The Using Of Linking Words to Enhance Students’ Writing Ability at Universitas Potensi Utama

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ABSTRACT

Nowadays, there has been great attention to studying the students writing ability as Foreign Language learners, especially the essay writing skills of non-native speaker students. The purpose of this study is to analyze the types of errors in using the linking words and phrases. The writer is focused in analyzing student examination results in essays term at medium-level academic writing course and state the main causes of these errors. The research method is a classroom research study. This research is based on Ngadda and Nwoke’s (2014) theories on the classification of errors and Biber et al.’s (2002) classification of linking adverbials as well as presents the frequency of the types of errors. The research object is students of Potensi Utama University at English Education program students in the fifth semester of the 2021-2022 Academic Year. The main findings of the research indicate that linking words were seldom applied in writing because students’ comprehension was very low. The teaching and learning process in exploring linking words certainly raised the level of students in mastering linking words in writing. The research consisted of 32 English students at Potensi Utama University. They were tested to know their writing ability in the capability of using linking words. The results indicated that there was a significant improvement in students’ writing ability after learning to link words comprehensively. The students were able to use and place the linking words correctly. The writer found that the students were able to manage linking words at Pre-Test was 9,38% and raise to 90,63% at Post-Test. Certainly, it is important to master the linking words to improve students’ ability in writing skills.

Keywords: linking words and phrases, error analysis, academic essay

1. INTRODUCTION

The research of using connectors has been spread worldwide in research interest recently. It has been studied in editorials (Kim and Ahn, 2012), in native speakers’ and language learners’ produced texts (e.g. Bikeliene, 2013; Vincela, 2013), and more specifically, also in academic essays (e.g. Januliene and Dziedravicius, 2015; Don and Srinivass, 2017). The research interest has been determined by the increased number of study programs offered in English. Moreover, the labor market requires professionals of different fields who could communicate in writing in English because multinational and international enterprises become more common in the global market.

At the C1 level, students as proficient users should demonstrate ‘controlled use of organizational patterns, connectors and cohesive devices’ as well as ‘consistent and helpful’ use of punctuation marks in their essays (Common European Framework of Reference for Languages, n.d.: 24)

Research (e.g. Henry and Roseberry, 2007; Heydari and Bagheri, 2012; Ngadda and Nwoke, 2014; Phuket and Othman, 2015) shows that L2 (second language) and EFL (English as a Foreign Language) learners commit both intralingual and interlingual errors in their written texts. Learners’ errors, their number, and classification have also been of continuous interest since 1967 when Corder published his paper ‘The significance of learner’s errors.'
Plakans and Gebril (2017: 98) have researched TOEFEL essays for ‘type and appropriateness of organization and coherence quality’ and concluded that ‘the cohesion markers analyzed in their study yielded no statistical differences across the score levels’. ‘[…] Crossley and McNamara (2012) found that more advanced L2 writers use fewer cohesive devices’ (mentioned in Plakans and Gebril, 2017: 109). ‘Research has suggested that many cohesion devices decrease with the level of text complexity because higher-level texts have more inferred, rather than explicit, cohesion (Graesser et al., 2004)’ (in Plakans and Gebril, 2017: 109). This observation correlates with the one made by Ngadda and Nwoke’s (2014: 13) research. However, other research demonstrates that linking adverbials are frequently used in research articles in different disciplines (Peacock, 2010) and editorials (Kim and Ahn, 2012).

Some studies emphasize the quantitative aspect of errors in student writing, which has been criticized by di Gennaro (2016). She has elaborated the criteria for the assessment of student writing by separating cohesive from rhetorical control. According to di Gennaro, the main characteristics of cohesive control are:

Ideas are overtly linked throughout the essay. The use of cohesive devices (logical connectors, repetition, synonyms) is always accurate. Compound and complex sentences are used accurately to create clear connections across sentences and paragraphs. (2016: 13)

She has emphasized that ‘the use of automated essay scoring programs, which also reduce writing to observable and measurable units, has been met with widespread criticism and resistance by composition and writing assessment scholars precisely for this reason (cf. Condon, 2013)’ (ibid.: 2). Thus, she emphasizes the need for contextual treatment of errors instead of a merely quantitative approach. Therefore, the research method chosen for the present paper is a case study.

