevertheless, anyway, still, nonetheless, alternatively, rather, more precisely, in any case, by contrast, again.
Transitional	Meanwhile, eventually, subsequently, originally, in the meantime, by the way, incidentally.

The frequency of sentence connectors in each category was obtained in each discipline in order to find out similarities or differences in the distribution of selective sentence connectors in AL and EE research articles (Table 4)

RESULTS OF THE USE OF SENTENCE CONNECTORS

We should use the contingency table to answer the research questions. Contingency table is often used to analyze the relation between two or more categories. The categories, the connectors, the number of occurrences and the percentages are shown in this table.

Zeinab Azarian[1] , Gholam Reza Zarei[2]

According to these tables, some of connectors used in AL but did not use in EE such as similarly in Listing connectors, in summary, in conclusion in and all in all(after all) in Summative connectors. In Appositional connectors writers used all these connectors in AL but in EE, Namely and i.e. were interested connectors in this category. As a consequence and in consequence in Resultive connectors did not use in two disciplines. Therefore in Inferential connectors used in AL and in that case used in EE from this category, in Contrastive connectors some of the connectors did not use in two disciplines such as *more precisely, in any case, after all, by contrast, Anyway, Nonetheless* and

Alternatively. Writers in EE did not interested to use of transitional connectors but this category used in AL.

Therefore, Contrastive and Listing connectors in AL used in high frequency by Iranian writers, but Inferential and Transitional connectors used in low frequency by writers, on the other hand, in EE writers used Listing connectors more than the other categories of connectors and Transitional connectors did not use by writers in this group. The total number of words in this corpus was 18545 words and the number of connectors used in this research was 207 items.

Table 3 Contingency table of connectors in two disciplines

Connectors		LINGUISTICS		ENGINEERING	
		Abs	con	abs	Con
Listing	Finally	3(8.8%)	2(2.2%)	3(7.3%)	2(4.8%)
	Furthermore	0	2(2.2%)	3(7.3%)	1(2.4%)
	in addition	1(2.9%)	2(2.2%)	1(2.4%)	5(12.2%)
	in the first place	0	0	0	0
	in the second place	0	0	0	0
	Similarly	0	3(3.3%)	0	0
	for a start	0	0	0	0
	in the same way	0	0	0	0
	Likewise	0	0	0	0
	Moreover	3(8.8%)	5(5.5%)	4(9.7%)	5(12.2%)
	Further	0	0	2(4.8%)	2(4.8%)
	Lastly	0	0	0	0
	last but not least	0	0	0	0
	to begin with	0	0	0	0
	for another	0	0	0	0
	for one thing	0	0	0	0
	above all	0	0	0	0
	First	1(2.9%)	3(3.3%)	6(14.6%)	2(4.8%)
	Second	0	1(1.1%)	2(4.8%)	2(4.8%)
	Firstly	0	0	0	0
	Secondly	0	0	0	0
Summative	to sum up	0	0	0	0
	to conclude	0	0	0	0
	in summary	0	1(1.1%)	0	0
	in conclusion	0	2(2.2%)	0	0
	Altogether	0	0	0	0
	Then	3(8.8%)	1(1.1%)	7(17%)	0
	in sum	0	0	0	0
	in short	0	0	0	0
	in brief	0	0	0	0
	all in all(after all)	0	3(3.3%)	0	0
Appositional	For example	0	1(1.1%)	0	0
	Namely	1(2.9%)	0	1(2.4%)	0

Zeinab Azarian[1] , Gholam Reza Zarei[2]

