

صعوبات متعلمي اللغة الإنجليزية بوصفها لغةً أجنبية من الكورد في استخدام أدوات الربط
الإضافية والاستدراكية بوصفها وسائل للتماسك النصي في كتاباتهم الأكاديمية

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Kurdish EFL Learners' Difficulties in Using Additive and Adversative Conjunctions as Cohesive Devices in their Academic Writings

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المخلص

تهدف هذه الدراسة إلى استقصاء الصعوبات التي يواجهها متعلمو اللغة الإنجليزية بوصفها لغةً أجنبية من طلبة الجامعات الكورد في استخدام أدوات الربط الإضافية والاستدراكية بوصفها وسائل للتماسك النصي في الكتابة الأكاديمية. وسعت الدراسة إلى تحديد أكثر أنواع الأخطاء شيوعاً، والكشف عن أسبابها الكامنة، واقتراح توصيات تربوية تسهم في تحسين أداء الطلبة في الكتابة الأكاديمية. واعتمدت الدراسة المنهج المختلط، الذي يجمع بين التحليلين الكمي والنوعي. وجمعت البيانات من أربعين طالباً وطالبة من المرحلة الرابعة في قسم اللغة الإنجليزية بكلية اللغات في جامعة صلاح الدين-أربيل، خلال العام الدراسي 2024-2025. وتمثلت أدوات البحث في مهمتين لكتابة مقال أكاديمي ومقابلات شبه منظّمة. وأظهرت النتائج أن المتعلمين واجهوا صعوبات ملحوظة في استخدام أدوات الربط الإضافية والاستدراكية استخداماً

مناسباً، إذ أسفرت أدوات الربط الإضافية عن عدد أكبر من الأخطاء (125 خطأ) مقارنةً بأدوات الربط الاستدراكية (102 خطأ). كما كشفت النتائج أن أكثر أنواع الأخطاء شيوعاً تمثلت في سوء الاستخدام، والإفراط في الاستخدام، والحذف، والتكرار غير الضروري، والتموضع غير الصحيح. وتبين أن أبرز أسباب هذه الأخطاء تعود إلى تأثير اللغة الأم، ومحدودية المعرفة بوظائف أدوات الربط، وضعف التعرض للكتابة الأكاديمية، وقلة الممارسة الكتابية، والأخطاء المحضة. وتوصي الدراسة بتقديم تعليم صريح لوظائف أدوات الربط، وتوفير تدريبات كتابية مركزة، واعتماد تغذية راجعة تصحيحية منتظمة؛ وذلك بهدف تعزيز التماسك والانسجام النصي، والارتقاء بالكفاءة العامة للطلبة في الكتابة الأكاديمية.

Abstract

This study investigates the difficulties Kurdish EFL university learners encounter in using additive and adversative conjunctions as cohesive devices in academic writing. It aimed to identify the most common types of errors, explore their underlying causes, and propose pedagogical suggestions for improving learners' writing performance. A mixed-methods approach was adopted, combining quantitative and qualitative analyses. Data were collected from forty fourth-stage students in the Department of English, College of Languages, Salahaddin University-Erbil, during the academic year 2024–2025. The research instruments consisted of two academic essay-writing tasks and semi-structured interviews. The findings revealed that learners experienced considerable difficulty using additive and adversative conjunctions appropriately, with additive conjunctions producing more errors (125) than adversative conjunctions (102). The most common error types included misuse, overuse, omission, redundancy, and inaccurate placement. The major causes were first-language interference, limited knowledge of conjunction functions, insufficient exposure to academic writing, lack of writing practice, and pure errors. The study recommends explicit instruction, focused writing practice, and systematic corrective feedback to improve learners' cohesion, coherence, and overall academic writing proficiency.

1.Introduction

Writing is one of the essential language skills that EFL students are expected to develop. Nevertheless, it is widely regarded as the most challenging skill for EFL learners and even native speakers. In general, writing is difficult for all writers because it requires managing multiple elements simultaneously, including content, organization, purpose,



audience, right vocabulary, punctuation, spelling, cohesion, and overall mechanics. Research indicates that learners' writing performance presents distinct challenges in English, especially within higher education institutions (Ahmed and Othman, 2019, p.1).

Indeed, an author may have correct meaning in mind, but an incorrect word choice can alter the meaning of sentence or even make it totally illogical. That is why a writer must continually strive for precise expression of language by finding the exact word to express a specific meaning. The correction of writing and speaking is to concentrate on what we are saying and most importantly on how we are saying it. Basically writers must have understanding of basic material with simple and complex words for example, naming words, asserting words, connecting words, descriptive words. Therefore, a knowledge of the properties and functions of the different kinds of words can make writers achieve a reliable and coherent content. Function of words make language has meaning, coherent and be readable (Ahmed and Othman, 2019, p.2). Norrish (1983) suggested that the most problematic skill for both language learners and language speakers is writing skill. When individuals improve both their speaking and their writing skills, they become superior communicators of the language in the long run. Prommas and Singwonsuwat (2011, p. 77) stated that writing skill is more complex than speaking since we cannot use any other form of communication, such as gestures, facial expressions, head movements, and mimicry which are essential elements for easing communication and to ensure that the message is accurately conveyed. Thus, in written discourse, there should be other alternative logical connectors one has to correctly use to make reading and comprehension easier. As such, knowing how to use conjunctions, specifically in writing, is an important aspect of language that can create cohesion and coherence. Conjunctions are one of the main topics taught in grammar lessons. It is essential for learners to connect their ideas in writing to achieve strong communication. The point of this study is to represent that most learners face difficulty in using conjunctions appropriately, because there are different types and functions. It is difficult for Kurdish EFL learners to comprehend their meanings and functions. Of course, there are many reasons that can contribute to this difficulty which may relatively differ from one learner to another.

1.1 Study Significance

This study contributes to the broader field of applied linguistics by deepening the understanding of cohesion in foreign language writing. By focusing specifically on additive and adversative conjunctions, it sheds

light on how Kurdish EFL learners construct logical relationships between ideas and where breakdowns in cohesion occur. This, in turn, enriches existing literature on discourse competence and cohesion in EFL contexts, particularly in under-researched Kurdish academic settings as it is an attempt to determine the factors behind all the misuse of those two types of conjunctions. The study has strong pedagogical significance. Its findings can help English language instructors identify the specific difficulties Kurdish EFL learners face when using those two types of conjunctions. This awareness enables lecturers to design more targeted instructional strategies, materials, and classroom activities that explicitly address cohesion and coherence in writing, rather than treating them implicitly as there are recommended solutions given for each difficulty students may encounter.

The study is valuable for curriculum designers and syllabus developers. By highlighting learners' weaknesses in using cohesive devices, it provides empirical evidence for integrating focused instruction on conjunctions and discourse markers into academic writing courses. This may lead to improvements in course content, teaching methodologies, and assessment practices. Furthermore, the study benefits learners themselves by raising awareness of the importance of cohesive devices in producing clear, logical, and well-structured academic texts. Improving the use of conjunctions can enhance their overall writing proficiency, academic performance, and ability to communicate effectively in English. Furthermore, students can be aware of the use of such conjunctions and try to decrease the number of most frequent written errors in the future. Finally, the study may serve as a reference point for future researchers who are interested in cohesion, discourse analysis, or EFL writing difficulties, particularly in similar sociolinguistic contexts. It opens avenues for further investigation into other types of cohesive devices or comparative studies across different learner groups.

1.2 Problem Statement

Although a considerable number of Kurdish EFL university students study several writing courses as a part of the requirements of the undergraduate program at the Department of English in College of Languages/ Salahaddin University-Erbil, they still have difficulties in writing. Even after successfully finishing the required writing courses in the department, many students are later found to fail in producing an appropriate piece of writing with additive and adversative conjunctions which should be academically and proficiently valued. Therefore, they often encounter several difficulties in their writing assignments,



examinations, and even mini research papers required for their graduation.

It is worth noting that there is a noticeable lack of focused research on the specific challenges Kurdish EFL learners encounter in using additive and adversative conjunctions as cohesive devices. The factors behind the difficulties Kurdish EFL learners come across are not identified. This gap highlights the need for an in-depth investigation into the nature and extent of these difficulties and the recommended solutions for them. One of the key aspects of cohesion is the appropriate use of conjunctions, particularly additive (e.g., *and*, *furthermore*, *moreover*) and adversative (e.g., *but*, *however*, *on the other hand*) conjunctions, which help establish clear relationships between ideas.

However, in the context of Kurdish EFL learners, these cohesive devices are often misused, underused, or overgeneralized. In many cases, learners rely heavily on a limited range of simple conjunctions, such as *and* and *but*, while lacking awareness of more formal and varied alternatives required in academic writing. Additionally, interference from the mother tongue, insufficient exposure to authentic academic texts, and limited explicit instruction on discourse markers further contribute to these difficulties. As a result, students' written texts tend to lack coherence, logical progression, and clarity, which negatively affects the overall quality of their academic writings. Therefore, this study aims to identify and analyze the problems 3rd stage Kurdish EFL learners face in using additive and adversative conjunctions in their academic writing during the academic year (2024-2025), in order to provide insights that can enhance teaching practices and improve learners' writing proficiency.

1.3 Research Questions

The study is an attempt to answer the following questions:

- 1.To what extent do Kurdish EFL learners use additive and adversative conjunctions appropriately in their academic writing?
- 2.What types of errors do Kurdish EFL learners make when using additive and adversative conjunctions as cohesive devices?
- 3.Which type of conjunctions (additive or adversative) poses greater difficulty for Kurdish EFL learners?
- 4.What are the possible causes behind Kurdish EFL learners' difficulties in using additive and adversative conjunctions?
- 5.How does the misuse or limited use of these conjunctions affect the overall coherence and quality of students' academic writing?
- 6.What pedagogical implications (recommended solutions) can be drawn to improve Kurdish EFL learners' use of cohesive devices in academic writing?

