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Abstract

Chinese EFL Learners' Use of Conjunctions in English and Chinese Argumentative Writing

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The primary aim of this thesis is to examine how Chinese EFL learners use English and Chinese conjunctions differently in their argumentative writing. Thirty-nine undergraduates voluntarily participate in the study, so thirty-nine English argumentative writings and thirty-nine Chinese argumentative writings are collected. Based on the data collected, quantitative and qualitative approaches are adopted to analyze the following aspects: frequency of semantic-type of conjunctions in English and Chinese, general characteristics of the English conjunctions used which include the analysis of sentence-initial position and the inappropriate uses of conjunctions. Finally, there is the analysis of some similarities and differences between the higher and lower learner groups in the use of English conjunctions.

First of all, differences in the use of conjunctions between the English and Chinese argumentative writing are analyzed in this thesis. It is found that the frequency of English conjunctions ranks in the order of listing, resultative, contrastive, summative, transitional, appositive and inferential while in Chinese, ranking order is contrastive, listing, resultative, summative, appositive, transitional, and no inferential was found.

In addition, Chinese students lack the awareness of using conjunctions in a flexible position because of their heavy dependence on the sentence-initial position. Another finding is the inappropriate uses of English conjunctions in students' writings including redundant use, misuse, mixed use and sentence fragments introduced by conjunctions.

Finally, quantitative analysis shows that though there is no apparent increase or decrease in the use of the seven kinds of semantic categories in English, wider varieties of conjunctions are found in the higher level group. The possible explanation is that they try to use more conjunctions to disguise their relatively lower level in English argumentative writing. This thesis concludes with some pedagogical implications and limitations.

Keywords: argumentative writing, conjunctions, Chinese EFL learners, semantic-type of conjunctions, sentence-initial position

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Table of Contents

Abstract	i
Table of Contents	iii
Chapter 1. Introduction	1
1.1 Background of the Study	1
1.2 Purpose and Significance of the Study	3
1.3 Research Questions	4
1.4 Organization of This Thesis.....	5
Chapter 2. Literature Reviews	7
2.1. Previous Studies on Conjunctive Markers.....	7
2.1.1. Definitions of Conjunctions.....	7
2.1.2. Classifications of Conjunctions in English and Chinese	9
2.2. Previous Studies on Learners' Use of English Conjunctions	26
Chapter 3. Data and Methodology.....	29
3.1 Participants	29
3.2 Data Collection	30
3.3 Data Analysis Procedures	32
Chapter 4. Data Analysis and Discussion	37
4.1 Comparison of the Use of English and Chinese Conjunctions.....	37
4.1.1 The Frequency of Semantic Types of Conjunctions in English and Chinese	37
4.1.2 Analysis of the Rank Order of the Top 10 Conjunctions in English and Chinese ..	45
4.2 The General Characteristics of Chinese University EFL Students' Use of English Conjunctions.....	53
4.2.1 Conjunctions in Sentence-Initial Position	53

4.2.2 Inappropriate Uses of English Conjunctions	55
4.3 Some Similarities and Differences between the Higher and the Lower Learner Groups in the Use of English Conjunctions	60
Chapter 5. Conclusion	65
5.1 Major Findings of the Study.....	65
5.2 Pedagogical Implications.....	67
5.3 Limitations of the Study	70
References	71
Appendix 1	77
Appendix 2	78
Appendix 3	79
국문 초록	82

Tables

<Table 1> Number of Essays, Words and Words per Essay	32
<Table 2> Categorization of Conjunctions in English.....	33
<Table 3> Categorization of Conjunctions in Chinese	34
<Table 4> Frequency of Conjunctions Used in English and Chinese Writings	38
<Table 5> Rank Order of the Use of Conjunctions	45
<Table 6> Classification of the Ten Most Frequently Used Conjunctions	48
<Table 7> The Syntactic Position of English Conjunctions	54
<Table 8> Mean for the Number of Each Category of Conjunctions in Higher and Lower Level Essays	62

Chapter 1. Introduction

1.1. Background of the Study

Writing provides writers opportunities to express their ideas thoroughly and combines various perspectives in persuasive communication exceeding both time and space (Crowhurst, 1990). Therefore, the ability to proficiently convey meaning in written texts is an essential skill for academic and professional success. Indeed, writing skills are one of the best predictors of academic success (Geiser & Studley, 2001), and even outside of academic writing, writing skills are still an important component of professional competence (Light, 2001).

Written English discourse has developed rapidly over the past twenty years. Particularly when compared with other genres of writing like narration, exposition and description, argumentative writing plays an irreplaceable role in writing because of its broad use in daily life and working situations (Crowhurst, 1987; Knudson, 1994; McCann, 1989). Meanwhile, students' performance in argumentative writing tasks indicates that they encounter considerable difficulty in argumentative writing which has been affirmed by some researchers (e.g. Gleason, 1999; Richards & Schmidt, 1992). In consideration of its importance and great difficulty to students, argumentative writing is worth being included in the classroom teaching. However, even writing in our first language, argumentative writing is considered difficult, let alone writing in a second language, for it requires the writers to master both the rhetorical and

textual difficulties of the target language (Kim, 1996; Ferris, 1994; Hinkel, 1999). Therefore, argumentative writing can be an effective indicator of the writers' written discourse competence in L2 as it explores their ability to produce linguistically appropriate discourse in that language (Yang & Sun, 2012).

In particular, many students seem to have difficulty with coherence and sequencing in the study of the argumentative writing (Prater & Padia, 1983). Since the introduction of Halliday and Hasan's (1976) book *Cohesion in English* in which five types of cohesive types (reference, substitution, ellipsis, conjunction and lexical cohesion) have been explored, research done on cohesion theory has become flourished and has attracted attention from a lot of scholars (Carrell, 1982; Neuner, 1987; Xu, 2000 etc.). Cohesion, according to Halliday and Hasan (1976), is that "a text has texture, which makes a text a unity with respect to its context and distinguishes it from a set of disconnected sentences" (p2). Based on this property of cohesion, Palmer (1999) proposed that it is not only important for the readers to understand the meaning of a text, but also for the writers to create an easily understandable text. In a word, cohesion not only maintains the coherence of a passage but also helps readers have a better understanding of an article.

Various studies on coherence have been conducted from different aspects. Among the five types of cohesive ties, conjunctions are essential to help readers follow the thread of the message that the writers want to convey and recognize the relationship between ideas (Zamel, 1983). A lot of research has also shown that the use of conjunctions can contribute greatly to the clarity and comprehensibility of discourse (e.g. Mauranen, 1993; Flowerdew & Tauroza,

1995) because conjunctive elements are not directly cohesive as they convey certain meanings that presuppose the presence of other components in the discourse (Halliday and Hasan, 1976). Therefore, writers may sometimes confuse their readers in the ideas that they have presented if they fail to make judgmental use of conjunctions. Because of the vital role of conjunctions to improve the coherence and cohesion in academic writing, the present study would focus on exploring Chinese EFL learners' use of conjunctions in English and Chinese argumentative writing.

1.2. Purpose and Significance of the Study

A lot of research has shown that, if appropriately used, conjunctions can contribute greatly to the clarity and comprehensibility of discourse (Mauranen, 1993; Flowerdew & Tauroza, 1995 etc.). However, it is also found that the use of conjunctions is one of the most discrepant parts between two languages such as English and Chinese (Gao and Xu, 2007). Chinese is a parataxis language with more attention paid to the fluency of the thought flow, so conjunctions are, more often than not, omitted and mainly relied on readers to understand the context and logic to infer the relationship of the sentences or clauses. On the other hand, English is a hypotaxis language with more emphasis put on the structural completeness of text and prefers signaling the relationship between chunks of information in an unambiguous way (Baker, 2000). Accordingly, there is an example provided by Li and Thompson (1976, p 631):

(1) na ke shu shuye da. Wo bu xihuan.

That tree leaves big. I don't like .

'The leaves of that tree are big, and I don't like them.'

With the use of overt causality linkage marker, double subjects and the lack of coreference, the Chinese version illustrates that Chinese depends more on covert connections than formal connections which is often regarded as cohesive by westerners (Jin, 2001).

Due to the great disparities in the use of conjunctions between the Chinese and English, there exist many cases of overuse (e.g. Field and Yip, 1992; Men, 2013; Jiang, 2006; Dai, 2006) or improper use of conjunctions in Chinese EFL learners' English writing which result in the lack of nativeness. Therefore, it is necessary to conduct a detailed study on the most frequently used conjunctions in both English and Chinese to help students have a better command of them so as to upgrade the quality of their papers.

1.3. Research Questions

With the growing interest in the study of conjunctions as they are significant not only for the development of text linguistics but also for its practical application in language teaching, this study is aimed to throw light on the use of conjunctions in different aspects. This thesis would focus on answering the following questions:

1. How are English and Chinese conjunctions used in Chinese EFL students'

argumentative writing in terms of frequency and taxonomy types?

2. What are the general characteristics of Chinese EFL students' use of English conjunctions?
3. What are some similarities and differences between higher and lower learner level groups in the use of conjunctions in English?

1.4. Organization of This Thesis

This thesis consists of five chapters. It is organized as follows:

Chapter One provides the background, purpose and significance of the research. Besides, research questions and the outline of the thesis are also included in this chapter.

Chapter Two gives a general literature review of the conjunctions study. First, the conception of conjunctions including the definition, classification and the differences between English and Chinese conjunctions are introduced. Second, there is review of previous studies on learners' use of English conjunctions.

Chapter Three deals with the research methodology and data collection of this study by providing detailed information about participants, data collection, and data analysis procedures of the study.

Chapter Four is results and discussion in which multi-level comparison is conducted. It first compares the frequency and taxonomies of conjunctions used in English and Chinese writing respectively. Second, there is analysis of the general characteristics of EFL students'

use of English conjunctions. Third, similarities and differences in the use of English conjunctions between students of different proficiency levels are analyzed.

Chapter Five summarizes the findings in terms of the research questions and then gives some pedagogical implications, explains the main limitations of this study, and finally offers some suggestions for future studies.

Chapter 2. Literature Reviews

The use of conjunctions in English writing has drawn a lot of attention from teachers and researchers, and a lot of research has studied conjunctions prosperously. Some studied the various classifications of conjunctions in China and abroad. Some studied the differences between EFL learners and native speakers in using conjunctions. There are also studies about the use of conjunctions by EFL learners of different English proficiencies. The followings are a brief summary of those various studies on conjunctions so as to have a comprehensive understanding of conjunctions before moving to a further analysis of them.

2.1. Previous Studies on Conjunctive Markers

In this section, there are some previous studies on conjunctions which include the semantic and syntactic definitions of conjunctions, and the classifications of conjunctions in English and Chinese respectively.

2.1.1. Definitions of Conjunctions

For the set of linking devices, different linguists have different definitions. Among all the definitions, the most widely known definition is given by Halliday and Hasan (1976). They held that “conjunctive elements are cohesive not in themselves but indirectly, by virtue of their specific meanings; they are not primary devices for reaching out into the preceding (or

following) text, but they express certain meanings which presuppose the presence of other elements in the discourse" (Halliday and Hasan, 1976, p226). In other words, conjunctions are words or short phrases that display the interrelation between statements or clauses by specifying a conceptual relationship explicitly between statements or clauses in a text.

Halliday and Hasan (1976) divided these devices into four parts: temporal, causal, adversative, and additive in view of the logical relationships between clauses or sentences.

