

## **CHAPTER FOUR**

### **METHODOLOGY**

There are three parts in this chapter. The first part describes the subjects in this study. The second part depicts the procedures in this study. And the third part is the discussion on the design of this research.

#### **4.1 Subjects**

This research focuses on the analysis of English conjunctions used in compositions written by senior high school students. One hundred and ninety-two compositions on two different topics by the third-grade Bai-Ling senior high school students were collected. One type of these writings was assigned as assignment in summer vacation. They had sufficient time to finish their compositions at home. Furthermore, the researcher also collected those students' in-class compositions. Students were asked to finish their writings within time limit. The design is that students may look up words in the dictionary when they finish their writings. That is why students are asked to write in class. Therefore, students performance in conjunctions can be evaluated both in planned and unplanned discourse.

These compositions were written by students in Class 301 and Class 303, including seventy-five female students, and twenty-one male students. All the students have learned basic grammar rules from their textbooks, mainly the use of conjunctions at sentence level. Furthermore, some conjunctions are regarded as main sentence patterns in teaching. For example, the use of "as...as" in making sentences appears in their textbooks. Students also practice some filling-the-bank exercise about

the use of conjunctions in their exercise books. Most important of all, students are required to take the course--English Grammar--during their second year of senior high. The use of conjunctions is one of the teaching points in this course.

#### 4.2 Procedures

In this part of study, all students were required to finish their take-home compositions in the summer vacation in 2002 and the second one is in-class composition in the first semester in November 2002. Students are asked to write as much as they could within 50 minutes limit in class. The requirement for the two writings are listed below:

**Composition 1:** The topic is “The Advantages and Disadvantages of Coeducation.” Students have to write down their ideas about coeducation. The word limit is 120 words, which is the same as the requirements in Entrance Exams for College.

**Composition 2:** The topic is “My Philosophy of Life.” This writing is finished in class. Therefore, students are asked to finish this writing with 50 minutes limit. Besides, the word limit for them is also 120 words. Students are told to finish their compositions as much as they could without the help of reference books or dictionaries.

Those students’ compositions are coded according to their class, class number and the way they finish the writings. Take T30149 for example, the letter “T” stands for take-home writing while the letter “I” stands for the writings in class. And the number “301” means the student belong to Class 301. And the last two numbers “49” represents the student’s class number. The researcher examines these compositions and then marks the mistakes they made in the writings. The next step is to list those mistakes of Additives and Adversatives and the context. Take the following composition as an example:

- (4.1) Coeducation has many advantages and disadvantages. It's advantages are as follows. First, students can learn how to get along with the opposite sex. Second, in school the boy can help to do the heavy works and on the other hand, the girl can do some work with careful. Third, the coeducation can cut down the population of homosexuality.  
 \*Besides, the disadvantages is, the boy or the girl maybe would on account of having girlfriend or boyfriend led them not pay attention to their study. To sum up, the coeducation do not have the absolutely correct or incorrect. We should see the situation of the school, then afterwards to decide how to do is correct. (T30101)

From the example above, T30101 means that the composition is finished by No. 1 student in Class 301 as an assignment at home. In analyzing the student's mistakes, the sign "\*" stands for the misuse of conjunction in the writing. In example (4.1) the second paragraph aims to show another point of view on coeducation, the conjunction appears at the beginning of the second paragraph should belong to the contrastive, or dissimilar type of conjunction, instead of the use of "besides," which belongs to the additive type. The category the author adopts to classify conjunctions is based on Jiang's (1992) repertoire, which is listed in Appendix I. In this example, the misuse of "besides" would be listed.

After the observation in learners' data, we use a questionnaire (Appendix III) to reexamine those learners' performance in using conjunctions. The questionnaire designed for the study aims to confirm out assumption about the difficulty of the use of conjunctions by Taiwan ESL learners. Because many students do not use conjunctions in their writings, the use of this questionnaire can assist in evaluating those learners' performance in using conjunctions.

### 4.3 Data Analysis

In this study, how Taiwanese senior high school students use conjunctions will be investigated based on the composition data. The purpose of this analysis is to find

out students' misuse of Additives and Adversatives in their writings. In particular, we focus on the use of "besides," "however," "on the contrary," and "on the other hand." Students' performance in using Additives and Adversatives can be examined as well. All the Additives and Adversatives as adverbial connectors in students' writings are listed. That is, the coordinating conjunctions and subordinating conjunctions in students' data will not be discussed in this analysis. Besides, those conjunctions belonging to Causals and Temporals will not be discussed as well.

