



Comparing the misuse, overuse and underuse of connectives in English  
Academic Writing among students from the English Language Teaching  
Program at Universidad Industrial de Santander in Bucaramanga Colombia in  
levels 4<sup>th</sup>-6<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup>

Research Project

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BUCARAMANGA  
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Research Project submitted in partial fulfillment of the Requirements for the  
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## CONTENT

**RESUMEN**

**ABSTRACT**

<b>INTRODUCTION .....</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>1.1 Statement of the problem .....</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>1.2 Justification.....</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>2. STATEMENT OF PURPOSE .....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>2.1 General Objective .....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>2.2 Specific Objective.....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>2.3 Research Questions.....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>3. THEORETICAL AND CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK.....</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>3.1 Overview of Non-native English Speakers Composition Research.....</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>3.2 Academic Writing .....</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>3.3 Coherence and Cohesion .....</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>3.4 Connectives .....</b>	<b>63</b>
<b>3.4.1 Definition .....</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>3.4.2 Classification of connectives.....</b>	<b>76</b>
<b>3.5 Previous Research on Connectives .....</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>3.6 PreviousCoherence and Cohesion.....</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>3.6.1 Studies Carried Out with Non-Colombian Students.....</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>3.6.2 Other Studies .....</b>	<b>262</b>
<b>3.6.3 Previous Studies on Connectives with Colombian Studies .....</b>	<b>27</b>
<b>3.7 Software for Corpus Analysis .....</b>	<b>3535</b>
<b>4. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY .....</b>	<b>41</b>
<b>4.1 Sampling.....</b>	<b>41</b>

<b>4.2. Instrument .....</b>	<b>43</b>
<b>4.3 Procedure .....</b>	<b>44</b>
<b>5. FINDINGS.....</b>	<b>45</b>
<b>6. DISCUSSION .....</b>	<b>52</b>
<b>6.1 CEW and RPW.....</b>	<b>52</b>
<b>6.2 RPW.....</b>	<b>63</b>
<b>6.3 CEW.....</b>	<b>69</b>
<b>6.4 Others .....</b>	<b>70</b>
<b>7. CONCLUSIONS .....</b>	<b>76</b>
<b>8. RECOMMENDATIONS .....</b>	<b>77</b>
<b>BIBLIOGRAPHY .....</b>	<b>79</b>
<b>APPENDIX 1.....</b>	<b>85</b>
<b>APPENDIX 2.....</b>	<b>87</b>

## RESUMEN

### TITULO\*<sup>1</sup>:

Comparación del mal uso, uso excesivo y falta de uso de los conectores en escritos académicos en inglés por los estudiantes de Licenciatura en Inglés de la Universidad Industrial de Santander in Bucaramanga Colombia en 4-6 semestre y 10 semestre.

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### PALABRAS CLAVE:

Conectores, cohesión, mal uso de conectores, uso excesivo de conectores, poco uso de conectores, análisis de corpus, software

### DESCRIPCIÓN:

Este estudio compara el uso de conectores por escritores colombianos de textos académicos en inglés como segunda lengua entre dos grupos de estudiantes (escritores de ensayos comparativos –CEW) de cuarto a sexto semestre, y (escritores de proyecto de grado- RPW) en décimo semestre, matriculados en licenciatura en inglés de la Universidad Industrial de Santander.

Los investigadores estuvieron a cargo de la recolección de información. Se decidió usar como base un estudio cuantitativo cuyos resultados serán analizados cualitativamente para así encontrar casos comunes de mal uso de conectores. Entre los instrumentos utilizados, dos corpus, se escogieron por la técnica de muestreo aleatorio simple y un programa de análisis de textos (WST4) se uso también.

Los resultados cuantitativos mostraron que RPW uso mas conectores que CEW. RPW, el cual esta conformado por un total de 90.961 palabras, uso 507 conectores en la totalidad del texto, que es un 0.557381%, mientras CEW utilizó tan solo 192 conectores de las 20.286 palabras en los textos, lo que corresponde a un 0.946465% de uso excesivo de conectores por CEW, por esa razón RPW tiene poco uso de conectores. Referente al mal uso, RPW tuvo menos errores (13.86%) comparado con CEW (26.06%). Algunas veces, los conectores son usados pero pueden ser removidos por distintas razones, y ningún otro lo puede sustituir. Además, puntuación, confusiones de registro en cuanto a los conectores que son adecuados para contextos académicos.

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## ABSTRACT

### TITLE\*<sup>3</sup>:

Comparing the misuse, overuse and underuse of connectives in English Academic Writing among students from the English Language Teaching Program at Universidad Industrial de Santander in Bucaramanga Colombia in levels 4<sup>th</sup>-6<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup>

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### KEY WORDS:

Connectives, cohesion, misuse, overuse, underuse, corpus analysis, software

### DESCRIPTION:

This papers compares the use of connectives by EFL Colombian writers of English academic texts among two groups of students (Comparative Essay Writers-CEW) from levels 4-6, and (Research Project Writers-RPW) from level 10, enrolled in the English Language Teaching Program at Universidad Industrial de Santander.

Field workers were in charge of the data collection. It was decided to have as a basis a quantitative study whose results will be analyzed qualitatively to find out common cases of misuse of connectives. Among the instruments used, two sets of corpora, chosen by simple random sampling techniques, and a text analysis software (WST4) can be found.

Quantitative findings showed that RPW used more connectives than CEW. On the one hand RPW used 507 connectives among the 90.961 words from the whole text, leading to 0.55% of connectives. On the other hand, CEW used only 192 connectives from the 20.286 words in the texts, which is a 0.94% of connectives. This shows that was overuse by CEW. As to misuse, RPW had fewer mistakes (13.86%) compared to CEW (26.06%). Sometimes a connective is used but it is possible to erase it for different reasons, and no other can be used instead. Another problem that emerged when doing the quantitative analysis of the writing samples had to do with punctuation. There are paragraphs where too many connectives are used. Another problem found in the learners' corpora was the use of spoken features in academic writing.

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## INTRODUCTION

### *1.1 Statement of the problem*

Writing quality academic essays implies a wide variety of requirements, among them the use of connectives. Connectives are needed to ensure cohesion. According to literature it has been a universally referred problem, surprisingly, not only for EFL learners, but also for experienced and native speakers. Certain groups of connectives have been reported to be used too much and improperly, while others are less frequent. However, although these problems are present in English native writing, EFL writers experience them more frequently.

### *1.2 Justification*

This study on connectives helps both teachers and students to understand concepts, definitions, and problems related to their use. Thus, for teachers it is a tool that may work as a document to be informed about the common uses that students make of connectives either mistakenly or appropriately. From the analysis of the misuses of connectives, a reflection could be done on how to deal with the difficulties that may arise when students use connectives to make learning easier and more effective. However, we know that it is impossible to predict all the specific mistakes learners can make.

It is also helpful for students whose L1 is Spanish. So that students can become aware of common aspects in which they might fail, thus, becoming agents of their own learning.

This paper shows the results at two different points in English studies. Comparative Essays Writers (CEW) are the end of explicit instruction on writing, and Research Project Writers (RPW) at the end of the ELT program. In this way, one group more advanced than the other allowed us to analyze the

difficulties presented in CEW's writings in reference to RPW's writings. All this, bearing in mind that RPW are just a reference group of non-native writers this study chose because it was appropriate for comparison due to the background they share in the program. Thus, with a larger scale project suggestions could be done on the teaching of subjects such as Writing Systems I and II.

This research analyzes the two most common types of academic writing that students are asked to do at college and academic life: essays and research projects. On the one hand, academic essays are the type of document needed for guaranteeing quality at a college level and they are also considered a show of the knowledge acquired and produced during the process. Meanwhile, research projects are the pieces of writing that show all the learning a student has done after five years at college. Also, this is one of the steps in the production of knowledge, which is quite important for the development of the field and therefore the country. In here is where the importance of cohesion is highlighted by looking at the conjunctive cohesion and connectives used in both types of academic writings.

To make the process more reliable and valid, the group used the software WordSmith 4.0 for analyzing data. By exploring these tools, the researchers are trying to introduce the use of new technologies at UIS. This study is an example of how to use software for data analysis, thus, giving insights for coming researchers to make discoveries about genre, many areas of linguistics, lexical semantics, grammar, discourse pragmatics, and translation studies.

Considering the few number of studies carried out with L1 Spanish English writers and their use of connectives, this paper may also set the path to start this series of works.

## **2. STATEMENT OF PURPOSE**

### *2.1 General objective*

To compare the use of connectives by EFL Colombian writers of English academic texts among two groups of students, (Comparative Essay Writers-CEW) from levels 4<sup>th</sup>-6<sup>th</sup>, and (Research Project Writers-RPW) from level 10<sup>th</sup>, enrolled in the English Language Teaching Program at Universidad Industrial de Santander.

### *2.2 Specific objective*

- To determine the differences in the use of connectives by EFL Colombian writers of English academic texts among two groups of students, (Comparative Essay Writers-CEW) from levels 4<sup>th</sup>-6<sup>th</sup>, and (Research Project Writers-RPW) from level 10<sup>th</sup>, enrolled in the English Language Teaching Program at Universidad Industrial de Santander, in terms of overuse and underuse.
- To determine the patterns of connectives' misuse by EFL Colombian writers of English academic texts among two groups of students, (Comparative Essay Writers-CEW) from levels 4<sup>th</sup>-6<sup>th</sup>, and (Research Project Writers-RPW) from level 10<sup>th</sup>, enrolled in the English Language Teaching Program at Universidad Industrial de Santander when writing such texts.

### *2.3 Research questions*

- What are the most commonly used connectives by EFL Colombian writers of English academic texts among two groups of students, (Comparative Essay Writers-CEW) from levels 4-6, and (Research Project Writers-RPW) from level

10, enrolled in the English Language Teaching Program at Universidad Industrial de Santander?

- What are the least frequently used connectives by EFL Colombian writers of English academic texts among two groups of students, (Comparative Essay Writers-CEW) from levels 4-6, and (Research Project Writers-RPW) from level 10, enrolled in the English Language Teaching Program at Universidad Industrial de Santander?

- Which are the most difficult connectives to use by EFL Colombian writers of English academic texts among two groups of students, (Comparative Essay Writers-CEW) from levels 4-6, and (Research Project Writers-RPW) from level 10, enrolled in the English Language Teaching Program at Universidad Industrial de Santander?

- Is there any difference in the use of connectives among the two groups of writers?

### 3. THEORETICAL AND CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

Writing an English academic essay is an activity that any college student gets involved in. In this context, texts must have a certain set of characteristics, and one of them is being coherent. However, this aspect seems to be problematic not only for foreign writers, but also for English native writers. In this study, we are particularly interested in connectives as cohesion devices in such English essays produced by EFL learners from Universidad Industrial de Santander.

After revising the literature on connectives in EFL and native writing, the pre-service teachers carrying out this project realized that studies analyzing the topic on EFL writers of English essays (whose L1 was Spanish) were limited. This research therefore attempts to set a basis to fill the gap by comparing the use of connectives by EFL Colombian writers of English academic texts among two groups of students, (Comparative Essay Writers-CEW) from levels 4<sup>th</sup>-6<sup>th</sup>, and (Research Project Writers-RPW) from level 10<sup>th</sup>, enrolled in the English Language Teaching Program at Universidad Industrial de Santander. This comparison will be made in terms of underuse, overuse and misuse.

The terms overuse and underuse are defined in this research on the basis of CEW use of connectives. Thus, overuse describes instances where the CEW use significantly more connectives than the RPW, whereas underuse refers to those cases when the CEW use significantly fewer connectives than the RPW. The present study does not consider RPW usage of connectives a reasonable target since such group is not composed of native speakers which use the connectives naturally. However, RPW are in a higher level than CEW, reason why the pre-service teachers hypothesized that they use them better, and some improvement might be seen.

To accomplish the objective of this paper the main concepts on the issue will be discussed. First, an overview of the research on EFL and ESL writing will be carried out.

### **3.1. Overview of Non-native English Speakers Composition Research**

Early approaches to writing involved controlled moving from paragraph to essay. It was only until the 1970s that ESL teachers were trained to teach ESL writing. This led to a change. The emphasis on controlled writing focused on structure is shifted into an emphasis on practice and free writing, concerned both with grammar and mechanics and with the process of writing<sup>5</sup>. These approaches and beliefs were borrowed partly from L1 composition research and newer approaches based on research in L2 writing.