Conjunctions can further be defined in the syntactic aspect. From the syntactic aspect, conjunctions can be divided into three types: coordinate conjunctions, subordinate conjunctions and conjunctive adverbials. Celce-Murcia & Larsen-Freeman (1999) defined conjunctions as logical connectors, the process of which two constituents are combined to produce another larger constituent of the same type. In their book *The Grammar Book*, they categorize the syntactic conjunctions into coordinating conjunction, adverbial subordinator and conjunctive adverbial which serve as a means of cohesion in English. First, there is coordinating conjunction which is used to build coordinate structure at both clause and phrase level, and also to link elements with the same syntactic functions. This construction is also defined as coordination by Quirk, Greenbaum, Leech and Svartvik (1985). Second, there is adverbial subordinator which is used to introduce dependent clauses. Through these conjunction constituents, one can understand the semantic relations between two clauses or sentences, and based on what has gone, one can even logically predict the meaning of the following sentence or content (Hu, 1994). The third one is conjunctive adverbial. Different from adverbial subordinators, conjunctive adverbials are complete adverbials themselves

which are used to connect independent clauses instead of subordinating a clause (Celce-Murcia & Larsen-Freeman, 1999). Similar to other adverbials, most of the conjunctive adverbials can occur in different places in a clause including sentence-initial, medial and final position of the independent clauses (Celce-Murcia & Larsen-Freeman, 1999).

For the sake of consistency, we adopt the most widely known term *conjunctions* in this paper.

2.1.2. Classifications of Conjunctions in English and Chinese

A lot of research has attempted to provide a systematic and theoretical account of how English conjunctions can be classified (Halliday and Hasan, 1976; Halliday, 1985; Quirk et al., 1985; Celce-Murcia and Larsen-Freeman, 1999 etc.). Coincidentally, studies in English cohesion also gave impetus to the research into Chinese cohesion. Therefore, this chapter would summarize the classifications of both English and Chinese conjunctions.

2.1.2.1. Classifications of Conjunctions in English

There are no unanimous classifications of conjunctions in English since they can be classified differently in different theoretical or analytical perspectives. Also, different approaches can be used for different research purposes. This section presents the classifications of conjunctions from several different perspectives.

(1) Halliday and Hasan's (1976) classification

In their book *Cohesion in English*, Halliday and Hasan (1976) state that "there is no single, uniquely correct inventory of the types of conjunctive relation; different classifications

are possible, each of which would highlight different aspects of the facts" (p 238). Among the various ways of classification, Halliday and Hasan (1976) adopted a scheme of four categories according to their semantic relationships: additive, adversative, causal, and temporal.

a. Additive conjunctions. Additive conjunctions show some forms of the preceding content. Any new information that constructs the topic of the text may be followed by many additive conjunctions logically (Zhu, 2012). Therefore, in the form of coordination, there are three types: additive *and* type, the alternative *or* type and their negative counterpart *nor* type under the heading of additive (Halliday& Hasan, 1976). Accordingly, there are some examples adopted from Dai's (2006) paper:

- (1) "...Undoubtedly you have mistaken me for someone else." ***And*** with a quick decision he turned to the shop girl and said in a loud voice. (p 6)
- (2) Are they preparing to perform operations on patients? ***Or*** are they shooting scenes for a science fiction film? (p7)
- (3) Certainly I don't teach because teaching is easy for me.....***Nor*** do I teach because I think I know answers, or because I have knowledge I feel compelled to share. (p7)

Other additive conjunctions include some adverbial conjunctions like *furthermore*, *in addition*, *incidentally*, *alternatively*, *likewise*, *for example* etc..

b. Adversative conjunctions. Halliday and Hasan (1976) pointed out that the primary

meaning of adversative conjunction is contrary to expectation. Moreover, "the expectation may be derived from the content of what is being said, or from the communication process, the speaker-hearer situation" (Halliday&Hasan, 1976, p250). Therein, one simple form of adversative is when the word *yet* occurs initially in the sentence, for instance:

- (4) All the figures were correct; they'd been checked. ***Yet*** the total came out wrong.

(Halliday & Hasan, 1976, p250)

Very similar to *yet* in this function are coordinator *but*, and some adverbial conjunctions like *however*, *though* *in fact*, *instead*, *rather*, *anyhow*, *in any case* etc.

c. **Causal conjunctions.** A cause-effect or cause-consequent relationship is shown between the clauses or sentences (Halliday and Hasan, 1976). Simple forms of causal relationship are expressed by *so*, *thus*, *hence*, *therefore*, *consequently*, *because of that*. There is one example in the following:

- (5) It could be said that multiple intentions, motivations, and goals exist in the arena of education reform. ***Consequently***, Winkelmann's collectivity idea may merit exploration for capturing some type of inclusive educational reform.

(COCA, 2012)

d. Temporal conjunctions. Temporal conjunctions refer to larger discourse context than the other conjunctions, and more different logical relations are used (Halliday and Hasan, 1976). Temporal can be subdivided into sequential ones such as *then*, *next*, *after that*, simultaneous ones such as *at the same time*, *simultaneously*, *just then*, preceding ones like *before that*, *previously*, and conclusive relations such as *finally*, *eventually*, *to sum up* etc (Halliday & Hasan, 1976, p262). There is one example in the following:

- (6) She stood by the window, watching. The postman turned round the corner on his bicycle. Her heart beat fast. Johnnie had seen him too and ran to the gate. ***Then*** clatter up the stairs. Johnnie knocked at her door. (Dai, 2006, p9)

2. Halliday's (1985) classification

In Halliday's book *An Introduction to Functional Grammar* (1985), Halliday puts forward a classification where conjunctions are divided into three major classes according to the logico-semantic relationship they indicate: elaboration, extension and enhancement.

a. Ellaboration conjunctions. There are two categories of elaborating relation, apposition and classification (Halliday, 1985). First, in apposition, "some element is re-presented, or restated, either by exposition relation like *in other words*, *that is*, *I mean*, *put it another way* etc., or by example relation such as *for example*, *to illustrate*, *to be more precise* etc." (p.540).

Consider the following examples:

(7) ***In other words***, animation permitted the children to be more successful naming the exact name of verbs but added nothing to their naming success with prepositions. (COCA, 2012)

(8) In a general-purpose programming language, no built-in language construct is likely to be a perfect fit. ***For example***, places and things could be objects, while commands could be implemented as methods. (COCA, 2012)

The other one is clarification. The elaborated element is not merely used to restate and summarize, but also used to reinstate and make the purpose of the discourse more precise. Clarification can further be categorized as corrective like *or rather*, *at least* etc.; distractive like *by the way*, *incidentally* etc.; dismissive like *in any case*, *any way*, *leaving that aside* etc.; particularizing such as *in particular*, *more especially* etc.; resumptive such as *I was saying*, *to resume*, *to get back to the point* etc.; summative like *in short*, *to sum up*, *in conclusion* etc.; and verificative like *actually*, *in fact* etc (Halliday, 1985, p82).

b. Extension conjunctions. Extension involves addition and variation. “Addition is either positive *and*, negative *nor* or adversative *but*; on the other hand, variation includes replacive *instead*, subtractive *except* and alternative *or* types” (Halliday, 1985, p.543). Moreover, since the adversative relation plays an essential part in discourse, it is best to regard it as a separate heading on its own.

c. Enhancement conjunctions. The various types of enhancement that create cohesion are spatio-temporal, manner, causal-conditional and matter (Halliday, 1985, p243).

As for the spatio-temporal, place reference can be used within a text conjunctively. With here and there, there are spatial adverbs such as *behind* and *nearby*, and expressions containing a place noun or adverb plus reference item, for example *in the same place*, *anywhere else* (Halliday, 1985, p544). Temporal conjunctions which cover diverse relations can be distinguished between simple and complex ones.

In manner conjunctions, cohesion is created by comparison and by reference to means such as *likewise*, *similarly*, *for comparison* etc.

In causal-conditional relation, some are general cause expressions while others are more specifically related to result, reason or purpose, for example, *therefore*, *because of that*, *for* etc.

Finally, many expressions of matter are spatial metaphors containing words like *point*, *ground*, *field*, and when coupled with reference items, they become conjunctions. The relation is either positive or negative like *in other aspects*, *elsewhere* etc.

In Halliday's classification, it exemplifies one hundred conjunctions. Li (2007) pointed out that one conjunction may fall into several sub-classes. That is, the same conjunction like *then* may express multiple logico-semantic relationships in different contexts. Another problem is that some conjunctions are familiar to learners while others are not. It seems that learners are inclined to use those conjunctions they are familiar with and neglect others. For example, *nevertheless*, *whereas* and *straightway* are rarely used in EFL writing while *and*, *or*, *but* etc. are used too frequently.

(3) Celce-Murcia and Larsen-Freeman's (1999) classification

Celce-Murcia and Larsen-Freeman (1999) point out some problems regarding Halliday and Hasan's classification of conjunctions. As it is stated above, the four broad categories summarized by Halliday and Hasan are: additive, involving new information; adversative, which is contrary to expectations; causal, expressing both true causes and logical inferences; and sequential, concerning either real-time relationships or sequential relationship in a text. Celce-Murcia and Larsen-Freeman (1999) state that though such a classification is practical to sort out possible relationships into types at the global level, there are also problems concerning that the definitions of individual conjunctions may frequently lead to erroneous word choices for EFL learners. They then further explain the problems. The first problem is that "the expressions within each category are often not interchangeable" (p531). One example, according to Celce-Murcia and Larsen-Freeman (1999) is that: we cannot use *nevertheless* or *despite this* in every case where *however* is used.

(9) a. Calvin wanted to fly to the moon. ***However***, he did not know how.

b. Calvin wanted to fly to the moon. ??***Nevertheless***, he did not know how.

c. Calvin wanted to fly to the moon. ??***Despite this***, he did not know how. (P531)

Examples above illustrate the difficulties for EFL learners in using conjunctions. Though *however*, *nevertheless*, *despite this* are categorized under the name of adversative, "the expressions within category are often not interchangeable" (Celce-Murcia and Larsen-

Freeman, 1999. p. 531).

Another problem is that more than one conjunction can be found to create acceptable paraphrases: we can say *(but) in any case*, *(and) in any case*, as well as *(or) in any case*, depending on the context of utterance (Celce-Murcia and Larsen-Freeman, 1999). Examples are as follows:

(10) We can take this apartment, or we can take the other one.

But in any case, we have to take something soon. (p 531)

(11) We may not be able to take our vacation as planned. The area is under six feet of snow.

And in any case, we just don't have enough money. (p 531)

(12) We may not be able to take our vocation as planned.

Or in any case, we won't be able to make it a long one. (p 531)

In Example 10, *in any case* can be understood as *anyway*, and this sentence can mean "no matter whether we choose this apartment or another, we have to take something anyway." However, in Example 11, *in any case* means *besides* which can be explained as: besides the first reason that the area is under six feet of snow, the second reason that we cannot take our vacation as planned is we lack of money. In Example 12, *in any case* is used to emphasize the importance of the thing. Examples given above show that *in any case* can be interpreted in many different ways.

The final problem is that functional labels like adversative are not always accurate: we rarely use *however* below to mark something contrary to expectation (Celce-Murcia and Larsen-Freeman, 1999). Consider the following example:

(13) Calvin wanted to fly to the moon. ***However***, he did not know how. (p 531)

The use of *however* above does not convey the meaning of contrary to expectations. According to Celce-Murcia and Larsen-Freeman (1999), *however* can show semantic contrast, “one in which exactly two entities or qualities are set adjacent to each other in order to focus on one or more semantic differences in them” (1999, p475). Therefore, *however* in the example above is not to deny Calvin’s intention to go fly to the moon, but to contrast the semantic differences between expectation and reality.