#### 4.3.1 Data Analysis in Compositions

After examining all the 192 compositions written by Taiwanese senior high school students, there are 21 compositions without any conjunctions. See Table 4.1.

Table 4.1 Numbers of Students' Compositions With and Without conjunctions

	Compositions without conjunctions	Compositions with conjunctions	Total
The number of compositions	21	171	192
The percentage (%)	11	89	100

From Table 4.1, it can be seen that eleven percent of the writings are written without the use of Additives and Adversatives. Eighty-nine percent of the compositions include the use of the four categories of conjunctions. Among the 192 compositions with conjunctions, the most frequently seen Additives and Adversatives are calculated and listed according to their frequency in Table 4.2.

Table 4.2 Students' Use of Additives and Adversatives in Compositions

	Students' Use of Additives and Adversatives			
	Correct		Wrong	
	Frequency	Percentage (%)	Frequency	Percentage (%)
But	57	100	0	0
And	47	98	1	2
On the other hand	31	69	14	31
However	28	78	8	22
In addition	13	100	0	0
On the contrary	1	8	11	92
Besides	6	60	4	40
Moreover	7	100	0	0
Furthermore	2	67	1	33
Nevertheless	2	67	1	33

Based on the analysis in students' data, the tendency of the use of English Additives and Adversatives can be observed. Among those conjunctions appeared in students' writings, it can be found that they have no trouble in using "but," "in addition," and "moreover." The most difficult one for learners is the use of "on the contrary" with a pretty high percentage—92%. The misuse of "besides" is also a big question for learners. Forty percent of them use "besides" incorrectly. "On the other hand" and "however" are the third and fourth wrongly used conjunctions in learners' data—31% and 22% respectively. Here, we will not discuss the use of "furthermore" and "nevertheless" in this study, for their low frequency in the compositions data. Those learners' use of "on the other hand," "however," "on the contrary," and "besides" will be further discussed respectively.

#### 4.3.2 Data Analysis in Questionnaire

The subjects for the questionnaire are ninety-six third-grade senior high school students who have participated in the first part of the study. There are seventy-five girl students and twenty-one boy students.

There are totally 13 questions, including 15 blanks on conjunctions, in the

questionnaire. After all the 13 questions are written, they are checked by a native speaker to make sure that the answers are correct. Some of them have more than one correct answer. The test also includes eight possible answers in the front of the questionnaire for students to choose from. Some of them are correct. The boldface answer in each question means the most appropriate one that learners should choose. See Table 4.3.

The questionnaire is handed out to the students. They have twenty minutes to finish it. After answering the questions, students are asked to exchange their questionnaire to check the answers.

The process of this analysis includes the following steps. First, all the students' answers are recorded whether they are right or wrong. Then, the number of students of every answer is counted. Thirdly, the percentage is also calculated. The last step is to analyze all the data.

Questions (1), (2), (4), (5), and (6) are cited from "An introduction to compositions for senior high school students." Questions (3) and (13) are based on the book—Grammar dimensions. Questions (9) and (10) are based on "a new translation handbook." Questions (7), (8), (11) and (12) are cited from "More reading power."

According to the outcome of the analysis of students' compositions data, the commonly frequently misused conjunctions are "besides," "however," "on the contrary," and "on the other hand." Thus, the questionnaire focuses on the four conjunctions. Those four mostly frequently misuse of conjunctions can be translated into "ci wai," (此外) "ran er," (然而) "xiang fan di," (相反地) and "ling yi fang mian" (另一方面) in Chinese. Therefore, questions (1) to (6) are translation questions to examine students' performance in using the four conjunctions with the help of translation.

Questions (1) and (6) focus on the use of “ran er.” (然而) Question (3) focuses on the use of “ling yi fang mian.” (另一方面) And question (4) focuses on the use of “ci wai.” (此外) Question (5) focused on the use of “xiang fan di.” (相反地) As for the design of question (2), the purpose is to verify the finding (d) in section 3.4. It can be used to examine learners’ use of “er.” (而) How students use the Chinese conjunction “er” (而) can be examined in question (2)<sup>1</sup>. All translation tests include more than one blank. That is, they test not only conjunctions but also some words or phrases, making students not noticing they are being tested in using conjunctions. Questions (7) to (13) are designed for students to fill in the conjunctions they consider the most appropriate according the context. Without the help of Chinese translation, students’ performance in choosing conjunctions can be investigated. Questions (7), (9) and (11) are designed to test learners’ use of “besides/in addition.” Questions (8), and (12A) are to examine learners’ use of “however.” Question (10) is used to examine the use of “on the contrary.” Question (12B) and (13) are used to examine learners’ use of “on the other hand.”