In the teaching of writing, several techniques have been designed. The most relevant ones have been English for Specific Purposes (ESP), and Computer Assisted Language Learning (CALL). ESP (English for Specific Purposes) was developed for ESL/EFL learners. With a focus on science and technology, ESP was offered as an alternative to general English courses, which usually concentrate teaching English for general life and literary purposes. However, ESP is hard to teach for the English teacher because the teacher has to know the writing conventions of the subject matter discussed. It can also be misleading since the English teacher cannot be an expert in those subjects.

Another method used in writing instruction is CALL (Computer Assisted Language Learning). It was also created for improving ESL students' composing and revision skills by analyzing and editing their writing<sup>6</sup>. In short,

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<sup>5</sup> Spack, R. Teaching across cultures. *College English*, 58 (5), 592. 1988

Swales, J. *Genre analysis*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press. 1987

<sup>6</sup> Choi, Jeongsook. A contrastive analysis of argumentative essays written in English by Korean ESL students and by native English-speaking students. SOUTHERN ILLINOIS UNIVERSITY AT CARBONDALE, 2005.

research on the field of ESL writing has been done. It has focused on the writing process as composing and revision strategies, developmental processes of ESL writers<sup>7</sup>, the impact of EFL language interference on ESL writing and error in ESL writing<sup>8</sup>, text organization research<sup>9</sup>, cohesion and coherence in ESL writing<sup>10</sup>. It is precisely this area of research, cohesion and coherence in ESL writing that our study focuses on and those cohesive ties found in the different types of essays to be analyzed, all this in the field of academic writing.

### **3.2. Academic writing**

In brief, academic writing is 'structured research' written by 'scholars' (university writers in the context of this research project) for other scholars. "Academic writing addresses topic-based 'research questions' of interest to anyone who is seeking factually-based, objectively-presented information on a particular topic. The objective of academic writing is "the creation of 'new knowledge' via (a) a review of what is currently known about a given topic as (b) the foundation for the author's new views or perspectives on the topic"<sup>11</sup>.

Academic writing is based on analysis - the process of breaking down ideas - to increase one's understanding. It uses deductive reasoning, semiformal voice, and third person point-of-view. *Deductive reasoning* consists on stating the thesis (main idea) early and then following with supporting examples and details to make complicated ideas easier to understand. Another feature is the use of *semiformal voice* to write. It means no slang, colloquialism (common

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<sup>7</sup> Raimes, A. (1985). What unskilled ESL students do as they write: A classroom study of composing. *TESOL Quarterly*, 19 (2), 229-258.

<sup>8</sup> Kroll, B. (Ed.). *Second Language Writing. Research Insights for the Classroom*. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge. 1990

<sup>9</sup> Clyne, M. *Australia's language potential*. Sydney, NSW: University of New South Wales Press Ltd. 2005

Kaplan, R. B. Cultural thought patterns in intercultural communication. *Language Learning*, 16, 1-20. 1996

<sup>10</sup> Halliday, M. A. K., Hasan, R. *Cohesion in English* (London–New York: Longman). 1976

<sup>11</sup> Finnish Institutions Research Paper. Available online: <http://www.uta.fi/FAST/FIN/RESEARCH/acadwrit.html> (Nov 13)

expressions of ordinary speech), contractions of nouns and verbs, etc can be used in the essay. Also, academic essays are mostly written in third person (e.g., *he, she, it,* and *they* as well as their accusative, dative, and possessive forms), since the use of the “authorial I” for many years was thought to weaken the objectivity and clarity of an argument presented in an academic essay. However, this tendency has started to change and nowadays its use is accepted bearing in mind some elements such as audience and message, where it is used<sup>12</sup>.

Academic writing must have some characteristics. It has a purpose, general and specific. The general purpose is to present information that displays a clear understanding of a subject. However the Specific Purpose varies according to the assignment. Four broad types of academic writing can be identified: Essay, Report, Literature Review and Journal. This study takes as the sample pieces of academic writing, essays, created by students at UIS from the Licenciatura en Inglés program in subjects such as Comparative Linguistics as well as *research projects* from 10th semester. Since essays are the type of texts this study deals with, they will be defined next.

Academic essays can be argumentative, expository, persuasive, descriptive, comparative and narrative.

*An argumentative essay* aims to convince the reader to join the author’s side of an issue. It is an essay that takes a position and tries to support or justify the position and persuade other to share it<sup>13</sup>. This is what makes an essay argumentative in nature. Argumentative essays call for extensive research of literature or previously published material. Also, they require empirical research where college students collect data through interviews, surveys, observations,

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<sup>12</sup> Writing Studio. Duke University. .Available online: [http://wvp.duke.edu/wstudio/resources/documents/first\\_person.pdf](http://wvp.duke.edu/wstudio/resources/documents/first_person.pdf) (Oct 5)

<sup>13</sup> *Choi, Jeongsook*. A contrastive analysis of argumentative essays written in English by Korean ESL students and by native English-speaking students. SOUTHERN ILLINOIS UNIVERSITY AT CARBONDALE, 2005.

or experiments. For all these requirements, these type of essays take the reader through a process of critical thinking<sup>14</sup>. It is needed in order to be certain and make sure that there was no mistake in reasoning or integrating any fallacies. They also include any possible objections the reader might have to the argument of the essay. The structure of an argumentative essay can be described as follows: a clear concise and defined thesis statement, paragraphs with evidential support (whether factual, logical, statistical or anecdotal), and a conclusion which does not simply restate the thesis, but readdresses it in light of the evidence provided<sup>15</sup>.

*Expository* essays are a type of written discourse that are used to explain, describe, instruct or give information<sup>16</sup> or clarify a process, it could also be a response to literature, to a question or to a quotation. This type of essay is commonly assigned as a tool for classroom evaluation and is often found in various exam formats. The purpose of an expository essay is to present, completely and moderately, other people's views or to report about an event or situation in detail, apart from criticism, argument or development. "Well-written exposition has a clear, central presentation of ideas, examples or definitions that enhance the focus developed through a carefully crafted reader's understanding"<sup>17</sup>, these facts, examples, and definitions are objective and not dependent on emotion, although the writing may be lively, engaging, and reflective of the writer's underlying commitment to the topic. Sometimes the argumentative essay and the expository essay are taken as only one, which is not true. These two genres are similar, but the argumentative essay differs from the expository essay in the amount of pre-writing (invention) and research involved. The argumentative essay is commonly assigned as a capstone or final project in first year writing or advanced composition courses and involves

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<sup>14</sup> Online Writing Lab. *Argumentative Essays*. Available at: <http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/685/05/> (Feb 8)

<sup>15</sup> Online Writing Lab. *Argumentative Essays*. Available at: <http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/685/05/> (Feb 8)

<sup>16</sup> Online Writing Lab. *Expository Writing*. Available at: <http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/685/02/> (Feb 8)

<sup>17</sup> Dalton State College. Rhetorical modes in essay writing. Available at: <http://www.daltonstate.edu/esl/Rhetorical%20Modes.htm> (Dec2)

lengthy, detailed research. Expository essays involve less research and are shorter in length.

A *persuasive* essay states an opinion and supports it convincingly. It considers the nature of the audience and marshals evidence accordingly<sup>18</sup>. It utilizes logic and reason in order to show that one idea is more legitimate than another idea. This kind of essays use facts taken from readings, observations or personal experiences; statistics that come from responsible sources; quotes that are directly from leading experts that support the position of the writer; and examples, which enhance the writer's meaning and make the ideas concrete. It is neither completely objective nor wholly emotional. Instead, it uses the controlled feelings of the writer to persuade the audience. Persuasive writing moves the reader to take an action or to form or change an opinion. This type of writing requires thinking skills such as analysis, synthesis and evaluation; requires writers to choose from a variety of situations and to take a stand; and the development of a skill frequently used in school and the workplace. Persuasive essays have various functions. For instance, to state and support a position, opinion or issue; to defend, refute or argue. In well-written persuasion, the topic or issue is clearly stated and elaborated as necessary to indicate understanding and conviction on the part of the writer<sup>19</sup>.

Essays can also be *descriptive*. According to The Online Writing Lab<sup>20</sup> a descriptive essay can be objective or subjective, giving the author "a wide choice of tone, diction and attitude". The purpose of a purely descriptive essay is to involve the reader enough so he or she can actually visualize what is being described, and share a sensory experience with the writer<sup>21</sup>. In other words, descriptive essays are sense appealing. The objective is to create a "word picture" vividly enough that the reader can "see", "smell", "hear", or "touch" the

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<sup>18</sup> Ibid. Dalston State College

<sup>19</sup> Ibid. Dalston State College.

<sup>20</sup> Writing English Lab. *The descriptive essay*. Available at: <http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/685/03> (Jan 5)

<sup>21</sup> Dalston State College. Rhetorical modes in essay writing. Op. Cit.

object being described<sup>22</sup>. It can also describe an object, person, place, experience, emotion, situation, etc.<sup>23</sup>. One of the main characteristics of descriptive essays is that they rely on concrete, sensory detail, or emotions to communicate their point.

*Comparative* essays, also called compare-and contrast essays or paper, are also a type of academic writing. The task of comparing is a fundamental part of academic writing. In a compare-and-contrast papers, writers weight A and B equally. They may be about two similar things that have crucial differences, yet turn out to have surprising commonalities<sup>24</sup>. Comparisons need to be supported by a range of sources, and the writing needs to demonstrate an understanding that knowledge is often complex and controversial (Writing Center at Harvard). There are two basic ways to organize the body of a comparative paper: (1) in *text-by-text*, in which A is discussed first, and then all B; (2) in *point-by-point*, in which the writer alternates points about A with comparable points about B. Comparative writing is more than just a summary or a description of two items, it must contain evaluative comments drawn from the comparison.

Finally, *narrative* essays, offer writers the chance to think and write about themselves. When writing this kind of essay, the purpose is to tell a story based on a real or imaginary event, or recount a personal or fictional experience<sup>25</sup>. Narrative essays are told from a defined point of view, often the author's, so there is feeling as well as specific and often sensory details provided to get the reader involved in the elements and sequence of the story. Despite this, they are less structured than essays. When writing these essays, the writer must include all the conventions of storytelling such as plot, character, setting, climax

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<sup>22</sup> Florida Community College. Available Online at: [www.fccj.edu/campuses/kent/campus\\_resources/learning\\_ctr\\_labs/lc\\_handouts/english/.../Description%20E-16.pdf](http://www.fccj.edu/campuses/kent/campus_resources/learning_ctr_labs/lc_handouts/english/.../Description%20E-16.pdf) (Oct 8)

<sup>23</sup> Ibid. The descriptive essay.

<sup>24</sup> Writing Center at Harvard. Comparative essay. Available at: <http://www.fas.harvard.edu/~wricntr/documents/CompAnalysis.html>. (Jan 23)

<sup>25</sup> Ibid. Dalston State College.

and ending. Usually, they are filled with details that are carefully selected to explain, support, or embellish the story.

Our study deals only with two of the aforementioned essays: argumentative and comparative, which are considered types of academic essays. In our study, the academic writing used will be that produced by students of Licenciatura en Inglés at UIS, from subjects such as Comparative Linguistics as well as research projects from 10th semester. Students from Comparative Linguistics will produce comparative and argumentative essays. Meanwhile, students from 10<sup>th</sup> semester will write research projects. Based on these texts, this research aims at comparing issues such as the use, misuse and overuse of connectives as cohesive devices among the two groups of CEW and RPW students. Although the primary aim of the study is not to analyze levels of coherence in the texts, both terms, coherence and cohesion will be defined for the sake of clarity.

### **3.3 Coherence and Cohesion**

Coherence and cohesion tend to be thought of as the same and sometimes it is difficult to separate the two. However, think of coherence as the text making sense as a whole at an ideas level, and cohesion as rather more “mechanical” links at a language level. Thus, it is possible to have a text full of cohesion devices and yet little coherence.

More in depth, coherence can be seen as the overall event structure of the narrative<sup>26</sup>. It may be realized for different types of cue that signal how people and things are related e.g. referential coherence, and how events within that discourse are related on the basis of time, location, causality and structure.

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<sup>26</sup> Shapiro, L. R., & Hudson, J. A. Coherence and cohesion in children's stories. In J. Costermans & M. Fayol (Eds.), *Processing interclausal relationships: Studies in the production and comprehension of text* (pp. 23–48). Mahwah, NJ: Erlbaum. 1997

Furthermore, coherence is seen as the element that allows a text to be understood in a real world setting<sup>27</sup>

Relating to cohesion, it is considered a subset of coherence, which along with it, is thought of as one of the key defining characteristics of the quality of writing<sup>28</sup>. A text can be cohesive in three levels: conjunctive cohesion, lexical cohesion, and repetition. Lexical cohesion is the means by which texts are linguistically connected<sup>29</sup> and conjunctive cohesion is the type of cohesion commonly and most extensively dealt with in grammar and composition writing. It is often referred to as “transitional devices”<sup>30</sup>. As the name suggests, connectives are the elements mostly referred to when discussing conjunctive cohesion. Since conjunctive cohesion is the level at which connectives are addressed, they will be the focus of the study.