Considering all the problems Halliday and Hasan’s classification have, Celce-Murcia and Larsen-Freeman put forward a modified classification by themselves:

- a. **Coordinating conjunctions:** *and, but, yet, or, so*
- b. **Adverbial subordinators:** *after, although, as, because, before, unless, if, since, until, while, when(ever), where(ver)*
- c. **Conjunctive adverbials** can be divided as:

Adversative: *in any case, nevertheless, in contrast, on the other hand, however, but* etc.

Additive: *also, in addition, moreover, furthermore, similarly, likewise* etc.

Causal: *consequently, therefore, thus* etc.

Temporal: *before, after, until, when* etc.

(4) Quirk et al.'s(1985) classification

It is stated by Quirk et al. (1985) in their book *A Comprehensive Grammar of English* that conjunctions can be divided into seven major types according to the semantic relationships:

a. Listing. It is a basic language function which, at its simplest, is used to index order by having items acting an ordinal function like *first(ly)* and *second(ly)*. The enumerative function not only gives numerical labels to the listed items, but also reveals their relative priority and endows the list with an internal structure which has a beginning and an end. The idea of an integral relation is especially conferred by the additive conjuncts (Quirk et al., 1985, p.636).

b. Appositional and summative. Both are used to indicate that an item is in relation to all the items having gone before. However, “summative conjunctions introduce an item that embraces the preceding ones while appositive conjunctions are concerned rather to express the content of the preceding item or items in other terms” (Quirk et al., 1985, p637). There are, for example, *namely, that is to say, especially* etc.

c. Inferential. These conjunctions present a conclusion based on logic and presumption like *otherwise, in other words* (Quirk et al., 1985).

d. Contrastive. Contrastive conjunctions are implied by either contrastive words or contrastive matter of what have preceded. The former type is apparently close to appositive, but instead of adding another formulation, it seeks to replace what has been said with a different formulation. It can also be divided into four categories. (i) reformulatory like *better, in other words, rather* etc.; (ii) replacive such as *again, alternatively, on the other hand* etc.;

(iii) antithetic like *conversely*, *instead*, *by contrast* etc.; and (iv) concessive like *anyhow*, *besides*, *nonetheless* etc.(Quirk et al., 1985, p.638).

e. Resultative. Resultative conjunctions request reasons or causes which have been mentioned in the previous context (Quirk et al., 1985).

f. Transitional. Transitional conjunctions intend to turn one's attention to another topic or to a temporally related event. The former is referred to as discursal which has *incidentally*, *now*, *by the way* etc. while the latter is called temporal, including *meantime*, *subsequently*, *eventually* etc.

As it is shown above, different researchers have different understandings and different classifications of conjunctions, but some are too concise including too many conjunctions while others are too complex to deal with. In view of this, Quirk et al.'s classification was adopted in this thesis because of its comprehensiveness and clarity in the classification of conjunctions.

2.1.2.2 Classifications of Conjunctions in Chinese

Similar to English, classifications of Chinese conjunctions do not lack of controversy. Scholars in China have also tried to find correspondent classifications to English in Chinese. The followings elaborate some classifications about Chinese conjunctions which correspond to English.

1. Semantic classification based on Halliday's (1985)

Following Halliday's (1985) classification, Zhu (2001) also tried to classify Chinese conjunctions into three types which are elaboration, extension and enhancement which

correspond to the English classification.

a. Elaboration conjunctions:

There are two categories of elaborating relation, apposition and classification.

Apposition: *zhe jiushi shuo* (that is to say 這就是說), *ye jiushi shuo* (in other words 也就 是說), *huan juhua shuo* (in other words 换句话说), *huan yan zhi* (to put it another way 換言 之), *liru* (for example 例如), *na...laishuo* (to illustrate 拿...來說)

Classification: *geng zhunque de shuo* (to be more precise 更準確地說), *shunbian shuo yixia* (by the way 順便說一下), *wulun* (anyway 無論), *tebieshi* (in particular 特別是), *huidao gangcai huati* (to get back to the point 回到剛才話題), *zongzhi* (in short 總之), *qishi* (actually 實際)

b. Extension Conjunctions:

In Chinese, extension is also classified into three sub-categories which are addition, adversative, and variation. Similar to English, additive can be either positive or negative.

There are:

Additive (positive): *zaishuo* (and 再說), *erqie* (also 而且), *cwai* (in addition 此外), *kuangqie* (moreover 况且)

Additive (negative): *jibu...yebu* (neither...nor 既不...也不), *yebu* (nor 也不)

As for adversative, some commonly seen conjunctions are: *keshi* (but 可是), *raner* (yet 然而), *cong lingsifangmian laishuo* (on the other hand 從另一方面來說), *danshi* (however 但是)

Variation: *xiangfan* (on the contrary 相反), *chucizhiwai* (apart from that 除此之外),

huozhe (alternatively 或者)

c. Enhancement conjunctions:

There is enhancement which includes four subcategories: spatio-temporal, manner, causal-conditional and matter. For example:

Spatio-temporal: *erhou* (then 而後), *yuci tongshi* (at the same time 與此同時), *yuanxian* (before that 原先), *shixian* (previously 事先), *zuihou* (in the end 最後), *like* (at once 立刻), *bu yihuier* (after a while 不一會兒), *shizhong* (all the time 始終), *diertian* (next day 第二天), *xiayici* (next time 下一次), *qijian* (meanwhile 期間), *dao nashi weizhi* (until then 到那時為止), *cishi cike* (at this moment 此時此刻)

Manner: similar to English, manner conjunctions can either express comparison like *yuci xiangfang de shi* (on the contrary 與此相反的是), *xiangfang* (in a different way 相反), or reference like *youci* (therby 由此), *tongguo zhezhong fangfa* (by such means 通過這種方法) *tongyangde* (likewise 同樣地).

Causal-conditional: *suoyi* (so 所以), *yushi* (then 於是), *yinci* (therefore 因此), *youyu* (because of that 由於), *jieguo* (in consequence 結果), *youyu zheyi yuanyin* (for that reason 由於這一原因), *weici mudi* (for that purpose 為此目的), *zai zhezhong qingkuang xia* (under the circumstances 在這種情況下), *fouze* (otherwise 否則), *jinguan ruci* (though 儘管如此)

Matter: *zai zhe fangmian* (in that aspect 在這方面), *zai qita fangmian* (in other aspects 在其他方面)

2. Overview of syntactic categories

Wang (1955: 378-399) classifies conjunctions into five classes:

- (a) Subordinate markers *de* (的) and *zhi* (之) occur before nominals or verbals, for example: *yisheng-buxiang-de zuo-le* (left without saying a word 一聲不響地走了);
- (b) Coordinate forms of equal status of *yu* (與), *he* (和), *bing* (並), *ji* (既) in Chinese all mean ‘and’ in English;
- (c) *yu* (於) means ‘in, on, at’, for example: *gua yu deng-shang* (hang on the latern 掛於燈上);
- (d) *erqie* (而且) means ‘and’, conjoining clauses, nominals and verbals.
- (e) A series of forms conjoin complex sentences: *erqie* (而且) and *qie* (且), both meaning ‘and’; *huo* (或) and *haishi* (還是) both meaning ‘or’; *ran* (然) ‘so’, *dan* (但) and *danshi* (但是) both meaning ‘but’; *ze* (則) meaning ‘however’; *gu* (故) and *suoyi* (所以) both meaning ‘therefore’, and others.

Besides, Chao (1968: 791-795) classifies conjunctions into four types:

- (a) The prepositional conjunctions include *geng* (更) meaning ‘and’, and *tong* (同) meaning ‘with’ only to join nominal expressions;
- (b) Macrosyntactic conjunctions are employed intersententially;
- (c) Correlative conjunctions bind clauses into compound or complex sentences;
- (d) Reduced main clauses are polysyllabic conjunctions derived from clauses, for example: *zongeryanzhi* (in a word 總而言之), or *jiushishuo* (that is to say 就是說).

As it is shown above, both English and Chinese can be categorized in a similar way.

However, during the process of translation from English to Chinese, it is found that there are two points that worth our attention. One point is that though some conjunctions have the same translation with English, there are several different translations in Chinese such as *then*. In English, since *then* can be used differently in different situations, of course, there are also various Chinese translations correspondent to it. According to *Oxford Advanced Learners' English-Chinese Dictionary*, when it is used as a conjunction, *then* can be used to show the logical result of a particular statement or situation which corresponds to the Chinese conjunctions *name* (那么), *name...jiu* (那麼...就), *bian* (便), *cai* (才). When it is used to introduce a summary of something that has just been said, it can be translated as *ze* (則). It can also be used to show the beginning or end of a conversation, statement etc. with the Chinese translation *ranhou* (然後). The other point is that in English, there are clear distinctions between the use of *however/but* and *so/therefore* while in Chinese, since Chinese is a parataxis language, there are no clear distinctions in the usage of these two sets of conjunctions. In Chinese, for example, both *therefore* and *so* can be translated as *suoyi* (所以) and both *however* and *but* can be translated as *danshi* (但是) which can both be used as coordinators and adverbial conjunctions in the sentence-initial position. However, unlike *therefore* and *however* which can be used in multiple positions in a sentence, *suoyi* (所以) and *danshi* (但是) usually appear in the sentence or clause initial position. Among the different translations of conjunctions from English to Chinese, the Chinese translation here is referred to Zhu's (2001).

2.1.2.3. Distinctive Characteristics of Chinese and English Conjunctions

As mentioned earlier, English prefers to use a large variety of conjunctions to maintain cohesion while Chinese tends to make a text coherent by the internal logic which becomes one of the most distinctive characteristics between English and Chinese conjunctions (Baker, 2000). Consider the following example:

(14) Xiaoniao feizou le, you huilai de shihou.

Birds have flown away there is return time

'Birds have flown away, but there is a time of return.'

In the Chinese original, there is no conjunction to connect the two clauses into a sentence, but in Chinese-English translation, the conjunction *but* should be added to the sentence to make it more cohesive and understandable.

As both Wang (1955) and Chao (1968) have pointed out, another important difference is that, considering some cases of class-overlapping, though a distinction between conjunctions and adverbial connectives can generally be made in English, they are often indistinguishable in Chinese.

The third important distinction has to do with the position of the clausal conjunctions in the two languages. In English, a clausal conjunction can be placed between the main clause and the subordinate clause while in Chinese most clausal conjunctions cannot be put in that position (Tsao, 1980). There are some examples in the following:

(15) Although he worked very hard, he did not succeed.

(16) He did not succeed, although he worked hard.

(17) Suiran ta hen yonggong, ta (haishi) mei chenggong.

Although he very work-hard he still did not succeed

‘Although he worked hard, he did not succeed.’

(18) ?ta mei chenggong, suiran ta hen yonggong.

He did not succeed though he very work-hard

‘He did not succeed, although he worked hard.’

From the examples above, we can see that though Example 15 and Example 16 are both acceptable, only Example 17 is natural in the case of Chinese. And Example 18 is possible only when the adverbial clause is taken as an afterthought.

Finally, Tsao (1980) further points out that there is a group of conjunctions called “variable position connectives” (Li and Thompson, 1981) in Chinese which can occur either in clausal-initial position or after the topic/subject which is similar to English. Consider the following example:

(19) Ta suiran hen yonggong, haishi mei chenggong.

He though very work-hard still did not succeed

‘Though he worked hard, he did not succeed.’

In the example above, *suiran* (though 雖然) can be either put in the initial position of the sentence or the position after the subject which is similar to English.

