

Use of Conjunctions as Cohesive Devices in Korean High School EFL Learners' Argumentative and Descriptive Essays

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Yeom, Soohye. (2016). Use of conjunctions as cohesive devices in Korean high school EFL learners' argumentative and descriptive essays. *Foreign Language Education Research, 19*, 19-43.

This study examined the use of conjunctions in Korean high school EFL learners' writings in two discourse modes—description and argument. A corpus of seventy-six descriptive essays and eighty argumentative essays was developed, in which the essays were rated based on their cohesiveness and divided into three groups by their grades. Conjunctions were analyzed based on Halliday and Hasan's (1976) framework: additive, adversative, causal, and temporal conjunctions. The results revealed different trends of using conjunctions in the two different discourse modes. The descriptive writings with high scores on cohesion tend to exhibit more conjunctions when compared to lower-quality writings, and the argumentative writings with high scores showed fewer conjunctions. The high-quality writings in descriptive mode showed highly frequent uses of additives and adversatives, while those in argumentative mode displayed a lower frequency of additives and a more frequent use of adversative *however*. Small numbers of causal and temporal conjunctions were used in both discourse modes, and they were particularly limited in descriptive writings regardless of the cohesiveness of writings. This implies that more explicit instructions on causal and temporal conjunctions for each mode are needed in the writing classes. In addition, the scores on cohesion were significantly lower for the descriptive essays than for the argumentative essays, and a much narrower range of conjunctions was employed in descriptive writing. These results suggest a more balanced focus on various discourse modes of writing and the introduction of conjunctions that are appropriate for each mode, since the ability to use conjunctions in one mode does not seem to be automatically transferred to another mode in high school EFL learners' writings.

Key Words: cohesive devices, conjunction, EFL writing, discourse mode, argumentative, descriptive

I . Introduction

As improving communicative competence has become one of the main goals in learning and teaching English in Korean secondary schools, productive skills (i.e. speaking and writing) are getting more attention in their English curriculum and regular assessments. Ministry of Education (2015) emphasizes the importance of writing in the

National English Curriculum, strongly recommending the provision of writing opportunities and the direct assessment of students' writing. Although there are several aspects of teaching, learning, and assessing writing, it has been reported that both EFL students and teachers tend to concern grammatical accuracy most when writing in English (Lee, 2009; Marefat & Heydari, 2016). For the effective communication, however, it is important to bind ideas together and maintain consistency to construct a well-organized structure, and one way to realize this is making use of different cohesive devices (Cameron et al., 1995; Celce-Murcia & Olshtain, 2000; Halliday, 1994; Halliday & Hasan, 1976). Halliday and Hasan (1976) classified cohesive devices into reference, substitution, ellipsis, conjunction, and lexical devices, and emphasized their roles at a discourse level. A close relationship between the use of cohesive devices and the writing quality has been reported by a number of studies (Chiang, 2003; Jafarpur, 1991; Liu & Braine, 2005), while there were some counter-evidences as well (Castro, 2004; Johnson, 1992; Zhang, 2000), where no significant correlation was found between the use of cohesive devices and the writing quality.

Conjunction, one of the most important cohesive devices, contributes to cohesion by expressing certain meanings that help create relations with other parts of discourse (Halliday & Hasan, 1976). The uses of conjunction in L1 and L2 writings have been compared in many studies, some as a part of comparative studies of different cohesive devices (e.g. Cho & Shin, 2014; Hinkel, 2011; Kim & Na, 2009; Zhang, 2000) and the others as more in-depth researches on different forms and functions of conjunctive devices (e.g. Bolton et al., 2003; Granger & Tyson, 1996). Several studies investigated Korean EFL learners' use of the conjunction, but most of them focused on Korean college students' writings (Kang, 2008; Kim, 2013; Yoon, 2006). Therefore, a detailed examination on Korean secondary school learners' conjunctive use is needed to understand and help them improve their writing skills.

Most of the aforementioned studies analyzed one mode, or genre, of writings, particularly argumentative type. Halliday and Hasan (1976) suggested further studies on cohesion whether there are differences in genres or discourse modes, and some studies revealed that cohesive devices found in native speakers' written discourse vary according to discourse modes (e.g. Cox et al., 1990; Crowhurst, 1987; Martin & Peters, 1985). However, few studies compared cohesive devices used in different modes of ESL or EFL learners' writings. Since writing in appropriate manner for different register is challenging even for native English speaking students (Applebee et al., 1986; Chall & Jacobs, 1983; Kameenui & Carnine, 1982; Prater & Padia, 1983), it is important for learners to recognize differences in writing modes and learn to use appropriate cohesive devices for each mode.

Thus, the present study aims to explore how Korean high school EFL learners use

conjunctions as cohesive devices in argumentative and descriptive writings. All essays were rated based on the cohesiveness to compare the conjunction use between writings with different scores.