The paper aims at analysing the types of errors in the use of linking words and phrases in student examination essays in a tertiary level academic writing course and stating the probable causes of the errors, irrespective of the total number of errors found in the analyzed essays. During the research, the following research questions were posed:

1) What linking words and phrases (LWPs) do students use in illustration essays?
2) What type of errors do students commit when using LWPs and what are the probable causes of these errors?

The appropriate use of particular linking words depends on the organization of the essay. There are several classifications available, for example, Oshima and Hogue (2006) distinguish four patterns of essay organization: chronological order, logical division of ideas, comparison and contrast, and cause and effect. Anker (2009) presents narrative, illustration, description, process, classification, cause and effect, comparison and contrast, and argument essays. Fawset (2018) mentions illustration, classification, narration, persuasion, description, process, cause and effect essays. Considering the LWPs these authors recommend to be used in each type of essay and organizational patterns, it can be observed that the same groups of linking adverbials are common for several essay types and organizational patterns, for example, to illustrate, to persuade, and to argue enumeration linking adverbials (Biber et al., 2002) are used, and all essays are recommended to be finished with the summation LWPs. In the present case study, we will look only at the illustration essays and the LWPs used in them.

According to Spangler and Werner (1986: 111), an illustration essay provides specific, interesting, and concrete examples to support a general statement, and examples ‘represent the chief characteristics of the class’. To attain the research aim, the paper starts with presenting the notion of error and the classification of errors and their probable causes in language learners’ texts, then clarifies how and why we use the term ‘linking words and phrases’ before presenting the results of the empirical study.
2. LITERATURE REVIEW

A. Linking Adverbials: Definitions

The term linking adverbials is used in many grammar books to refer to those adverbials that are used to relate independent grammatical units such as clauses, sentences, and paragraphs. Their primary function is to state the speaker's / writer's perception of the relationship between two units of discourse. These adverbials may be classified in various ways according to their meanings and use in the sentence in which they occur.

These meanings include:

1) Listing:
   a) Enumerative. e.g.: first, second, for one thing, for another…etc.
   b) Additive:
      i. Equative: e.g.: equally, in the same way, similarly… etc.
      ii. Reinforcing: e.g.: also, moreover, in addition … etc.

2) Summative. e.g.: altogether, overall, in sum … etc.

3) Appositive. e.g.: namely, for example, that is to say …etc.

4) Resultive. e.g.: consequently, hence, accordingly …etc.

5) Inferential. e.g.: in the other words, in that case, otherwise … etc.

6) Contrastive:
   a) Reformulatory. e.g.: rather, more precisely, more accurately …etc.
   b) Replacive. e.g.: alternatively, on the other hand, worse …etc.
   c) Antithetic. e.g.: on the contrary, by contrast, oppositely …etc.
   d) Concessive. e.g.: however, nevertheless, notwithstanding …etc.

7) Transitional:
   a) Discoursal. e.g.: incidentally, by the way, by the by … etc.
   b) Temporal.e.g.: meantime, meanwhile, subsequently … etc.

Linking adverbials are powerful reading and writing tools because they show how an argument is developed. Through reading the use of these adverbials shows where the writer's thoughts are going, and similarly tells the reader how the writer's ideas are developing. So, the effective use of linking adverbials provides the writer /reader with the means of organizing the text, creating focus, and providing overall coherence. (Sotirious, 1991: 66). They also allow a listener/ reader to infer connections between two segments of discourse, usually adjacent sentences. They are typically said to be types of cohesive devices; lexical expressions that may add little or no propositional content by themselves but that serve to specify the relationships among sentences in oral or written discourse, thereby leading the listener/ reader to infer that the sentences hang together or make sense in their meanings. (Clee – Murcia and Larsen – Freeman, 1999: 521). In other words, if placed appropriately, linking adverbials should function as signposts guiding the listener/ reader through the discourse. (Int: 1) (Quirk et al., 1985: 634).