2.2. Previous Studies on Learners' Use of English Conjunctions

First of all, there is a comparison between native speakers and EFL learners in the use of conjunctions in English writing. Jin (2001) points out that Chinese students favor implicated conjunctions in Chinese writing, such as zero anaphora, ellipsis, and omission of transitional word which may contribute to their less use of conjunctions in their English writing than the native speakers who rely on textual devices for cohesion and favor a linear development of ideas. Therefore, it is widely believed that most Chinese EFL learners tend to underuse conjunctions in their English writing. However, contrary to the assumption above, Field and Yip (1992) found that “Cantonese students’ writing in English use more conjunctive cohesive devices in the organization of their essays than students at a similar educational level who are native English speakers” (p15). Similar to Field and Yip’s study, Crewe (1990) also noticed that Hong Kong students in The University of Hong Kong tend to overuse conjunctions, citing that one student writer packs a chain of expressions such as *moreover, indeed, as a matter of fact, in actuality, however, nevertheless* etc. into the space of just three short paragraphs of an article. Field and Yip (1992,) further express the reason that leads to such phenomenon:

The high frequency of devices in L2 and even in L1 scripts may be due to the

limited time provided for completion of the task. Content had to be devised quickly and writers may have relied on organizational devices to shape the essay rather than a strong development of their thought. The... educational level of the writers, who would have little essay writing experience, may also account for an overall high use (p24).

Large-scale of corpus-based studies are also conducted on the analysis of the use of conjunctions. In Chen's (2008) study, to check whether the Chinese students have a tendency to overuse or underuse some conjunctions in comparison with the native speakers, NNWC and NWC which come from the sub-corpora of Spoken and Written English Corpus of Chinese Learners are used. It shows that Chinese EFL learners use much fewer types (95 vs. 112) but far more numbers of conjunctions (241 vs. 139 per 10,000 words) in their writing than the native English speakers. The number of conjunctions in Chinese students' compositions is much more than that of the American students', which, suggested by Ma (2002), is because Chinese students use more simple sentences, and Chinese teachers always stress the importance of conjunctions in EFL writing classes. That may be the reason why many L2 writers overuse conjunctions such as *though* and *however*.

In addition to the comparison between native and non-native speakers in the use of conjunctions, conjunctions used by students from different English proficiency levels are also worth examining. Based on Halliday and Hasan's taxonomy, Witte and Faigley (1981) analyze ten English-native freshman essays (five rated high quality and five rated low quality) in order to determine the differences between the high-rated and the low-rated essays. They

find that high-rated essays consist of more cohesive ties, more references, more conjunctions and more lexical collocations than low-rated essays, while low-rated papers use more lexical repetitions than high-rated papers. It is believed that low-rated students are less competent in vocabularies and poorer ability to elaborate and expand ideas. Due to the very small number of subjects, another investigation is carried out by using statistic methods. It is aimed to compare the features of textual cohesion theorized by Halliday and Hasan, between the higher level and lower level compositions written by 364 non-English majors Chinese college freshmen. Result shows that the frequency of both grammatical and lexical cohesion is much higher in good compositions than in poor ones. However, another study which is conducted among students of different proficiencies in twelfth-grade ($n=206$), tenth-grade (228) and sixth-grade ($n=223$) shows that there is no overall tendency for the frequency of cohesive ties, like collocation and the use of synonyms, to increase with the higher grade level, but other types of cohesion to decrease with grade level, namely, exophora, causal conjunctions, and temporal conjunctions (Crowhurst, 1987).

In conclusion, either in the frequency of conjunctions used between native speakers and EFL students or in the aspect of the conjunctions used by different proficiency levels, there is no easy one-sided conclusion that can be drawn. Therefore, to conduct a more persuasive and detailed study to draw a more general conclusion becomes one of the motivations of this study.

Chapter 3. Data and Methodology

The aim of this chapter is to describe research methodology and data collection procedures for this study. This chapter consists of four parts: participants, data collection, and data analysis procedures.

3.1. Participants

39 undergraduate students took part in the current study, 5 males and 34 females. Their ages range from 21 to 26 years old. Since all the participants were volunteers from different universities, most of them have different majors and different backgrounds of English learning. Twenty students major in English while the other 19 students come from different fields such as business administration, Japanese, marketing, physics and engineering, automation etc. Seven students got the certificate of TEM¹ 8 (Test for English Major), nine students got TEM 4, 14 students got CET 6 (College English Test) in which 3 students have also taken the TOEFL and 2 students have taken the IELTS. The remaining 9 students got CET 4. Such exams provide chances for the students to practice their writing skills out of class by themselves. In order to test whether there are noticeable differences between a higher and a lower level group in respect of the use of conjunctions, students were divided into two groups according to the certificate they had. All the participants are native speakers of

¹In China, one of the obligatory exams for all university students is the CET (College English Test for the non-English major students) or TEM (Test for English Major) which consists of listening, reading and writing.

Chinese who have been learning English for more than 10 years. Therefore, it is assumed that they all have good proficiency in both Chinese and English writing. All the students regularly use computers to assist their schoolwork, including the preparation of project reports, so they all agree that it is more comfortable to do their writing on computers. Moreover, to make sure that all the participants form a homogenous group, they were selected based on the following criteria: (i) Their native language is Chinese; (ii) They are learning English as a foreign language and have no experience in living in an English-speaking country; (iii) They have similar linguistic and instructional backgrounds.

All the participants were volunteers recruited through the school bulletin board and the students chatting room. After finishing the tasks, each student and rater received monetary reward.

3.2. Data Collection

This study consisted of a Chinese argumentative writing (Appendix 1), an English argumentative writing (Appendix 2) and a post-questionnaire (Appendix 3). Before the test, all the participants were required to complete the background survey form. Participants' compositions were the main part of data for this study. Participants were first asked to write a Chinese argumentative essay with minimum 500 characters in at least three paragraphs within 30 minutes. After a week, an English essay test on the same topic with minimum 250 words as it is required in CET 4 writing in 40 minutes was administered. It is assumed that there is

not much influence of the Chinese essays on the English essays. Participants were not informed of the purpose of the compositions beforehand. Explanation about the test was provided in Chinese in case there was any confusion about the requirements of the test. Participants were allowed to use dictionaries so as to allow them to focus on maintaining the coherence of the article without being distracted by their limited vocabulary. Moreover, in order to find out the possible factors that affected the participants' use of English conjunctions, a post-test survey was also conducted. It was not only aimed to find out whether the use of Chinese conjunctions interfered with the use of English conjunctions or not, but also to determine the influence of classroom teaching on the students' use of conjunctions.

The prompt of the topic is: People attend college or university for many different reasons (for example, new experiences, career preparation, or to increase knowledge). Why do you think people attend college or university? Use specific reasons and examples to support your answer.

After all the students finished the writing, the researcher collected all the papers, printed them out and then gave them to the two English native speakers, a male and a female, to evaluate. Both of them are native speakers of English, one from America and the other from Australia. They both have experience in evaluating English compositions. They were required to review the paper carefully, and underline the grammatical mistakes but did not have to correct them because grammar was not the focus of this study. They were also asked to circle all the conjunctions that the students used and, if there were any misuses, they should correct them.

Table 1 below provides the detailed information about the number of essays, words and words per essay in the English and Chinese compositions.

Table 1

Number of Essays, Words and Words per Essay

	English Essays	Chinese Essays
Number of Essays	39	39
Number of Words ²	10,685	23,941
Number of Words per Essay	274	614

Table 1 shows that altogether there are 39 articles in English and Chinese respectively. The total number of words in English is 10,685, with 274 words per essay while in Chinese there are 23,941 characters in total, with 614 characters per essay.

3.3. Data Analysis Procedures

The conjunctions are classified into seven semantic categories in English and Chinese respectively. The way of classification is adapted from Quirk et al. (1985) with some³ modifications. The following table is the summary of the conjunctions that the participants used in their essays, which would become source data of my analysis.

² A “Word” refers to one character in Chinese and one word in English.

³ The original list contains 136 items, which include some items over two categories (e.g. then, thus).

Table 2

Categorization of Conjunctions in English (Adapted from Quirk et al. (1985))

category	Sub-category		items
1. listing (27)	enumerative		firstly, first, secondly, second, thirdly, third, first of all, on the other hand, another, finally, at the beginning, at first, to begin with, at last, lastly, ⁴ *last but not least
		equative	*just like, *like
	additive	reinforcing	and ⁵ , also, moreover, in addition, what's more, *as well as, then, *additionally, *not only...but also
2. summative (9)			in a word, all in all, in conclusion, to conclude, to sum up, in all, above all, all of the above, *generally speaking
3. appositive (5)			for instance, for example, such as, that is, namely
4. resultative (12)	causal		since, because, because of, as, *if
	resultative		so, therefore, as a result, thus, accordingly, *so that, *so...that
5. inferential (1)			in this case
6. contrastive (13)	reformulatory		rather than, *in fact
	antithetic		instead of, on the contrary

⁴ Those with "*" are the conjunctions added by the author.

⁵ "And" can be used to connect two nouns, two adjectives or two verbs, and can be used to connect clauses or independent sentences. Here I only take those connecting clauses or independent sentences into consideration.

	concessive		but, although, even though, besides, of course, however, nevertheless, *certainly, *in spite of
7. transitional (4)	discursal		Now
	temporal		at the same time, *after, *before

Table 3
Categorization of Conjunctions in Chinese

category	Sub-category	items
1. listing (27)	enumerative	shouxian (first of all 首先), diyi (first 第一), dier (second 第二), disan (third 第三), qici (secondly 其次)
	equative	
	additive reinforcing	zaiyou (moreover 再有), haiyou (what's more 還有), shenzhi (even more 甚至), zaici (one more time 再次), lingwai (in addition 另外), ciwai (moreover 此外), chucizhiwai (in addition 除此之外), bingqie (and 並且), ji (and 既), bing (and 並), ye (also 也), bujin...geng (not only...even 不僅...更), bujin (not only 不僅), bujin...hai (not only...and 不僅...還), ji...ye (not only...but also 既...也), ye...ye (also...also 也...也), ze (then 則), ranhou (after that 然後), bian (then 便), cai (then 才), name (then 那麼), name...jiu (then 那麼...就)

2. summative (4)			zongzhi (in short 總之), zong de lai shuo (in a word 總的來說), zong er yan zhi (to sum up 總而言之), zongshang (in conclusion 綜上)
3. appositive (3)			birushuo (for example 比如說), biru (for example 比如), jiushi (that is 就是),
4. resultative (13)	causal		yinwei (because 因爲), youyu (for 由於), ruguo...name (if...then 如果...那麼), ruguo...jiu (if...then 如果...就), ruguo (if), ruo (if 若), jiaru (if 假如), zhiyou...caineng (only if 只有...才能), zhiyao (provided 只要),
	resultative		suoyi (so 所以), yinci (therefore 因此), yiner (hence 因而), yushi (therefore 於是), jiu (so 就),
5. inferential (0)			
6. contrastive (9)	reformulatory		bushi...ershi (rather than 不是...而是), ershi (instead 而是)
	concessive		danshi (however 但是), er (but 而), buguo (merely 不過), raner (but 然而), que (but 卻), sui (though 雖), jishi (although 即使), suiran...danshi (although...but 雖然...但是), wulun...dou (anyway 無論...都)
7. transitional (2)	discoursal		
	temporal		yibian...yibian (meanwhile 一邊...一邊),

			tongshi (at the same time 同時)
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Table 2 shows that there are 71 types of English conjunctions identified in the students' papers while there are 136 types in Quirk et al.'s classification. In the Chinese papers, based on the principle that both meaning and usage of the Chinese conjunctions should be similar to the English counterparts, there are only of 58 types of conjunctions identified as shown in Table 3. Consistent with the study conducted by Lee (2004), it was also found that as for the conjunction density, the Chinese writings contained much fewer conjunctions. In the following, there is detailed comparison in each category.