II. Literature Review

1. Conjunction

Conjunction is an essential source in writing that contributes to discourse cohesion, but it does not simply create an anaphoric relation like other cohesive devices such as reference, substitution, and ellipsis. Conjunctive devices are “cohesive not in themselves but indirectly, by virtue of their specific meanings” (Halliday & Hasan, 1976, p. 226). According to Halliday and Hasan’s (1976) taxonomy, conjunctions can be semantically subdivided into four categories: additive, adversative, causal, and temporal conjunction. Many studies that compared the L1 and L2 use of conjunction followed this categorization, some of which examined conjunction as a part of research on different cohesive devices (Cho & Shin, 2014; Connor, 1984; Hinkel, 2011; Kim & Na, 2009; Zhang, 2000). Even though these studies did not investigate the use of different conjunctive items in detail, L2 learners’ dependence on additive conjunctions was one of the findings that they had in common. In Hinkel’s (2011) study, the learner group used transitions three times as frequent as their native counterparts.

Previous studies on Korean EFL learners’ use of conjunction particularly revealed that Korean learners overuse conjunctions and they prefer to use them in sentence-initial positions (Cho & Shin, 2014; Kang, 2008; Kim, 2013; Oh, 2009; Yoon, 2006). Kang (2008) conducted an interesting comparison of Korean college students’ narration in their native language Korean and in English. The result seemed somewhat surprising that they employed more sentence-middle conjunctions than sentence-initial ones when they wrote in Korean, while they relied heavily on sentence-initial conjunctions when they wrote in English.

A few studies have made attempts at in-depth investigations on conjunctions in L2 writing (Kim, 2013; Oh, 2009). Kim (2013) carried out a detailed analysis on the discrepancy in the use of the conjunction between native English speakers’ writings and Korean EFL students’ writings, finding that Korean college students preferred using coordinating conjunctions (e.g. so, but) while native speakers used more conjunctive adverbials (e.g. in addition, however). However, the distribution of conjunctions used within each category (i.e. conjunctive items used in each of additive, adversative, causal, and temporal group) is not considered in Kim (2013) as well as in most previous studies,

providing a limited picture of the conjunctive use in Korean EFL students' writing.

It is also notable that most previous studies on Korean EFL learners' use of conjunction examined writings of college or graduate students (Cho & Shin, 2014; Kang, 2008; Kim, 2013; Kim & Na, 2009; Oh, 2009; Park, 2013; Yoon, 2006). Even though teaching and testing writing recently have gained more attention in secondary schools, there have been relatively few efforts to analyze Korean secondary school students' writings. Without such examination, however, it would not be possible to overview the developmental phases of conjunctions in Korean EFL learners' written discourse. Therefore, the present study compared the conjunction use in the writings of Korean high school EFL students, with the in-depth analysis on different types of conjunctions.

2. Discourse mode

Discourse mode has been considered as a fundamental notion in teaching and testing writing (Rashid & Heng, 2008). One of the most commonly used classification of modes is Bain's (1867) taxonomy, in which he classified writing into the narration, description, argumentation, and exposition. A number of studies have been conducted in this framework, most of which focused on the mode influence on the quality of student writing (Quellmalz et al., 1982; Freedman & Pringle, 1984; Kegley, 1986; Prater, 1985; Prater & Padia, 1983). It was widely agreed that writing appropriately for different modes is challenging even for native English speaking students, and that students are particularly having more difficulty in argumentative writing than narrative writing (Abadiano, 1995; Applebee et al., 1986; Chall & Jacobs, 1983; Kameenui & Carnine, 1982; Prater & Padia, 1983).

Since the quality of writing and the use of cohesive markers have been reported to be closely related, there have been calls for more research on cohesive devices used in different writing modes (Connor, 1984; Halliday & Hasan, 1976). Some studies investigated native English speaking students' written discourse and found that the use of cohesive devices varied according to different writing modes (Cox et al., 1990; Crowhurst, 1987; Martin & Peters, 1985; Perera, 1984). In terms of conjunction, Crowhurst (1987) revealed that less temporal conjunctions were used in argumentative writings than narration because it was more difficult for students to learn appropriate temporal conjunctions which are used to develop an argument, while time markers for narration were acquired at an early age.

Few studies, however, compared different discourse modes of EFL writings. One exception, Park (2013) examined conjunction and reference in Korean college EFL learners' narrative and argumentative writings and found a significant mode difference only in temporal conjunctions. It was also revealed that a wider range of conjunctions

was employed in argumentative writing. The study did not provide detailed descriptions of conjunctive use within each category. When analyzing the frequencies of individual connectors, the study did not take the four categories, additive, adversative, causal, and temporal, into account. Thus, the current study looked into the conjunction usages for each category, and compared them in two different discourse modes, descriptive and argumentative.

Following two research questions were addressed in this study.

- 1) How are conjunctions used in Korean high school English learners' argumentative and descriptive writings?
- 2) Are Korean high school students' writings in one mode better than those in the other mode, when it comes to the cohesiveness of writing?

III. Method

1. Data

Eighty students from a high school located in Gangnam-gu, Seoul, were asked to write a descriptive essay and an argumentative essay. The 80 students were from two classes, which consisted of students with various levels of English proficiency. Four students were absent on the day when the descriptive writings were collected.