1.4 Research Hypotheses

The study hypothesizes the following:

- 1.Kurdish EFL learners face significant difficulties in the appropriate use of additive and adversative conjunctions in their academic writing.
- 2.Kurdish EFL learners frequently commit errors such as misuse, overuse, and underuse of additive and adversative conjunctions.
- 3.Adversative conjunctions pose greater difficulty for Kurdish EFL learners than additive conjunctions.
- 4.The learners' difficulties in using these conjunctions are mainly attributed to mother tongue interference, limited linguistic competence, and insufficient explicit instruction on cohesive devices.
- 5.The inappropriate use of additive and adversative conjunctions negatively affects the coherence, clarity, and overall quality of Kurdish EFL learners' academic writing.

1.5 Objectives of the Study

The main objectives of the study are the following:

- 1.To investigate the extent to which Kurdish EFL learners use additive and adversative conjunctions in their academic writing.
- 2.To identify and classify the types of errors Kurdish EFL learners make in using additive and adversative conjunctions as cohesive devices.
- 3.To determine whether additive or adversative conjunctions present greater difficulty for Kurdish EFL learners and why.
- 4.To identify the causes of learners' difficulties in using these conjunctions.
- 5.To propose pedagogical recommendations that can help improve Kurdish EFL learners' effective use of those two types of conjunctions in academic writing.

1.5 Related Studies

A good piece of composition, by a native or non-native speaker, must be balanced in different written issues; content, organisation, purpose, audience, and vocabulary. However, writing in a foreign language is even more demanding because it is a complicated, challenging, and difficult process.

As Chiu (2004) indicated, "coordinating conjunctions have not received much attention in second language acquisition because it is generally believed that coordinating conjunctions are easy to acquire due to simplistic notions of parallelism" (p.2). He emphasized that "EFL learners do not know how to parse chunks of elements, thereby leading to misunderstanding of sentences; the reason is ignorance of the function of



conjunctions, especially coordinating conjunctions” (p.2). In her research, she tried to investigate the use of the coordinator and as it has “important functions in reading and written discourse and that it occurs so frequently...” (p.3). In Chiu’s research, an emphasis was put on the transfer of first language as a major reason of and misuse of the coordinating conjunction and. Moreover a high frequency of and in the narrative written samples was revealed.

Adiantika (2005, p.98) investigated the use of cohesive devices in expository texts written by Indonesian EFL students. The findings revealed that four main types of cohesive devices were present in their compositions: reference, substitution, conjunction, and lexical cohesion. The study further indicated that errors in using these devices were largely due to insufficient training in their appropriate use. Overall, previous research suggests that EFL learners tend to rely on certain types of cohesive devices while experiencing difficulties in using them correctly. While some learners tend to overuse these devices, others use them inaccurately.

Meisuo (2000, p.87) examined the use of cohesive devices in compositions written by Chinese learners of English and found that they tended to overuse and misuse conjunctions such as “and,” “moreover,” “furthermore,” “however,” and “but.” Using a corpus-based approach, Narita, Sato, and Sugiura (2004, p.1172) explored how Japanese learners of English employed conjunctions in both their English and native-language essays, revealing that the influence of L1 transfer on their use of conjunctions in English was inconclusive.

In a similar vein, Lai (2008, p.66) investigated conjunction use among Taiwanese learners of English by relating it to their proficiency levels. The findings indicated that more proficient learners used conjunctions less frequently than less proficient learners.

An issue, regarding using coordinating conjunctions by speakers of Arabic, was investigated in Hinkel’s study (2001, p.63). His research findings spelled out that Arabic speakers may concentrate “on avoiding redundancy and excessive repetition of parallel constructions such as noun and verb phrases” (p. 129). Daif-Allah and Albeshir (2013) analyzed discourse markers, such as and, but and so used by a number of EFL students in different Saudi teaching contexts. According to “the descriptive quantitative and qualitative approaches” (p.219) they utilized in their study, the study findings revealed that Saudi students “overused the additive connectors followed by the causative, the contrastive and the illustrative ones. In addition, the students’ use of writing discourse



markers was too limited and the ones that frequently used were *and, in addition, and for example*" (ibid, p.217).

In a similar context and relatively recent related study, Hamed (2014) investigated the use of conjunctions in the argumentative writing of Libyan students enrolled at Omer Al-Mukhtar University. The findings revealed that the study subjects used some type of conjunctions such as, additives and causals, "inappropriately in their writing and it thus weakened the logical connectivity between sentences and paragraphs" (p.114). Based on his study findings, Hamed (2014) argued that the use of conjunctions is problematic for the Libyan participants because of "the negative transfer from the participants' mother tongue (Arabic)".

Mohamed-Sayidina (2010, p.54) conducted a research to examine the use of transition words and cohesive devices in English compositions written by ESL Arabic-speaking students, who were studying academic English module at the American University of Sharjah in the UAE. She came up with the conclusion that Arabic speaking learners used more additive words than the English native speakers did.

In a different context and in a more recent investigation, Martinez (2016) reported that her participants encountered difficulties in using conjunctions, particularly adversative and additive types. She also noted that errors in the use of conjunctions were more common among students in non-bilingual programs compared to those enrolled in bilingual programs (p.117). Likewise, Ong (2011) conducted a study on the writing of Chinese undergraduate EFL students and found that the most frequent errors related to conjunctions involved adversative and additive forms (p.46).

Lauherta Martinez (2018) examined how syntactic complexity, particularly the use of conjunctions relates to EFL learners' writing quality. Based on data from 188 secondary school students and using the framework of Halliday and Hasan (1976, p.226), the study found a positive relationship between the frequency of conjunction use and the overall quality of writing. Halliday and Hasan (1976) also emphasized that skilled writers demonstrate a sophisticated command of conjunctions, using them purposefully to establish logical relationships and convey meaning effectively. Such appropriate use improves clarity, coherence, and the overall readability of a text. Overall, the findings indicate that while conjunctions can enhance writing quality, their proper use remains a significant challenge for language learners across different educational contexts.

In the most recent study, Kusyowo, Sujatna, Indrayani, and Rido (2020, p.2332) conducted a corpus-based comparison of conjunction use



between native and non-native English-speaking lecturers. The corpus approach provided a reliable and detailed framework for identifying subtle differences in usage across contexts. However, the findings revealed no significant difference between the two groups in their use of conjunctions. Kusyowo et al. (2020, p.2332) showed that although a corpus-based method allows for precise and context-sensitive analysis of language use, both native and non-native lecturers employed conjunctions in largely similar ways, with no meaningful variation observed between them.

Drawing on the above literature review, the present study differs from previous research in that it specifically examines a selected set of coordinating conjunctions used by Kurdish university EFL learners within a Kurdish context. Furthermore, the study relies on both quantitative and qualitative data to address its research questions and hypotheses.

1.6 Limits of the Study

The study is mainly devoted to investigating and identifying the difficulties (Errors, reasons, and solutions) faced by Kurdish 4th stage EFL learners in using additive and adversative conjunctions as cohesive devices in their academic writing in Department of English, at the College of Languages, Salahaddin University-Erbil, during the academic year (2024-2025).

2. Conjunctions: Theoretical Background

Writing can be considered a fundamental component of language, and examining one of its key elements is therefore essential. Conjunctions play a vital role in forming effective communication in both written and spoken discourse. Although scholars have offered slightly different definitions, their views largely converge. For instance, Malmkjaer (1991, p.31) describes conjunctions as essential parts of speech that meaningfully link other elements, while Aidinlou and Reshadi (2014) view conjunctions as semantic links between clauses. Language involves both receptive and productive skills; namely speaking and writing, so the ability to recognize and understand conjunctions is crucial for clear communication (Unubi, 2016, p.).

Halliday and Hasan (1976, p. 226) define conjunction as a cohesive device whose function is not inherent in the items themselves but arises from their meanings. In other words, conjunctive elements do not directly link to preceding or following parts of the text; rather, they signal meanings that assume the presence of other elements within the discourse. Although different terms are used in the literature to refer to conjunctions, they essentially serve the same purpose in texts. For

instance, Quirk, Greenbaum, Leech, and Svartvik (1985, p.920), as well as Zamel (1983a, p.23), label them as “conjuncts,” while other scholars use terms such as linking words, signal words, transition words, connecting words, discourse markers, logical connectors, transitional devices, connectives, and transitions. Celce-Murcia and Larsen-Freeman (1983, p.323) classify them as a closed class of words or phrases that express logical relationships between two or more basic sentences. These linking elements may function as coordinating conjunctions, joining clauses or sentences of equal grammatical status, or as subordinating conjunctions, linking clauses of unequal status. In this study, Halliday and Hasan's (1976) definition of conjunction is adopted as the operational definition due to its comprehensive and clearly defined nature.

As claimed by Halliday and Hasan (1976, p.238), there are four kinds of conjunction; they are additive, adversative, causal, and temporal. This study focuses on only the first two to identify and classify the types of errors Kurdish EFL learners make in using additive and adversative conjunctions as cohesive devices. In the following section all types of conjunction are highlight (ibid., 1976, p.238):

1. She is intelligent and hardworking. (**Additive**)
2. Although it was raining, they went out. (**Adversative**)
3. Since you are here, we can start the meeeting. (**Causal**)
4. She was listening to music while studying. (**Temporal**)

Conjunctions play a significant role in creating cohesion, making texts easier to understand and more readable. Halliday and Hasan (1976) argue that conjunctive elements are not inherently cohesive; rather, their cohesion is indirect and derives from their specific meanings. These elements do not primarily function to connect directly with preceding or following text. Instead, they convey meanings that assume the existence of other components within the discourse. Therefore, when conjunctions are described as cohesive devices, the focus is not on general semantic relations within the grammatical system, but on a particular function: linking linguistic elements that occur sequentially without being connected through other structural mechanisms.