### **3. 4. Connectives**

#### *3.4.1 Definition*

In literature, despite the attention the term has got from researchers the consistence of the terms has not been achieved. Connectives<sup>31</sup> have been referred to as adverbials, logical connectors, some even call them conjunctions, or connectors<sup>32</sup>, logical devices or transitional devices, discourse markers (DM),

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<sup>27</sup> Fitzgerald, J. and D.L. Spiegel. Textual Cohesion and Coherence in Children's Writing. *Research in the Teaching of English* 20, 263-280 1986 in *Coherence in the Narrative and Persuasive Writing of Adolescents* By John Evar Strid. Available Online at: [http://web.mac.com/jevar/Site/Publications\\_and\\_Research\\_files/Coherence%20in%20the%20Narrative%20and%20Persuasive%20Writing%20of%20Adolescents.pdf](http://web.mac.com/jevar/Site/Publications_and_Research_files/Coherence%20in%20the%20Narrative%20and%20Persuasive%20Writing%20of%20Adolescents.pdf)

<sup>28</sup> Strid, J.E. "Coherence in the Narrative and Persuasive Writing of Adolescents." Paper presented at Illinois TESOL, Chicago, IL. John Evar Strid, Ph.D. 1998

<sup>29</sup> Ramasawmy, Narainsamy. *Conjunctive cohesion and relational coherence in students' compositions*. Nov 2004. UNISA ONLINE-UNISA ETD.

<sup>30</sup> Op. Cit

<sup>31</sup> Blakemore, Diane. *Semantic constraints on relevance*. Oxford: Basil Blackwell. 1987.

<sup>32</sup> Celce-Murcia, M., Larsen-Freeman, D. *The Grammar Book: An ESL/EFL Teachers Course*. Newberry House, Rowley, MA. 1983

pragmatic markers<sup>33</sup>, discourse particles<sup>34</sup>, or pragmatic particles<sup>35</sup>. Each one of these terms has its own meaning, and depends on the linguists' attitudes to make it different from the rest. In this paper, they all will be called "connectives" for the sake of consistency.

Connectives are cohesive elements. According to Fraser connectives are "a class of lexical expressions drawn primarily from the syntactic classes of conjunctions, adverbs and prepositional phrases". As Halliday and Hassan<sup>36</sup> argue, connectives contribute only indirectly to text coherence. Since they do not have meaning by themselves, their role is to link and give meaning<sup>37</sup> to the elements of a text to facilitate readers understanding it more easily. Similarly, Tang and Ng conclude that "connectives do not create relationships. They only express the cohesive relationships that already exist in the writer's thinking. They are indicators of visible signs of the relationships". Both researchers agree in that connectives suggest relations (definitions and examples of such relations will be presented in section 3.4.2.2 *Semantic categorizations*).

The role of connectives in coherence has been studied from reading comprehension, pragmatic meaning, and listening comprehension perspectives. Regarding the analysis of connectives from the pragmatic perspective, the theory presented by Fraser<sup>38</sup> needs to be mentioned. For him, similarly to Halliday and Hassan<sup>39</sup>, connectives do not give any meaning to the propositional content. Instead, they are clues to signal the relationships that exist in the authors mind. Thus, omitting them would not allow understanding

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<sup>33</sup> Fraser, Bruce. Discourse Markers across Language. *Pragmatics and Language Learning Monograph Series 4*, 1993.

<sup>34</sup> Schorup. Common discourse particle in English conversation: *Like, well, y'know*. New York: Garland. 1985

<sup>35</sup> Shen, Ying. An analysis of Discourse Markers used by non-native English Learners: Its Implications for Teaching English as Foreign Language. 2007.

<sup>36</sup> Halliday, M. A. K., Hasan, R. *Cohesion in English* (London–New York: Longman). 1976

<sup>37</sup> Byrne, D. *Teaching Writing Skills*. London: Longman. 1979

<sup>38</sup> Op. Cit. Fraser.

<sup>39</sup> Op. Cit 1976

the author's thinking. Following the same line, Blakemore<sup>40</sup> stated that connectives have "procedural meaning". This is, they reduce the speed and efforts of the readers to interpret the meaning, thus improving communication.

Although existent, little research has been carried out to analyze the role of connectives in listening comprehension. Euen's study is one of the few existent. The study was conducted with 80 Korean learners of English as a foreign language. 40 students listened to a lecture with discourse markers (connectives), while the other had to listen to one without them. After asking the subjects to do a summary of the lecture, it was discovered that the ones who listened to the lecture with DM's performed better in the task. This showed that connectives have an important role in listening comprehension.

In view of the previous facts, most argue that connectives are vital for linking a text and understanding its meaning<sup>41</sup>. However, it has been discovered that even if connectives are not present the semantic relations of a text can still be identified by other elements, this is conjunctive cohesion can be signaled by other elements.

It has also been stated that the fact that a text is full of connectives does not make it easier to read<sup>42</sup>. Similarly, Crewe has criticized the overuse of connectives and states that "over-use at best clutters up the text unnecessarily, and at worst, causes the thread of the argument to zigzag about, as each connective points it in a different direction". Thus, researchers such as Harnett<sup>43</sup> found out that, surprisingly, taking out connectives from texts can improve their quality and readability.

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<sup>40</sup> Blakemore, Diane. *Semantic constraints on relevance*. Oxford: Basil Blackwell. 1987.

<sup>41</sup> Crewe, William. *Connectives on the other hand who needs them though?* Working Papers in Linguistics and Language Teaching Vol. 1985 No. 8. 1985.

<sup>42</sup> Tang, Eunice and Cristina Ng. *A Study on the Use of Connectives in ESL Students' Writing*. Hong Kong Journals Online: Perspectives (City University of Hong Kong) Vol. 7 (1995 Autumn), 18 pages.

<sup>43</sup> Ibid.

### 3.4.2 Classification of connectives

Connectives have been classified in different manners. The following taxonomies have been suggested:

#### 3.4.2.1. Grammatical Categories of Connectives

Connectives can be categorized grammatically as: coordinators, subordinators, and adverbials.

*Coordinators* are used to join two independent clauses. The coordinators are *and, but, for, nor, yet, so, or, or else; correlative pairs* such as *both...and, not only...but also, and...too, neither...nor, but...still, but...anyway, so...that, such...that, whether...or not, as...as, more/less...than* (Usually found in Grammar-Quizzes).

Usually a comma is placed before the coordinator.

#### Examples:

*The office is closed for the next two days, but you can still phone to leave a message.*

*I forgot my computer disc, so I will have to hand in my assignment late.*

*Subordinators* join a dependent clause to an independent clause. Examples of subordinators are: *although, even though, because, since, so that, when, also, as well as, besides, too, in addition, moreover, furthermore, though, while, whereas, despite, in spite of, now that, as, in order that, so, as long as, inasmuch, because of, due to, owing, or rather, if only if, unless, even if, whether or not, provided (that), in case, in the event (that), after, before, when, while, since, as, until, as soon as, by the time, as (like) as if, as though*. They are used before the dependent clause. They can be used in two positions:

1) The subordinator and dependent clause can come before the independent clause with a comma.

When the bell rang, the students ran to the sky-train station.

2) The subordinator and dependent clause can come after the independent clause with no comma.

The students ran to the sky-train station when the bell rang.

*Adverbials* are one-word items such as *however, next, conversely, etc.*; phrasal constructions such as *in other words, that is, etc.* or sentence-modifying elements that connect the unit they occur to a larger unit in the discourse. They function in logical relations such as reason and result, sequencing of elements, or temporal sequencing of information. Some are more common at the beginning of the sentences, but they can appear in other places.

One example is:

Kapa was also used to make the *malo* or loincloth for men, and a wrap-around skirt, called a *pa'u*, for women; however, an item of clothing worn by both sexes was called a *kihei* which was a square or rectangular shawl that was fastened around the shoulders by tying two ends in a knot.

#### 3.4.2.2. *Semantic Categorizations*

Three different taxonomies will be reviewed in this section -Halliday and Hasan's<sup>44</sup>, Quirk's et al.<sup>45</sup>, and Fraser's<sup>46</sup>. They are defined by Halliday and Hasan as temporal, causal, adversative, and additive.

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<sup>44</sup> Halliday, M. A. K., Hasan, R. *Cohesion in English* (London–New York: Longman). 1976

<sup>45</sup> Quirk, R., Greenbaum, S., Leech, G., and Svartvik, J. *A Grammar of Contemporary English*. 1972. London: Longman

**a.** *Temporal* connectives express relations that in some way are “next in time”. Such a sequence is said to be in the speaker’s or writer’s organization of his discourse. Examples of temporal conjunctives are *then, and, next, afterwards, after that, subsequently* and some others.

[RPW-3251] “In this reflective practice, the pre-service teachers applied theories in classroom practice, ***then*** analyzed their performance together with their peers to...”

Temporal connectives also refer to two actions taking place at the same time, a temporal overlap relation as in:

[RPW-3248] However, after the analysis of concrete findings it can be said that some classroom situations are of major importance ***while*** carrying out a teaching practicum.

Other conjunctives of temporal overlap include *meanwhile, all this time*.

**b.** *Causal* connectives express relations that show the result of one phenomenon or event arising from another phenomenon or event and vice versa, for example:

Conjunctives such as *so, thus, hence, therefore, consequently, accordingly, as a result of, in consequence* have the semantic relational function of reason-result, *to* and *by* can indicate means-purpose and *therefore* can point to a grounds-conclusion relation.

[RPW-4141] “In this manner, the pre-service teachers or tutors would be able to discuss suitable procedures to follow, with the aim of modifying problematic

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<sup>46</sup> Fraser, Bruce. What are discourse markers? *Journal of Pragmatics* 31 (1999) 931-952

issue addressed. **Consequently**, this groups or pre-service teachers might increase the level of classroom management skills and gain more fulfilling results...”

In example [RPW-4141] **consequently** suggests a grounds-conclusion relation between the two sentences.

c. *Adversative* connectives are according to Halliday and Hasan<sup>47</sup> adversative conjunctives that basically signal a “contrary to expectation” relation, which may be deduced from the content of what is being said, or from the communication process. Such a relation is normally signaled by conjunctives like *but, however, and, though, on the other hand, unlike, instead, rather* and so on. Examples are:

[RPW-1627] “This can be explained by their condition as pre-intermediate students and the short time assigned to the development of the course. **Nevertheless**, text spelling was perfect in almost all of the texts, showing the effect of word processors in their composing process. “

In [RPW-1627] **nevertheless** signals “in spite of what I just said”.

d. *Additive* conjunctives provide additive relations to the text. However, the conjunctive *and* is somewhat different from coordination proper, although it is no doubt derivable from it. The words *and, or, and nor* are all used cohesively as conjunctives and classified as additives. Examples also include *either or, or else, and also, furthermore, similarly, for example* and many others.

Also, the main connectives are grouped below according to the similarity of their meaning with the three basic connectives. In this first classification the three main categories for basic connectives can be found. These are: similar to AND,

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<sup>47</sup> Halliday, M. A. K., Hasan, R. *Cohesion in English* (London–New York: Longman). 1976

similar to OR, and similar to BUT. This classification is based on Chapter 10 “Sentence Connection” in A Grammar of Contemporary English by Quirk<sup>48</sup>

Connectives similar to AND which include. This type of connectives can of different types *listing, transition, summation, inference, result and apposition*.

**Listing** connectives can be (1) enumerative and (2)additive. (1)Enumerative connectives indicate a *cataloguing* of what is being said. Most enumerations belong to clearly defined sets: “First, ... furthermore, ... finally, ... “; “One, ... two, ... three, ...”; “First(ly), ... second(ly), ... third(ly), ...”; “above all” , “last but not the least” which mark the end of an *ascending* order; “first and foremost”, “first and most importantly” which mark the beginning of a *descending* order. And those connectives such as “next”, “... then”, “... afterward”, “... lastly/finally”.

On the other hand, connectives can also show (2) addition to what has been previously indicated. They can (a) reinforce (includes confirmation), e.g. also, again, furthermore, further, moreover, what is more, then, in addition, besides, above all, too, as well (as); (b) show equation (similarity with what is preceded) e.g., equally, likewise, similarly, correspondingly, in the same way.