The descriptive essay writing task and the argumentative essay writing task were given as formal assignments, each of which was collected after covering chapter 1 and chapter 2 of their English textbook, respectively. The tasks were related to what they had learned in their previous English classes. The topic for the descriptive writing was "describe a book that you would like to introduce to your classmates." Since students described books of their own choices, many of which were story books, the descriptions also included some features of narration. The topic for the argumentative writing was "With more immigrants coming to Korea from different countries, multiculturalism is emerging as a major issue. What are some possible conflicts and ways to resolve them?". The numbers of writings and the total tokens are shown in Table 1.

TABLE 1
The Number of Essays (Tokens in Total)

	Total
Description	76 (11,992)
Argument	80 (19,252)
Total	156 (31,244)

3. Rating

One hundred and fifty-six essays were rated by one high school English teacher, who has 4 years of teaching experience and has master's degree in English Language Education. The rater was asked to give grades to the essays based on how well an essay is written with a particular focus on its cohesiveness. Grade A was given to the well-written essays with excellent cohesion, and Grade C was given to the low-quality essays that were not cohesive at all. Grade B was given to the essays whose quality was in between Grade A and C. Sixteen essays (10% of the 156 essays) were additionally rated by another high school English teacher who has 10 years of teaching experience to see if the rating was reliable enough. Using SPSS Statistics 22, Cohen's Kappa was run to determine if there was an agreement between the two raters' ratings. There was moderate agreement between the two teachers' judgements, $\kappa = .632$, $p < .0005$.

4. Data analysis

Conjunctive cohesive devices used in the students' writings were analyzed based on Halliday and Hasan's (1976) framework: additive, adversative, causal, and temporal conjunctions. To investigate the diversity of the conjunctions used, each category of conjunction was further divided into the two groups of most frequently used conjunctive items and a group of others. All conjunctions were also coded according to their position, whether they were placed at the sentence-initial position or sentence-middle position. The conjunctions which were not used as the first word(s) of a sentence were classified as sentence-middle. Connectives which were used to form lists of noun phrases, adjectives, or verb phrases (e.g. "foreign friends *and* families", "this behavior is childish *and* pointless") were excluded in the analysis. See Appendix for coding categories and conjunctive items found in each group.

The frequency of each type of conjunction for each essay was counted with the help of Wordsmith 5.0 and was converted to the frequency per 100 words to eliminate the different length effect of each essay. Since the size of the analyzed data is not big enough and the texts are divided into smaller categories (i.e. different types of conjunctions and three grades), only descriptive statistics were used for the analysis of the use of conjunctions in the two discourse modes (Research question 1). For the second research question, a repeated measure t-test was used for analysis to examine whether the students wrote more cohesive essays using conjunctions effectively in one discourse mode than in the other. IBM SPSS Statistics 22 was used to perform the analysis.

IV. Results and Discussion

This section describes and discusses Korean high school EFL learners' use of conjunctions in two different discourse mode, the descriptive and the argumentative writings. All 156 writings of students were rated based on its cohesiveness and were divided into three groups by the grades they received: grade A, B, and C (see Table 2). The conjunction use of the three different groups was compared. Also, whether the writings of one mode were more cohesive than the other was discussed. Each point is explained and elaborated below following the two research questions.

TABLE 2
The Number of Essays (Tokens in Total)

	Grade A	Grade B	Grade C	Total
Description	10 (2,103)	26 (6,271)	40 (3,618)	76 (11,992)
Argument	33 (9,069)	33 (7,640)	14 (2,543)	80 (19,252)
Total	43 (11,172)	59 (13,911)	54 (6,161)	156 (31,244)

1. RQ 1: The use of conjunctions in the two discourse modes

The participants' overall use of conjunction in the two discourse modes of writing is shown in Table 3 below. The frequencies of conjunctions appeared in each mode were normalized. More conjunctions were used in the argumentative writings ($M=4.0855$ per 100 words) than in descriptive writings ($M=3.4395$ per 100 words). Also, the wider range of conjunctions was found in the argument (45 different conjunctions) than in the description (34 different conjunctions), implying that Korean high school EFL students repetitively use a relatively smaller variety of conjunctions when writing descriptive essays. The additive and causal conjunctions were more frequent in the argumentative writings, whereas the adversative and temporal conjunctions appeared more in the descriptive writings. The temporal conjunction was the only conjunction that showed a wider range of use in the descriptive writings than in the argumentative writings. See Appendix 1 for conjunctive items used for each mode of writing.