Let's first talk about **additive ones**. The additive relation is somewhat different from coordination proper, although it is no doubt derivable from it. Considering cohesive relations, 'and, or, and nor type' can be grouped under the heading of additive. Coordination is said to be realized in the form of a particular structural relation since it is incorporated into linguistic structure (Halliday and Hasan, 1976, p.233), while additives



indicate something rather looser and less structural than what it meant by coordination. Hence, if coordination relation is structural, the additive relation is cohesive. The correlative pairs, such as '*both ... and, either ... or, and neither ... nor*' do not occur to express in general a cohesive function; they restricted to structural coordination within the sentence. The reason is that a coordinate pair functions as a single unit. '*And, or, and nor*' may express either the external or the internal type of conjunctive relation. For example '*and*', in the additive context, in fact, would reveal no clear difference between the two (external or internal); but when it is used alone as a cohesive item, as a distinct from *and then, etc.*, it often seems to have the sense of 'there is something more to be said.' Consider the following example (Halliday and Hasan 1976, p.245):

(1) "While you're refreshing yourself," said the Queen, "I'll just take the measurements." And she took a ribbon out of her pocket, marked in inches... (Halliday and Hasan, 1976: 235)

Here '*and*' does link two different facts, which makes it external, but at the same time, it may serve to convey the speakers' intention that they should be regarded as connected in some way. In what follows is a summary of the conjunctive relations realized by the additive type with an example for each one (Darweesh & Kadhim, 2016, p.171):

a. Simple additive relations (external and internal):

Additive: *and, and also, and... too.*
Negative: *nor, and ... not, not either, neither.*
Alternative: *or, or else.*

b. Complex additive relations (internal): emphatic

Additive: *further (more), moreover, additionally, besides that, add to this, in addition.*
Alternative: *alternatively.*

c. Complex additive relations (internal): de-emphatic

Afterthought: *incidentally, by the way.*

d. Comparative relations (internal):

Similar: *likewise, similarly, in the same way, in (just) this way.*
Dissimilar: *on the other hand, by contrast conversely.*

e. Appositive relations (internal):

Expository: *that is, I mean, in other words, to put it another way.*
Exemplificatory: *for instance, for example, thus.*

Starting with **adversative conjunctions**, "Contrary to expectation" is the basic meaning of the adversative relation derived from the content of what is being said or from the communication process, and the speaker-hearer situation have a look at example (2). The sense of contradiction is shown by the use of 'but' and 'however' consider examples (3-7) (Darweesh & Kadhim, 2016, p.172):

(2) All the figures were correct; they'd been checked. Yet the total came out wrong. (Halliday and Hasan, 1976, p.250)

(3) All this time Tweedledee was trying his best to fold up the umbrella, with himself in it ... But he couldn't quite succeed, and it ended in rolling over, bundled up in umbrella with only his head out. (Halliday and Hasan, 1976, p.250)

(4) He's not exactly good-looking. But he's got brains. (Halliday and Hasan, 1976, p.252)

(5) 'I see you're admiring my little box,' the Knight said in a friendly tone. '... You see I carry it upside-down, so that the rain can't get in.' 'But the things can get out,' Alice gently remarked. (Halliday and Hasan, 1976, p.252)

(6) ... it swept her straight off the seat, and down among the heap of rushes. However, she wasn't a bit hurt, and was soon up again. (Halliday and Hasan, 1976, p.251)

(7) She failed. However, she's tried her best. (Halliday and Hasan, 1976, p.252)

The adversative relation also has its internal aspect. Here the meaning is still 'contrary to expectation'; but the source of expectations is to be found not in what the presupposed sentence is about but in the current hearer configuration whereby the point can be reached in the communication process. Consider the following example:

(8) '... You might catch a bat, and that's very like a mouse, you know. But do cats eat bats, I wonder?' (Halliday and Hasan, 1976, p.253)

The summary of conjunctive relations of the adversative type (Darweesh & Kadhim, 2016, p.173):

a. Adversative relations 'proper' ('in spite of external and internal)

Simple: *yet, though, only.*





Containing: *but.*
Emphatic: *however, nevertheless, despite this, all the same.*

b. Contrastive relations ('as against') (external):

Simple: *but, and.*

Emphatic: *however, on the other hand, at the same time, as against that.*

c. Contrastive relations ('as against') (internal):

Avowal: *in fact, as matter of fact, to tell the truth, actually, in point of fact.*

d. Corrective relations ('not... but') (internal):

Correction of meaning: *instead, rather, on the contrary.*

Correction of wording: *at least, rather, I mean.*

e. Dismissive (generalized adversative) relations ('no matter...still') (external internal):

Dismissal, closed: *in any case, in either case, whichever.*

Dismissal, open-ended: *anyhow, at any rate, in any case.*

Regarding **casual conjunctions**, there are "so, thus, hence, consequently, accordingly, therefore and a number of expressions like *as a result (of that), because of that, in consequence,*" are used a means to realize the causal relation. All the examples of causal are regularly combined with initial and. Thus 'so' occurs only initially, unless it is followed by *and*. There are three specific relations under the heading of causal relations. They are '*result, reason, and purpose*'. The simple form of expression is '*so*', '*intended to*', '*as a result*', '*for this reason,*' '*for this purpose.*' They usually occur as distinguishable prepositional phrases. The simple forms *thus, hence, and therefore* all occur regularly in an internal sense to imply some kinds of reasoning or argument from a premise. The word 'so' occurs frequently internally in another meaning shared in it with '*then*'; it is a statement about the speaker's reasoning processes in order to conclude something from what is being said (or from other evidence)' (Halliday and Hasan 1976, p.257; Darweesh & Kadhim, 2016, p.173).

The **temporal relations** are the relations between two successive sentences. Their relation in external terms, as content may be simply one

of the sequences in time: the one is subsequent to the other. This temporal cohesion is expressed in its simple form by 'then'. The other expressions of temporal relationship besides 'then' and 'and then' are *next, afterwards, after that, subsequently, following, later, since*. Halliday and Hasan (1976, p.261) stated that the presence of an additional component also make temporal relation more specific by the presence of an additional component in the meaning, as well as o of succession in time. Consider the following examples Darweesh & Kadhim, 2016, p.173) :

- a. then + immediately (at once, thereupon, on which)
- b. then + after an interval (soon, presently, later, after a time)
- c. then + repetition (next time, on other occasion)
- d. then + a specific time interval (next day, five minutes later)

2.1 Significance of Conjunctions

Conjunctions can help build a grammatical structure that serve proper communication of a message, helping the reader constructs the different segments of a text to achieve unity, which is one of the most necessary features that must be available in language, and it is achieved by the use of conjunctions. They play a massive role in giving the text its meaning (Heino, 2010, p.27). The proper use of conjunctions enhances the natural flow of ideas in both written and oral contexts, whereas their misuse may result in confusion, ambiguity, or even contradiction. As Zamel (1983b, p.177) notes, conjunctions are central to constructing meaning and establishing relationships between ideas within discourse. Consequently, they are indispensable in writing (McCarthy, 1991, p.76), since readers may misinterpret a text if conjunctions are used incorrectly, and unlike spoken communication, written texts do not allow for immediate clarification of the writer's intended meaning.

Conjunctions as one of the cohesive devices can affect the quality of a text. That is, quality of writing is related to the number of conjunctions used. Moreover, conjunctions can help shape representations, as the relationships among text segments can increase the reader's knowledge of discourse. That is, appropriate use of conjunctions can enrich a text with clarity and reason. In discourse, conjunctions express a certain meaning that is indirectly expressed through their meaning, as they refer to other components that may not be available in words (Halliday and Hasan, 1976, p.238). However, they primarily serve to join preceding or following components of a text, expressing certain meanings that are available in other components.



Siddiqui (2014, p.39) highlights the crucial role of conjunctions in ensuring effective communication in both spoken and written forms. Being aware of how to use different conjunctions appropriately enables individuals to communicate more effectively. Proper use of conjunctions can also enhance confidence and facilitate quicker comprehension of messages, without the need to break sentences into smaller parts. In other words, the way a text is understood and interpreted is greatly shaped by the use of conjunctions. Similarly, McClure and Steffensen (1980, p.14) argue that conjunctions are essential in clarifying logical relationships between propositions, particularly in written texts where non-verbal cues such as body language are absent. As a result, the effective use of conjunctions helps minimize potential misunderstandings.

2.2 Coordinating Conjunctions

Coordinating conjunctions are commonly classified into four main types: addition (including negative addition), contrast, alternative, and inference. Additive conjunctions simply introduce extra information without qualification, whereas contrastive conjunctions highlight differences between ideas. Alternative conjunctions present a choice between two options, and inferential conjunctions are used to draw conclusions. As noted by Hassoon (2023, p.2945), conjunctions can function across a wide range of contexts. In general, coordinating conjunctions are single-word connectors that link elements of equal grammatical importance within a sentence, such as words, phrases, or independent clauses, thereby contributing to textual unity (Walter, 2017, p.23). There are only seven coordinating conjunctions in English: *for*, *and*, *nor*, *but*, *or*, *yet*, and *so*. These are often remembered through the acronym FANBOYS (Hassoon, 2023, p.2945):

- F: **(for):** She stayed home, **for** she was feeling unwell.
A: **(and):** He completed the assignment, **and** he submitted it on time.
N: **(nor):** She does not like coffee, **nor** does she drink tea.
B: **(but):** The task was difficult, **but** they managed to finish it successfully.
O: **(or):** You can join the discussion now, **or** you can wait until later.
Y: **(yet):** The explanation was simple, **yet** many students misunderstood it.
S: **(so):** It was raining heavily, **so** the match was postponed.