**Transitional** connectives can lead to a new stage in the sequence of thought. Some examples are now, with reference/respect/regard to, regarding, let us (now) turn to...; as for, as to , which are often used when describing something briefly; incidentally, by the way, come to think of it, which indicate a digression and an afterthought ;and talking/speaking of... (Informal), apropos (formal), or that reminds me, which are used to introduce digression. These last connectives are more common in spoken language.

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<sup>48</sup> Quirk, R., Greenbaum, S., Leech, G., and Svartvik, J. A Grammar of Contemporary English. 1972. London: Longman.

**Summation** connectives indicate a generalization or summing-up of what has preceded. Some examples are : in conclusion, to conclude, to sum up briefly, in brief, to summarize, altogether, overall, then, therefore, thus.

Also, **opposition** connectives are found in this classification. They are used to refer back to previous sentences or to parallel or related references: i.e., that is, that is to say, - namely, - in other words – or, or rather, or better –and – as follows – e.g., for example, for instance, say, such as, including, included, especially, particularly, in particular, notably, chiefly, mainly, mostly (of).

**Result** connectives express the consequence or result of what has been said before: So , therefore, as a result/consequence, the result/consequence is/was..., accordingly, consequently, now, then, because of this/that, thus, hence, for this/that reason.

**Inference** devices indicate a deduction from what is implicit in the preceding sentence(s): Then, in other words, in that case; else, otherwise, which are equivalent to a negative condition; If so/not ..., that implies, my conclusion is.

Secondly, there are those connectives similar to OR which include reformulation, and replacement connectives. **Reformulation** connectives are used to express ideas in a different way from the previously used: better, rather, in other words, in that case, to put it (more) simply. **Replacement** connectives are used to express an alternative to what has preceded: again, alternatively, rather, better/worse (still)... on the other hand, the alternative is..., another possibility would be

Finally, there are connectives whose meaning is similar to BUT. These can be contrast and concession connectives. **Contrast** connectives express a contrastive idea: instead, conversely, then, on the contrary, by (way of ) contrast, in comparison, (on the one hand)... on the other hand.... Also, **concession** connectives indicate the unexpected, surprising nature of what is

being said in view of what was said before: besides, (or) else, however, nevertheless, nonetheless, notwithstanding, only, still, while, (al)though, yet, in any case, at any rate, for all that, in spite of/despite that, after all, at the same time, on the other hand, all the same, even if/though.

According to Fraser, another classification is possible. Fraser<sup>49</sup> states that there are two types of DM's [connectives]. These are the ones (1) which relate messages, and (2) which relate topics.

After crosschecking list, and taking as basis Halliday and Hasan's classification this research group will use the following taxonomy and definitions:

Category	Items
<i>Additive</i>	Also, besides, for instance, furthermore, in addition, in other words, likewise, moreover.
<i>Adversative</i>	Although, anyhow, despite this, however, in contrast, nevertheless, on the contrary, on the one hand, on the other hand
<i>Causal</i>	As a result, consequently, for that reason, in consequence, therefore,
<i>Temporal</i>	Finally, in conclusion

**The additive connectives imply the “and” relation. Next, an explanation for each connective belonging to this group will be provided:**

- The connective *also* implies a simple “and” relation. It is used simply to introduce an additional topic with no emphasis; for instance, when listing.

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<sup>49</sup> Fraser, Bruce. What are discourse markers? *Journal of Pragmatics* 31 (1999) 931-952

- The additive connective *besides* has an emphatic function. This is, it is used to introduce a final point or argument that is decisive this connective implies “in addition to what I previously stated, ... is also true”. As to register it is referred, *besides* is never used in academic writing, it is more common in informal texts.

- The connective *for instance* implies an exemplificatory function. It expresses the notion “some examples of what I previously stated are”. It is also used to refer back to previous sentences or to parallel or related references.

- *Furthermore* similar to *besides* has an emphatic sense and is also used to include confirmation, that is, to reinforce what has been mentioned before. The sense of “there is yet another point to be taken in conjunction with the previous one” or “in addition to what has just been mentioned”. This connective marker falls into the formal connectives.

- *In addition* also has an emphatic sense. It is also used to include confirmation, that is, to reinforce what has been mentioned before. The sense of “there is yet another point to be taken in conjunction with the previous one”

-*In other words*. This connective has an expository function. It is used to introduce an explanation of something. It has the sense “an explanation of what I just said is” or to refer back to previous sentences or to parallel or related references.

- The additive connective *likewise* is used to compare two things that are similar. It shows equation and a semantic similarity in which the source of cohesion is the comparison of what is being said with what has gone before. This form is used by the speaker to assert that a point is being reinforced or a new one added to the same effect”. It has the sense “in a similar way (to what I mentioned)” and it is commonly used in formal writing.

- This additive connective *moreover* has an emphatic function. It is also used to include confirmation, that is, to reinforce what has been mentioned before.

Again, it means “there is yet another point to be taken in conjunction with the previous one”. It is commonly found in formal writing.

**The adversative connectives mean a “contrary to expectation” relation. Each one of the groups from this category will be explained:**

- The adversative connective *although* is usually found in informal writing. It means “in spite of” or “as against”. *Although* can also mean “*but*” like *however* which is more formal.

- The adversative connective *anyhow* has a dismissive relation. That is, it presupposes that something is irrelevant. It implies “*no matter what... still*”. Besides, this connective has a general adversative meaning which is open-ended. To be precise, it covers an entire set of possibilities.

- The adversative connective *despite this*, has an emphatic relation. It is used to show that something happened or is true “in spite of” something.

- The adversative connective *however* has a contrastive relation. It can be used to show a dissimilarity between two clauses or two sentences. It implies “differently from the previous point...” “in spite of”. It is commonly found in writing.

- The adversative connective *in contrast* has a negative comparative function. It is used to compare two things which are dissimilar, or in other words to show the differences between them. It implies the notion of “in contradistinction”.

- The adversative connective *nevertheless* has an emphatic relation. It signals “in spite of what I just said”.

- The adversative connective *on the contrary* has a corrective relationship. It is used for correcting meaning similar to *instead*, or *rather*<sup>50</sup>. The connective *on the contrary* means “opposite to what I just stated” or “not...but”.

- The adversative connective *on the other hand* makes comparative relations which is dissimilar. In conjunction with *in contrast*, it also has a negative comparative function. It can be interpreted as “as against” or “to be set against” or “spite of”.

When it has its correlative form (on the one hand... on the other hand), the sense of dissimilarly tends to be weakened. It is used to introduce different points of view, ideas, etc. especially when they are opposites.

**The causal connectives entail a “because (A)...then (B)” relation. They have a means-purpose, reason-result or grounds-conclusion relation between the two sentences. The different connectives are presented next:**

-The causal connective *as a result* simply implies “as a result of this” . It has the semantic function of reason-result. It expresses the consequence or result of what has been said before.

- The causal connective *consequently* expresses an emphatic reason-result relation, “because..., so” or “as a result”. This connective resembles the adversative connective *nevertheless*.

- The causal connective *for that reason* indicates reason. It expresses the consequence or result of what has been said before.

- The causal connective *in consequence* indicates result. It also has a semantic relational function of reason-result. It is a formal connective, which means that

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<sup>50</sup> Other connectives such as *I mean* or *at least* are used for correcting wording.

can be used in academic writing. It means “as a result of what I previously stated...”

- The causal connective *therefore* implies some kind of reasoning or argument from a premise. It points to a grounds-conclusion relation between two sentences. It means “the logical result of what I just mentioned is...” or “because...so”

**The temporal connectives suggest a “next in time”, “previous in time” or “at the same time”. An explanation for each connective belonging to this group will be given:**

The temporal connective *finally* has a conclusive or culminative function. It means “and the last point or idea is”, “to round off the point” or “to sum up”. It is used to introduce the last on a list of things or end a discussion about something.

- The temporal connective *in conclusion* indicates a conclusive or culminative semantic relation between two ideas. Again, similar to finally, it can mean “to round off the point”, “to sum up”.

In summary, connectives are words or phrases that mark a boundary in a discourse, typically as part of a complete text. This section explicated the properties of DMs or connectives so that the scope of the current investigation is well-defined. Next, a brief review of some recent corpus-based studies will be presented.

### **3.5. Previous Research on Connectives**

Studies in cohesion and coherence have promoted an interest in connectives. As it was explained earlier in section 1.1 these studies have been carried out

from different perspectives. In this section they will just be briefly mentioned to avoid repetition, and only the ones relevant to the study will be discussed. Previous studies include the analysis of their role in reading comprehension, pragmatic meanings (Fraser<sup>51</sup>, 1993; Blakemore, <sup>52</sup>1987), a little research on listening comprehension, and investigation into linguists' consensus regarding the position to use for certain connectives. In fact, most of the research on connectives has analyzed the “underuse”, “overuse” and “misuse” of connectives with corpus-based approaches. Our study confines itself to these three aspects. Basically, the following 4 corpus-based connectives studies will be reviewed in this section- Milton and Tsang<sup>53</sup> (1993), Granger and Tyson<sup>54</sup> (1996), Altenberg and Tapper<sup>55</sup> (1998) and Bolton et al<sup>56</sup> (2002).

Although our study is not a comparative study, we will cite several comparative studies which are considered relevant. These are as follow<sup>57</sup>.

### **3.6. Previous Corpus-Based Connectives' Studies**

#### *3.6.1. Studies Carried Out With Non-Colombian Students*

In the context of China, relevant studies on connectives have been carried out by Liu<sup>58</sup> (2005). She analyzed the use of connectives between Chinese learners

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<sup>51</sup> Quirk, R., Greenbaum, S., Leech, G., and Svartvik, J. A Grammar of Contemporary English. 1972. London: Longman.

<sup>52</sup> Blakemore, Diane. Semantic constraints on relevance. Oxford: Basil Blackwell. 1987.

<sup>53</sup> Milton, J. and E.S.C. Tsang. A corpus-based study of logical connectors in EFL students' writing: directions for future research, in R. Pemberton and E.S.C. Tsang (eds) Studies in Lexis. Working Papers from a Seminar, pp. 215–46.

<sup>54</sup> Granger, Sylviane and Tyson, Stephanie. Connector usage in the English essay writing of native and non-native EFL speakers of English. Blackwell Publishers Ltd. 1996. 108 Cowley Road, Oxford OX4 1JF. UK and 23H Main Street, Suire

<sup>55</sup> Altenberg, B. and M. Tapper. The use of adverbial connectors in advanced Swedish learners' written English, in S. Granger (ed.) Learner English on Computer, pp. 80–93. London and New York: Addison-Wesley Longman. 1998

<sup>56</sup> Bolton, K., Nelson, G. & Hung, J. A Corpus-Based Study of Connectors in Student Writing: Research from The International Corpus of English in Hong Kong (ICE-HK). International Journal of Corpus Linguistics, 7 (2), 165-182. 2002

<sup>57</sup> In this section, although this study uses the word connectives, others have different ways to call them. To avoid presenting misleading information, the studies will be presented with the same names they gave them.

of English and native English speakers. She concluded that Chinese learners used more connectives than native speakers did; the frequency distribution of the semantic categories was consistent among both groups. Specific uses of connectives were dissimilar in both groups. Among the problems discovered on the part of Chinese learners was the mechanical use of connectives, style confusion and misunderstanding of semantic properties. He Anping<sup>59</sup>(2002) has studied this aspect, too.

Milton and Tsang's<sup>60</sup>(1993) study compared the use of logical connectors between Hong Kong students and native speakers of English when writing. The Hong Kong students' corpus consisted of 4 million words, whereas for the analysis of native speakers use of connectors the Brown and LOB corpora was used. From the study, they found out that non-native writers overused a set of connectives. The top ten list of the most frequently used connectors were *lastly*, *besides*, *moreover*, *secondly*, *firstly*, *consequently*, *furthermore*, *regarding*, *therefore* and *namely*. Also, they analyzed non-native students' problems quantitatively focusing on the use of *moreover* and *therefore*. They concluded that students had mainly two problems: overuse or "redundant use" (Tsang) <Wei-Yu Chen> and misuse. This means that on one hand, students tended to use connectives even if they are not necessary to improve the coherence of the text. On the other hand students did not use connectives correctly.

They concluded that students must be trained on connectives' use sensitivity. According to them, this training would let students realize that connectives do not play an ornamental role in writing, instead that the process of selection must enhance rather than hinder the cohesion of the text. Another important study has been carried out by Bolton et al<sup>61</sup>(2002). It provides insights into use,

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<sup>58</sup> Liu, Meihua et al. Cohesive features in argumentative writing produced by Chinese undergraduates. *System*. Volume 33, Issue 4, December 2005.