TABLE 3
Conjunction Use in Two Discourse Mode

	Descriptive (per 100 words)	Argumentative (per 100 words)	Range (N)	
			D	A
Additive	1.8651	2.2501	7	18
Adversative	0.6628	0.6314	6	10
Causal	0.4791	0.8821	6	6
Temporal	0.4325	0.3219	15	11
Total	3.4395	4.0855	34	45

Two things are to be noted about the sentential position of conjunctions in the students' writings, which are presented in Table 4. More conjunctions were used in sentence-initial position in argumentative essays ($M=0.9733$ for Description and $M=2.0799$ for Argument), while more sentence-middle conjunctions were used in descriptive essays ($M=2.4663$ for Description and $M=2.0056$ for Argument). In terms of range, a number of conjunctions were used only in the sentence-initial position in the argumentative writings. Twenty-nine and thirty-seven different conjunctions were used in the sentence-initial position in the descriptive and argumentative writings respectively. On the other hand, similar ranges of sentence-middle conjunctions were used in both modes of writings. Twenty-two and twenty sentence-middle conjunctions were used in each writing.

TABLE 4
Position of Conjunction in Two Discourse Mode

	Descriptive (per 100 words)	Argumentative (per 100 words)	Range (N)	
			D	A
Initial	0.9733	2.0799	29	37
Middle	2.4663	2.0056	22	20

1.1. Descriptive Writing

The conjunction use in the descriptive writings with the different grades is shown in Table 5. The writings with the higher grade had more additive and adversative conjunctions than those with the lower grade. On the other hand, the causal and temporal conjunctions did not show any linear developmental increase or decrease in the frequencies, implying that the frequency of conjunctions does not always correlate with the writing quality. The similar tendency has been noted by previous studies, which

found no significant difference in the use of the conjunction between different proficiency groups (Kim & Na, 2009; Park, 2013). One might be surprised to see that the range presented in Table 5 did not show a positive developmental phase as the grade goes up, as a wide range of conjunctions is usually considered to be one of the aspects of good essays (Crowhurst, 1987). This can be explained by the fact that only a few essays were rated as Grade A, resulting in the lack of sample texts that were analyzed. Only 10 essays were classified and analyzed as Grade A essays, while 40 essays were in the Grade C group, increasing the chance of a wider range of conjunctions in the Grade C writings.

TABLE 5
Conjunction Use in Descriptive Writing

	Grade A (per 100 words)	Grade B (per 100 words)	Grade C (per 100 words)	Range		
				A	B	C
Additive	2.4516	2.1105	1.5590	5	7	5
Adversative	1.1377	0.7674	0.4762	4	5	3
Causal	0.4686	0.5370	0.4441	3	5	5
Temporal	0.4220	0.5538	0.3562	6	12	7
Total	4.4799	3.9687	2.8355	18	29	20

As presented in Table 6, there were more sentence-middle conjunctions than the sentence-initial conjunctions in all three groups of writings. This was mainly due to the highly frequent use of *and* in the sentence-middle position to connect two or more clauses as shown in Example 1.

Example 1 Descriptive #49 (Grade A)

She asked him for another monster *and* Frankenstein says yes.

On the other hand, more different types of additive conjunctions were used in the sentence-initial positions in all three groups' writings (see Range in Table 6), meaning that a greater number of conjunctions were used only in the sentence-initial position. In fact, few conjunctions were used in the sentence-middle position except for *and*.

TABLE 6
Position of Conjunction in Descriptive Writing

	Grade A (per 100 words)	Grade B (per 100 words)	Grade C (per 100 words)	Range		
				A	B	C
Initial	1.2708	1.1991	0.7521	13	23	16
Middle	3.2091	2.7696	2.0834	11	17	12

A more detailed description of additive conjunctions used in descriptive writing shown in Table 7 reveals that *and* and *also* are the two most common additives used in all three groups. Crowhurst (1987) had similar results in his study on NES students, but a decrease was seen in the frequency of *and* from grade 6 to grade 12, the tendency which did not clearly appear in the results of the present study. Hopefully, however, the use of other additive conjunctions besides *and* and *also* were more used in Grade B writings than in Grade C writings (M=0.0613 for Grade C and M=0.1614 for Grade B). There was a slight drop in the use of other additives in Grade A writings, but again, the size of the analyzed texts for Grade A was too small to compare its result with the other two groups.

TABLE 7
Additive Conjunction in Descriptive Writing

	Grade A (per 100 words)	Grade B (per 100 words)	Grade C (per 100 words)
Additive	2.4516	2.1105	1.5590
And	2.2785	1.7301	1.2516
Also	0.0633	0.2190	0.2461
Others	0.1098	0.1614	0.0613

For adversative conjunctions, all three groups of descriptive writings showed an extensive use of only *but* and *however*, rarely presenting any other conjunctions (Others: M=0.0301 for Grade C, M= 0.0682 for Grade B, and M=0.1210 for Grade A) as shown in Table 8. *But* was also the most common adversative conjunction in NES students' writing, but a wider range of conjunctions were used as they advanced into the next grade (Crowhurst, 1987). The similar tendency existed in the Korean high school students' writings, as the better writers used other adversatives than *but* or *also*, such as *even though* and *instead* in their writings. Example 2 depicts the use of *instead* in a Grade A descriptive writing.

Example 2 Descriptive #62 (Grade A)

Because he doesn't discuss what we can do to be successful, he *instead* shows examples of how luck, random events, and opportunity have blended to make some people very successful that others aren't- and it can be extremely frustrating.