The absence of such words in writing can create ambiguity since the reader might miss some important connection. This fact can be illustrated by the following example:

- He found that it was helpful to practice conversation with native speakers. He learned a lot about the customs of the country by talking with them.

The sentences above are grammatically correct but the reader cannot tell how these facts are connected. This problem can be solved by indicating the relationship between the two sentences through the use of linking adverbials as shown below:

- He found that it was helpful to practice conversation with native speakers. {Also, Besides, Moreover, Indeed, Furthermore} she learned a lot about the customs of the country by talking with them. (Lado and Fries, 1964: 264).
The example above reveals the fact that linking adverbials show the reader the way the writer's thoughts are going. They tie speech ideas together and provide consistency of movement because they enable the speaker to move smoothly from one point to the next. They can also connect ideas, distinguish conditions or exceptions, or point out a new direction of thought. (O'hair et al., 2001: 185).

B. Adverbs and Adverbials

Adverbs and Adverbials are more complicated to describe than nouns, verbs, and adjectives because they consist of many sub-classes and positional variations. However, the most suitable definition is that an adverb is a part of speech that can be a tool to qualify a verb, an adjective, or other adverbs, for example:

- The man worked slowly. (slowly modifies the verb worked)

Morphologically, three types of the adverb can be differentiated; two of these types are not derivational, they are (simple and compound), and one is derivational as samples as follows:

1. Simple adverbs: e.g. now, soon, too, enough. Many simple adverbs reveal position and direction, e.g. on, in, out, behind, there, down.
2. Compound adverbs: e.g. therefore, overnight, in-house, off-line, early on.
3. Derivational adverbs: the majority of these adverbs have the suffix (–ly). It means new adverbs are created from adjectives (and participle adjectives), as in:
   - happy ---- happily
   - greedy ---- greedy

Schauster (1965: 155) stated that adverbs have a great deal of mobility than any other part of speech, i.e. they can be moved from one position to another within a sentence. The main positions that can be distinguished are:

1. Front – position. e.g.: - Luckily, I won the contest.
2. Mid-position. e.g.: - She thinks positively about you.
3. End – position. e.g.: - I went to Canada last year.

The clausal function that adverbs perform is termed 'adverbial'. The term 'adverbial' is much larger than simply an 'adverb' along with terms like subject, object, and complement, it denotes an element of clause structure, as opposed to a word – class.

An adverbial is defined as a name given by grammarians to a structure that functions as an adverb (in modifying a verb, an adjective, and other adverbs) but which does not have usual formal features, i.e. does not end in (-ly), as in:

- He walked fast. or
- He walked across the street. (fast and across are then called adverbials).

Adverbials can be divided into three major classes:

1. Circumstance adverbials have to add circumstantial information about the proposition in the clause, e.g. (here, frankly).
2. Stance adverbials that express the speaker's/writer's attitude towards the clauses, e.g. (positively, quite complicated).
3. Linking adverbials that link the clause (or some part of it) to some other unit of discourse, e.g. (as I say…which marks a restatement of an earlier utterance).

The position of an adverbial depends partly on its structure (whether it is an adverb, a prepositional phrase, a verbless clause ---etc) and partly on its meaning. Moreover, constraints on
the adverbial mobility depend on the type and form of the adverbial. That is, the adverbial in the SVA type (subject, verb, adverb) normally follows the subject and verb, e.g.:
- Your children are outside. Whereas the adverbial in the SVOA type, on the other hand, (subject, verb, object, and adverb) normally follows the direct object:
  e.g.: - He directed his speech at the workers.

C. The Notion of An Error

Already 50 years ago, Corder (1967: 161) stated that learners’ errors need to be analyzed because they provide significant information to the researcher about the language acquisition process, to the teacher – ‘how far towards the goal the learner has progressed, and the learner can also learn from them. He emphasized the difference between systematic and non-systematic errors as even native speakers in everyday speech commit both types due to ‘memory lapses, physical states, such as tiredness and psychological conditions such as strong emotion’ (Corder, 1967: 166). In this case, speakers immediately realize they have made an error.