Chapter 4. Data Analysis and Discussion

This chapter presents the results and findings. First, in 4.1, to answer the question about the kinds of conjunctions used in English and Chinese writing, the frequency of the English and Chinese conjunctions of different types, and the rank order of ten most frequently used conjunctions are examined in English and Chinese respectively. Then in 4.2, I analyze the general characteristics of students' use of conjunctions in English. In 4.3, there are the similarities or differences between students of different English proficiency levels.

4.1 Comparison of the Use of English and Chinese Conjunctions

In this section, there is the comparison in the use of English and Chinese conjunctions. In 4.1.1, the frequencies of semantic types of conjunctions in English and Chinese are compared. In 4.1.2, first, there is the analysis of the top ten conjunctions used in English and Chinese writings. Then there are also category classifications of these top ten conjunctions.

4.1.1 The Frequency of Semantic Types of Conjunctions in English and Chinese

Table 4 provides the descriptive statistics for the proportion of each type of conjunction used in students' papers.

Table 4
Frequency of Conjunctions Used in English and Chinese Writings

Category	Sub-category	English	Percentage	Chinese	Percentage
Listing	Enumerative	60 (15.3%)	44.0%	26 (9.9%)	33.0%
	Additive	112 (28.6%)		61 (23.2%)	
Summative		18 (4.6%)	4.6%	12 (4.6%)	4.6%
Appositive		12 (3.1%)	3.1%	3 (1.1%)	1.1%
Resultative	Causal	60 (15.3%)	26.1%	27 (10.3%)	19.8%
	Resultative	42 (10.7%)		25 (9.5%)	
Inferential		1 (0.3%)	0.3%	0	0
Contrastive ⁶	Reformulatory	2 (0.5%)	17.6%	1 (0.4%)	40.7%
	Antithetic	2 (0.5%)		0	
	Concessive	65 (16.6%)		106 (40.3%)	
Transitional	Discursal	2 (0.5%)	4.3%	0	0.8%
	Temporal	15 (3.8%)		2 (0.8%)	
Total		391	100%	263	100%

In all 78 pieces of texts, 39 in English and 39 in Chinese, there are a total of 391 English conjunctions and 263 Chinese conjunctions. Table 4 presents the frequency of conjunctions

⁶ In Quirk et al's classification, contrastive type includes reformulatory, replacive, antithetic and concessive, but in this study, since no corresponding items in replacive type is identified, replacive type was not listed here.

per type in both English and Chinese. Obviously, in English, listing is with the highest frequency which accounts for 44.0% of the total conjunctions. Following is resultative conjunctions which account for 26.1%. The third highest frequency is contrastive which accounts for 17.6%. The remaining conjunctions rank in the following order: summative, transitional, appositive, and inferential which only account for 12.3% in total. This result is parallel with some previous studies (e.g. Zhang, 2006; Chen, 2008; Altenberg & Tapper, 1998). An example is that in a corpora study on the use of conjunctions in advanced Swedish learners' written English, it is found that listing, contrastive and resultative conjunctions are most frequent, summative and transitional ones are not that common, and no clear cases of the inferential can be found at all (Altenberg & Tapper, 1998) which is quite similar to the current study. In Chinese, the distribution of each type of conjunctions is a little different from English. Contrastive occurs 107 times accounting for 40.7% of all conjunctions which is the most frequent one of all conjunctions. The second highest frequency is listing which sums up to 87 times, accounting for 33.0%. The third one is resultative which occurs 52 times accounting for 19.8%. The remaining conjunctions are summative, appositive, and transitional which account for only 6.5% while no corresponding item is identified in the inferential type.

In spite of some differences, this table does reveal that listing, resultative and contrastive conjunctions account for most part of all the conjunctions used in both English and Chinese, which is up to 87.7% and 84.0% in English and Chinese respectively while summative, transitional, appositive and inferential are rarely used in both English and Chinese. Obviously, it may because listing, resultative and contrastive include more sub-categories than

summative, appositive, inferential, and transitional in their classifications. In listing, it includes two sub-categories which are enumerative and additive. In resultative, it includes resultative and causal while in contrastive, it includes reformulatory, antithetic and concessive though most of them are concessive conjunctions. However, for summative, appositive, inferential, each of them just has one sub-category which may result in their smaller proportion of all the conjunctions used. Another reason may be that students are just more inclined to use the commonly used conjunctions like listing, contrastive and resultative conjunctions. Such phenomenon is similar to the native speakers. Biber et al. (2008) propose that the reason can be explained as “listing connectives, helping to structure the information in argumentative essays, are used more commonly than other registers; contrastive connectives highlight contrasting information, which often lead to main points that author wants to make in their argumentative essays; resultative connectives, marking the conclusions that the writer expects the reader to draw and connect the writer’s claim to support facts, is most common category in argumentative essays” (p880). Listing conjunctions, for example, take up a large proportion of all the conjunctions used in both English and Chinese. By observing the data, it was found that both in English and Chinese papers, students were more inclined to use *first (firstly)*, *second (secondly)*, *third (thirdly)*, and *last but not least* to maintain the logic flow of the article. Students used 15.3% of such kind of ordinal number in English while in Chinese, 9.9% were used. One possible explanation can be that teachers emphasize too much on conjunctions in constructing sentences and paragraphs. Therefore, most critics criticized the existing pedagogical methods in which conjunctions were presented

because it is common for some Chinese instructors to provide some formulaic writing models for students to follow mechanically based on similar topics, especially in argumentative essays. Some textbooks also offer such writing models to students (e.g. Yuan and Fan, 2002). There are two reasons why instructors offer formulaic writing models: on the one hand, students can develop topics easily by following those models; on the other hand, it will be easier for the teachers to score a composition if a formulaic model is used (Zhang, 2010). However, such models undoubtedly restrict the creativity of the students. Therefore, Shea (2009) suggests that research which is aimed to inform pedagogy should avoid recycling practice by treating a variety of conjunctions as members of a single unified class.

Besides, the presence of a large number of contrastive conjunctions in both English and Chinese writings cannot be considered surprising. One reason is that since the materials collected in this study were assigned in the argumentative genre of comparison and contrast, it is quite natural that contrastive conjunctions which are typical of comparison and contrast discourse were frequently used. The great number of contrastive conjunctions indicates that students are more inclined to involve the opposing viewpoints so that much greater emphasis is put on the differences rather than similarities. Another reason is that Chinese EFL students partly know that conjunctions contrastive conjunctions can be used to assist them in overtly expressing contrastive relations. However, when compared English with Chinese, in spite of the fact that in English, “the category of contrast is broader than many other categories of linking adverbials, containing items that in some way mark incompatibility between information in different discourse units, or that signal concessive relationships” (Quirk et al.,

1985, p878), students' use of contrastive conjunctions seems quite limited. Research result showed that participants could only use limited and common kinds of conjunctions to mark contrasts. When students present either contrastive words or contrastive matters of what have proceeded, 19 (4.9%) out of 69 (17.6%) are concessive conjunctions like *although*, *even though*, and *however*. Only few students can use reformulatory, antithetic conjunctions like *nevertheless*, *on the contrary*, etc. What is worse, no students can use replacive conjunctions such as *alternatively*, *worst of all* etc. According to Lee (2004), at the syntactic level, the repeated use of the same conjunctions may be acceptable, but at the discourse level, it may make the non-native speakers' writing boring. Several reasons may contribute to the underuse of some contrastive conjunctions in English such as learners' lack of full understanding of some contrastive conjunctions or lack of stylistic awareness (Hu, 2008). But in Chinese writing, students are more inclined to use various kinds of conjunctions especially pairs of conjunctions to express contrastive meaning such as *wulun...dou*, *jinguan...que*, *buguan*, *buguo*, *que* etc. Such pairs of conjunctions seem to be more familiar in Chinese students' mind whenever they want to express the relationship of contrastive.

Table 4 also shows that most of the conjunctions in English outnumber their Chinese counterparts in tokens. The reason may be that students try harder to use various kinds of conjunctions in English than in Chinese. For example, in the way expressing summative or to draw forth a conclusion, students used more various ways in English than in Chinese.

(1) ***In a word***, attending college is a process of improving and perfecting ourselves.

(Student #1)

(2) **In conclusion**, attending college or university helps us to acquire more knowledge

needed by the development, get out of poverty and learn life wisdom. (Student #2)

(3) **In all**, we should be full of hope for university, cherish our time there, do something

meaningful, and be well prepared for the future. (Student #3)

Students also applied other expressions *like all in all, to conclude, to sum up, above all* etc. However, in Chinese writing, students only used 4 types of expressions in total. The same phenomenon occurred in resultative and transitional, appositive and inferential. It may because Students assume that using more various kinds of conjunctions in English can make their essays look more cohesive which, they think, can get higher score in writing.

Besides the differences in each category, the total number that conjunctions used in English is also different from Chinese. English and Chinese belong to different language systems: English requires hypotactic (using conjunctions between clauses) and thus uses more conjunctions than Chinese as Chinese emphasizes paratactic which is realized by the arranging of clauses without using conjunctions to indicate relation between them (Wang, 1954). Therefore, it is not surprising that the number of conjunctions in English writing is much more than the Chinese writing. Consider the following examples:

(4) shang daxue shi henduoren de mengxiang, zhiyu weishenme

Going to university is many people's dream as to why

shangdaxue, butongderen you butongde yuanyin.

go to university different people has different reasons

(Going to university is the dream for many people, **but** as to why go to university,

different people have different reasons.) (Student #4)

(5) tamen buzhidao weishenme yao qushangdaxue, tamen zhi zhidao

they don't know why have to go to university they only know

tamen bixu qu yinwei tamende laoshi he jiazhang rang tamen

they must go because their teachers and parents let them

zheyangzuo.

do this

(They have no idea why they need to go to school, **and** they just know they have

to because their teachers and parents ask them to do so.) (Student #5)

In Example 4, in Chinese, it just used 3 clauses without any conjunctions in a long sentence. Still, there is no difficulty for the Chinese to understand the meaning of the sentence. In English, however, if *but* is omitted, the sentence will become a run-on sentence.

In Example 5, in English, *and* is used to connect two parallel clauses, while in Chinese, it is unnecessary to do this. This is an important reason that why the total number of the conjunctions used in English is much bigger than in Chinese.

4.1.2 Analysis of the Rank Order of the Top 10 Conjunctions in English and Chinese

In the following, Table 5 shows the top 10 most frequently used conjunctions in English and Chinese respectively which is to understand whether there are any similarities or differences in the habit of conjunctions used in English and Chinese.

Table 5
Rank Order of the Use of Conjunctions

Rank	English	Raw frequency	Percent	Chinese	Raw frequency	Percent
1	and	68	17.4%	danshi (however) 但是	38	14.4%
2	because	32	8.2%	er (but)而	28	10.6%
3	but	29	7.4%	suoyi (so)所以	16	6.1%
4	also	14	3.6%	qici (secondly) 其次	15	5.7%
5	so	13	3.3%	yinwei (because) 因為	14	5.3%
6	therefore	12	3.1%	shouxian (first of all)首先	13	4.9%
7	besides	11	2.8%	suiran...danshi (although...but) 雖然...但是	12	4.6%

8	however	10	2.6%	wulun...dou (anyway) 無論...都	10	3.8%
9	so that	9	2.3%	raner (but)然而	7	2.7%
10	although	8	2.0%	cai (then)才	6	2.2%
total		206	52.7%		159	60.5%

Table 5 shows the ten most frequent conjunctions in both English and Chinese. In English, the ten most frequent conjunctions comprise up to 52.7% of the total number of conjunctions in English and 60.5% in Chinese. That is, the top-ten conjunctions of both English and Chinese take up more than half of the total number of conjunctions, although these ten conjunctions only represent 14.1% and 16.1% of the overall conjunction types in English and Chinese respectively. It can be easily concluded that in both English and Chinese writing, students rely heavily on a few conjunctions. As for English, this study shows that EFL writers lack variety in the use of conjunctions compared with the native English speakers. The possible explanation is that Chinese EFL learners have a tendency to use their most familiar and limited number of conjunctions; they might avoid using those that they have less confidence in because they do not have sufficient understanding of the abstract meaning of some items or due to their inexperience in using them (Chen, 2008). As for Chinese, like English, students are prone to use those conjunctions that they are familiar with even though they know other less frequent ones. Therefore, besides those most frequently

used conjunctions like *suoyi* (so 所以), *qici* (secondly 其次), *yinwei* (because 因爲) and *shouxian* (first of all 首先), others are in relatively low frequency.