TABLE 8

Adversative Conjunction in Descriptive Writing

	Grade A (per 100 words)	Grade B (per 100 words)	Grade C (per 100 words)
Adversative	1.1377	0.7674	0.4762
But	0.7239	0.4938	0.3565
However	0.2927	0.2053	0.0896
Others	0.1210	0.0682	0.0301

TABLE 9

Causal Conjunction in Descriptive Writing

	Grade A (per 100 words)	Grade B (per 100 words)	Grade C (per 100 words)
Causal	0.4686	0.5370	0.4441
So	0.2635	0.2073	0.2534
Because	0.1808	0.2515	0.0995
Others	0.0242	0.0783	0.0913

The frequencies of causal and the temporal conjunctions were much lower than the additives and adversatives, implying that the formers were less needed in descriptive writings. It can also be interpreted that the high school students developed their ideas in their essays only in simple ways, not employing causal or temporal relations. Writings with different grades did not show any clear developmental phase in the overall frequency of causal conjunctions nor in the use of the most common causal conjunction *so* as displayed in Table 9. This was different from the previous study's results with NES students (Crowhurst, 1987), in which causal conjunctions were less used in grade 12 than in grade 6 and 10, due to the decrease in the use of *so* and the increase of other ways of expressing causal relations.

The temporal conjunctions used in the descriptive writings did not show clear discrepancy among the three different groups as presented in Table 10. Few temporal conjunctions were used irrespective of grades, and there were no one or two common conjunctions used in the writings. What was noticeable, however, was the relatively

wider range of temporal conjunctions used, compared to other types of conjunctions (see Table 3). This seems to be due to the characteristics of the descriptive writing and the topic of the task which was the book description. Various temporal conjunctions were used to describe the sequence of events as shown in Example 3.

Example 3 Descriptive #57 (Grade B)

Her life becomes miserable, and feels great pain. She *then* decides to end her life by running into the train at the platform where she first met Bronshy.

TABLE 10

Temporal Conjunction in Descriptive Writing

	Grade A (per 100 words)	Grade B (per 100 words)	Grade C (per 100 words)
Temporal	0.42204	0.5538	0.3562
Then	0.0985	0.1741	0.0000
Others	0.3235	0.3797	0.3562

In short, the writings that received higher grades had more additive and adversative conjunctions, which showed that the students should be encouraged to use more of these conjunctions to connect and present their ideas effectively. The ranges of these two types of conjunctions were wider in Grade A writings than the other two groups of writings. This clearly shows that making use of various conjunctions is important in writing a good descriptive essay.

On the other hand, there was no linear developmental increase or decrease among the three groups of descriptive writings with different grades in the use of the causal and temporal conjunctions. Particularly, the limited use of causal and temporal conjunctions seemed to appear in all three groups of writings. This could lead to two different interpretations. It is possible that the descriptive writing does not need many causal or temporal conjunctions. However, this could also mean that the ideas in the students' writings were presented by listing of the facts (or the counter-facts), without employing diverse ways to describe the target for the description. Both of the two examples below received Grade A for their cohesiveness, but ample use of different types of conjunctions shown in the excerpt in Example 5 was praised by the rater for making the writing more engaging and attractive.

Example 4 Descriptive #12 (Grade A)

This book is about the author Jiang Jili's childhood during the Cultural Revolution in

China. She shows the tragic part of the Cultural Revolution by showing what she did and saw during the time. She wonders why the revolution had to happen, and what was the benefit of it for the Chinese people. I liked this book because I could learn about the revolution, and I could see how Chinese people were affected by it.

Example 5 Descriptive #48 (Grade A)

Its nature and animals were so beautiful and amazing. He and tiger stayed there for a few days and spent a great time. However, he realized that the island was a cannibal island by discovering a tooth of human. Therefore, he and tiger decided to leave the island and continued the voyage. Pi kept the exhausting days on the ocean with the tiger for a long time. Finally, on the 227th day since the ship sank, they reached to the land and rescued by people from a land. At the last part of the story, an astonishing story is revealed.

This implies that more attention on the use of causal and temporal conjunctions is particularly needed when teaching descriptive writing, since there was no sign of automatic improvement in Korean high school students' descriptive writings. More explicit teaching could help Korean high school students develop their use of various conjunctions.

1.2 Argumentative Writing

The conjunctions used in the argumentative writings are classified and presented by the grades in Table 11. An interesting trend appeared as the grade goes up. The lower overall frequency was shown for the writings with higher grades (M=3.8321 for Grade A, M=4.1045 for Grade B, and M=4.6377 for Grade C). The ranges, on the other hand, revealed the opposite trend, the writings with higher grades exhibiting more various conjunctions (N=38 for Grade A, N=32 for Grade B, and N=18 for Grade C). This suggests that it is not the number of conjunctions but the range of appropriate conjunctions that is one of the primary concerns for a writing to be considered as a good argumentative essay.