<sup>59</sup> Anping, H. On the discourse marker *so*, in P. Peters, P. Collins and A. Smith (eds) *New Frontiers of Corpus Research*, pp. 41–52. Amsterdam: Rodopi. 2002

<sup>60</sup> Milton, J. and E.S.C. Tsang. A corpus-based study of logical connectors in EFL students' writing: directions for future research, in R. Pemberton and E.S.C. Tsang (eds) *Studies in Lexis. Working Papers from a Seminar*, pp. 215–46.

<sup>61</sup> Bolton, K., Nelson, G. & Hung, J. A Corpus-Based Study of Connectors in Student Writing: Research from The International Corpus of English in Hong Kong (ICE-HK). *International Journal of Corpus Linguistics*, 7 (2), 165-182. 2002

misuse, and overuse of connectives, but also on important methodological issues for the current study. This will be discussed at the end of this section.

Other studies have been carried out in French settings. The second relevant study was conducted by Granger and Tyson<sup>62</sup>(1996) <Wei-Yu chen>. His study also compared connectives' usage. It was carried out based on the French sub-corpus of ICLE consisting of 89,918 words with the native corpus *Louvain Corpus of Native Essay Writing* (LOCNESS). From their study, they hypothesized that the French learners overused connectives in their essays. The qualitative analysis of the corpuses proved the hypothesis not to be true since the total number of connectives per 100,000 words was 1,085 for the French writers, and 1,178 for the native one. However, a more detailed qualitative investigation showed different results. According to it, French learners overused connectives such as *however*, *therefore*, and *thus*. Also, it was discovered that these non-native learners misused certain connectives, too. Some of them were *moreover*, *for instance*, and *on the contrary*. As for misuse, Granger and Tyson affirmed that French learners had trouble with the "stylistic restrictions" of certain connectives (1996:23). This, for him, similar to Milton and Tsang, must be one of the focus of writing classes.

Studies have also been conducted with Swedish students. The third study under review in this section is Altenberg and Tapper<sup>63</sup>(1998). It was carried out with the Swedish corpora (86 essays/50000 words) from the ICLE in comparison to a native English control corpus (70 essays/50000words). The author's hypothesis was that Swedish learners of English underused conjunctions in English writing. His assertion was supported by the results of the study: Swedish learners used fewer conjunctions than native students in their writing (72 vs. 95 examples per 10000words). In a more detailed

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<sup>62</sup> Granger, Sylviane and Tyson, Stephanie. Connector usage in the English essay writing of native and non-native EFL speakers of English. Blackwell Publishers Ltd. IYY6. 108 Cowley Road, Oxford OX4 IJF. UK and 23H Main Street, Suire

<sup>63</sup> Altenberg, B. and M. Tapper. The use of adverbial connectors in advanced Swedish learners' written English, in S. Granger (ed.) *Learner English on Computer*, pp. 80–93. London and New York: Addison-Wesley Longman. 1998.

investigation Altenberg and Tapper <sup>64</sup>(1998) found out that the connectives overused by Swedish were *moreover, for instance* and *on the contrary*, and the connectives underused were *hence, therefore, thus* and *however*.

Their study decided to take a step further and compare the above results of Swedish students with the Granger and Tyson's <sup>65</sup>(1996). When comparing Swedish to French learners, the first group underused a higher amount of connectives among which were found resultive and contrastive connectives (1,085 vs 7,22 tokens/100000 words). Results regarding overuse and underuse by the two groups of learners shared similar characteristics. The Swedish group showed again a higher preference for less formal connectives than for the formal alternatives.

The fourth study to be reviewed is Bolton's et al. <sup>66</sup>(2002). They compared three corpora in the use of connectives- the Hong Kong component of the *international corpus of English*, the corresponding data from the British component of the ICE and a subset of public academic writing taken from ICE-GB. After comparing Hong Kong and British writings to those of accomplished writers, the results drawn from the study showed patterns of overuse in the writings of both groups. For Hong Kong students the top five overused connectives were: *so, and, also, thus* and *but*, while for the British they were: *however, so, therefore, thus, and furthermore*. The group of students who overused connectives the most was the group of the Hong Kong students.

Also, Bolton's et al<sup>67</sup>. (2002) study is of great relevance in this research because it points out three important issues for the researchers studying connectives. First, questioning the suitability of the existing framework of

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<sup>64</sup> Altenberg, B. and M. Tapper. The use of adverbial connectors in advanced Swedish learners' written English, in S. Granger (ed.) *Learner English on Computer*, pp. 80–93. London and New York: Addison-Wesley Longman. 1998.

<sup>65</sup> Granger, Sylviane and Tyson, Stephanie. *Connector usage in the English essay writing of native and non-native EFL speakers of English*. Blackwell Publishers Ltd. 1996. 108 Cowley Road, Oxford OX4 1JF. UK and 23H Main Street, Suite

<sup>66</sup> Bolton, K., Nelson, G. & Hung, J. A Corpus-Based Study of Connectors in Student Writing: Research from The International Corpus of English in Hong Kong (ICE-HK). *International Journal of Corpus Linguistics*, 7 (2), 165-182. 2002

<sup>67</sup> Bolton, K., Nelson, G. & Hung, J. A Corpus-Based Study of Connectors in Student Writing: Research from The International Corpus of English in Hong Kong (ICE-HK). *International Journal of Corpus Linguistics*, 7 (2), 165-182. 2002

connectives (Halliday and Hassan 1976<sup>68</sup> and Quirk et al. 1972). In their study, instead of using previous taxonomies they created one containing only the adverbials used by students in the British component of the international corpus of English (ICB-GB). In this respect, the authors of the current studies agree with Bolton et al. (2002) in that classifications of connectives should be more realistic. For that reason, in order to ensure the comprehensiveness of the list, connectives that were not from the original list, but were identified during the data processing, were added to the list. The second methodological issue was the calculation of ratio of frequency. For example, Milton and Tsang calculated the ratio of occurrence by dividing the total number of words in a corpus with the number of identified connectives. In addition, Altenberg and Tapper (1998) and Ganger and Tyson (1996) employed another widely-used-word-based calculation method. This method presents the ratio of frequency in terms of the number of connectives per 10,000 or 100,000 words. Concerning this, Bolton et al. state that the word-based calculation method is “fundamentally flawed”, preferring sentence-based approaches.

Bolton argues that since connectives function at the level of sentences and not words, the sentences should be the unit of analysis. However, as stated by Wei-Yu Chen “both the word and the sentence based approaches are reasonable because (Conjunctive Adverbials) CAs can also be used in non-finite-dependant clauses”.

Another methodological issue highlighted and criticized by Bolton et al. (2002) refers to the use of general corpora and writings of native students as the target model for non-native undergraduate students. They state that instead of comparing non-native writing with undergraduate native writings, this sample should be conformed by published academic writing between 1990 and 1993. In their study, they collected 40 academic published papers from different disciplines.

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<sup>68</sup> Halliday, M. A. K., Hasan, R. *Cohesion in English* (London–New York: Longman). 1976

To summarize, this session offers a review on the literature about corpus-based studies on connectives. Important issues on the methodology in research and analysis of connectives were raised.

### 3.6.2 Other studies

Other studies that have investigated the use of connectives in other languages include the work by Liu <sup>69</sup>(2005), Chen <sup>70</sup>(2006), Choi<sup>71</sup> (2005), Mu and Carrington (<sup>72</sup>2007).

Relevant work on the use and misuse of connectives has been conducted by Liu and Braine <sup>73</sup>(2007).

They investigated the cohesion and coherence when writing in a second/foreign language, particularly English. The results, showed that among the five sub-categories of conjunction devices, additive devices such as *and*, *also*, *or*, (44.4%) accounted for the largest percentage of use, followed by causal like *so*, *because of*, *for*, (19.5%), temporal with a 18.6% (First, firstly, second, secondly, third, thirdly, finally), and a 15.6% for adversative devices like *surely* and *of course*. Continuative devices occurred only 13 times in the 50 compositions analyzed, probably because they are seldom used in formal written work. As

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<sup>69</sup> Liu, Meihua et al. Cohesive features in argumentative writing produced by Chinese undergraduates. *System*. Volume 33, Issue 4, December 2005.

<sup>70</sup> Chen, Cheryl Wei-yu . The Use of Conjunctive Adverbials in the Academic Papers of Advanced Taiwanese EFL Learners. *International Journal of Corpus Linguistics*, 11(1): 113-130. *International John Benjamin Publishing Company*. 2006

<sup>71</sup> Choi, Jeongsook. A contrastive analysis of argumentative essays written in English by Korean ESL students and by native English-speaking students. SOUTHERN ILLINOIS UNIVERSITY AT CARBONDALE, 2005.

<sup>72</sup> Mu, Congjun. An Investigation of Three Chinese Students' English Writing strategies. June 2007 Volume 11, Number 1. *TESL-EJ. Teaching English as a Second or Foreign Language*. <<http://tesl-ej.org/ej41/a1.html>>

<sup>73</sup> Liu, M., & Braine, G. (2005). Cohesive features in argumentative writing produced by Chinese undergraduates. *System*, 33 (4), 623–636.

this results show, all the students appeared to be aware of the five sub-categories of conjunction devices.

Additive devices were the most frequently used because they are helpful in connecting phrases, clauses and sentences in writing. The cohesive items with the highest frequency were *and*, *also* and *or*, all of which belong to the group of easy words and expressions Chinese students learn when they have access to English. Among adversative devices, *but* was used with the highest frequency (86), while on the contrary *and*, *instead* occasionally occurred in the writing.

This may imply that the students were not competent enough to use other cohesive items to indicate transition of meaning such as *however*, *rather*, and *on the contrary*. Among causal devices, *so* was the most frequently used item, followed by *because of* and *for*. Other items for instance *as a result* and *thus* were only occasionally or rarely used. As to temporal, the students preferred using *first*, *firstly*, *second*, *secondly*, *third*, *thirdly* and *finally* to indicate the sequence of time or importance, etc. However, items as *sum up*, *meanwhile*, and *all in all* were hardly found in the writing.

On the other hand, a study by Chen<sup>74</sup> (2006) to compare the use of connectives when writing was carried out. His study compared advanced learners of English, and professional writers, taking the last group as a reference corpus. The results proved that EFL writers in the study tend to use more additive conjunctive adverbials (CA) with a 33.8% while the professional writers mostly use conjunctive adverbials in the adversative category 37%. Moreover, as for the use of individuals CA, overall, the most frequently used CA account for 65% of all the CA use in the corpus by the learners and a 67% in the reference corpus proving that both groups rely heavily on a group of CA when writing. In addition, the adversative CA *however* is the most used in both groups, especially in the reference corpus. Also, to test the overuse hypothesis, results

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<sup>74</sup> Chen, Cheryl Wei-yu . The Use of Conjunctive Adverbials in the Academic Papers of Advanced Taiwanese EFL Learners. *International Journal of Corpus Linguistics*, 11(1): 113-130. *International John Benjamin Publishing Company*. 2006.

indicated that learners use slightly more CA than professional writers do. On the other hand, Chen affirms that these results do not support the overuse hypothesis since the professional writers made more use of CA than learners.

Thirdly, in a research done by Choi <sup>75</sup>(2005), he identified and examined the different ways native speakers of Korean (ESL) and native speakers of English write English argumentative compositions regarding error types, textual organization, and cohesion device. The findings from this study propose that, generally, the Korean ESL students wrote shorter essays and showed more errors, more textual organization patterns and less use of cohesion devices. Specifically, in terms of the cohesion devices, both Korean and American students used conjunctions and logical connectives more often in their essays, implying the lack of use or knowledge of other connectives or the overuse of logical connectives. Three adult student writers employed a broad range of writing strategies for success in the target academic community. A taxonomy of their common writing strategies was established, which provides some insights for future L2 writing researchers and practitioners.

Furthermore, it is important to mention Mu and Carrington's (2007) research where there is some evidence to support that the L2 writing process is strategically, rhetorically and linguistically different from the L1 writing process. Moreover, as the writing process in L1 and L2 are different, writing strategies can be transferred across languages and cultures positively. In particular, the three Chinese writers in this study were found to transfer organizing and cohesive strategies negatively, and they had difficulties in utilizing rhetorical strategies.

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<sup>75</sup> Choi, Jeongsook. A contrastive analysis of argumentative essays written in English by Korean ESL students and by native English-speaking students. SOUTHERN ILLINOIS UNIVERSITY AT CARBONDALE, 2005.