Corder mentioned that the same reasons also affected a second language learner’s errors. Therefore, Corder (1967: 166–167) introduced the term the error of performance for unsystematic errors and the error of competence for systematic errors, which indicates insufficiencies in the learner’s knowledge about the correct language use. Corder suggested differentiating them into mistakes and errors respectively. Richards and Schmidt (2010: 201) define an error as ‘the use of a linguistic item (e.g., a word, a grammatical item, a speech act, etc.) in a way which a fluent or native speaker of the language regards as showing faulty or incomplete learning’. Richards (1971) distinguishes three sources of errors: interference errors (based on the impact of the rules of the native language while speaking or writing in another), intralingual errors (occurring due to faulty learning and application of language rules), and developmental errors (occurring due to the learner’s limited experience with the target language).

The classification of errors has been addressed a lot since then, for example, by Richards (1974), Schacheter and Celce-Murcia (1977), Brown (1980), James (1998), and in some more recent empirical studies, by Heydari and Bagheri (2012), Ngadda and Nwoke (2014); however, most of them apply Richards’ distinction between interlingual and intralingual errors. Yates and Kenkel (2002: 29) refer to Reid (1998) who admits that ‘student errors in writing reflect the student’s underlying system’ and mentions the following causes for writing errors: 1) first language interference; 2) overgeneralization of English language rules, 3) high level of difficulty of the language structure, 4) production errors (which are labeled “mistakes”).’ Ngadda and Nwoke (2014: 13) in their research of texts written by undergraduate engineering students state that the basic causes of errors in novice writers’ papers are: (i) Interlingual difficulties, (ii) Intralingual difficulties, (iii) Lack of exposure to the target language, (iv) Faulty teaching and learning, (v) Forgetfulness.’ Their research also indicates that errors in the use of connectives appear to be the least frequent ones. Heydari and Bagheri (2012: 1588) conclude that ‘as learners progress in acquiring the norms of the target language, more and more intralingual errors are manifested’.

D. The Notion of Linking Words

There are different ways how to name and classify text linkers. According to Swales and Feak (1994: 22), ‘[linking words and phrases can help a writer to maintain flow and establish relationships between ideas. Their taxonomy of linking words is based on ‘their function and grammatical use’ (ibid.). Swales and Feak (ibid.) distinguish subordinators (e.g. although, even though, because), sentence connectors (e.g. furthermore, in addition, moreover), and phrase linkers (e.g. in addition to, despite, despite). Biber et al. (2002: 356) distinguish linking adverbials (LAs) that perform a connecting function, showing ‘the relationship between two units of discourse’, which may be sentenced, units larger than a sentence and also units smaller than a sentence. Chalker (1996: 1) mentions two types of ‘grammatical ways of joining clauses’ – by using coordinating and subordinating conjunctions and connectors. If a conjunction ‘normally combines two (or more) clauses into one sentence’ and is part of a clause (ibid.: 2), a connector refers to ‘the preceding sentence’ and thus ‘does not grammatically belong so closely to its clause’ (ibid.: 3).

DOI: https://www.doi.org/10.22303/melt.7.1.2022.01-13
Those linguists who use the term discourse markers may distinguish overall meta-discourse markers, partial meta-discourse markers, and inter-sentential markers emphasizing that even a clause (e.g. a thesis statement) may function as a discourse marker (Kobayashi and Rinnert, 2008: 13). Oshima and Hogue (2006: 27) use the terms: transition signals: transition phrases (e.g. in addition, on the other hand, in contrast), conjunctive adverbs (furthermore, moreover, still, otherwise), coordinating conjunctions (and, but, yet), subordinating conjunctions (although, though, if), others (another (+ noun), an additional (+ noun), despite (+ noun), despite (+ noun). Other scholars also mention three groups of linking words: ‘(a) coordinating conjunctions, (b) subordinating conjunctions, (c) linking adverbs’ (Leech, 1989: 241). Bikeliene (2013) mainly uses the term linking words when describing the research on the use of ‘moreover, in addition, also, besides, furthermore, what is more,’ in a subcorpus of Lithuanian learners of English and several British corpora, but she also refers to them as ‘connectors’ at the beginning of the paper. As the discussion above reveals, borderlines between different groups of linkers are blurred; therefore, the term linking words and phrases (LWPs) will be used as an umbrella term in the analysis of the selected tertiary-level academic essays.