They are employed to link two or more words, phrases, or clauses that carry equal importance. By doing so, they facilitate the clear expression of intended meaning and contribute to textual coherence. When two simple sentences are combined using these conjunctions, they form a compound sentence. Moreover, coordinating conjunctions are not limited to connecting elements within a sentence; they can also be used to link paragraphs when they appear at the beginning of a subsequent sentence or paragraph. Consider the following two example sentences (Hassoon, 2023, p.2945):

- (9) The test was ready. **But** where were the examinees?
(10) I asked them to study hard to pass the exam. **And** they started to do just that.

2.3 Subordinating Conjunctions

Subordinating conjunctions precede dependent subordinate adverbial clauses, serving to join them with their independent clauses. That is, this kind of conjunction establishes a connection between a dependent clause and an independent clause. The dependent adverbial clause alone cannot be a complete simple sentence. It provides the reader with information about how, when, or why. By contrast, an independent clause can be a simple sentence by itself. That is, the dependent depends on the independent one for its full meaning. Some examples of these conjunctions are: 'after', 'although', 'because', 'before', 'if', 'since', 'though', 'unless', 'until', 'than', 'when', 'whenever', 'where' and 'while'. They can achieve different relationships like cause-and-effect, a contrast, a condition, result, place, time or other kind of relationship that can exist between clauses. Consider all those following examples and see how those conjunctions represent different relationships (Hassoon, 2023, p.2946):

- (11) I met him **when** I was going home.
(12) Make sure you clean your teeth **before** you go to bed.
(13) I read books **because** I love reading.
(14) **Before** you go to bed, make sure you clean your teeth.
(15) **Because** I love reading, I read books.

2.4 Correlative Conjunctions

Paired or correlative conjunctions and coordinating conjunctions have in common some features: first they serve to link clauses that are grammatically similar. Second, they serve the same functions that



coordinating conjunctions do: addition/negative addition, contrast, alternative and inferential. Then they join grammatically equal elements, parts of speech or phrases. But, they are formed by the combination of two words or phrases. Paired conjunctions obtained their name from the fact that they include two words or phrases used to create completion to the two balanced structures that are joined by them. They include: 'either...or', 'neither...nor', 'both...and', 'as many...as', 'whether...or', 'not only...but also', 'such...that', 'so...that', 'hardly...when', 'scarcely...when', 'no sooner...than', and 'not...but'. See the following examples (Hassoon, 2023, p.2947):

(16)Both Maha **and** Nada met the deadline.

(17)They could **either** play **or** eat what they like.

(18)He could **neither** read **nor** write.

2.5 Compound Conjunctions

Compound conjunctions function similarly to coordinating conjunctions, acting as single units that connect elements within a sentence. They can be categorized into several groups. One group consists of conjunctions that require the word *that*, such as *in order that*, *in that*, *except that*, *on condition that*, *so that*, and *such that*. Another group includes those in which *that* is optional, for instance *now (that)*, *provided (that)*, *supposing (that)*, *seeing (that)*, and *considering (that)*. A further category comprises conjunctions containing *as*, including *as well as*, *as much as*, *as though*, *in as much as*, and *as soon as*. Consider the following examples (Hassoon, 2023, p.2947):

(19)She is saving money **in order that** she can continue her studies abroad.

(20)They agreed to support the project **on condition that** all members participate actively.

(21)You may join the course **provided that** you meet the required qualifications.

(22)There are **as** many books **as** there are students in the classroom.

3.Cohesion and Coherence

No linguist or language teaching specialist talks about cohesion without direct or indirect reference to Halliday and Hasan's (1976) pioneering publication on the issue. Not only did their book sow the seeds of discourse analysis and text linguistics but it also had a significant impact on language teaching and learning. All of the definitions of the concept of

cohesion center around Halliday and Hasan's (ibid, p.25) view that it is "a basic unit of meaning" that signals relationships within and between sentences and paragraphs of a text. Elsewhere, Halliday and Hasan (1985, p.4) say that "the concept of cohesion is a semantic one; it refers to relations of meaning that exist within the text, and that define it as a text." According to them, cohesive devices include reference, substitution, ellipsis, conjunction and lexical cohesion.

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

Coherence and cohesion have been cited as one of the most problematic areas in writing for EFL learners. Coherence refers to the overall clarity and logical flow of ideas in a text, where all parts contribute meaningfully to a unified whole and the reader can easily understand the intended message. It is achieved through the organization of ideas, relevance of information, and the writer's ability to present thoughts in a structured and meaningful way. In contrast, cohesion concerns the linguistic elements that connect sentences and clauses on the surface level, such as conjunctions, reference words, substitution, and lexical repetition. While coherence is related to meaning and the reader's interpretation of how ideas fit together, cohesion is concerned with the grammatical and lexical ties that link parts of a text. Therefore, a text may be cohesive through the use of appropriate connectors and devices, yet still lack coherence if the ideas themselves are not logically organized or clearly related (Shokrpour & Fallahzadeh, 2007, p.151).

4.Error Analysis: Definition

The process of analyzing errors is one of the most significant domains of second language learning for the reason that it reveals the problematic areas of language learning to syllabus designers, lecturers, and textbook writers. Crystal (1999, p.125) defined "error analysis" in language teaching and learning, as a technique for identifying, classifying and



systematically interpreting the unacceptable forms produced by someone learning a foreign language, using any of the principles and procedures provided by linguistics". Erdogan (2005, p.262) refers to error analysis as a branch of applied linguistics, which demonstrate that learner's errors were not only because of learner's native language but also they reflected some universal learning strategies.

James (2001, p.62) defined Error Analysis as "the study of linguistic ignorance, the investigation of what people do not know and how they attempt to cope with their ignorance". Another explanation has been made by Ellis (1994, p.107) who explained Error Analysis as "an approach which involves a set of procedures for identifying, describing and explaining errors in learner's language". Attiya (1990, p.12) also defined Error Analysis as "The study of students recurring errors, their classification into categories, using them as the basis for preparing lessons and materials designed to help students overcome such errors".

4.1 Errors versus Mistakes

Brown (2000, p.216) explained the necessity of drawing a distinction between both errors and mistakes by believing that in order to analyze learner's language in a proper perspective, it is crucial to make a distinction between mistakes and errors, technically two very different phenomena.

Richards, et al (2002), in the Dictionary of Language Teaching and Applied Linguistics, believed that a learner makes mistake when writing or speaking because of lack of attention, fatigue, carelessness, or some other aspects of performance. Mistakes can be self-corrected when attention is called. Whereas, an error is the use of linguistic item in a way that a fluent or native speaker of the language regards it as showing faulty or incomplete learning. In other words, it occurs because the learner does not know what is correct, and thus it cannot be self-corrected. Corder (1981, p.10) claimed that "it is sometimes difficult to distinguish errors from mistakes. Moreover, he stated "mistakes have no importance to the process of language learning".

Generally, Ellis (2000, p.17) made a distinction between errors and mistakes by stating that "Errors reflect gaps in learner's knowledge, they occur because the learner does not know what is correct. Mistakes reflect occasional lapses in performance; they occur because, in a particular instance, the learner is unable to perform what he or she knows". Lennon (1991, p.181) observes that errors do not constitute as easily recognizable a feature as might be imagined. Therefore, in fact, great problems in unambiguously defining error and considerable variation to be found

even among native speakers in error identification. Finally, although distinguishing between errors and mistakes can sometimes be challenging, this study focuses specifically on learners' errors of the two types of conjunctions rather than the mistakes of them. This is because errors tend to occur consistently and go unnoticed by the learners themselves. As a result, they can typically only be identified by teachers or researchers, not by the learners.

5. Methodology

This research adopted a mixed-methods approach, combining quantitative and qualitative research designs; quantitative analysis of the frequency of additive and adversative conjunction errors with qualitative analysis to interpret the causes of the difficulties and then provide solutions to the errors. The purpose of selecting this approach is to explore the experiences and perspectives of participants in depth, allowing for a rich understanding of the underlying factors contributing to these difficulties. The study also employs semi-structured interviews following the administration of the test in order to gain deeper insights into the learners' difficulties. These interviews provide participants with the opportunity to reflect on their performance and share their experiences in using additive and adversative conjunctions. Through this approach, the researcher is able to explore the underlying reasons behind the errors identified in the test, including learners' thought processes, areas of confusion, and possible gaps in their linguistic knowledge and other aspects.

5.1 Procedures

The population of the study contains Kurdish EFL university 4th stage students during the academic year (2024-2025), second semester. It consists of (40) male and female students at the Dept. of English Language, College of Languages, Salahaddin University-Erbil, Kurdistan Region-Iraq. Two written test items were chosen as the tools of the study. Students have studied English conjunctions for two years in 'Advanced syntax' and 'Academic writing' subjects in their second and third stages. The test required the students to write two academic essays, each consisting of approximately 200 words, under a time constraint of one hour and a half. The test was conducted during one of the students' double-hour lectures to ensure a controlled and familiar academic environment. The essay topics were carefully selected as "*The advantages and disadvantages of using social media in academic life*" and "*Online learning versus classroom learning: which is more effective?*". These topics were chosen because they are familiar, relevant,



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and engaging for university students, allowing them to generate sufficient ideas and arguments. More importantly, both topics naturally require comparison, contrast, addition, and argumentation, which makes them highly suitable for eliciting the use of additive and adversative conjunctions. Therefore, they provide an appropriate context for achieving the objectives of this study and obtaining reliable data on learners' difficulties in using cohesive devices in their academic writing.