### 3.6.3. *Previous Studies on Connectives with Colombian Students*

The research on connectives mentioned in sections 3.6.1 and 3.6.2 shown above confirms that there have been many studies on connectives from different linguistic and pragmatic perspectives. The main purpose of this study is to analyze the misuse, overuse and underuse of connectives in English Academic Essay Writing. For that reason it would be logical to review previous literature on connectives by non-native Colombian students (NNCS). However, in the case of Spanish speaker students, more specifically Colombian students, who produce academic writing in English, no research has been carried out on the topic of connectives. This research therefore, limits the review to the studies carried out in other languages mentioned in the above section. It is our hope that the current study provides insights for further research in our country.

### **3.7. Software for Corpus Analysis**

As it was seen in the previous section, *3.6 previous corpus-based connectives' studies*, the interest in connectives and corpus analysis has increased over the years. However, as time goes by, the amount of information that can be collected and analyzed, due to the internet access for example, has increased, too. Thus, it has become vital to create fast ways to analyze the big amounts of data gathered by researchers. Fortunately, not only the amounts of data collected, but also technology support has increased throughout the years. This is how researchers have felt the need to incorporate the use of computationally oriented approaches.

Currently, there are a wide variety of software tools available for corpus analysis. In general, what these programs do is generating KW (Key Word) concordance lines and plots showing the distribution of search hits in documents; analyzing keywords, word lists and keyword lists sorted alphabetically or by frequency; indexes of lists of the distinct words in a text, each with the number of times it occurs and a list of the places where it occurs;

comparing different uses of a word in a text and among texts; finding phrases and idioms and even publishing to the web. Findings collocates and common word clusters; providing a visual profile of the distribution of words in a text by printing the different frequency bands in different colors and searching the internet for creating corpora.

The most common solutions are of two types: software and freeware. MONOCONC PRO 2.2 (MPC 2.2), WORDSMITH TOOLS 4 (WST 4) and CONCORDANCE (CC) are software of different prices. On the other hand, MULTI LANGUAGE CORPUS TOOL (MLCP), CONCAPP 4 (CA 4), ANTCONC 3.1 (AC 3.1), ACONCORDE (ACC), SIMPLE CONCORDANCE PROGRAM (SCP 4), CONCORDANCER FOR WINDOWS 2.0 (WC 2) and TEXT STAT 2.6 (TS 2.6) are freeware (*To see where you can download these programs from check APPENDIX A2*). Also, it must be noted here that software tools are a lot more comprehensive than freeware tools. In Colombia, Santander, the audience of our research project, and particularly Universidad Industrial de Santander, there are no records of software application for the analysis of corpus. (See Appendix A3 for a brief review of the characteristics of these programs)

**TABLE 2. Extracted from *Corpus Linguistics Resources: Concordancing Software (Wiechamann and Fuhs)*<sup>76</sup>**

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<sup>76</sup>Downloaded from <<http://www.lexically.net>> or ordered at <<http://www.oup.co.uk/isbn/0-19-459400/9>>, which is the Oxford University Press website

TOOL	Stats					Help				
	Platform	Publisher	Language	Price	Developer	Context Sensitive	Global help file	Manual	Installation	
<b>MPC 2.2</b>	PC (Win 95 and higher)	Athelstan	English	\$85 single \$550 15 PC	Michael Barlow	No	No	Yes	not necessary	
<b>WST 4</b>	PC (Win 95 and higher)	OUP	English	GBP 51.95 single GBP 262.90 10 users	Mike Scott	yes	yes	Excellent	not necessary	
<b>CC</b>	PC (Win 2000/XP)	R.C.J. Watt	English	\$99 single \$40 for subsequent copies	R.J.C. Watt	no	yes	no	not necessary	
<b>MLCP</b>	JAVA Runtime Environment	na	English	Freeware	Scott Piao	no	no	yes	not necessary	
<b>CA 4</b>	PC (Win 98 and higher)	na	English	Freeware	Chris Greaves	no	no	Online Help	not necessary	
<b>TS 2.6.</b>	Windows, Linux, MacOSX	na	English	Freeware	Matthias Hünning	no	yes	not necessary	prompted	
<b>AC 3.1</b>	Windows (also v2.2.2. for Linux)	na	English	Freeware	Laurence Anthony	no	yes	not necessary	not necessary	
<b>ACC</b>	JAVA Runtime Environment	na	English, Arabic	Freeware	Andrew Roberts	no	no	not necessary	not necessary	
<b>SCP 4</b>	MacOSX, Win 95/XP	na	English	Freeware	Alan Reed	yes	yes & video tutorial	installation file	prompted	
<b>WC 2</b>	Win 98/XP	na	English	Freeware	Zdenek, Martineck, Les Siegrist	yes	no	installation file	prompted	

### 3.7.1. Wordsmith Tools 4.0 (WST4)

*Wordsmith Tools 4.0* (WST4) is a text analysis software created by Mike Scott published by Oxford University Press<sup>77</sup>. It was selected for the current study, from all the previously mentioned software tools, because WST4 is considered one of the most powerful tools. Their functions will be explained later in Section

Although WST4 might seem of little use for learners, due to the wide range of features which they may rarely need, these are relevant for a corpus linguistic investigation. It has been used by many other researchers in areas such as genre analysis, translation, lexico-grammatical characteristics of texts, the creation of specialized bilingual dictionaries and critical discourse analysis among other topics. Some of the researchers are Barbara and Scott, 1999; Batista, 1998; Berber, Sardinha, 1995, 1999a, b; Berber Sardinha and Shimazumi, 1998; Bonamin, 1999; Collins and Scott, 1996; Conde, 1999; Dutra, 1999; Freitas, 1997; Fuzetti, 1999<sup>78</sup>. Research on connectives Lan-fen (2006),

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Other 200 works using WST4 can be found at <[www.lexically.net/wordsmith/corpus\\_linguistics\\_links/papers\\_using\\_wordsmith.htm](http://www.lexically.net/wordsmith/corpus_linguistics_links/papers_using_wordsmith.htm)>

Balazic<sup>79</sup> ( 1980), and Cheryl Wey-yu Chen <sup>80</sup>(2006). Although knowing how these researchers applied the program when studying connectives is important in our study, the researchers of this study consider that a discussion of the topic cannot be carried out without being informed about the functions of the tool. For that reason, the characteristics of the program will be explained next (Section 3.7.1.1 below), followed by a review on the help WST 4 has provided researchers around the world will be done (Section 3.7.1.2).

### 3.7.1.1 WST4 Functions (Tools)

In general this corpus analysis toolkit has many functions that can be used for creating concordances, frequency lists, collocate tables and perform keyword analysis. A description of the main tools of the program is presented next:

*Concord:* The Concordance tool allows researchers to search for a word/phrase and display it as concordance lines. The tool has many other functions, not only allowing sorting, deleting and marking lines but also to find multi-word units, seeing a graphic display of where in a text the searching word is found and generating a list of collocations.

*Wordlist:* The WordList tool will allow users to create word lists ordered alphabetically or by frequency. It will also generate statistics about the text(s), such as number of words, type-token ratio and word length. Users can choose to group items into lemmas via the word list.

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<sup>79</sup> Balažic, Tatjana. Connectors in students' academic writing in two closely related languages (on the case Slovene and Croatian language). *The Corpus Linguistics Conference Series*. Vol. 1, no. 1

<sup>80</sup> Chen, Cheryl Wei-yu . The Use of Conjunctive Adverbials in the Academic Papers of Advanced Taiwanese EFL Learners. *International Journal of Corpus Linguistics*, 11(1): 113-130. *International John Benjamin Publishing Company*. 2006.

*Keyword:* The KeyWords tool will compare two (or more) word lists and identify the words that are more frequent (in relation to text size). Users can compare lists from two texts or one list from a text to a list from a (reference) corpus.

From these tools we are going to use Concordance and Wordlists tools to analyze misuse, underuse and overuse of connectives by the CEW (Comparative Essays Writers) and the RPW (Research Project Writers), at sentence and word level.

This text analysis software will be used to design frequency tables of the connectives used. Also, this program will be used to determine the percentage/rate of use of connectives for both corpora by categories, create a general picture of the use of connectives in terms of categories used by the CEW group and the reference group (RPW), determine the overall frequency of connectives usage at sentence and word level for both corpora CEW and RPW and specify which connectives are most frequently used.

To show previous usage of this tool by other studies working on connectives, a review Lan-fen (2006), Balazic <sup>81</sup>(1980), and Cheryl Wey-Yu Chen <sup>82</sup>(2006) and Shaw's (2004) work will be done.

#### *3.7.1.2. Corpus Studies on Connectives Carried Out With WST 4*

A short review of the uses of WST, in any of its versions, in quantitative studies, will be given by the researchers, and the tools used by them will be discussed.

To begin with, the work of Lan-fen (2006) comes out. In his study, Lan-fen (2006), by analyzing two corpora, aims at discovering similarities and

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<sup>81</sup> Balažic, Tatjana. Connectors in students' academic writing in two closely related languages (on the case Slovene and Croatian language). *The Corpus Linguistics Conference Series*. Vol. 1, no. 1

<sup>82</sup> Chen, Cheryl Wei-yu . The Use of Conjunctive Adverbials in the Academic Papers of Advanced Taiwanese EFL Learners. *International Journal of Corpus Linguistics*, 11(1): 113-130. *International John Benjamin Publishing Company*. 2006.

differences in the use of connectives (additive, adversative, causal, temporal) across two disciplines. For the qualitative part of his study, Lan-fen decides to employ WST4 in order to gather data to define items such as: frequency per 10,000 words and concordance.

Also, Balazic (1996) has contributed to this respect with her study “Connectors in Students’ Academic Writing in Two Closely Related Languages”. She studies the differences in native and non-native students writing in two closely related languages in combination with the methodology of corpus linguistics. For the qualitative part of her study the computer software WST4 was used to extract individual frequencies of connectives, as well as to compare those results and identify the overuse and underuse of individual connectives and the semantic relations expressed by different connectives.

The third study under review in this section is Cheryl Wey-yu Chen<sup>83</sup>(2006). Cheryl explores the use of conjunctive adverbials (CAs) in two corpora. To do so, the researchers first used Microsoft Word to draw conclusions referring to the counting of words and sentences which was done manually. Then, with the concordancing function of WST4 the results from the manual extraction were verified.

Finally, Shaw’s study (2004) also uses WST for analyzing corpora in the aspect of connectives usage. The initial essays were combined as one corpus and the retests as another. The facilities Wordlist, Keywords and KWIC in Wordsmith Tools were used to analyze the results. Wordlist was used in order to get a list of all the orthographic words in the corpus analyzed. Also, The KEYWORDS facility in Wordsmith Tools was used to suggest significant differences among the corpora used. KEYWORDS was intended to compare two frequency lists, one for a large reference corpus and one for a smaller test corpus. It delivered a list of words which are ‘key’ for the test corpus, that was in a statistical sense

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<sup>83</sup> Chen, Cheryl Wei-yu . The Use of Conjunctive Adverbials in the Academic Papers of Advanced Taiwanese EFL Learners. *International Journal of Corpus Linguistics*, 11(1): 113-130. *International John Benjamin Publishing Company*. 2006.

significantly more frequent in that corpus than in the reference. In his study the two corpora were of similar sizes and both rather small. At the end, to see what these numerical differences meant in more qualitative terms, Shaw (2004) used the KWIC facility, which allowed him to call up all instances of a character string (word or phrase) and examine the text y context and its syntactic function.

In the current study, the research group will follow a methodology similar to Shaw's. Among the different WST4 tools this study will use Concordance and Wordlist. The latter will be used to generate lists of words, and the former to display lists of the connectives found in context in the texts (To see the steps to follow refer to section 4.3). However, unlike Shaw, we consider important the statistical measures produced by the program. For that reason, we will also take them into account It is important for us to mention here that, although in the works previously mentioned it is not made clear if these statistical measures were calculated with WST 4, for some of them the program can be used. Therefore, they will be calculated with the help of the program.

Next is the study itself.

## **4. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

### **4.1. Sampling**

This investigation will use a procedure known as random sampling. There are five common random sampling techniques. These are simple random sampling, systematic sampling, stratified sampling, cluster sampling, and multi-stage sampling. To select the sample this research will use *simple random sampling*. For that reason, this one will be defined next. (*Further reading about the other types of sampling, refer to Australian Bureau of Statistics*). Simple random sampling is generally the best and simplest way to draw a sample when small a

population is involved. Furthermore, it ensures that bias is not introduced regarding who is included in the survey (Purdue University Calumet). That is, this procedure allows every member of the population to have an equal opportunity to be included in the sample since pure chance is the only factor to determine who actually goes into the sample<sup>84</sup>.