TABLE 11
Conjunction Use in Argumentative Writing

	Grade A (per 100 words)	Grade B (per 100 words)	Grade C (per 100 words)	Range		
				A	B	C
Additive	2.2057	2.1753	2.5308	15	13	7
Adversative	0.6716	0.5850	0.6460	8	6	3
Causal	0.6642	0.9492	1.2376	6	6	4
Temporal	0.2906	0.3950	0.2233	9	7	4
Total	3.8321	4.1045	4.6377	38	32	18

As presented in Table 12, a much greater number of conjunctions were used only in the sentence-initial position in all three groups' writings. For example, more than 20 conjunctions including *furthermore*, *moreover*, *therefore*, and *nevertheless* were only used intersententially, as the first word of a sentence. In terms of the frequency, sentence-initial conjunctions were more used in the Grade A writings, while sentence-middle conjunctions were more used in the Grade C writings. This was found to be due to the fact that various conjunctions mentioned above was employed in the Grade A writings, and many of them were only used in sentence-initial position. In fact, *and*, *but*, and *because* in sentence-middle position consisted most of the conjunctions in the Grade C writings.

TABLE 12
Position of Conjunction in Argumentative Writing

	Grade A (per 100 words)	Grade B (per 100 words)	Grade C (per 100 words)	Range		
				A	B	C
Initial	2.0752	2.0286	2.2120	35	27	16
Middle	1.7570	2.0759	2.4257	14	15	8

Table 13 presents a further examination of additive conjunctions used in students' argumentative writings. It is interesting to note that the overall frequency of additives in Grade C writings was higher than Grade A and B writings. This was mainly attributable to the overuse of *and* and *also* in Grade C writings. It is true that *and* and *also* are the two most common additives used in all three groups, but as the grades of the writings go up, the frequencies of the two items decreased. Crowhurst (1987) had similar results of highly frequent *and* in his study on NES students, and a decrease was seen in the frequency of *and* from grade 6 to grade 12, the tendency which could be comparable to the results of the present study.

TABLE 13
Additive Conjunction in Argumentative Writing

	Grade A (per 100 words)	Grade B (per 100 words)	Grade C (per 100 words)
Additive	2.2057	2.1753	2.5308
And	1.0234	1.0373	1.1927
Also	0.3855	0.4517	0.5469
Others	0.7968	0.6862	0.7912

For adversative conjunctions, an extensive use of *but* and *however* was found in the writings of all three grades as shown in Table 14. Example 6 below shows a typical Grade C argumentative writing, in which the ideas are connected with the repetitive use of only simple conjunctions such as *but* and *so*. However, Grade A writings exhibited less *but* and more *however* and other adversative conjunctions. An excerpt from a Grade A writing is provided in Example 7, in which the writer tried using different conjunctions to emphasize her point and to effectively develop her ideas. This trend was also seen in Crowhurst's (1987) study: *but* was also the most common adversative conjunction in NES students' writing, but a wider range of conjunctions was used as they advanced into the next grade.

Example 6 Argumentative #20 (Grade C)

Second, multicultural children difficult to learn Korean education.

Because, there parents are foreigner. So they can't speak Korean or not good at speak Korean. Multicultural children have to learn Korean *but* there parent can't help them so they difficult to learn Korean education.

Example 7 Argumentative #66 (Grade A)

What is more, many people are worrying about crime rates, especially because of black people. It is true that crime rates of different races are increasing. *Nevertheless*, we can solve this problem in long run.

TABLE 14
Adversative Conjunction in Argumentative Writing

	Grade A (per 100 words)	Grade B (per 100 words)	Grade C (per 100 words)
Adversative	0.6716	0.5850	0.6460
But	0.2790	0.3842	0.4999
However	0.2824	0.1439	0.0720
Others	0.1102	0.0570	0.0742

The causal conjunctions were least frequently used in Grade A argumentative writings ($M=0.6642$) than in Grade B ($M=0.9492$) and Grade C writings ($M=1.2376$) as displayed in Table 15. This can be explained by the frequencies of the two most common causal conjunctions *so* and *because* which were less used in the writings with better grades. Instead of using *so* for several times, the argumentative writing #54 in Example 8 used *therefore* in addition to using *so* to show causal relationships. The previous study had related results (Crowhurst, 1987), in which causal conjunctions were less used in grade 12 than in grade 6 and 10, due to the decrease in the use of *so* and the increase of other ways of expressing causal relations.

Example 8 Argumentative #54 (Grade A)

Also, the conflict arise in education. For example, let's say that a women from Vietnam has married Korean man. The woman can speak only little Korean, *so* she cannot teach her children Korean well. *Therefore*, her kids are entering elementary school, unable to speak neither Korean nor Vietnamese.