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Conjunction Category	Conjunctions	Frequency of Use	Correct Usage	Incorrect Usage	Common Error Type	Possible Cause
Additive	<i>And</i>	83	63	20	Redundancy	Overreliance on familiar conjunctions
Additive	<i>Also</i>	55	31	24	Overuse	Literal translation from L1/ Pure Error
Additive	<i>Moreover</i>	43	18	25	Misuse	Absence of Knowledge
Additive	<i>Plus</i>	36	21	15	Misuse	Lack of exposure to academic writing & practice
Additive	<i>Furthermore</i>	26	11	15	Misuse	Absence of knowledge
Additive	<i>In addition</i>	34	15	19	Inaccurate placement	Weak discourse organization
Additive	<i>Likewise</i>	11	4	7	Inaccurate placement	Absence of knowledge
Adversative	<i>But</i>	70	50	20	Overuse	Overreliance on familiar conjunctions
Adversative	<i>Yet</i>	38	22	16	Omission / Misuse	Lack of exposure to academic writing & practice
Adversative	<i>However</i>	42	27	15	Omission / Overuse	Confusion regarding contrastive meaning
Adversative	<i>Although</i>	41	14	27	Omission /	Absence of knowledge



					Overuse	
Adversative	<i>Nevertheless</i>	5	1	4	Omission / Misuse	Lack of exposure to academic writing & practice
Adversative	<i>Whereas</i>	18	6	12	Misuse	Absence of knowledge
Adversative	<i>On the other hand</i>	11	7	4	Omission / Misuse	Absence of knowledge
Adversative	<i>Conversely</i>	6	2	4	Misuse	Absence of knowledge

5.2 Data Collection and Analysis

After collecting essays from forty 4th stage students, all instances of additive and adversative conjunctions were carefully identified, categorized, and examined according to their grammatical and discourse functions. The analysis was based on Halliday and Hasan's (1976) framework. It focused on detecting different types of errors, including misuse, omission, redundancy, and inaccurate placement of conjunctions within the written discourse. For the quantitative analysis, the frequency of each type of error were calculated to determine the most recurrent difficulties among the participants. This statistical analysis also helped reveal which conjunctions posed greater challenges for the learners and provided a clearer picture of the overall patterns of errors in their academic writings. In addition, the learners' correct usages of conjunctions were also considered in order to compare accurate and inaccurate performances. Regarding the qualitative analysis, selected examples from the students' essays and interview responses were analyzed interpretively to explore the possible causes behind these difficulties. Now, Consider the following **Table 1** for the study's data analysis:



Table 1: Results of the Tests: Patterns of Conjunction Use and Misuse in Students' Writings

5.2.1 Discussion of the Results

The data show that additive conjunctions were generally used more frequently than adversative conjunctions. Among all conjunctions, **and** recorded the highest frequency of use (83 occurrences); mainly because Kurdish speakers commonly use additive conjunctions, “و” (“and”), to join words, phrases, and sentences in everyday communication. This frequent exposure may encourage students to adopt a similar pattern when writing in English. The second highest frequency of use is **but** (70 occurrences), followed by **also** (55 occurrences), and **moreover** (43 occurrences). The predominance of these conjunctions indicates Kurdish learners' preference for simple and familiar cohesive devices. This tendency result from extensive exposure to these conjunctions in basic English instruction and their direct equivalents in Kurdish. The results represent that Kurdish EFL learners rely heavily on common conjunctions while avoiding less familiar alternatives. Although frequent use may indicate awareness of cohesion, it does not necessarily reflect mastery.

At the lower end of the frequency scale, **nevertheless** (5 occurrences) and **conversely** (6 occurrences) were the least frequently used conjunctions. They were followed by **on the other hand** (11 occurrences), **likewise** (11 occurrences), and **whereas** (18 occurrences). The limited use of these conjunctions suggests that students tended to avoid less familiar cohesive devices and instead relied on more common conjunctions such as **and**, **also**, and **but**. One possible explanation for this pattern is that these conjunctions have relatively complex meanings and functions and are more commonly associated with formal and academic writing.

The conjunction ‘**and**’ was the most frequently used additive conjunction, appearing 83 times. Of these occurrences, 63 were correct and 20 were incorrect. Despite its relatively high accuracy rate, the number of errors remains noteworthy. The predominant error type was redundancy, suggesting that students often inserted *and* unnecessarily or repeatedly within the same sentence. This pattern reflects learners' dependence on a familiar conjunction to link ideas, even when alternative devices would be more appropriate. Such overreliance can weaken cohesion because excessive repetition creates monotonous sentence structures and reduces stylistic variety. Now, consider the following pairs of sentences from students' essay writings E1 and E2:





(23)Incorrect: *Social media helps students find academic resources, **and** it helps them communicate with teachers, **and** it helps them collaborate with classmates.* (E1)

Correct: *Social media helps students find academic resources, communicate with teachers, **and** collaborate with classmates.*

(24)Incorrect: *Online learning is effective, **and because** it is flexible many students prefer it. It helps students learn, **and** it helps students communicate, **and** it helps students collaborate.* (E2)

Correct: *Online learning is effective because it is flexible, **and** many students prefer it. It helps students learn, communicate, **and** collaborate.*
In both sentences, **and** is repeatedly employed to connect closely related ideas, even when a more concise grammatical structure could express the same meaning. This excessive repetition creates a monotonous sentence pattern and reduces the overall quality of academic writing. Although the sentences remain understandable, the overuse of **and** makes the text less cohesive and stylistically less sophisticated. One possible reason for this error is learners' overreliance on familiar conjunctions. Since **and** is one of the first conjunctions acquired in English and is relatively easy to use, students often depend on it whenever they need to connect ideas. Instead of employing more varied sentence structures, they repeatedly insert **and** as a default linking device. This tendency may result in unnecessary repetition and limited syntactic variety.

The reason behind this overreliance on familiar conjunctions is mother-tongue influence. In Kurdish, the additive conjunction **و** (and) is frequently used. Consequently, Kurdish EFL learners may transfer this habit into English writing and rely excessively on **and** when organizing their ideas. The frequent use of additive connections in the first language may therefore encourage learners to overuse **and**, leading to redundancy and reducing the effectiveness of academic expression.

The conjunction '**also**' occurred 55 times, with 31 correct and 24 incorrect uses. The high proportion of errors suggests that students experience difficulty determining when and where *also* should be used. The most common problem was overuse, likely resulting from literal translation from Kurdish and intralingual errors. Students may perceive *also* as a universal marker of addition and therefore apply it excessively without considering contextual appropriateness. Now, consider the following pairs of sentences from students' writings:

(25)Incorrect: *Social media help students use educational resources. **Also** it allows them to communicate with their teachers. **Also** it enables them to collaborate with their classmates.* (E1)

Correct: *Social media helps students access educational resources, communicate with their teachers, **also** collaborate with their classmates.*

(26)Incorrect: *I prefer online learning because it is easy. Students can **also** study from home. **Also**, they can save time. (E2)*

Correct: *I prefer online learning because it is flexible. **Also**, students can study from home and save time.*

The examples demonstrate the overuse of the additive conjunction **also**, which results in repetitive and less cohesive writing. In both cases, **also** is repeatedly used at the beginning of successive sentences to introduce additional information. While the conjunction is grammatically correct, its excessive use creates a mechanical writing style and weakens the flow of ideas. Instead of integrating related points into a unified sentence structure, the learner relies on **also** as the primary means of connection. One possible cause of this error is literal translation from the learners' first language. Kurdish speakers frequently use additive expressions such as (له‌گەڵ ئەوەشدا, هەرودها), or similar markers to introduce additional information. When writing in English, learners may directly translate these expressions as **also** and repeatedly insert the conjunction whenever they wish to add a new point. This transfer of first-language patterns can lead to an unnatural frequency of **also** in English texts.

Among additive conjunctions, '**Moreover**' displayed one of the highest error rates, with 25 incorrect uses compared to only 18 correct uses. Since *moreover* is generally associated with formal and academic discourse, students may recognize its prestige and attempt to use it frequently. However, limited understanding of its semantic and rhetorical functions often leads to misuse. This finding indicates that students may know the lexical item itself but lack sufficient awareness of the specific situations in which it should be employed. Now, consider the following pairs of sentences from students' writings:

(27)Incorrect: *Social media has many advantages for students because they can find information quickly. **Moreover**, it can waste a lot of their time and affect their study negative. (E1)*

Correct: *Social media has many advantages for students because they can find information quickly. **However**, it can waste a lot of their time and affect their study negatively.*

(28)Incorrect: *Social media helps students communicate with their teachers easily. **Moreover**, many students like sports activities in the university. (E1)*



Correct: *Social media helps students communicate with their teachers easily. **Moreover**, it allows them to discuss academic topics with their classmates online.*

In (27), using *moreover* is wrong because it was used to introduce a disadvantage that contrasts with the previous advantage. In (28), using *moreover* is wrong again because it was used to add information that is not logically related to the previous statement.

The conjunction '**Plus**' appeared 36 times, with 21 correct and 15 incorrect occurrences. Although students demonstrated moderate success in using this conjunction, the number of errors suggests uncertainty regarding its stylistic appropriateness. Many learners seem unaware that *plus* is generally less formal than other additive conjunctions and may therefore use it in academic contexts where alternatives such as *furthermore* or *in addition* would be more suitable. Now, consider the following pairs of sentences from students' writings:

(29)Incorrect: *It helps students communicate with their classmates about assignments. **Plus**, they can share educational materials with each other.* (E1)

Correct: *It helps students communicate with their classmates about assignments. **Moreover**, they can share educational materials with each other.*

(30)Incorrect: *Online learning allows students to study from home. **Plus**, they save money on transportation.* (E2)

Correct: *Online learning allows students to study from home. **As a result**, they save money on transportation.*

In the second pair, students used *plus* to express a consequence rather than simple addition.