The outcome of learners’ reponses to the questions is given in Table 4.3. Each question has one appropriate answer. However, some questions may have more than one choice for learners to choose from, including questions (4), (7A), (7B), (9), (11), (12A), (12B), and (13). Learners’ use of appropriate conjunctions, acceptable

<sup>1</sup> Learners’ response to Question (2) is shown as follows:

2. 吸煙對肺部有害，喝酒過度傷肝。而賭博則會導致美滿家庭破裂，毀了人的一生。

Smoking \_\_\_\_\_ our lungs, and excessive drinking will hurt our liver. \_\_\_\_\_, gambling will break up a sweet home and ruin our lives.

[Li, J. S. et al. *An introduction to compositions for senior high school students*, p.64.]

<b>And</b>	60%
But	3%
However	12%
Nevertheless	5%
On the contrary	0%
On the other hand	1%
Besides	10%
In addition	9%

conjunctions, and misused conjunctions are calculated.

Table 4.3 The Analysis of Students' Use of Additives and Adversatives  
in Questionnaire

	Most Appropriate Answer (%)	Acceptable Answers (%)	Wrong Answers
Question (1)	However (69%)		And (0%)/ But (9%)/ Nevertheless (17%)/ On the contrary (0%)/ On the other hand (1%)/ Besides (2%)/ In addition (1%)
Question (2)	And (60%)		But (3%)/ However (12%)/ Nevertheless (5%)/ On the contrary (0%)/ On the other hand (1%)/ Besides (10%)/ In addition (9%)
Question (3)	On the other hand (69%)		And (9%)/ But (1%)/ However (1%)/ Nevertheless (1%)/ On the contrary (0%)/ Besides (10%)/ In addition (9%)
Question (4)	Besides (70%)	And (1%)	But (1%)/ However (5%)/ Nevertheless (2%)/ On the contrary (0%)/ On the other hand (7%)
		In addition (14%)	
Question (5)	On the contrary (32%)		And (5%)/ But (3%)/ However (3%)/ Nevertheless (3%)/ On the other hand (50%)/ Besides (3%)/ In addition (3%)
Question (6)	However (63%)		And (6%)/ But (5%)/ Nevertheless (22%)/ On the contrary (2%)/ On the other hand (0%)/ Besides (2%)/ In addition (0%)
Question (7A)	In addition (22%)	Besides (10%)	And (17%)/ But (5%)/ However (19%)/ Nevertheless (14%)/ On the contrary (0%)/ On the other hand (14%)
Question (7B)	Besides (18%)	In addition (18%)	And (11%)/ But (5%)/ However (22%)/ Nevertheless (6%)/ On the contrary (11%)/ On the other hand (11%)
Question (8)	However (12%)		And (18%)/ But (16%)/ Nevertheless (14%)/ On the contrary (7%)/ On the other hand (1%)/ Besides (20%)/ In addition (8%)
Question (9)	Besides (25%)	In addition (17%)	And (13%)/ But (8%)/ However (17%)/ Nevertheless (5%)/ On the contrary (13%)/ On the other hand (1%)
Question (10)	On the contrary (20%)		And (6%)/ But (6%)/ However (3%)/ Nevertheless (4%)/ On the other hand (39%)/ Besides (10%)/ In addition (11%)

Question (11)	In addition (11%)	Besides (20%)	And (42%)/ But (23%)/ However (0%)/ Nevertheless (3%)/ On the contrary (1%)/ On the other hand (0%)
Question (12A)	However (26%)	And (14%)	Nevertheless (7%)/ On the other hand (6%)/ On the contrary (8%)/ Besides (8%)/ In addition (8%)
		But (16%)	
Question (12B)	On the other hand (1%)	However (28%)	And (23%)/ But (16%)/ Nevertheless (7%)/ On the contrary (8%)/ Besides (8%)/ In addition (8%)
Question (13)	On the other hand (12%)	But (16%)	And (13%)/ Nevertheless (2%)/ On the contrary (13%)/ Besides (8%)/ In addition (8%)
		However (28%)	

After examining learners' data, the misused conjunctions are pointed out and generalized in Table 4.2. The similarity and the differences between Chinese and English Additives and Adversatives are listed in Table 3.5. By comparing Table 3.5, and Table 4.2, which points out students' use of Additives and Adversatives in compositions, learners' confusion in Chinese and English Additives and Adversatives can be testified. And the analysis of the questionnaire in Table 4.3 can help further verify students' misuse of "besides," "on the other hand," "on the contrary," and "however." The further discussion of learners' use of English Additives and Adversatives will be presented in next chapter.