Based on statistics, to determine the minimum size of the sample, the requirement to follow is that it must be larger than the 0,005% of the population selected. Bearing this in mind, participants (which account for approx. half the papers submitted in Comparative Linguistics and the Research Project) will be selected at random. To do so, it was essential to have a complete list of all the members of the population of two groups. In this particular case the population is made up of any Colombian undergraduate student in Universidad Industrial de Santander, who has been enrolled in Comparative Linguistics (CEW) in the period of one year, 2007 B – 2008 A, and those who had submitted projects as requirement for degrees (RPW) along the same period of time.

Thus, this number corresponds to the 13 Colombian undergraduate students in Universidad Industrial de Santander, whose mother tongue is Spanish, who have been enrolled in Comparative Linguistics (CEW) in the period of one year, and those who had submitted projects as requirement for degrees (RPW).

The sampling of this study will be chosen taking into account the following criteria: CEW will be selected considering the fact that they have taken subjects such as English I, II, III, and IV; Writing Systems I and II, and Syntax I and II. Meanwhile, RPW will play a part in the project taking into account that they have taken all subjects in the Language Teaching program, and that they already published their research project as a requirement to obtain their degree. All participants will be given a consent form which they will sign agreeing to take part in the study. On average, both groups will be made up of men and women in the same proportion. Group- 1 (CEW) will consist of 7 students enrolled in *Comparative Linguistics* who will work in pairs to hand in a comparative essay

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<sup>84</sup> Purdue University Calumet. Online] <<http://education.calumet.purdue.edu/vockell/research/chapter8.htm> (November 17)

for assessment. Group -2 (RPW) will consist of 6 students working on their research project (*working in groups of 2, 3, 4 or even 5*) as requirement for the Bachelor's Degree in Teaching English as a Second Language.

#### **4.2. Instrument**

In order to conduct the phenomenon under research, the pre-service teachers decided to have as a basis a quantitative study whose results will be analyzed qualitatively to find out common cases of misuse of connectives. Among the instruments used, two sets of corpora and a text analysis software (WST4) can be found.

Relating to the quantitative phase, two sets of corpora were included as sources of data. The first corpus (*CEW*) consisted of 7 pieces of writing and the second corpus (RPW) consisted of 6 pieces of writing; each one consisting of 20,286 and 90,961 words, respectively. The pieces of writing produced by the CEW group will be built of comparative essays submitted for assessment, and the writings by the RPW will be research projects submitted as a requirement to obtain the degree in Teaching English.

Also, *Wordsmith Tools 4.0* (WST4) will be used (a text analysis software created by Mike Scot published by Oxford University Press - *downloaded from <http://www.lexically.net>*.) This text analysis software will be used to design frequency tables about the number of texts for each corpus, the total number of words, the total number of sentences, the total number of connectives, the correctly used and the misused number of connectives, the total percentage of connectives by corpus, the frequency of the individuals connectives selected for this study, the 5 most frequently used connectives, and the 5 least used connectives which will be used to determine the rates of underuse and overuse. Also, it will be used to create concordance lines, where the connectives appear, for analyzing the cases of misuse. Since in most of the cases reading only the concordance line was not enough, the source text was screened by clicking on

the connective to be studied to have a real view of how the word was being used.

### 4.3 Procedure

31 EFL Colombian writers of English academic texts accounting for two groups of students -13 CEW and 18 RPW- will be selected (to see selection criteria refer to section 4.1 Sampling). Then, the students will be asked to sign the consent form.

Essays and research projects will be collected following a simple random sampling procedure. (*For more information refer to section 4.1*) After this, the comparative essays will be typed so that the research group can count on these papers as computer files. The typed essays will be double-checked by two investigators of the present study. The projects will not be typed since the electronic version was taken from the UIS Library Database. They will be converted into .doc using the program *Free PDF to Word Doc Converter*. After that, all the files will be loaded into the program Word Smith Tools 4.0. ( To know how to load corpora into the program refer to Appendix A3)

Then, from the connectives presented in the Categorization of logical connectives adapted from Quirk et al. <sup>85</sup>(1972) and presented by Tang and Ng <sup>86</sup>(1995) connectives will be selected using a random procedure. These selected connectives will be typed in a list and loaded into the program in order to generate frequency tables, for both CEW and RPW to do the quantitative analysis. These tables will show information such as the number of texts for each corpus, the total number of words and the total number of sentences.

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<sup>85</sup> Quirk, R., Greenbaum, S., Leech, G., and Svartvik, J. A Grammar of Contemporary English. 1972. London: Longman.

<sup>86</sup> Tang, Eunice and Cristina Ng. A Study on the Use of Connectives in ESL Students' Writing. Hong Kong Journals Online: Perspectives (City University of Hong Kong) Vol. 7 (1995 Autumn), 18 pages.

Regarding the devices this study is interested in, the tables will show the total number of connectives in each corpus, the correctly used connectives, the total percentage of connectives by corpus, the frequency of the individuals connectives selected for this study, and its percentage (in relation to the total number of connectives in each corpus), the categories of use of connectives, the categories of misuse of connectives, the 5 most frequently used connectives, and the 5 least used connectives which will be used to determine the rates of underuse and overuse (without discrimination right from wrong use), and the most problematic and the most frequently used categories of connectives.

Then, concordance lines will be created, for analyzing qualitatively the cases of misuse. In most of the cases the source texts will be screened by clicking on the connective under study to have a broader view of how the device works not only in the sentence, but also in the paragraph. With this information, the misused number of connectives will be calculated. After this, those problems found either in CEW or RPW will be categorized, exemplified, and the supporting analysis of the reasons why the connectives are misused will be given.

## 5. FINDINGS

After analyzing the data quantitatively, the following results were obtained.

<b>CHARACTERISTICS</b>	<b>RPW</b>	<b>CEW</b>
Number of texts	6	7
Total number of words	90961	20286
Total number of sentences	4621	992
Total number of connectives	507	182

**Table 1. The corpora**

Two groups from Licenciatura en Inglés were selected from different levels. There were 7 essays from the CEW group and 6 research projects from the RPW group. In order to calculate the overall frequency of words and sentences the software analysis program WST4 was used. As a result the total word count for CEW was 20.286 and 90.961 for the RPW. Relating to sentence count, it is 992 and 4.621 respectively. Since the two corpora are of different size, the comparisons among them will be made in terms of percentages.

<b>NUMBER OF CONNECTIVES</b>	<b>RPW</b>		<b>CEW</b>	
	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%
Correctly used	437	86.19	139	72,39
Misused	70	13.80	53	27.60
TOTAL (number of connectives)	507	100	192	100

**Table 2. Total Number of Connectives**

Out of the total number of words in each corpus, 192 ( 0,89%) connectives were found in the CEW, and 507 (0,55%) in the RPW. Also Table 2 shows that CEW misused 27.60% (f=53), while the RPW 13.80% (f=70). With regard to the rest of connectives in both corpora, 72,39% (f=139) in CEW and 86.19%(f=437) in RPW were correctly used. This indicates that CEW was the group which overused connectives.

<b>Rank of Use</b>	<b>RPW</b>	<b>f</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>CEW</b>	<b>f</b>	<b>%</b>
<b>1</b>	Also	130	25,64	Also	66	34.37
<b>2</b>	Finally	57	11,24	However	30	15.62
<b>3</b>	However	56	11,04	For instance	23	11.97
<b>4</b>	Therefore	56	11,04	Although	17	8.85
<b>5</b>	Although	28	5,52	On the other hand	12	6.25
<b>6</b>	Besides	28	5,52	In contrast	10	5.20
<b>7</b>	Consequently	21	4,14	For that reason	5	2.60
<b>8</b>	On the other hand	18	3,55	As a result	4	2.08
<b>9</b>	Though	16	3,15	Finally	4	2.08
<b>10</b>	Furthermore	13	2,56	Though	4	2.08
<b>11</b>	On the contrary	12	2,36	Therefore	3	1.56
<b>12</b>	As a result	10	1,97	On the contrary	3	1.56

13	Moreover	10	1,97	Moreover	2	1.04
14	For instance	9	1,77	Nevertheless	2	1.04
15	Nevertheless	9	1,77	Furthermore	1	0.52
16	In other words	8	1,57	In addition	1	0.52
17	In addition	6	1,18	In conclusion	1	0.52
18	In contrast	5	0,98	On the one hand	1	0.52
19	Likewise	4	0,78	Consequently	1	0.52
20	For that reason	3	0,59	In other words	1	0.52
21	In conclusion	3	0,59	Likewise	1	0.52
22	In consequence	1	0,19	Anyhow	0	0
23	Despite this	1	0,19	Besides	0	0
24	On the one hand	1	0,19	Despite this	0	0
25	Anyhow	0	0	In consequence	0	0
	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>507</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>192</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Table 3. Use Frequency of Connectives in Both Corpora**

Table 3 shows frequency of use of all connectives, from the most to the least frequent, in RPW and CEW. According to the previous rank the connectives most frequently used in the RPW are *also* (25.74%), *finally* (11.28%), *however* (11.08%), *therefore* (11.08%), *although* (5.54%). As to CEW, *also* (34.37%), *however* (15.62%), *for instance* (11.97%), *although* (8.85%), *on the other hand* (6.25%) are in the top. It is important to mention that neither on RPW nor in CEW was used the connective *anyhow*. Others such as *besides*, *despite this* and *in consequence* were not used in the CEW at all. Thus, for the RPW the

least frequently used connectives are in *conclusion*, *in consequence*, *despite this*, *on the one hand* and *anyhow*, whereas for the RPW such connectives are *likewise*, *anyhow*, *besides*, *despite this*, *in consequence*. Common connectives for both corpora, which are never used, are *in consequence*, *anyhow*, and *despite this*.

Category	RPW		CEW	
	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%
<b>Additive</b>	208	41,02	95	49,47
<b>Adversative</b>	148	29,19	79	41,14
<b>Causal</b>	91	17,94	13	6,77
<b>Temporal</b>	60	11,83	5	2,60
	507	100	192	100

**TABLE 4. Use of Connectives by Categories in both corpora**

Table 4 shows that the most frequently used categories among RPW and CEW are common. For both corpora, the most common groups of devices more frequently used is the *additive* which accounts for a 41.18% and a 49,47% of all the other categories. It shows that CEW use 9% more additive devices than RPW. Similarly, the other categories, in order of use among the corpora, are the same. The second category most used for both corpora is the adversative one, which is followed by the causal and the temporal. However, the percentages of use differ from each other.

Connective	<i>f</i>	%
Therefore	22	4.35
Although	9	1.78
Finally	8	1.58
Also	5	0.99
In contrast	5	0.99
On the other hand	4	0.79
Consequently	3	0.59
However	3	0.59
Though	2	0.39
For instance	2	0.39
In the contrary	2	0.39
In other words	1	0.19
In consequence	1	0.19
For that reason	1	0.19
As a result	1	0.19
Furthermore	1	0.19
<b>Total</b>	70/507	100

Connective	<i>f</i>	%
For instance	8,85	17
Also	5,73	11
However	5,20	10
Although	4,16	8
Though	1,56	3
On the other hand	0,52	1
In contrast	0,52	1
Finally	0,52	1
Nevertheless	0,52	1
Total	100	53/192

Table 6. Connective Devices Misused CEW

Table 5. Connective Devices Misused RPW

Tables 5 and 6 show the most problematic connectives for RPW and CEW. According to the rank, *therefore*, *although*, *finally*, *also*, and *in contrast* are the most frequently misused connectives for RPW; and *for instance*, *also*, *however*,

*although*, and *though* are for CEW. Both groups have one common problem with *although* and *finally*. The most problematic for RPW group is *therefore*. However, *although* is more problematic for RPW and *finally* for CEW.

Category	RPW			CEW		
		Out of the total of 70 connectives	Out of the total of 507 connectives		Out of the total of 53 connectives	Out of the total of 192 connectives
Additive	9	12,85	1,77	28	52,83	14,58
Adversative	25	35,71	4,93	24	45,28	12,5
Causal	28	40	5,52	0	0	0
Temporal	8	11,42	1,57	1	1,88	0,52
	70/507	100	13,59/100	53/192		27,60/100

**Table 7. Misused connectives by categories.**

According to Table 7, the group with the highest percentage of problems in the use of connectives is the CEW with twice more problems, 27,60%, than the RPW 13,59%. For the RPW the problematic categories are all of them, additive, adversative, causal and temporal. Being the adversative the most problematic for them. Differently, as to CEW, they seem to have trouble with only 3 of them: additive, adversative, and temporal. There are two interesting facts that this table shows. First, interestingly, the misuse top category is exactly the same for both corpora: adversative. Second, according to statistics CEW seem to have no problems when using causal connectives, while the RPW misused 5.52% of the causal connectives used.