E. Register

Not to break the unity of a written text, the selected linking words and phrases should match the register of the written text. However, only a few scholars indicate the differences in the register, mentioning which linking words are more formal or informal than the rest of the words. Moreover, the lists are not complete, and not all course books on academic writing consistently reveal the difference in the register, for example, only some information is available in Oshima and Hogue’s (2006) book. Therefore, we have attempted to create a more comprehensive list, combining information from available sources. Table 1 presents a list of common linking words and phrases that, according to several researchers (Leech, 1989; Chalker, 1996; Biber et al., 2002; Oshima and Hogue, 2006; Carter and McCarthy, 2006), would be found in either formal or informal register. The information from the table will be used in further research to check whether research participants commit register errors when writing an academic essay.

3. METHOD

The corpus of the present research comprises 18 illustration essays (7000 words in total) – 12 written by local students and 6 written by international students

Table 1. Common linking words and phrases used in formal and informal register (modified from Carter and McCarthy, 2006)

| Formal | Informal |
|--------|----------|
| accordingly, albeit (rare), although, as a consequence, as a result of, because (of), consequently, despite (the fact that), duly, e.g., even though, first, finally, for example, for fear that, for instance, further(more), hence, hitherto, however, i.e., in addition (to), so that, in that, insofar as (in so far as), despite, in the event, so that, in other words, lest, moreover, nevertheless, on the contrary, on the other hand, on top of that, rather, simultaneously, so, that is, then, therefore, though, thus, to conclude, to summarise, to the extent that, whereas, whether, concerning, who(m), yet | all the same, and, anyway, as I say, because of that, but, in the end, or, so (without ‘that’), so then, still, such (without ‘that’), that (referring to people), though, what’s more |
The small size of the research object is explained by the fact that only illustration essays were selected for the analysis as this type dominated the examination essays and was also selected by the international students. Language learner groups in the chosen study program and university are small (30–40 students per year) because students pay the tuition fee as opposed to many other study programs where state-funded budgets places are available.

The local students have studied essay writing in both their native language and English as a foreign language, so they are already supposed to have C1 level knowledge of essay writing even before starting the high-level course. The international students have various background knowledge in writing academic essays in English. However, at the end of the course, the knowledge level should be the same for all students; thus, the results are supposed to be comparable. The analyzed essay was written as an examination essay at the end of a university course in academic writing.

The research was a classroom action study. To raise the research purpose, the researcher tries to analyze the types of errors in the use of linking words and phrases in student examination essays in a high-level academic writing course and state their probable causes, the above-discussed conclusions on the types of errors (interlingual or intralingual) and their probable causes as suggested by Ngadda and Nwoke (2014) were considered and compared.

A. Syntactic Realizations of Linking Adverbials

Linking adverbials can be explained syntactically in specific different forms, these are:

1) Prepositional phrases
   - e.g., In a friendly way, in conclusion, on the other hand, before working, near the blue window, by the way, etc.

2) Adverb phrases
   - e.g., very slowly, even so, still here, more precisely, more accurately, etc.

3) Finite and non–finite clauses
   - e.g., this is, that is to say, what is more, to conclude, to sum up, to cap it all.

4) Adjective Group
   - e.g., last of all and better still.

5) Closed–Class Adverb
   - e.g., nevertheless, moreover, first, next, now… etc.

6) Open–Class Adverb
   - e.g., namely, accordingly, consequently, alternatively… etc. (Downing and Philip, 1992: 64; Biber et al., 2000: 884).