Moreover, among the top-ten conjunctions in English and Chinese, since there is no direct Chinese counterparts with the English conjunctions like *and*, *also*, *so that* etc. only three out of ten conjunctions occur in both languages, which are *because* (*yinwei* 因爲), *but* (*danshi* 但是), *so* (*suoyi* 所以). One particular example is *suiran...danshi* (although...but 雖然...但是). There is one example in the following:

(6) suiran shuo daxuesheng yijing bushi jinguide shiqing, danshi nenggou

although say university students have not rare thing but can

shang daxue bijingshi kao xuesheng zishende shili de.

go to university still depend students' own ability

“Although college students are no longer rare, going to college still depend on one's ability” (Student #3)

In Example 6, as we all know, in English, *although* is a conjunctive adverbial while *but* is a coordinating conjunction which can never be used together, but in Chinese, *suiran...danshi* (although...but) is a commonly used pair of conjunctions with 12 times frequency, ranking 7 among all the Chinese conjunctions in students' articles.

The top-ten frequently used conjunctions can also be analyzed according to the category they belong to. In Table 6, there is the comparison in the distribution of semantic types across

different varieties conjunctions

Table 6

Classification of the Ten Most Frequently Used Conjunctions

Category	English	percent	Chinese	percent
Listing,	And, besides, also	23.8%	qici (secondly 其次), shouxian (first of all 首先), cai (then 才)	12.8%
Summative	0	0	0	0
Appositive	0	0	0	0
Resultative	So , therefore, so that, because	16.9%	suoyi (so 所以), yinwei (because 因為)	11.4%
Inferential	0	0	0	0
Contrastive	But, however, although	12.0%	er (but 而), suiran...danshi (although...but 雖然...但是), wulun...dou (anyway 無論...都),	19.0%
Transitional	0	0	0	0

Table 6 shows that of the seven categories of conjunctions, only three (listing, resultative, contrastive) categories are included into the top-ten frequently used conjunctions.

In English, listing, *and*, *besides*, *also*, accounts for 23.8% of all conjunctions which is the

most frequently used category. On the other hand, in Chinese, it is contrastive, *er* (but 而), *suiran...danshi* (although...but 雖然...但是), *wulun...dou* (anyway 無論...都) that are most frequently used, accounting for 19.0% which is different from English. From these numbers, it can be seen that students rely more heavily on the category of listing than contrastive and resultative in English writing, while in Chinese writing, students prefer the category of contrastive to listing and resultative.

Another important finding is that in the category of listing, the most frequently used conjunctions are *and*, *also* and *besides* which is quite different from the results done on either native speakers or other second language learners. In a corpus study conducted by Chen (2008) which is done on the native English speakers, *also* ranks first and *then* ranks seventh in the category of listing. According to another study done on 242 Chinese college students, listing conjunctions among the top ten include *also* which ranks third, *and* which ranks fourth, *and...also* which ranks tenth (Dai, 2006). However, in the current study, *and* far outnumbers other conjunctions ranking first and *besides*, ranking seventh here, is rarely included in the top ten conjunctions in other studies (e.g. Tang and Ng, 1995). Therefore, it is worthwhile to investigate participants' use of *and* and *besides* in more detail in this study.

In the current study, *and* is the most popular conjunctions, at the top of the list. The reason for the high frequency of *and* is understandable. First of all, it can not only be used to connect sentence components of parallel structures, for example, two nouns, two adjectives or two verbs, but also be used to connect independent sentences though this study only takes those that connect sentences into consideration. Consider the following example:

- (7) Only after we enter a higher level school can we receive better education, *and* then we will have a chance to study in a well-known university. (# Student 15)

The second reason lies in the overuse of *and* in writing (e.g. Li, 2007; Tang and Ng, 1995). According to Tang and Ng (1995), many students may have the idea that *and* is the simplest and easiest conjunction; it can be used to connect any sentences which makes the connection straightforward. In fact, *and* which is frequently used to replace other conjunctions to indicate a logical relationship may also cause confusion or seems to be redundant when it is used before other conjunctions.

One problem is that students usually put *and* at the very beginning of a sentence instead of using other more appropriate conjunctions such as *moreover*, *thus*. For example:

- (8) People go to college for many reasons. Firstly, if you have a chance to study in a college, it means that you may have a better start for your future than those who never go to a college, because you can get a degree certificate or more.

And as many people's view, a higher degree means more chances to get a better job.

(# Student 16)

- (9) Without attending university, not to mention whether it is famous or not, people cannot be armed with as much as knowledge in any other place. *And* this is the reality of the knowledge era. (# Student 17)

In Example 8 *and* can be replaced by *moreover* which is to express addition. In Example 9, *thus* which is used to express conclusion is usually used instead of *and* according to the judgment of the two English native raters.

Besides is usually used to indicate that ‘this is the final and most important reason’ rather than used as one of a series of points (Wilcoxon & Hayward, 1991). Though frequently used as an additive or an indication that the point is the final and most important reason in argumentative writing, *besides* is seldom included in the top-ten list. However, it was found that participants overused *besides* in this study which is consistent to Tang and Ng’s (1995) corpus study. According to their study, it is also found that students have a tendency to overuse *besides* in their argumentative writing which is 20.6 vs. 2.36 per 100,000 words between the EFL students and the native English speakers. One possible reason is that students are greatly influenced by the formulaic writing models. They often tend to use *besides* in the sentence-initial position to present addition to the previous statement. Consider the following examples:

- (10) However, things are different in the university. They must live in the campus every day. And they have to solve problems by themselves. Students will grow up quickly in the university, which lays a solid foundation for their future life.

Besides, students in the university can enjoy a new time, when they can practice their all kinds of abilities. And they can develop many new friendships which will last for good

All in all, university gives students knowledge, new experiences and memories. And it makes students different.....(# Student 11)

(11)In China, many teachers in universities typically encourage extensive reading and critical thinking; students are released from the College Entrance Exam; the government has not imposed its strict speaking requirement on universities. All these factors contribute to students' mental development.

Besides, universities have many student-run societies. These societies are often described as the mini-version of the society. Students join one or two societies, make acquaintance with other students, polish their social skills, and complete takes one by one.....

In addition, universities can develop a student's muscle.....

In conclusion, universities serve as a buffer between academic ivory tower and the real society..... (# Student 18)

As it is shown above, students seemed to follow the model of using *firstly*, *first of all*, *secondly* at the beginning of a sentence, then adding a new supportive point by using additive conjunctions like *what is more*, *besides*, and finally at the end of a passage, a summative connector is used frequently. Such pattern is frequently found in participants' writings as it is shown in the examples above. Therefore, with students' excessive use of such formulaic writing patterns, it contributes to students' overuse of *besides*.

One more important finding about listing is that though enumerative conjunctions

especially the ordinal conjunctions like *first*, *firstly*, *second*, *secondly*, *third*, *thirdly* account for an important proportion of the total conjunctions, none of them rank among the top ten conjunctions individually in English. One possible reason is that in English, there are various ways in expressing order such as *first*, *firstly*, *first of all* which is to indicate number one accounting for 4.9% in total, and *second*, *secondly* which account for 4.3% in total while in Chinese, ordinal number expressions are not that variable.

4.2 The General Characteristics of Chinese University EFL Students' Use of English Conjunctions

Influenced by the different characteristics of English and Chinese language, Chinese EFL students' use of English conjunctions has its own features. Firstly, there are the studies about students' sentence-initial conjunctions. Secondly, there is explanation of students' inappropriate uses of conjunctions.

4.2.1 Conjunctions in Sentence-Initial Position

Although the position of some conjunctions in sentences is flexible which can occur in the initial, medial and final position, yet according to Halliday and Hasan (1976), “a conjunctive adjunct normally has first position in the sentence, and has its domain of the whole of the sentence in which it occurs: that is to say, its meaning extends over the entire sentence, unless it is repudiated” (p232). Therefore, it is of great importance to investigate the

sentence-initial position conjunctions. Table 7 displays the raw frequency and percentage of conjunctions in terms of two different syntactic positions which are sentence-initial and non-initial position.

Table 7

The Syntactic Position of English Conjunctions

	Sentence-initial	Non-initial
Frequency	198	193
Percentage	50.6%	49.4%

Table 7 shows the frequencies and percentage of the use of conjunctions in terms of syntactic positions. It is shown that participants' use of conjunctions is frequently in the sentence initial position with 50.6% of all conjunctions. This result is parallel to some previous studies (e.g. Granger & Tyson, 1996). Learners seem to have difficulty in mastering the complete knowledge of the conjunctions' various possible syntactic positions (e.g. sentence initial, medial or final) (Lee, 2004). Let's take *however* which is the most frequently observed conjunctions in corpus for example (Lee, 2004). There are a total of ten *however* appearing in all papers, among which six are used in the sentence-initial position. The following are some examples:

- (12) **However**, after this series of lecture, I found I was able to plan my time more effectively. (Student #19)

(13) **However**, the quantity of jobs is limited. (Studeng #20)

(14) **However**, what is far more significant, is to learn how to learn. (Student #21)

The examples above are the examples that when *however* is used in the sentence-initial position. As Granger and Tyson (1996) suggested, overuse of sentence-initial conjunctions may be a developmental problem as it is only observed in the learner corpus. Therefore, before learners develop enough proficiency to manipulate conjunctions in different positions, they may put conjunctions mostly in the sentence-initial position (Park, 2013). Furthermore, Zhang (2010) also proposed several reasons why students prefer to use sentence-initial position. First, it may be that EFL learners try to ensure cohesive ties between two sentences. Second, it may be that EFL learners do not have sufficient knowledge in the use of conjunctions. Third, it may also be due to the transfer of mother tongue. For example, as the direct translation of *however*; *raner* 然而 (*keshi* 可是, *danshi* 但是) are also frequently used in the sentence-initial position, which is the unmarked position of conjunctions in Chinese. Leedham & Cai (2013) also proposed that it was because of the influence of teaching materials. English language reference books in China frequently put conjunctions in the sentential-initial position, in both sentence-level exercises or within short passages of writing.

4.2.2 Inappropriate Uses of English Conjunctions

Inappropriate use refers to those conjunctions used in students' papers cannot be regarded as totally wrong, but the use of them is inappropriate. Observed from participants'

papers, inappropriate uses can be categorized as redundant use, misuse, mixed use, and fragment sentences introduced by conjunctions.

First, some conjunctions are used completely wrong but the use of these conjunctions can mislead the readers. There are also several kinds of misuse in students' writing. In English writing, students seem to have difficulty in distinguishing whether a conjunction is used as parenthesis or is used to lead a clause or a sentence, so they misuse them. The following is one example:

(15) College is like a small society young people go to college to learn some basic social skills, *for example*, college students learn how to get along with different people and how to get involved into some activities and how to develop their career.
(Student #22)

Often *for example* is used as a parenthesis which can be used in the initial, medial and final position of a sentence to express appositive relationship. However, it cannot be used as a conjunction which connects two independent sentences, or it would produce run-on sentences. Therefore, in Example 15, a comma before '*for example*' should be changed into a period. In this way, *for example* is used in the initial position to start an independent sentence. There are also similar misuses such as *namely*, *then*. Consider the following examples:

(16) When I was child, my parents told me that they would be proud of me if I get high

marks in exams, *namely* I can get admission of a university owned good reputation.