The conjunction '**Furthermore**' showed a relatively high error rate too as '**Plus**', with 15 incorrect uses compared to only 11 correct uses. Similar to *moreover*, students appear to have difficulty understanding the nuanced meaning and formal function of this conjunction. Its misuse indicates insufficient knowledge of advanced academic discourse markers and limited exposure to authentic academic texts. Now, consider the following pairs of sentences from students' writings:

(31)Incorrect: *I believe that it allow student to communicate with their teachers quickly. **Furthermore**, many students prefer studying in the morning.* (E1)

Correct: *I believe that it allows students to communicate with their teachers quickly. **Furthermore**, it enables them to discuss academic issues with their classmates online.*



(32)Incorrect: *Online learning is more flexible because students can study from any place. Furthermore, classroom learning gives students more opportunities for face-to-face interaction. (E2)*

Correct: *Online learning is more flexible because students can study from any place. On the other hand, classroom learning gives students more opportunities for face-to-face interaction.*

In (31), students used *furthermore* for adding information that is not logically connected to the preceding statement and the possible cause behind this is their limited awareness that *furthermore* requires a closely related supporting point. In (32), students used *furthermore* to compare two different educational modes, which is completely wrong, and the possible cause is that the learner confuses addition with comparison or contrast in using this conjunction. These errors are particularly common among Kurdish EFL learners because *furthermore* is often taught as a sophisticated academic connector, leading students to overgeneralize its use without fully understanding its semantic restrictions.

The phrase '**In addition**' was used 34 times, with 15 correct and 19 incorrect occurrences. The principal error involved inaccurate placement within sentences and paragraphs. This finding suggests that students may understand the additive meaning of the expression but struggle with its syntactic positioning. Such problems point to weaknesses in discourse organization rather than vocabulary knowledge alone. Consider the following pairs of sentences from students' writings:

(33) Incorrect: *In addition, it is very popular among university students. (E1)*

Correct: *Many students use social media for academic purposes. In addition, it is very popular among university students.*

(34) Incorrect: *My classmates like online classes because they can study from home. They can in addition manage their study time more easily. (E2)*

Correct: *My classmates prefer online classes because they can study from home. In addition, they can manage their study time more easily.*

In sentence (33), the error type is weak discourse organization; the conjunction is used although no previous idea has been presented, and the possible cause is that learners recognize *in addition* as an academic conjunction and insert it at the beginning of sentences without considering whether an addition is actually being made. In sentence (34), the error type is incorrect placement of the conjunction. This error happens because of learners' limited awareness of the conventional position of conjunctive expressions in academic English. These errors are particularly representative of Kurdish EFL learners because they reflect



organizational difficulties at the discourse level rather than simply misunderstanding the meaning of the conjunction.

The conjunction '**Likewise**' exhibited one of the weakest performances among additive conjunctions, with only 4 correct uses and 7 incorrect uses. The frequent misuse of this conjunction suggests that students do not fully understand its comparative function. Instead of signaling similarity between ideas, it was often employed simply to add information. This indicates a lack of awareness regarding the specific semantic relationship conveyed by *likewise*. Consider the following pairs of sentences from students' writings:

(35)Incorrect: Using social platforms, we as students can make educational groups and learn from others. **Likewise**, some students become dependent on it and spend too much time online. (E1)

Correct: Social platforms allow students to join educational groups and learn from others worldwide. **However**, some students become dependent on it and spend too much time online.

(36)Incorrect: Nowadays, online learning helps students access digital resources. They can **likewise** review recorded lectures whenever they feel like they need them. (E2)

Correct: Nowadays, online learning helps students access digital resources. **Likewise**, they can review recorded lessons whenever they need.

The error type of the sentence in (35) is that the student used *likewise* where contrast is intended rather than similarity, and the possible cause is that the learner knows *likewise* is a formal conjunction, but does not understand that it indicates similarity, not opposition. The error type in the sentence in (36) is that there is inaccurate placement of the conjunction. This happens as the student has limited awareness of the discourse function and positioning of *likewise*.

Now, analyzing the adversative conjunction usage by Kurdish learners, we can see that the conjunction '**But**' was the most frequently used adversative conjunction, appearing 70 times. Of these occurrences, 50 were correct and 20 were incorrect. This data suggest that students are generally familiar with the contrastive function of *but*. However, the relatively large number of errors indicates overreliance on familiar conjunction. Similar to *and*, students often use *but* as their default adversative conjunction rather than selecting more precise alternatives. Consider the following pairs of sentences from students' writings:

(37)Incorrect: *Sometimes you don't have time to read 44 slides, an educational video on on you tube can help you, **but** it also allows you to join online channels and study in group whenever you want. (E1)*

Correct: *Sometimes you don't have enough time to read a pdf of 44 slides, you can watch you tube videos on the same topic. **Moreover**, it allows you to join online channels and study in groups whenever you want.*

(38)Incorrect: *There is one very good point about classroom learning which is it improves communication with teachers, **but** students can also participate in group activities easily. (E2)*

Correct: *There is one milestone point about classroom learning which is that it improves communication with teachers. **In addition**, students can also participate in group activities more easily.*

In sentence (37), the learner overused **but** because it is a familiar conjunction, even though the second clause adds another advantage rather than expressing contrast. In sentence (38), the learner used **but** despite the absence of any contrast. Both clauses present positive aspects of classroom learning, so an additive conjunction is required.

The conjunction '**Yet**' appeared 38 times, with 22 correct and 16 incorrect uses. The results suggest partial understanding of its contrastive meaning. Students may confuse *yet* with *but* because both express contrast. However, *yet* often conveys a stronger sense of unexpected contrast, a distinction that Kurdish learners may not fully recognize and they occasionally dismiss using it. Consider the following pairs of sentences from students' writings:

(39)Incorrect: *When studying, for instance, I can have access to educational materials, **but** it can still affect my concentration during study time. (E1)*

Correct: *When studying, for instance, I can have access to educational materials, **yet** it can still reduce my concentration during study time.*

(40)Incorrect: *Overall, different social media apps are a very serious item people have to be careful in dealing with them. (E1)*

Correct: *Overall, different social media platforms make life easier, **yet** people have to be quite careful in using them.*

In sentence (39) the learner relied on the familiar conjunction **but** instead of the more formal conjunction **yet**, showing limited exposure to academic writing. In (40), the learner omits **yet**, resulting in two separate statements without an explicit adversative relationship.



The conjunction '**However**' demonstrated comparatively better performance, with 27 correct uses and 15 incorrect uses. Despite this, the occurrence of misuse indicates that learners frequently experience difficulties distinguishing between sentence-level and paragraph-level contrast which means they are confused in dealing with the contrastive meaning the conjunction carries when connecting multiple ideas with one another. In other words, errors involving *however* often reflect confusion regarding punctuation, the degree of contrast being expressed and omitting it in some cases. Consider the following pairs of sentences from students' writings:

(41)Incorrect: In my opinion, studying online gives students more flexibility. **However**, it allows them to study from any location. It connects people with others everywhere. **However**, it has clear and obvious advantages. (E2)

Correct: In my opinion, studying online gives students more flexibility. **Furthermore**, it allows them to study from any location. It connects students with others everywhere.

(42)Incorrect: *Classroom learning is effective because it provides immediate feedback from teachers. Online learning is more popular because it is suitable better.* (E2)

Correct: *Classroom learning provides immediate feedback from teachers. **However**, online learning is becoming more popular because it is more convenient.*

In (41), the learner incorrectly used **however** even though the second sentence adds another advantage rather than presenting a contrast. Another error is that the learner used another **however** where it is not required. In (42), the learner omits the conjunction **however**, leaving the contrast between the two ideas unstated which is considered to be a catastrophic error in academic writing affecting the cohesion of the entire paragraph.

The conjunction '**Although**' emerged as the most problematic adversative conjunction Kurdish EFL learners struggled with. Out of 41 occurrences, only 14 were correct while 27 were incorrect. The predominance of omission and misuse errors suggests that students encounter serious difficulties with subordinate clause structures. Because *although* requires more complex syntactic constructions than conjunctions such as *but*, learners often fail to apply it correctly. Consider the following pairs of sentences from students' writings:



(43)Incorrect: *It makes life that is full of mixed situations much easier. For example you can find study materials, and many students spend too much time chatting instead of studying. (E1)*

Correct: *It makes life that is full of mixed situation much easier. **Although** you can find study materials, many students spend too much time chatting instead of studying.*

(44)Incorrect: ***Although** classroom learning is enjoyable and more interactive, **but** online learning is more comfortable for some students. (E2)*

Correct: ***Although** classroom learning is more enjoyable and interactive, online learning is more comfortable for some students.*

In sentence (43), the sentence has Omission of the conjunction **although**. The learner understands that the two ideas contrast with each other but does not realize that a subordinating conjunction is required to introduce the concessive clause. This may result from limited knowledge of English complex sentence structure and the influence of Kurdish, where the contrast is expressed differently. In (44), there is another error which is overuse of the conjunction through the redundant use of **but**. The learner assumes that both **although** and **but** are needed to indicate contrast in the same sentence. This error commonly results from first-language influence and a lack of awareness that English does not permit this double marking of contrast.

The conjunction '**Nevertheless**' was the least frequently used adversative devices, appearing only five times. Four of these uses were incorrect, and one was correct. The extremely low frequency and high error rate suggest that students have very limited familiarity with this formal academic conjunction. Its rarity indicate avoidance behavior resulting from uncertainty or insufficient exposure. Consider the following pairs of sentences from students' writings:

(45)Incorrect; *For example, when we study online, I feel isolated and alone and they are many students still choose it because it is flexible and saves time as they say. (E2)*

Correct: *For example, when we study online, I feel isolated. **Nevertheless**, many students still choose it because it is flexible and saves time.*

(46)Incorrect: *With using Goolge, for instance, you can have access to Millions educational resources. **Nevertheless**, it helps you communicate with your friends in class. (E1)*



Correct: With using Google, for instance, you can have easy access to many educational resources. **Moreover**, it helps students communicate with their classmates.