B. Position of Linking Adverbials

Linking adverbials can be put at initial, medial, or final positions in the sentence. These positions can be identified as below:

a) Initial position
   It precedes any clause element in the sentence;
   - e.g., that is, before the subject; as in:
     - He is afraid of being poor And therefore, he works very hard

b) Medial position
   This is the position between the subject and the verb, as in:
   - He was born and raised in the USA, in the other words, He is American.

c) Final position
   In this position, the final elements of the sentence may be an object, or an obligatory adverbial, for example:
   - He refused to pay for the debt. But he paid, at the same time, for the donation.
C. Syntactic Features of Linking Adverbials

Syntactic characteristics should be considered when we talk about linking adverbials.

These characteristics are:

1) Virtually all linking adverbials (except for only and somehow) can appear with questions whether they are Yes – No questions or Wh – questions, as in the examples below: - anyway, do you know the answer? - * only will you resign?

2) Linking adverbials that are restricted to an initial position are unacceptable in indirect questions, as in:
   - He asked whether {hence / so / yet} they would stay.

3) Most linking adverbials can emerge with imperatives, whether positive or negative, as in: - What's more, All the same, try to mix with them Nevertheless, Moreover, do not try to mix with them Otherwise, (Quirk et al., 1972: 530 – 31)

4) Linking adverbials cannot accept premodification by how in an interrogative or exclamatory Clauses, as in:
   - * How similarly did they behave with him?

5) Linking adverbials can indicate relations between two clauses where one is subordinate to the other, for example:
   - I will see him tonight because he will otherwise feel hurt. (cf I will see him tonight; otherwise, he will feel hurt). (Quirk et al., 1985: 647).

6) Some linking adverbials are sequentially fixed to the previous clauses, therefore, they cannot be transposed without producing unacceptable sentences, as in:
   - * Nevertheless John gave it away, Mary wanted it. (ibid: 921-22).

7) Linking adverbials cannot be the basis of contrast in alternative interrogation or negation; and cannot be focused by subjects, for example:
   - Should you send her the agenda nonetheless or therefore?
   - You should only send her the agenda. (ibid: 631).

D. Linking adverbials and Conjunctions

Since there is an overlap between linking adverbials and conjunctions, it is necessary to give a brief outline of these two categories.

Semantically, connectors play a role in making a text coherent; that is, making it more than just a random set of simply juxtaposed sentences (Int: 1). They form a coherent group with equivalent functions, namely the joining of clauses into semantic progressions where each clause has its theme-rheme articulation and its place in a thematic progression. (Int: 2)

As for coordinating and subordinating connectors (conjunctions), the first sort links together units that are of equal status, e.g. a noun and a noun as in Jack and Jill. The second sort involves a more complex relationship between the units being joined, where one is thought to be dependent on another. (Finch, 2000: 91).

A major difference between coordination and subordination of clauses is that the information in subordinate clauses is not asserted, but presupposed as given. (Quirk et al., 1972: 551). For example:

- He has quarreled with the chairman and has resigned.

- Since he has quarreled with the chairman, he has resigned.

The semantic difference is that in (20 b) the hearer is assumed to know about the quarrel already. (Quirk et al., 1985: 919)

Linking adverbials, on the other hand, are often used to connect longer stretches of language perhaps whole sentences that themselves contain coordinate or subordinate clauses. They differ
from conjunctions in that they introduce a clause that, though grammatically independent, is logically subordinate to or dependent upon what has gone before. For example:

- I know he is earnest; consequently, I believe he will succeed. (Marckwardt and Cassidy, 1960: 212; Leech and Svartvic, 1994: 181)

A few linking adverbials overlap with conjunctions, for instance, though can be both a conjunction and a linking adverbial depending on the context. For example:

- He eats a lot. He is very thin, though. (linking adverbial)
- Though he eats a lot, he is very thin. (conjunction). (Chalker, 1989: 2).