	that is	0	2(2.2%)	0	0
	that is to say	0	2(2.2%)	0	0
	in other words	1(2.9%)	0	0	0
	for instance	1(2.9%)	1(1.1%)	0	0
	e.g.	1(2.9%)	2(2.2%)	0	0
	i.e.	1(2.9%)	3(3.3%)	2(4.8%)	1(2.4%)
Resultive	Consequently	0	2(2.2%)	0	0
	Therefore	2(5.9%)	9(9.9%)	0	4(9.7%)
	So	2(5.9%)	2(2.2%)	3(7.3%)	6(14.6%)
	Hence	0	1(1.1%)	0	0
	Thus	0	6(6.6%)	0	0
	as a consequence	0	0	0	0
	in consequence	0	0	0	0
Inferential	Therefore	1(2.9%)	2(2.2%)	0	0
	in that case	0	0	3(7.3%)	1(2.4%)
	Otherwise	0	0	0	0
	in other words	1(2.9%)	0	0	1(2.4%)
	if so	0	0	0	0
Contrastive	However	6(17.6%)	9(9.9%)	3(7.3%)	3(7.3%)
	Although	1(2.9%)	5(5.5%)	0	1(2.4%)
	on the other hand	1(2.9%)	1(1.1%)	0	1(2.4%)
	Instead	0	1(1.1%)	0	0
	on the contrary	0	1(1.1%)	0	0
	Nevertheless	0	3(3.3%)	0	0
	in contrast	0	0	0	3(7.3%)
	Rather	1(2.9%)	2(2.2%)	0	0
	more precisely	0	0	0	0
	in any case	0	0	0	0
	Again	0	1(1.1%)	0	0
	(even) though	1(2.9%)	2(2.2%)	0	0
	after all	0	0	0	0
	by contrast	0	0	0	0
	Besides	0	1(1.1%)	1(2.4%)	1(2.4%)
	Anyway	0	0	0	0
	Still	0	2(2.2%)	0	0
	Nonetheless	0	0	0	0
	Alternatively	0	0	0	0
Transitional	Meanwhile	1(2.9%)	1(1.1%)	0	0
	in the meantime	0	0	0	0
	Originally	1(2.9%)	0	0	0
	Incidentally	0	1(1.1%)	0	0
	Eventually	0	0	0	0
	Subsequently	0	0	0	0
	by the way	0	1(1.1%)	0	0

The number of connectors used in AL was 125 items in two sections of articles, abstract 34 items and conclusion 91 items and in EE the total number of connectors were 82 in two sections, abstract 41 items and conclusion 41 items too. Hence, writers in AL used more connectors than writers in EE. It could be due to the acquiring knowledge of linguistics by writers in AL.

Table 4 shows the frequency of connectors in two parts (abstract & conclusion) in two disciplines (Applied Linguistics & Electrical Engineering) by Iranian writers. Here in this table we have seven categories of connectors, which we can see the results of them in

. The frequency of connectors in Section conclusion in AL was more than connectors in EE,

Zeinab Azarian[1] , Gholam Reza Zarei[2]

however, frequency of connectors in EE in two sections (abstract t& conclusion) was the same and writers in this discipline used connectors in the same way.

Table 4 The frequency of sentence connectors in abstracts and conclusions in AL and EE

Connector	LINGUISTICS			ENGINEERING			TOTAL
	Abs	con	LING total	Abs	Con	ENGIN total	
Listing	8	18	26	21	19	40	66
Summative	3	7	10	7	0	7	17
Appositional	5	11	16	3	1	4	20
Resultive	4	22	26	3	10	13	39
Inferential	2	2	4	3	2	5	9
Contrastive	10	28	38	4	9	13	47
Transitional	2	3	5	0	0	0	5
Total	34	91	125	41	41	82	207

To know whether the differences between two disciplines (AL, EE) are meaningful and to make the results generalizable, we calculated Pearson Chi-Square in each corpus separately in the following Tables (Tabel 5-9)

Tabel 5 shows the calculated chi-square at p≤5% level. In this table, the comparison between two disciplines (Linguistics & Engineering) was considered. The results show that the difference between two disciplines was not meaningful. So, writers use the sentence connectors in different way in AL and EE. Therefore, there are not meaningful relations between them.

Table 5 The comparison between AL and EE

	Value	Sig
Pearson Chi-square	24.52	0.0004180869
log-likelihood	26.5	0.0001798549

Table 5 shows the calculated chi-square at p≤5% level. In this table, writers in AL compared in two parts (abstract and conclusion). The results show that all of relations in this comparison were meaningful. Therefore, connectors in two sections of articles (abstract & conclusion) were used in the same way.

Table 6 Comparison between abstract &conclusion in AL

	value	Sig
Pearson Chi-square	3.65	0.7237
log-likelihood	3.72	0.7145

Zeinab Azarian[1] , Gholam Reza Zarei[2]

Table 7 shows the calculated chi-square at p≤5% level. It shows the comparison between two parts, abstract and conclusion in EE. The results show that all of relations in this comparison were not meaningful. Therefore, writers use the connectors in two parts, abstract and conclusion in different manner.