In (45), we have omission of the conjunctive adverb **nevertheless**. The learner does not explicitly mark the contrast between the disadvantage and the unexpected result. This omission commonly results from limited exposure to academic writing, where conjunctive adverbs are used to connect ideas logically and improve textual cohesion. In (46), we have overuse of using **nevertheless** where no contrast exists. The learner overuses **nevertheless** because of insufficient familiarity with the meanings and functions of academic conjunctions. Due to limited practice with academic texts, the learner treats **nevertheless** as a general linking word rather than recognizing that it should introduce an unexpected contrast, not an additional supporting point.

The conjunction '**Whereas**' was used 18 times, with only six correct uses and twelve incorrect uses. Students appear to struggle with the comparative and contrastive functions of this conjunction. Many learners may incorrectly treat *whereas* as a simple equivalent of *but*, overlooking its role in comparing two contrasting situations. Consider the following pairs of sentences from students' writings:

(47)Incorrect: *Social media can be very useful because students can communicate with their classmates, **but whereas** it can waste a lot of their study time. (E1)*

Correct: *Social media helps students communicate with classmates, **whereas** it can waste a lot of their study time.*

(48)Incorrect: ***Whereas** classroom learning allows students to ask questions face to face, **however** online learning is more comfortable. (E2)*

Correct: *Classroom learning allows students to ask questions immediately, **whereas** online learning is more flexible.*

In (47), the type of error is duplication of contrast markers by combining **but** and **whereas**. The learner incorrectly assumes that using more than one contrast marker makes the sentence stronger. This error is often influenced by first-language transfer and inadequate understanding of English conjunctions; in Kurdish people use two conjunctions like this 'به‌لام له‌گه‌ڵ نه‌وه‌شدا', 'به‌لام هه‌رچه‌نده'. Since **whereas** already expresses contrast, combining it with **but** is redundant and is an error. In (48), we have duplication of contrast markers by using **however** and **whereas** separately within the same statement. The learner did that because they believe multiple conjunctions emphasize contrast more effectively. This



error stems from insufficient knowledge of the distinct grammatical roles of conjunctive adverbs (**however**) and subordinating conjunctions (**whereas**). In this sentence, **whereas** alone is sufficient to express the intended contrast.

The conjunction '**On the other hand**' occurred eight times, with three correct and five incorrect uses. Similar to other adversative markers, students demonstrated uncertainty regarding its discourse function and pragmatic meaning. Consider the following pairs of sentences from students' writings:

(49)Incorrect: *On the other hand, watching a You Tube video can waste students' time because they spend many hours on it. Every person can use it in a good way or on the other hand in a bad way. (E1)*

Correct: *Watching a You Tube video can waste students' time because they spend many hours on it. It depends on the user.*

(50)Incorrect: *Choosing online studies, it will be easy for students to gather and meet whenever they want. On the other side, if there is any emergency it is very easy to ask for help. (E2)*

Correct: *Choosing online studies, it will be easy for students to gather and meet whenever they want. Furthermore, if there is any emergency, it is very easy to ask for help.*

In (49), there is misuse of **on the other hand** without presenting the first side of the contrast. The learner mistakenly believes that **on the other hand** can simply introduce any new sentence. This reflects insufficient knowledge of its discourse function. In English, **on the other hand** normally follows an earlier statement presenting the first side of a comparison or contrast. Another misuse in (49) is that the learner used two conjunctions (**or**) and (**on the other hand**) where none is required. In (50), there is misuse of **on the other hand** to introduce an additional advantage. The learner confuses additive and adversative connectors because of insufficient knowledge of their meanings and functions. Instead of expressing contrast, the second sentence simply adds another advantage, making **on the other hand** inappropriate.

The conjunction '**Conversely**' was the least frequently used adversative devices after '**Nevertheless**, appeared only six times, with four incorrect uses and two correct uses. The low frequency suggests limited familiarity, while the high error rate indicates insufficient understanding of its role in expressing opposite relationships between ideas and the punctuation marks needed when using the conjunction. Consider the following pairs of sentences from students' writings:



(51)**Incorrect:** *We all know that social media helps students communicate with teachers **conversely** it can waste a lot of study time.* (E1)

Correct: *We all know that social media helps students communicate with teachers. **Conversely**, it can waste a lot of study time.*

(52)**Incorrect:** *With online learning students feel more satisfied. **Conversely**, it allows them to study at their own speed; there will be less stress.*

Correct: *With online learning, students feel more satisfied. **Furthermore**, it allows them to study at their own speed; there will be less stress.*

In (51), there is incorrect punctuation and incorrect positioning of **conversely**. The learner is unaware that **conversely** is a conjunctive adverb, which typically introduces a new independent clause and is normally placed at the beginning of that clause, followed by a comma. The error reflects insufficient knowledge of English punctuation rules and sentence organization. In (52), there is misuse of **conversely** to express addition instead of contrast. The learner incorrectly assumes that **conversely** can connect any two related ideas. This misunderstanding arises from insufficient knowledge of academic conjunctions and limited practice distinguishing between additive and contrastive relationships.

5.2.2 Discussion of the Interview Results

The interview result showed that the students' difficulty in using Additive and Adversative conjunctions is engrained in common reasons. When they were asked about the use of those two cohesive devices in their essays, their answers showed several themes related to their errors. The most common reason was revealed as pure errors, followed by the absence of knowledge, lack of writing practice and literal translation from first language. Each of these answers is explained in the following sub-sections.

5.2.2.1 Pure Error

Most of the students answered that their mistakes were due to pure error. It means that when the students were shown their errors in using a cohesive device, they could instantly recognize that their sentence contained an error. For example, when the researcher showed S18 the errors she made in her writing, she immediately corrected her error. She informed:

S18: *"Yes, yes, I'm sorry Miss. Not "Also.....Also", actually it should be "Also,...". So, in the sentence, there should be only one **Also** usage. I did*

not re-read my writing; I didn't have enough time to think about other additive conjunctions".(E1)

From the interview response, as shown above, the student knew how to use cohesive devices correctly. However, errors were made due to their carelessness during the writing process. This reason could connect with another reason; the lack of time to write. Practicing students need sufficient time and opportunity to strengthen their knowledge in writing.

5.2.2.2 Absence of Knowledge

The second reason for their errors in using the two cohesive devices was their absence of knowledge. When asked about their errors, they did not know why they were incorrectly used. It means they did not know enough about using those two cohesive devices correctly. According to S38, her sentence was correct. She informed:

S38: "Wait, let me read it again...is this wrong Miss? With using Goolge, for instance, you can have access to Millions educational resources. Nevertheless, it helps you communicate with your friends in class. Yeah, no Miss, there is nothing wrong with my answer". (E2)

When they were informed of their mistakes, they were surprised and informed that some of the cohesive devices were not used and mentioned a lot by their previous teachers; though, they didn't have enough chance to practise. They further informed that even though they commonly found the words of conjunctions when reading English textbooks, they only focused on the main idea of the text or sentence. In this regard, they only read texts to get the content ideas but ignore how cohesive devices were used in the texts. They did not pay special attention to the cohesive devices they encountered, and it led to the absence of knowledge on how to use some of the cohesive devices correctly.

5.2.2.3 Lack of Writing Practice

The students also admitted that they rarely wrote in English. They only write when their English teachers asked them to (i.e., gave a writing assignment or homework). S22 said she did not often write since she had no time to practice independently. She informed:

S22: "I have a lot of homework and exercises, so I can't write in English often. But the teacher sometimes gives us writing assignments just like this. English is not an essay language; I have to think hard when I try to write. I often forget the words that I want to write."



Hence, the lack of writing practice made the students struggle to use those two cohesive devices properly. The researcher found it difficult to read their essays due to the incoherency of the use of these devices and grammar problems. Meanwhile, there should be a correlation between the use of cohesive devices and the readability of a text. In this case, there is a connection between the use of cohesive devices and the quality of writing. It means that the inappropriate use of cohesive devices by the students could potentially obstruct their achievement in developing their writing skills. Based on the students' reasons, it seemed that learning how to use cohesive devices properly takes time and practice. Indeed, learning to write efficiently is a long process; thus, it requires much practice and sometimes explicit and formal instruction. These Kurdish students are not alone in the struggle. It is common for EFL learners to face the same difficulties.

5.2.2.4 First Language Interference

Many students relied on literal translation from Kurdish when writing in English. Most participants admitted that they usually formed their ideas in Kurdish first and then translated them directly into English. As a result, they often transferred Kurdish sentence structures, expressions, and conjunction patterns into their English writing, leading to the inappropriate use of additive and adversative conjunctions. S7 explained:

S7: "When I write in English, I usually think in Kurdish first. Then I translate my ideas into English word by word. Sometimes I use the conjunction that sounds correct in Kurdish, but later I realize it is not correct in English. The grammar and sentence structure are different, so I become confused."

The students' responses indicate that literal translation from the first language significantly influenced their use of the two cohesive devices. The researcher observed that many conjunction errors reflected Kurdish language patterns rather than English grammatical and discourse conventions. Students frequently selected conjunctions based on their Kurdish equivalents without considering whether they conveyed the same semantic relationship or fulfilled the same cohesive function in English. Consequently, many essays contained inappropriate, redundant, or incorrectly positioned conjunctions, which reduced textual coherence and readability.

Since Kurdish and English differ in their syntactic structures, punctuation conventions, and the semantic functions of conjunctions, literal

translation often resulted in unnatural sentence construction and inappropriate cohesion. The students appeared to assume that conjunctions have direct one-to-one equivalents across the two languages, although many English conjunctions carry more specific grammatical and discourse restrictions than their Kurdish counterparts.