But, on the other hand, can occur as a coordinator and as a linking adverbial. The coordinator can imply a sense of contrast or negation between the conjoined constituents, as in:

- She is small but strong.

The hallmarks of the adverbial are syntactic and semantic. Syntactically, the adverbial but never conjoins constituents below the rank of the clause and unlike true coordinators, is not restricted to linking constituents of equal rank as in example (24) below where the adverbial but demonstrates a link between its clause and the whole of the preceding paragraph. (Int:3), as in:

Sometimes they go to jail and sometimes they lose their licenses and sometimes they lose their jobs, we are told. But, in reality, they rarely do.

Most drunk drivers get away with it. (Roger Simon, "No Compassion for Drunk Drivers").

Semantically, the coordinator strongly implies contrast or negation, whereas the hallmark of the adverbial but is its implied concession. (ibid)

Linking adverbials resemble conjunctions in that both of them may join two sentence patterns and may stand directly between the patterns they join. For example:

- Charlie slept; therefore, Eggstone grew impatient. (linking adverbial)
- We knew that it was late, but there was nothing we could do about it. (conjunction). (Roberts, 1956: 211-21).

However, the two main differences between LAs and conjunctions are:

1. Their punctuation.
2. Their positions of possibility.

As for punctuation, when the conjunction is used between two sentence patterns

1. If both patterns are short, no punctuation is required, e.g.:

- I taught and she learned.

2. More commonly, a comma is used directly in front of the conjunction to show where the first pattern ends and the second one begins, e.g.:

- He came to play around, but he didn't get a warm welcome.

3. Sometimes a semicolon may be used between the two patterns, e.g.:
- His worker, who was very sad about his report card, decided to raise his performance; but he failed to fulfill his commitment immediately.

4. Finally, if the writer desires to throw emphasis on the second sentence, he may use a period before the conjunction, e.g.:

- The firemen struggled for many hours, trying to free the woman from the fired building. But their work went for nothing.

E. Conceptual Framework

Onwuegbuzie and Frels (2016) identified a typology of transition words and phrases. Specifically, their typology comprises the following 12 dimensions of link words/phrases:

- Add information/provide similarity (e.g., Further; Moreover)
- Narration (e.g., Initially; Suddenly)
- Provide an emphasis (e.g., Specifically; Particularly)
- Contrast ideas (e.g., However; Although)
- Summarize previous information (e.g., In summary; In other words)
- Provide a result (e.g., Therefore; Consequently)
- Express purpose (e.g., With this in mind; To this end)
- Sequence previous ideas (e.g., First; The former)
- Provide a reason (e.g., Because; In as much as)
- Space/location/place (e.g., Alongside; Wherever)
- Time (e.g., Presently; Meanwhile)
- Provide examples (e.g., For instance; As an example).

These dimensions capture at least 277 link words/phrases. Although this list of link words is not exhaustive, it is extremely comprehensive—containing the most popular link words used.

F. Steps of Research

The students were asked to fill out the essays.

1) The main essays are as follows:

- Write down linking words that the students recognized and make sentences using those words.
- Combine 50 sentences with linking words.
- Write a story (around 400 words) by using linking words (at least 10 linking words).
- Check appropriate or not appropriate the given story and fixes them.

The Researcher gave the essays to be filled out by the students before the learning (Pre-Test) and after learning (Post-Test). The learning of using linking words was held for 6 (six) weeks with 6 times meetings. The Post-test result could be compared with Pre-Test Result and it will stipulate the improvement of students' writing ability after the application of learning linking words.