TABLE 15
Causal Conjunction in Argumentative Writing

	Grade A (per 100 words)	Grade B (per 100 words)	Grade C (per 100 words)
Causal	0.6642	0.9492	1.2376
So	0.2606	0.4916	0.5603
Because	0.2668	0.2949	0.5637
Others	0.1368	0.1628	0.1136

When compared to the Grade A writings ($M=0.2906$), there seems to have been an overuse of the temporal conjunctions in the Grade B writings ($M=0.3950$), while there was a lack of those conjunctions in the Grade C writings ($M=0.2233$) as noted in Table

16. In other words, Grade C argumentative essays employed few temporal conjunctions, weakening the relation between successive sentences, as shown in Example 9. Grade B writings, on the other hand, had excessive temporal conjunctions which made the essays sound less interesting. For instance, the excessive use of *then* in Example 10 was seen to make the essay monotonous and hinder readers from concentrating on the key points. One notable characteristic found in the temporal use in Grade A argumentative essays was that only one or two temporal conjunctions were employed in each essay. Although there were not many temporal conjunctions, the one used was presented in an appropriate place where it could effectively emphasize the point of the essay, as shown in Example 11.

Example 9 Argumentative #9 (Grade C)

The kindergarten and elementary school from someone like us and we perform multi-cultural is wrong. not only with us a little bit different. It should be recognized as a member of the 'we'. The local community center or government office me method that allows you to adapt to help their difficulties and can be carried out mainly Korea and Korean culture, education, cultural exchange events.

Example 10 Argumentative #30 (Grade B)

Also, they often heard violent language from their workplace. *then* it is hard to raise their own complaint. The solution that I think about discrimination is to establish immigrants labor law, because, this problem needs not just personal effort but government's act. The law should be reinforced, *then* Korea will be changed into nice workplace. Next solution about communication might need immigrants' effort. They should try to learn korean as well as their surrounding korean people. *Then* it will be far more easy to insist their thought.

Example 11 Argumentative #61 (Grade A)

In recent 5 years, the devorce rate in multicultural family have grow gradually because of mulicultural conflicts. Many foreign bride come to Korea without knowing anything about Korea. So they don't know how to speak Korean, and they don't know how Korea is. They have trouble having relation with Korean, even with their husband. This cause the lack of chance to learn the culture of Korea, *eventually* make foreign bride to believe 'suffer patiently, or divorce is the solution.'

TABLE 16
Temporal Conjunction in Argumentative Writing

	Grade A (per 100 words)	Grade B (per 100 words)	Grade C (per 100 words)
Temporal	0.2906	0.3950	0.2233
Then	0.0642	0.1469	0.0423
Others	0.2264	0.2480	0.1810

In summary, the smaller numbers of the additive and causal conjunctions were used in the Korean high school students' argumentative essays with higher grades. This was due to the lesser use of *and*, *also*, *so*, and *because* in the highly-rated essays. The essays with low grades displayed repetitive uses of the four conjunctions. The adversative conjunctions, however, were more employed in the Grade A essays. The frequency of *however* was particularly high in those essays, while the number of *but* was lower than that in the Grade B or C essays. In terms of the temporal conjunctions, very few of them appeared in the writings with the lowest grade, Grade C, whereas too many of the temporal conjunctions, particularly *then*, were used in the writings with Grade B. The writings which received Grade A showed an appropriate use of the small number of temporal conjunctions. In addition, the high-quality essays showed a wider range of different conjunctions as expected.

2. RQ 2: Difference in the cohesiveness of writing in students' descriptive and argumentative essays

To investigate whether there is any difference in the cohesiveness between Korean high school students' descriptive and argumentative essays, a dependent t-test was conducted to compare the cohesion scores for the two types of writing. As presented in Table 17, the mean score for the description was 1.61, whereas that for the argument was 2.26. Only 76 argumentative essays from 80 were analyzed, since the other four essays were from those who did not write a descriptive essay.

Table 18 shows the result of the dependent t-test for the difference in the scores of the two writing tasks. There was a significant difference in the scores for the descriptive essays ($M=1.61$, $SD=.713$) and the argumentative essays ($M=2.26$, $SD=.713$); $t(75)=6.69$, $p=.000$. This indicates that the quality of the Korean high school students' argumentative writing was much better than that of their descriptive writing from the perspective of cohesion.

TABLE 17

Descriptive Statistics for the Scores of the Two Writing Tasks

	N	Mean	SD
Descriptive	76	1.61	.713
Argumentative	76	2.26	.737

TABLE 18

Result of the Dependent T-Test for the Difference in the Scores of the Two Writing Tasks

	Mean	SD	t	df	Sig.
A - D	.658	.857	6.69	75	.000

Although the writers of the two tasks were exactly the same, the participants were significantly better in writing argumentative essays than in descriptive essays, producing more cohesive essays with a better use of conjunctions. In other words, the participants could not employ conjunctions as effectively in their descriptive writings as in their argumentative essays, even with the same writing competence. This suggests that the teachers should give students opportunities to write in different modes of discourse, introducing appropriate conjunctions that are used in each mode.