5.2.3 Causes behind Kurdish EFL Learners' Difficulties

Five major factors appear to contribute to Kurdish EFL learners' errors. First, first-language interference encourages learners to transfer conjunction patterns from Kurdish into English. Second, limited exposure to academic writing restricts learners' familiarity with formal discourse markers. Third, insufficient or lack of knowledge of semantic distinctions among conjunctions leads students to use several connectors interchangeably. Another cause is called pure error which was explained above. Finally, their lack of writing practice. These explanations are consistent with previous studies on EFL learners' use of conjunctions as cohesive devices.

6. Findings

Based on the quantitative analysis of the students' essay writings and the qualitative analysis of the interview responses, the following findings were obtained:

1. Kurdish EFL learners experienced considerable difficulties in using additive and adversative conjunctions. The overall findings indicate that although students were familiar with a number of conjunctions, they frequently failed to use them accurately according to their grammatical and discourse functions. Therefore, this finding confirms the validity of the first hypothesis.
2. Additive conjunctions were used more frequently than adversative conjunctions. This suggests that learners relied more heavily on additive relationships when constructing their academic essays. The conjunction **'and'** was the most frequently used conjunction in the students' writings, followed by **'but'**, **'also'**, and **'moreover'**. In contrast, **'nevertheless'** and **'conversely'** were the least frequently used conjunctions, indicating learners' tendency to avoid less familiar academic conjunctions.
3. Kurdish EFL learners relied excessively on a limited number of familiar conjunctions, particularly **'and'**, **'but'**, and **'also'**, while avoiding a wider variety of additive and adversative conjunctions required in academic writing.
4. The quantitative analysis revealed four major categories of conjunction errors: misuse, overuse, omission, and inaccurate placement. Among these, misuse and overuse were the most frequently occurring



error types. Redundancy was particularly evident in the use of **'and'**, where students repeatedly connected ideas although more concise grammatical structures or alternative conjunctions were more appropriate. Therefore, this finding confirms the validity of the second hypothesis.

5. Formal additive conjunctions such as **'moreover'**, **'furthermore'**, **'likewise'**, and **'in addition'** presented considerable difficulty for the learners. Students often misunderstood their meanings, discourse functions, or appropriate sentence positions. Among adversative conjunctions, **'although'** emerged as the most problematic conjunction. Learners frequently omitted it, combined it incorrectly with **'but'**, or failed to construct the required subordinate clause structure. Students also experienced considerable difficulty using advanced adversative conjunctions such as **'whereas'**, **'however'**, **'on the other hand'**, **'nevertheless'**, and **'conversely'**, particularly in distinguishing their specific discourse functions.

6. The quantitative analysis showed that additive conjunctions posed greater difficulty for Kurdish EFL learners than adversative conjunctions. A total of 125 errors were identified in the use of additive conjunctions, whereas 102 errors were found in the use of adversative conjunctions. Therefore, this finding confirms that the third hypothesis is invalid.

7. The inappropriate use of conjunctions negatively affected the cohesion and coherence of students' essays. Repetition, omission, misuse, and weak logical connections reduced the clarity and overall quality of their academic writing. Therefore, this finding confirms the validity of the fifth hypothesis.

8. The interview findings revealed five major causes behind learners' difficulties: pure errors, absence of knowledge, lack of writing practice, first language (Kurdish) interference, and limited exposure to academic writing. First language interference was found to be one of the major contributing factors. Many students reported that they first formulated ideas in Kurdish and then translated them directly into English, resulting in inappropriate conjunction selection and sentence organization. Many learners lacked sufficient knowledge of the semantic and grammatical functions of several conjunctions. Although they recognized many conjunctions, they were often unaware of the specific contexts in which they should be used. Therefore, this finding confirms the validity of the forth hypothesis.

7. Pedagogical Suggestions to Overcoming the Difficulties Numerous significant strategies have been proposed to be effective solutions that students have in their writing in using Addative and Adversative conjunctions. These strategies are divided into three key classifications

that are the need for teaching of conjunction functions, focused writing practice and corrective feedback and self-revision as found below.

7.1 The Need for Teaching of Conjunction Functions

To address these difficulties, English teachers should provide explicit instruction on the functions of additive and adversative conjunctions rather than assuming that learners will acquire them naturally through reading or writing activities. Conjunctions should be introduced according to their discourse functions, enabling students to understand the different relationships they establish between ideas. For instance, additive conjunctions should be taught according to whether they express addition, reinforcement, similarity, or alternative, while adversative conjunctions should be classified according to the type of contrast they convey, such as direct opposition, concession, comparison, or contradiction. Such functional categorisation can help students distinguish between conjunctions that appear similar but perform different discourse roles. Furthermore, instruction should emphasise the grammatical characteristics of conjunctions, including their appropriate sentence position and punctuation. Teachers should also compare commonly confused conjunctions and explain the contexts in which each one is appropriately used. Since first language interference contributed to some of the students' errors, teachers should explicitly discuss differences between Kurdish and English conjunction usage to minimise negative transfer. Through systematic and explicit instruction, students can develop a clearer understanding of conjunction functions and become more capable of selecting appropriate conjunctions in academic writing.

7.2 Focused Writing Practice

English teachers should incorporate regular writing activities that specifically target additive and adversative conjunctions. Writing practice should progress gradually from controlled exercises, such as sentence-combining and sentence-completion activities, to paragraph writing and eventually essay writing. Such progression enables learners to strengthen their understanding before applying conjunctions in more complex writing tasks. In addition, teachers should design activities that require students to use a wider variety of conjunctions rather than repeatedly relying on a limited number of familiar forms. For example, students may be asked to rewrite paragraphs by replacing repetitive conjunctions with more appropriate alternatives or complete writing tasks in which particular conjunctions must be incorporated accurately. Teachers can also utilise authentic examples taken from students' own writing to illustrate common errors and encourage learners to identify and correct





them. This type of focused practice promotes greater awareness of conjunction usage while helping students gradually expand their repertoire of additive and adversative conjunctions.

Moreover, conjunction instruction should be integrated into different writing genres, including argumentative, discussion, and compare-and-contrast essays. Since these genres naturally require the use of additive and adversative conjunctions, they provide meaningful contexts in which students can develop both grammatical accuracy and textual coherence.

7.3 Corrective Feedback and Self-Revision

Teachers should therefore provide systematic corrective feedback that specifically addresses the use of additive and adversative conjunctions. Instead of merely indicating that an error exists, teachers should explain the reason why a particular conjunction is inappropriate, identify the nature of the error, and provide guidance on selecting a more suitable alternative. Feedback should focus not only on incorrect conjunction choice but also on punctuation errors, inaccurate placement, omission, and redundancy, as these were among the most frequently observed problems in the students' essays.

Equally important is encouraging students to participate actively in the revision process. After receiving feedback, learners should revise their own writing using editing checklists that direct their attention to conjunction usage. Such checklists may include questions such as whether the conjunction accurately expresses the intended relationship between ideas, whether punctuation has been used correctly, whether the conjunction has been positioned appropriately within the sentence, and whether unnecessary repetition has been avoided. This reflective process helps students develop greater awareness of their own writing and encourages them to become more independent writers.

Peer-review activities may also complement teacher feedback by allowing students to analyse one another's writing and discuss possible improvements. Evaluating conjunction use in classmates' essays enables learners to recognise common mistakes more easily and reinforces their understanding of appropriate conjunction functions. Through continuous feedback and repeated revision, students are more likely to internalise the correct use of additive and adversative conjunctions and produce more coherent and cohesive academic essays.

8. Conclusion

The present study investigated the difficulties Kurdish EFL university learners encounter in using additive and adversative conjunctions. The results demonstrated that Kurdish EFL learners experience considerable difficulty in using additive and adversative conjunctions accurately and

appropriately. Although students were familiar with a number of conjunctions, they frequently misused them, overused familiar conjunctions, omitted necessary conjunctions, or placed them inaccurately within sentences. These problems often weakened the logical relationships between ideas and negatively affected the cohesion, coherence, and overall quality of their academic writing.

The quantitative findings further revealed that additive conjunctions posed greater difficulty than adversative conjunctions. A total of 125 errors were identified in the use of additive conjunctions, compared with 103 errors involving adversative conjunctions. This indicates that learners encountered greater challenges in selecting and applying additive conjunctions appropriately despite their more frequent use. The results also showed that students relied heavily on familiar conjunctions such as *and*, *also*, and *but*, while less frequently using more formal academic conjunctions such as *nevertheless*, *conversely*, *likewise*, and *whereas*. This reliance limited the variety and sophistication of their academic writing. The study also identified several recurring patterns of error. The most common problems included misuse, overuse, omission, redundancy, and inaccurate placement of conjunctions.

The interview findings provided valuable insight into the causes behind these difficulties. The major contributing factors included first-language interference, absence of knowledge regarding conjunction functions, limited exposure to authentic academic writing, lack of writing practice, and pure errors resulting from carelessness or time pressure. These findings suggest that learners' difficulties extend beyond grammatical knowledge and are also influenced by limited opportunities to develop discourse competence through meaningful writing practice.

Overall, the findings indicate that the appropriate use of conjunctions remains a significant challenge for Kurdish EFL learners. The study therefore highlights the importance of providing explicit instruction on conjunction functions, integrating focused writing practice into writing courses, and offering systematic corrective feedback to help learners improve their use of cohesive devices. Such instructional practices can contribute to the development of more coherent, cohesive, and academically appropriate writing that can assist English language teachers, curriculum designers, and learners in improving the teaching and learning of academic writing. It is hoped that the findings will also provide a useful foundation for future research on conjunctions, cohesion, and discourse competence in Kurdish and other EFL contexts.



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