(Student #23)

(17) We must understand the significance of university, *then* we have the power to move forward in the university on the road. (Student #24)

The second kind of inappropriate use is that fragment sentences are introduced by conjunctions. Examples are as follows:

(18) Everybody knows that in China, if you don't learn in a university or college, you will never have a easy life. *Because* it's difficult to find a gang of learned teachers or friends who have rich social sources for you. (Student #16)

(19) This situation is rare in undergraduates' life. Just **because** the platform is very different. (Student #25)

In both Example 18 and Example 19, *because* is used in the sentence-initial position to introduce an independent sentence. However, in English, *because* is usually used as a subordinating conjunction to introduce a clause. Subordinate clause is a part of a sentence and thus cannot exist independently. The fragment sentences which are introduced by causal conjunctions especially by *because* are the main reason of overuse of them (Yu, 2007). There are also other conjunctions that are used in fragment sentence such as *for*. Such kind of mistakes should be avoided by Chinese EFL learners in the process of writing.

Third, since there are many pairs of correlatives which connect two clauses into compounds or compound parts of sentences in Chinese, Chinese EFL learners have a strong tendency to use some conjunctions redundantly which appear grammatically in Chinese but are regarded as impossible in English. The most common errors in pair correlatives found in English writing of Chinese EFL students are the use of *although/but*. The tendency to use both in English is very strong among the Chinese EFL students. Consider the following example:

(20) ***Although*** at first, people may not understand the real reason why they go to college and just do it, ***but*** after such a precious time, the real answer will finally come to the surface. (Student #9)

As we all know, in English, since *although* is an adverbial conjunction while *but* is a coordinator which are both used to express contrastive relationship, they cannot be used redundantly in the same sentence. The reason that students use them as a pair of conjunctions maybe that in Chinese, the co-occurrence of the counterparts of *although* (*suiran* 雖然) and *but* (*danshi* 但是) is a frequently used pair of conjunctions to express contrastive meaning which appears as many as 12 times in Chinese writing. Therefore, it is possible that such mistakes are caused by the interference of mother language. When students were asked whether they would first think in Chinese and then translate it into English and whether the use of the English conjunctions was greatly influenced by Chinese when writing English, half

of the students who did the survey admitted that they were influenced by Chinese when they wrote in English. However, such mistakes only occurred once among the 39 English writings. The reason may be that students are in relatively high level of English writing or they have internalized the instruction given by the teacher to avoid such transfer of mother tongue. Therefore, they are conscious to avoid such mistakes.

The fourth kind of inappropriate use is the mixed use of conjunctions. In the use of enumerative conjunctions, students seem to mix different kinds of enumerative conjunctions in an essay. Consider the following example:

(21) ***First***, the most precious thing I get from school is I acquainted with many friends, no matter my classmates, my younger and older schoolmates. They must be a treasure in my life.

Second, we expand our knowledge on many aspects, we can talk some issues of major with our teachers, and we also can exchange our ideas about something popular, we can know someone other's mind about these things.

Thirdly, I think in the university I get the skills which deal with some difficulty.

(Student #26)

In fact, for the enumerative conjunctions like *first* and *firstly*, they have little difference as linking adverbials, including the usage and the meaning. Therefore, *first* should collocate with *second* and *third*, while *firstly* is accompanied by *secondly* and *thirdly*. In Example 21, it

shows that though there is *first* in the first paragraph, *second* in the second paragraph, in paragraph 3 *thirdly* is used instead of *third*. It seems that students pay no attention to consistency when they have to use the enumerative conjunctions.

Finally, some students may have difficulty in remembering some conjunctive phrases exactly or because of carelessness, they make some simple mistakes.

(22) ***Besides of*** knowledge, training our own comprehensive quality is also important in university. (#Student 13)

(23) ***Last but not the least***, university seems become more and more popular because it is a must, or become a habit for most of the families. (Student #27)

Obviously, in Example 22, it is *besides* not *besides of* and in Example 23, it should be *last but not least*. Though they are simple mistakes, many students make similar mistakes in their writing which should call back our attention.

4.3 Some Similarities and Differences between the Higher and the Lower Learner Groups in the Use of English Conjunctions

In order to test whether there is a substantial difference between students in the lower and the higher English writing proficiency in the use of conjunctions, the researcher divided the students into two groups according to the level of the certificate the students have. TEM

and CET are national English examinations in China which enjoy good reliability and validity, aimed to test the ability of the students in using English comprehensively (Sun & Henrichsen, 2011). CET (College English Test, including two phases: band 4 and band 6), is designed to measure the English proficiency level of non-English majors in college. Similarly, for the English majors, they have their own English proficiency test TEM which also has two phases: band 4 and band 8. Obviously, CET 4 is the lowest level while TEM 8 is the highest level. However, it is quite controversial about the difficulty between CET 6 and TEM 4. According to the analysis of two questionnaires conducted about the difficulty of the listening and reading sections in these two exams, the results are as follows: first, 100 English-major sophomores who have both taken CET6 and TEM 4 find that the listening section of CET-6 is more difficult than that of TEM4 as CET6 demands higher level of communicative language competence in vocabulary and syntax (Wang, 2012) ; second, as for the reading comprehension section, 93 valid questionnaires are collected, 48 from English majors and 45 from non-English majors. Only a few of the total find their TEM 4 reading comprehension test is more difficult than the CET 6 in the reading section (Xu, 2008). Therefore, the students who have the TEM 8 or CET 6 certificates are categorized into the higher writing level group. The students who have TEM 4 or CET 4 are in the lower writing proficiency group. That is, there are 24 students in the higher level group and 15 students in the lower level group. Table 8 shows the difference in the number of conjunctions in each category for higher level and lower level essays.

Table 8
Mean for the Number of Each Category of Conjunctions
in Higher and Lower Level Essays

Category	Sub-category	Higher group	Mean for higher group	Lower group	Mean for lower group
Listing	Enumerative	45	1.88	15	1.00
	Additive	78	3.25	34	2.27
Summative		8	0.33	10	0.67
Appositive		6	0.25	6	0.40
Resultative	Causal	38	1.58	22	1.47
	Resultative	27	1.13	15	1.00
Inferential		1	0.04	0	0
Contrastive	Reformulatory	1	0.04	1	0.07
	Antithetic	2	0.08	0	0
	Concessive	38	1.58	27	1.80
Transitional	Discoursal	0	0	2	0.13
	Temporal	8	0.33	7	0.47
Total		252	10.5	139	9.27

From the table above, it can be seen that both the higher proficiency group and lower

proficiency group used similar number of conjunctions on average which higher proficiency group used an average of 10.5 conjunctions in their articles while lower proficiency group used 9.27 conjunctions. This finding is accorded with Yang and Sun's (2012) study, stating that no salient increase or decrease was found regarding the employment of the mean quantity of conjunctions between sophomores and seniors (sophomores are regarded as lower proficiency group while seniors are regarded as higher proficiency group). However, as for each category, there are some differences and similarities between them.

Both the higher level group and the lower level group students used more listing and resultative conjunctions which is consistent with Chen's (2008) study. It indicates that "they have internalized the essence of academic argumentation in English and mastered some skills of connectives use in their English writing" (Chen, 2008, p38). Furthermore, except for summative and inferential, for all other conjunctions, higher level group used fewer conjunctions than the lower level group. Consistent with the current study, Jiang (2006) also found that learners at higher proficiency levels used conjunctions less frequently than learners at lower proficiency levels (6564 vs. 6851). These two results are counter to Hu's (2008) who stated that students with higher proficiency always kept teachers' instructions in mind, and tended to use more tokens and types of conjunctions.

However, after a detailed analysis of each category, it was found that students in the lower level group used similar number of conjunctions to the higher level group, the conjunctions they used were confined to a narrow range of repeated words such as *however*, *although* in contrastive, *after* in transitional, and even no items was found in inferential etc.

However, in the higher level group, they could use more various conjunctions in their writing like *nevertheless*, *to begin with* etc. which could not be found in the lower level group. That is to say, students' use of different conjunctions in their writings does not necessarily mean that they are better writers. If the conjunctions are merely used to display 'stylistic variation' (Crewe, 1990), it should not be encouraged. Rather, more attention should be paid to the relationship between the sections of the text that they intended to link. Another important reason is that higher level group can use other cohesive devices, such as repetitions and substitutions to link up their text rather than relying only on certain conjunctions. Moreover, it is also possible that those who are identified as lower level writers want to use more conjunctions to disguise their poor writing skills and impose surface logicality on their writings. Park (2013) also pointed out that although the writers in the lower proficiency group might be ambitious to try to use more conjunctions, they often did not seem to have a clear understanding of the correct use of those conjunctions.

Chapter 5. Conclusion

This study investigated the use of conjunctions by Chinese EFL learners to provide some instructive implications to language teaching and learning. In this section, major findings of this thesis in terms of the research questions are summarized. Some pedagogical implications of this study are pointed out later. At last, limitations of the research are presented, and some suggestions for further research are given.

5.1 Major Findings of the Study

Through both quantitative and qualitative analysis of 78 articles, 39 articles in English and the other 39 in Chinese, empirical studies on the use of conjunctions by Chinese EFL learners were carried out and shed some light on it. The results of this research have provided answers to the research questions which were put forward in Section 1.3 of Chapter One. The major findings of the present study have been obtained as follows:

Firstly, from the descriptive statistics for proportion of each type of English and Chinese conjunctions used in students' papers, some features can be found. With the different characteristics of English and Chinese, it was found that the use of listing, resultative, transitional, and appositive conjunctions in English outnumbered the Chinese counterparts. Students' overuse of certain conjunctions indicated the students' limited ability to write coherently in content. In other words, students are inclined to resort to some familiar and commonly used conjunctions as easy text organizer instead of developing their ideas in an

internally coherent way. Moreover, because of students' limited use of contrastive conjunctions in English, contrastive conjunctions in Chinese appear to be more various and more frequently used. Such phenomenon may be due to the characteristics of the Chinese argumentative writing. Finally, from the analysis result of the top ten conjunctions, with the high density of the use of certain English conjunctions, again it proved that most of the participants tended to use limited kinds of English conjunctions which may be due to their lack of knowledge in the different uses of conjunctions or may be that they do not pay enough attention to diversify their use of conjunctions when writing. There is also no evidence to prove whether it is due to the influence of Chinese on English writing or the characteristics of the English writing itself.

Second, sentence-initial position and inappropriate use of English conjunctions which are two outstanding features in Chinese EFL learners' use in English conjunctions were studied. It was found that more than half of all conjunctions occupied the sentence initial position in students' English writing. Three reasons may be contributed to the students' preference to sentence-initial position according to the study. First, EFL learners try to use conjunctions to ensure cohesive ties between two sentences. Second, EFL learners do not have sufficient knowledge in the use of the conjunctions. Third, it may be due to the transfer from mother tongue. As for the students' inappropriate use of conjunctions, it was found that redundant use, misuse, mixed use and fragment sentence introduced by conjunctions were the most common types of inappropriate use of English conjunctions. Reasons can be: first language transfer, poor grammatical competence, and unfamiliarity with the use of certain

conjunctions.