Table 7 Comparison between abstract and conclusion in EE

	value	Sig
Pearson Chi-square	13.99	0.0156
log-likelihood	17.00	0.00449

Table 8 shows the calculated chi-square at p≤5% level. It shows the comparison between abstracts in two disciplines.Chi-square in this table cannot be a good scale to evaluate so we must use another scale that its name was log-likelihood. By this scale, the results show, not all of the differences were meaningful. Therefore, writers used the connectors in abstracts in two disciplines in different manner.

Table 8 Comparison between abstracts in AL and EE

	Value	Sig
Pearson Chi-square	12.30	0.05568907
log-likelihood	13.31	0.03835516

Table 9 shows the calculated chi-square at p≤5% level. It shows the comparison between conclusions in two disciplines. The results show that all of relations in this comparison were not meaningful. Therefore, sentence connectors in conclusions in two disciplines were used in different way.

Table 9 Comparison between conclusions in AL and EE

	Value	Sig
Pearson Chi-square	15.97	0.01392159
log-likelihood	19.07	0.004044886

DISCUSSION

It is clear that the English language has become the major language for academic publications. Some reports show that approximately half of the academic articles in the world are written in English (Swales, 1990). This study seeks to investigate use of connectors in different disciplines in research articles in two sections (abstract & conclusion) by Iranian writers. It should be mentioned that every academic discipline has its own technical terms and putting forward the arguments for presenting the ideas but what is important for this study is the extent of using sentence connectors in research articles. The main objective of this study was to compare written academic papers produced by Iranian researchers in two disciplines, Applied Linguistics and Electrical Engineering. In this research, discipline refers to the different branches of science, for example, AL as the humanities and EE as non-

humanities. In AL, most of the writers are more familiar to linguistics but in EE, writers usually are not familiar to this knowledge. Hence, comparison of these disciplines can show the differences or similarities of this knowledge in writing research articles. Frequency of sentence connectors in AL was more than the frequency of connectors in EE. Contrastive connectors had high frequency instead the other categories of connecters then, listing connectors was more interested for writers in this discipline although we can see the low frequency of connectors in two categories namely - (i) Inferential Connectors (IC) and (ii) Transitional Connectors (TC). Writers used connectors in conclusions more than abstracts and the usage of connectors in conclusions was in high frequency than abstracts. Therefore, sentence connectors in two sections (abstract &conclusion) were used in the meaningful way in AL. On the contrary, listing connectors was more

Zeinab Azarian[1] , Gholam Reza Zarei[2]

interested in EE for writers and as same condition in previous group, IC and TC had not many followers. The frequency of sentence connectors in two sections of articles (abstract & conclusion) was the same, although, connectors in two sections of articles in EE were used in different manner. Consequently, sentence connectors as potentially coherent semantic units that construct knowledge mediated by distinctive patterns of language. As found in our study, connectors are the parts of discourse which tableaus how the text is to be appropriately interpreted, facilitating understanding.

CONCLUSION

It is now commonly agreed that written academic texts are dialogic and interactive. How do academic writers increase interactivity of discourse? How do they organize texts and communicate with readers? Text connectors are one of the many meta-discoursal categories used by writers to arrange their arguments and involve their readers.

Writers not only produce texts, they but also try to persuade and convince readers to accept their claims. However, we need to increase our knowledge of the frequency of the use of each category of sentence connectors in different genres, disciplines, text types and skills among native and non-native writers or speakers in order to provide a pedagogical theory of sentence connectors. By analyzing surface linguistic features of discourses and by comparative study across different disciplines we can get familiar with these features of academic discourse. Making students aware of these rhetorical strategies helps them observe and apply these features in their writing. Therefore, they appear as a member of a specific discourse community.

Use of sentence connectors is varying in different texts. Texts especially academic texts are more involved in appropriately using sentence connectors. Research articles are one of the academic genres that have been studied for this strategy. The study of connectors has received considerable attention in linguistics. They have been studied under numerous labels such as linkers, coordinators, discourse markers, pragmatic markers, discourse connectors and many others. Connectors play an important role in discourse. The main objective of this study was to compare written academic papers produced by Iranian researchers in two disciplines, Applied Linguistics and Electrical Engineering. In this study we investigated connectors based on taxonomies by Quirk et al. Sentence connectors offer teachers a useful way of assisting students towards control over disciplinary sensitive writing practices because it shows how writers connect their ideas and intentions to readers. Learning discourse and then connectors as part of discourse can help students to get correct forms and employing them in their texts.

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Zeinab Azarian[1] , Gholam Reza Zarei[2]