TABLE 19

Conjunction Use in Grade A writings

	Descriptive (per 100 words)	Argumentative (per 100 words)	Range (N)	
			D	A
Additive	2.4516	2.2057	5	15
Adversative	1.1377	0.6716	4	8
Causal	0.4686	0.6642	3	6
Temporal	0.4220	0.2906	6	9
Total	4.4799	3.8321	18	38

When comparing Grade A writings of the two discourse modes, the descriptions showed a higher overall frequency in conjunctions, having more additive, adversative, and temporal conjunctions than the arguments. The trend was also found in Crowhurst's (1987) study with native English speaking students, in which he indicated an insufficient conjunctive use in arguments of NES students. Only the causal conjunctions were more frequently used in the argumentative writing. Although this result is different from the previous studies which revealed no difference between the two modes in the use of causal conjunctions (Crowhurst, 1987; Park, 2013), it suggests the possibility that this

type of conjunctions is closely related to the development of an argument. On the other hand, a much wider range of conjunctions was used in the argumentative essays. The students' limited use of conjunctions in descriptive writing is in line with the difference in scores for the two discourse mode, which showed that the students were more prepared for writing an argument than to writing a description.

V. Conclusion

The findings of the present study revealed Korean high school EFL learners' use of conjunction in argumentative and descriptive writings. The trend of conjunctions used was different between the two discourse modes. The overall frequency of conjunctions was higher in Grade A writings in the descriptive essays, whereas the overall frequency was lower in Grade A argumentative essays than that in the essays with lower grades.

The characteristics of Grade A writings in the descriptive mode included highly frequent uses of additives and adversatives, while those in the argumentative mode included a lower frequency of additives and a more frequent use of adversative *however*. The causal and temporal conjunctions in descriptive writings were very limited regardless of grades of the writings. The Grade A argumentative writings also showed a relatively smaller number of the causal and temporal conjunctions. Previous studies on NES students' use of conjunctions indicated the difficulty of using temporal conjunctions, pointing out that the temporal conjunctions for argumentation are underused in students' argumentative writings due to their difficulty (Crowhurst, 1987; Gorman et al., 1988).

The scores on cohesion were significantly higher for the students' argumentative essays than for the descriptive essays. The low scores on cohesiveness and narrow ranges of conjunctions employed in descriptive writing suggest that a more balanced focus on various discourse modes is needed in writing classes, introducing conjunctions that are appropriate for each mode.

In line with previous studies, a number of conjunctions are placed only at the initial position in both modes of writings. Since in Korean, the students' native language, sentence-middle conjunctions appear in the form of conjunctive morphemes, the students might not have been aware that they could use conjunctions in the sentence-middle positions when writing in English. Therefore, an explicit explication or presentation on the possibilities of different positions of conjunctions would be helpful, particularly for low-level learners.

Although the present study provides some important pedagogical implications for teaching writing in Korean high school English classes, there are some limitations that could be further developed into the future studies. One of the limitations of the study is

that the conjunction use described in this study cannot represent the writings of general Korean high school students, since all the writings were from students in one high school. Therefore, it would be desirable for further studies to include writings from different high schools located in other parts of Korea, thus reducing the regional effects. Building a native control corpus which is collected with the same topics of writings would also be helpful for more accurate comparisons between EFL students and native speakers. Since this study compared conjunctions in descriptive and argumentative writings, it calls for more research on other types of cohesive devices in other modes of writings.

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APPENDIX

Conjunctive items found in descriptive and argumentative writings

Category	Descriptive writing		Argumentative writing	
	N	Conjunctive items	N	Conjunctive items
Additive	7	And, also, likewise, or, for example, for instance, first/second	18	And, also, or, furthermore, for example, I mean, moreover, additionally, in addition, in this way, that is, in other words, for instance, likewise, to begin with, first of all, first/second, firstly/secondly
Adversative	6	But, actually, even though, instead, however, on the other hand	10	But, however, even though, nevertheless, yet, in fact, actually, instead, on the contrary, on the other hand
Causal	6	So, therefore, because, as a result, thus, in that case	6	So, therefore, as a result, because, for that/this reason, thus,
Temporal	15	Then, ~ later, later on, at last, eventually, finally, as soon as, meanwhile, from then, from that moment, in the end, and then, soon, at first, in short	11	Then, and then, next, finally, eventually, at the same time, in conclusion, to sum up, from now, at first, at last
Initial	29	And, also, and also, likewise, for example, for instance// but, however, on the other hand, even though// so, therefore, as a result, because, thus, in that case// then, and then, at first, later on, as soon as, meanwhile, from that/this moment, at last, eventually, finally, first/second, in short, in the end	37	And, also, or, furthermore, for example, likewise, moreover, additionally, in addition, in this way, that is, in other words, for instance// but, however, nevertheless, yet, in fact// so, therefore, as a result, because, for that/this reason, thus// then, eventually, finally, first/second, first of all, at the same time, in conclusion, to begin with, to sum up, at first, firstly/secondly, from now, next

Middle	22	And, also, and also, or, for example, thus// but, however, actually, instead, even though// so, therefore, because// then, later on, ~later, at last, eventually, finally, from then, in the end, soon	20	And, also, or, for example, for instance, I mean// but, however, even though, actually// so, therefore, as a result, because// then, and then, finally, first, eventually, first of all
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Received on 31 October 2016
 Reviewed on 15 November 2016
 Revised version received on 30 November 2016
 Accepted on 24 December 2016