Third, this study also analyzed the differences and similarities in the use of conjunctions by Chinese EFL students at different proficiency levels in their argumentative writings which provided some reasonable evidence of whether and how higher proficiency EFL learners differed from the lower proficiency counterparts in the habit of acquiring and using different varieties of conjunctions. By comparing the number of conjunctions in each category in the lower level essays and the higher level essays, it was found that consistent with Yang and Sun's (2012) study, no salient increase or decrease was found in the use of conjunctions by different proficiency levels.

5.2 Pedagogical Implications

Based on the major findings above, some implications for the teaching and learning of English writing especially for the university undergraduates are as follows: .

Firstly, according to the analysis above, it was found that English conjunctions were used too often by the Chinese EFL learners especially the enumerative conjunctions and coordinating conjunctions like *firstly, secondly, thirdly, last but not least, and, but* etc. Since logical relationships can be either overt or covert, it is not necessary to present all the logical relationships with conjunctions (Li, 2007). Therefore, even though conjunctions are absent, there is still no difficulty for the readers to understand the logical relationships of an article through their world knowledge and experience. For teachers, besides explaining the different

uses of various conjunctions, they should also raise students' awareness to diversify their ways to achieve cohesion such as by repetition or substitution. Students, on the other hand, are encouraged to combine multiple simple sentences into long complicated sentences or to use prepositional phrases rather than relying excessively on conjunctions so as to make essays more concise.

Secondly, teach students to use conjunctions correctly. Difficult as it may be, students should try to master the semantic properties of different conjunctions clearly. According to a brief survey conducted before the experiment, some students acknowledged that they used conjunctions only by instinct. Therefore, when students want to express addition, most of them use *and*; when they have to express contrastive, most of them use *but* without any further consideration if the conjunctions precisely express their meanings. Thus, it is necessary to teach students to pay more attention to each conjunction they used. When they have confusion on some conjunctions, they should ask teachers for help or refer to dictionaries. If students pay more attention when every conjunction is used, conjunctions can definitely help improve the quality of their essays.

Thirdly, teachers are not recommended to adopt mechanical practice to teach conjunctions and students should avoid the so-called "writing models". From the writing samples of the participants, it is not difficult to notice that most of them follow similar patterns of argumentative writings. One important reason seems to be that teachers sometimes ask students to recite some writing models which may help students complete their compositions swiftly during examinations. However, in regard of the limited variety of writing patterns and

conjunctions used in students' writings, it seems that classroom teaching, to some extent, restricts students' writing development and then it may cause them hard to get away from the restriction to produce creative essays. Therefore, students are recommended to learn the use of conjunctions in natural environment as much as possible instead of simply following the textbook strictly and practice writing rountinely (Men, 2013).

Fourthly, attention should be paid to the negative transfer of mother tongue. The negative transfer of L1 writing to English writing is often unavoidable in the use of conjunctions, mainly reflected on the position of conjunctions in sentences and the cases of misuse of conjunctions according to the present study. On the one hand, excessive use of sentence-initial conjunctions will ultimately give rise to the low-level of nativeness of English writing. On the other hand, misuses of English conjunctions caused by the Chinese thinking model will surely lower the quality of an essay, such as the use of the correlative *suiran* (although)...*danshi* (but). Therefore, teachers should properly emphasize the diverse positions of English conjunctions to make English writing more native-like. At the same time, teaching students to reduce the negative influence of L1 consciously is also very important to prevent the misuse of conjunctions.

Finally, concerning that students' use of conjunctions is quite limited, the application of corpus-based materials is recommended as it can help tackle the limitation of class-room teaching. On the one hand, students can have a more comprehensive understanding toward a conjunction if they have known the contexts where the conjunctions are used. On the other hand, by referring to the authentic English corpus, it provides the cases in which conjunctions

are used correctly and help students avoid the errors that English learners tend to make.

5.3 Limitations of the Study

Although the present study has achieved some tentative findings so far, however, it is far from being perfect and much work needs to be done. There are still some limitations in terms of sampling, methodology and generalization. Therefore, suggestions are provided in the following for further research.

First, the size of participants is too small. This research only investigates 39 students which may affect the final result more or less. Therefore, the generalizations of its findings should be tested by future studies which include a larger sample. Second, the scope of research participants and materials used are not extensive enough. Participants in this study were confined to those with relatively high English proficiency. More various levels of participants should be included so that the findings can be generalized to students with low, mediate and high proficiencies. Third, since comparison is only limited to Chinese EFL learners, there may be of significance if comparison is conducted between EFL learners or EFL professional writers and native speakers.

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Appendix 1

Writing Experiment Paper in Chinese

Part A: Background information

姓名 : 年龄 : 年级 : 性别 : 专业 (英文) :

手机号码 : e-mail 地址:

1. 学英语多长时间了? _____ 年
2. 有没有住在英语国家多达一年以上的经验? _____
3. 有没有英语成绩 ? 如果有 , 成绩是多少 ? _____ (TOEFL/TOEIC/CET/TEM 等)

写作主题 : 大家都为了各种原因而上大学 (例如 , 赚取新的人生经验 , 为就业做准备 , 或者是为了增长知识。那你觉得上大学是为了什么原因呢 ? 请详细说明你的理由。

1. 文体必须是议论文 , 用汉语写作 , 2. 字数不少于 500 字 , 最好分段写 , 3. 不得网上抄袭 , 如有发现 , 则取消实验资格 , 4. 写作限时为 30 分钟

Translation:

Part A: Background information

Name : Age: Grade : Sex: Major:

Telephone number : e-mail:

1. How long have you learned English? _____ years
2. Do you have any experience living in English-spoken countries for more than two years? _____

3. Do you have any English test score? If yes, what it is. ____ (TOEFL/TOEIC/CET/TEM)

Instruction : People attend college or university for many different reasons (for example, to obtain new experiences, career preparation, to increase knowledge). Why do you think people attend college or university? Use specific reasons and examples to support your answer.

1. It must be an argumentative and written in Chinese; 2. No less than 500 characters; 3.

Time limit is 30 minutes.

Appendix 2

Writing Experiment Paper in English

Instruction : People attend college or university for many different reasons (for example, to obtain new experiences, career preparation, to increase knowledge). Why do you think people attend college or university? Use specific reasons and examples to support your answer.

Requirement: 1. It must be an argumentative and written in English; 2. No less than 250 words; 3. Time limit is 40 minutes.

Appendix 3

Questionnaire

Post assessment:

1. 在英语写作中，我会先用汉语思考怎么写然后直接翻译成英语。
A. 非常同意 B. 同意 C. 不同意 D. 非常不同意

2. 在英语写作中，我会有意识地尽量多使用关联词，如：first..second, besides, however...
A. 非常同意 B. 同意 C. 不同意 D. 非常不同意

3. 我觉得多使用关系词会有助于提高英语作文的质量。
A. 非常同意 B. 同意 C. 不同意 D. 非常不同意

4. 我并不明确各英语关联词用法上的不同，根据感觉随意使用。
A. 非常同意 B. 同意 C. 不同意 D. 非常不同意

5. 在英语写作中，关联词的选用很大程度是受到汉语的影响。
A. 非常同意 B. 同意 C. 不同意 D. 非常不同意

6. 我经常用错那些与汉语使用方法不同的关联词，如经常会把 although...but, because...so 放在一起使用。
A. 非常同意 B. 同意 C. 不同意 D. 非常不同意

7. 在英语写作中，老师会强调要多使用英语关联词。
A. 非常同意 B. 同意 C. 不同意 D. 非常不同意

8. 我只会使用那些老师经常强调的英语关联词。

- A. 非常同意 B. 同意 C. 不同意 D. 非常不同意

9. 我使用的英语关联词种类非常有限。如果是，为什么呢？

- A. 非常同意 B. 同意 C. 不同意 D. 非常不同意

如果是，原因是：_____

10. 在使用英语关联词前，我会努力尝试使用那些不常用的，如，*simultaneously*，*hitherto*, *thereupon* and *straightway etc.*

- A. 非常同意 B. 同意 C. 不同意 D. 非常不同意

在英语关联词选用时，对我影响最大的是什么？如，老师的教学作用，汉语的影响，

因为怕麻烦选用那些比较简单的等等。请说明。(必答)

Translation:

Attention: SA= strongly agree, A= agree, D= disagree, SD= strongly disagree

	SA	A	D	SD
1. When writing in English, I will first think in Chinese and then translate it into English.				
2. When writing in English, I will try to use more conjunctions consciously, such as first...second, besides, however...				
3. I think that using more conjunctions can help improve the quality of my English writing.				

4. I cannot clearly distinguish the use of conjunctions and just use them as I like.			
5. When writing in English, my use of the English conjunctions is greatly influenced by Chinese.			
6. For those English conjunctions that are used differently from Chinese, I am more likely to make mistakes. For example: use 'although...but' or 'because...so' as a pair.			
7. When writing in English, English teachers will emphasize that we should use more conjunctions.			
8. I can only use those English conjunctions that the teachers often emphasize.			
9. My use of conjunctions is very limited.			
10. When I have to use conjunctions, I will try to use those that are not frequently used.			
11. When conjunctions are used, what factors influence you most? For example: teachers' teaching effect, Chinese etc.			

국문 초록

중국 EFL 학습자의 영어와 중국어 논설문 작성에서 접속사의 사용

본 논문의 주요한 목적은 중국 EFL 학습자의 영어와 중국어 논설문 작성에서 접속사의 사용이 어떻게 달라지는지에 대한 연구이다. 이번 연구는 중국인 대학생을 대상으로 실험을 진행하면서 총 39 명의 참가자를 모집했다. 주요한 주제에 대한 참가자는 영어와 중국어로 논설문을 각각 1 편씩 썼다. 두 언어의 데이터를 기반으로 정량적 분석과 정성적 분석 방법을 통해서 몇 가지 측면을 중심으로 분석했다: 영어와 중국어 작문에서 각각의 의미적 접속사 유형의 빈도와 영어 접속사의 일반적인 특징 (문장 맨 앞에 위치한 접속사의 분석과 영어 접속사의 부적절한 사용)이 그것이다. 마지막으로 영어 능력이 높은 학습자와 낮은 학습자에 대한 영어 접속사 사용의 공통점과 차이점의 분석이다.

이 논문에서 논설문 작성 중에 영어 접속사와 중국어 접속사 사용에 차이를 보인다. 영어 접속사의 사용 빈도는 목록화 접속사, 결과적 접속사, 대조적 접속사, 요약적 접속사, 전이적 접속사, 동격적 접속사 그리고 추론적 접속사 순서로 나타나고 반면에 중국어 접속사의 사용빈도는 대조적 접속사, 목록화 접속사, 결과적 접속사, 요약적 접속사, 동격적 접속사, 전이적 접속사 순서로 나타나며, 추론적 접속사를 사용하는 사람은 없는 것으로 나타났다. 그 이유는 영어 논설문에서는 접속사 사용에 더 많이 의존하는 것으로 짐작하고 있다.

그리고 중국 학습자들이 영어 접속사를 사용할 때 구절의 첫 위치를 많이 차지하는 현상이 보인다. 또 다른 공통점은 중국 학습자들이 영어 접속사를 사용할 때 여러 가지 오류가 있다는 점이다. 가장 대표적인 오류들로는 접속사의 중복사용, 오용, 혼용 등이 있다.

마지막으로 정량적 분석 결과를 살펴보면 영어 능력이 높은 학습자들과 낮은 학습자가 영어 접속사 사용빈도의 차이가 거의 없어 보이지만 영어 수준이 높은 학습자가 더 다양한 접속사를 사용했다. 그 이유는 영어 수준이 낮은 학생이 접속사를 사용하는 것으로 자신의 낮은 영어 수준을 숨기려하기 때문이다.

주요어: 논설문 작성, 접속사, 중국 EFL 학습자, 의미적 접속사 유형, 구절의 첫 위치

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