Table 1. The Result of Students' Essays Before Application of Learning Linking Words (Pre-Test)

| No. | Questions                                             | Amount of Students | Total |
|-----|-------------------------------------------------------|--------------------|-------|
|     |                                                       | Score 3 | Score 4 | Score 5 | Score 6 | Score 7 | Score 8 | Score 9 |       |
| 1   | Mention linking words that you know!                  | 12      | 10      | 6       | 3       | 1       | 0       | 0       | 32    |
| 2   | Make 10 sentences by using linking word!              | 16      | 9       | 5       | 2       | 0       | 0       | 0       | 32    |
| 3   | Write story (around 400 words) using linking words   | 14      | 10      | 7       | 1       | 0       | 0       | 0       | 32    |
| 4   | Check appropriate or Not-Appropriate of the given story! | 13      | 11      | 5       | 2       | 1       | 0       | 0       | 32    |
| 5   | Combine 50 sentences using linking words.             | 11      | 12      | 4       | 3       | 2       | 0       | 0       | 32    |
|     | Total Students                                        | 66      | 52      | 27      | 11      | 4       | 0       | 0       | 160   |

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Based on the data above, we could tell the students' ability in writing by using linking words are as follows:

1. Almost all of the students (41.25% + 32.50% + 16.88% = 90.63%) didn’t understand the linking words function and cannot use them in writing story or combine sentences.
2. Only Nine point thirty-eight percent (9.38%) of students were able to use linking words even though the scores were around 6-7.
3. None (0.00% + 0.00% = 0.00%) of students can achieve 8-9 scores to optimize the linking words in writing.

We could summarize that 90.63% of students didn’t have a comprehension of linking words. It caused their unwillingness of them to use linking words in their writing. Several factors could be revealed as a lack of linking words’ vocabulary, the minimum practice of writing, difficulty to understand and combine sentences, no interest in writing, etc.

| Questions | Amount of Students |
|-----------|--------------------|
|           | Score 3 | Score 4 | Score 5 | Score 6 | Score 7 | Score 8 | Score 9 | Total |
| 1 Mention linking words that you know! | 0 | 0 | 3 | 5 | 14 | 8 | 2 | 32 |
| 2 Make 10 sentences by using linking words! | 0 | 0 | 4 | 7 | 11 | 7 | 3 | 32 |
| 3 Write story (around 400 words) using linking words | 0 | 0 | 3 | 4 | 12 | 10 | 3 | 32 |
| 4 Check appropriate or Not-Appropriate of the given story! | 0 | 0 | 3 | 5 | 12 | 7 | 5 | 32 |
| 5 Combine 50 sentences using linking words. | 0 | 0 | 2 | 3 | 13 | 8 | 6 | 32 |
| Total Students | 0 | 0 | 15 | 24 | 62 | 40 | 19 | 160 |
| Students' Percentage | 0.00% | 0.00% | 9.38% | 15.00% | 38.75% | 25.00% | 11.88% | 100% |

Based on the Post-Data above (Table 2), we could tell the improvement in students’ writing ability are as follows:

1. Only nine-point thirty-eight percent of students (9.38%) still have difficulty to applicate linking words in writing even if the score is five, better than Pre-Test (3-5 scores).
2. More than half of the students (53.75%) got scores of 6-7 in Post-Test. It meant they were able to absorb the linking words lesson during the learning and teaching process for 3 months. There were comprehended but not optimized.
3. There were 36.88% of students who could reach scores of 8-9 as the highest score and we could state that they were understanding to use the linking words and how to applicate them in writing.

We could tell that 90.63% of students can write using linking words and 9.38% of students still need time to learn it. In Pre-Test, the students did not understand the function and use of linking words. It caused them cannot applicate it in writing. But after learning for 3 (three) months, they understood and could write by using linking words very well.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

A. Results

As a significant difference in using linking words after treatment, there were 90.63% in Pre-Test who failed to pass the essays decreased to became 9.38%. And 9.38% of students who passed the essays increased to 90.63% after experiencing three months of the learning-teaching process of
linking words. It was a very huge improvement and should keep it on a good track for improving writing skills in the future.

The students certainly were able to learn and grasp the teaching of linking words, even in a very short term (3 months). It is a very high jump in learning a new lesson and how the students understood and applied it in writing should be given high appreciation.

B. Discussions
After doing this research for three months, the suggestion could be stated as follows:
1) The English teacher can push students to learn the linking words on another level.
2) The students must train themselves to use the linking words in every field of English lesson, not only in writing too.
3) Other writers can use this research as a reference in the future.

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