## 6. DISCUSSION

From the qualitative analysis of the use of connectives, a number of cases of misuse were identified. First, it will be discussed the ones that occurred not only in the CEW group but also in the RPW group. Then, the ones that appeared in only one of the group of writers, either CEW or RPW. These cases are of research interest as well as pedagogical importance. Examples of these among CEW and RPW can be found in the following excerpts.

### 6.1 CEW and RPW

**CASE 1:** Sometimes a connective is used but it can be erased for different reasons, and no other can be used instead.

A. When there is redundancy, other phrases or words occur in the sentence, which express the same idea as the connective.

**[CEW EXTRACT # 483]** *“There are some adjectives in this language that do have an absolute change in meaning depending on the place they are produced. Some of these adjectives are **for instance**: “Antiguo”, “nuevo”, “viejo”, “solo”, “grande”,...”*

The additive connective *For instance* has an exemplificatory sense. It signals “some examples of the information previously stated are”. Thus, in [CEW-483], if this connective is replaced by its meaning, the phrase would imply: [Some of the adjectives that can change according to the place they are produced are (examples of the information previously stated are)...]. In such an event, a redundancy is created; this is why the connective should be deleted.

**[CEW EXTRACT # 174]** *“Possessive pronouns are the equivalent of the English pronouns: *mío* “mine”, *tuyo* “yours”, *suyo-el suyo, la suya* “his”, “hers”, “its”, *suyo –el suyo, la suya* “theirs” and *Nuestro –el nuestro, la nuestra* “ours”.*

**Nevertheless**, they are not used in exactly the same way in Spanish as they are in English, because...”

The emphatic adversative connective *nevertheless* can also be stated as ‘in spite of this’. The connective is replaced with its meaning, [Possessive pronouns are the equivalent of the English pronouns: ... (In spite of this), they are not used in exactly the same way in Spanish as they are in English ...]. Here, it is noticeable that it is redundant, since there is no need to clarify that they are not used in Spanish as in English.

Another example of this case is [CEW # 816]

The same characteristic occurs in RPW, the examples were:

[RPW EXTRACT #2138] *Other data collection procedures. This research **also** used two more procedures to gather data from the subjects*

The additive connective *also* implies “and or in addition to what I said”. The additive function, however, is also expressed by the word more, creating a redundancy. In this case the sentence would mean “this research used (in addition to what I said) two more procedures”. For that reason, a better form of the sentence would be deleting also.

[RPW EXTRACT # 2116] Lastly, once again, the third sample was a free writing activity which not only attempted to assess the students writing performance after the tutorials but also how worthy they were. **Finally**, the purpose of the tutorials was to guide students in the English language sentence structure.

The connective *finally* denotes “and the last point or idea is”. Although, it is correctly used, the problem arises when one sentence before another temporal

connector with the same function is used. This connective is *lastly*. It is obvious that there cannot be more than one final point to be made.

Some other examples where one connective should be deleted in RPW are [4194] and [3251]

Finally, one more example of redundancy should be mentioned:

*[RPW EXTRACT # 4125] **Finally**, through the learner's output and the interlocutor's response to that output, the learner can reflect and consequently modifies his or her language use.*

***Finally**, we will focus on Bialystok's view of second language learning.*

The repeated use of 'finally' suggests lack of variety of temporal devices, and makes the text redundant. This suggests that one of them should be changed. However, we mention that they were correctly used for expressing temporal functions. This is slightly different from the previous ones because instead of deleting one connective, it could be replaced by another.

B. Another problem that was present in both corpora was the use of connectives which caused "logical leaps". There is no reason why the two ideas linked should be this way. Examples of this case are the following:

C.

**[CEW EXTRACT # 111]** This happens in English with the third person singular of the present tense (think thinks), where the -s shows that we're dealing with a he, she or it, **although** in English the pronoun is never omitted with the

exception of the imperative (“Sit down! Not you Sit down!”), unless we want to emphasize on the person being addressed with the command.”

*Although* is an adversative connective that is only used at the beginning of sentences, due to the fact that its short form *though* is the one subordinated in the middle or at the end of sentences. *Although* signals “despite the fact that”. As a result, when the connective is replaced by its meaning in [CEW-111] it is not necessary to use this connective: [*This happens in English with the third person singular of the present tense (think thinks), where the –s shows that we’re dealing with a he, she or it, **despite the fact that** in English the pronoun is never omitted with the exception of the imperative (“Sit down! Not you sit down!”)...*]

**[CEW EXTRACT # 564]** “As a conclusion we could say that adjectives are not that similar in English and Spanish languages given that they have different characteristics. **However**, both languages seem to use adjectives in a similar way. *Although* there are many things to talk about when referring to adjectives that were not included in this paper ...”

Also, *however* is an adversative connective which in this case might seem appropriate because both ideas are contrastive, but there is a problem with the ideas stated since it is better to paraphrase these ideas by joining them together and restate them, as well as deleting the adversative connective.

Another example of this case is [CEW 190]

Examples of this in RPW are:

**[RPW EXTRACT #3040]** It can be said, especially for students from state institutions that the only opportunity to get in touch with the language is the weekly class hours which tend to be three. **Consequently**, there is an important factor to take into account while talking about classroom management.

The connective *consequently*, as it was mentioned in CASE 2, means “because..., so” or “as a result of this”. However, the fact that students get just a few hours of English classes, is not the cause of an interest in classroom management. In this case, if there was a relation, the argument should have been better developed. The best option here is to eliminate the connective, and split the paragraph in two.

**[RPW EXTRACT # 4308]** *From what could be inferred, subjects 10 and 12 agreed entirely that opportunities are more limited for English practice outside the classroom in a non-English speaking country and that in a majority Spanish context the lack of that added impetus of the English-speaking environment decreases their willingness to speak or interact in the TL outside the classroom situation. **On the contrary**, subject 4 suggested that she lacks both the linguistic and pragmatic competence defined by Kasper as the knowledge developed and acquired through exposure and use of the target language” (Chen, 2006).*

The connective *on the contrary* means “opposite to what I just stated”. It denotes an adversative relation. In this case, there is no relationship between the first idea and what is stated afterwards. The first argument has to do with some aspects that limit Ss practice of L2 in which some Ss agreed. On the other hand, the second idea that is introduced by the connective deals with the fact that a subject lacks of linguistic and pragmatic competence. As it can be seen, these two sentences have no clear relation, not even to be put in contrast.

Another case where the connective must be deleted, and the sentences separated because there is no relation between them is [RPW 13], [RPW 42], [RPW 65], [RPW 66]

This case was also found by Wei-Yu's study (2006). She also found pieces of work where the Taiwanese students used Crewe (ct in Wei-yu 2006) calls "surface-level fillers". In this group, the connective most frequent found is *therefore* which was used by one writer leap from one idea to another, which is not e.g. the cause to the previous one. Thus, although ideas are apparently linked by connectives, those logical connections do not really exist. This also happens when, two ideas are linked despite the fact the content do not relate to each other. This case is called "content leap". Shen's<sup>87</sup> study also discovered patterns of misuse by the Chinese and Japanese students in terms of leaps. This time the connector used was *so*. It was used to try to impose relations between ideas despite the fact that for instance, again, the idea before the connective was not the direct cause of the second one. Tand and Ng<sup>88</sup> stated that sometimes students used connectives as a linking device between sentences, but do not contribute to the logical development. They might perhaps provide a surface "logicality" to establish a "glue effect" on the argument, but they cannot serve as guide posts for the reader to follow the argument.

C. The connective use is inappropriate since the function of the connective used is not the needed to connect the ideas. This is, the connective expressed inappropriately the relation between two ideas. E. g.:

**[CEW EXTRACT # 300]** *"An infinitive used as an adverb always describes a verb. An adverbial infinitive usually occurs at the beginning or at the end of a sentence and does not need to be near the verb it describes (1). As an example in English, we have the sentence "to win, you need the highest number of points", in which "to win" is the adverbial infinitive and "need" is the verb. **Also** in*

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<sup>87</sup> Shen, Ying. An analysis of Discourse Markers used by non-native English Learners: Its Implications for Teaching English as Foreign Language. 2007.

<sup>88</sup> Tang, Eunice and Cristina Ng. A Study on the Use of Connectives in ESL Students' Writing. Hong Kong Journals Online: Perspectives (City University of Hong Kong) Vol. 7 (1995 Autumn), 18 pages.

*Spanish we can find adverbial infinitives as in the sentence “estudia sin cesar” in which “cesar” is the adverbial infinitive.”*

The additive connector *also* is used to add simple items to a list, it has the sense “and or in addition to what I just said”. In that way, the sentence would mean: [In English sentences it is possible to find infinitive adverbials, in addition to this in Spanish we can find adverbial infinitives]. This is why the correct sense of the connective in [CEW-300] should be that of comparison and not simple addition. The connective similarly could be used instead. It is still additive but provides the sense of a positive comparison being established.

**[CEW EXTRACT # 304]** *“In English it is possible to identify an adverbial infinitive by inserting the test words in order in front of the infinitive. If the words in order make sense, the infinitive is adverbial. For example (in order) to win, you need the highest number of points. **Finally**, the infinitive functioning as a noun may function as well as a subject, direct object, retained object, subject complement, appositive and delayed appositive. The infinitive as a subject with “to” may be used both as a grammatical subject (to go by car is comfortable, to walk is healthier) and as a logical subject (“It is advisable to leave early”; which is alike with “to leave...”*

The correct use of the connective *finally* is to conclude. As a temporal connector, *finally* is used in a culminative sense. It signals ‘to round off the point’. As it can be seen in the [CEW-304], the use of *finally* is not suitable due to the fact that it does not sum up the whole idea from the paragraph, but instead it continues discussing the same topic. That’s why, instead of a temporal connective, it should be used an additive connective to keep on discussing the new topic.

Other examples of this case are [CEW 304], [CEW 449]

The examples of this type of misuse in RPW are:

**[RPW EXTRACT #1529]** *Table 1.1 illustrates the general results obtained by students. Concerning each specific domain, results were **consequently** similar.*

In [RPW 1529], the causal connective *consequently* expresses a cause-effect relation, “because..., so” or “as a result of this”. Despite this, nothing is mentioned that causes “similar results in each domain”. Instead, the information presented before the connective is information added to the previous topic, for that reason it is better delete the connective.

*[RPW EXTRACT #4313] Aside from these results 5 out of 8 subjects expressed to feel bad when initiating an interaction with a peer. **For instance**, they agreed to begin an interaction if the following conditions were present: “When I am drinking; when I do not want people to understand what I am saying to my peer; when I want to practice for a speaking examination”*

In [RPW 4313], the connective for instance expresses the notion “some examples of the information previously stated are”. However, in this case the information after the connective is not an example. Instead, they are ideas that show a deeper look into the peer-to-peer interaction. Also, this happened with extracts [RPW 4] and [RPW 6], [RPW 44], [RPW 23].

**CASE 2:** Another problem that emerged when doing the quantitative analysis of the writing samples had to do with punctuation.

- A. Examples of omission of punctuation marks are included in this case. Sometimes only one or no marks were used.

*[CEW EXTRACT # 870] “Speakers use “you” in both cases, for example: “you are my friend” and “you are my parents”. The only plural indicator is the word*

*“parents”. Spanish **however**, has many forms of the second person: for a formal speech it is used “usted”(singular),..”*

In this case, a semicolon is necessary to place when the adversative connective however occurs in mid-sentences.

**[CEW EXTRACT # 265]** *“It is somewhat misleading to use the word subject, however, since an infinitive phrase is not a full clause with a subject and a finite verb. **Also** notice that when it is a pronoun, the actor appears in the objective case (me, not I) (2). For instance “their fathers advise them to study”.*

Another example of this is [CEW 816], [CEW300], [CEW733], [CEW325], [CEW266], [CEW750], [CEW757], [CEW757<sup>9</sup>], [CEW794], [CEW432], [CEW428], [CEW757<sup>9</sup>], [CEW794]

The examples found in the RPW corpus are:

**[RPW EXTRACTS # 3246]** *It was **therefore** found that throughout reflection research teachers can become thoughtful practitioners who regularly evaluate the effects on their instruction, and reflect on the ways that their pedagogical practices may promote or obstruct the teaching learning process.*

In this case, although the function expressed by therefore is right, there are problems with punctuation since no comma was used after therefore.

**[RPW EXTRACTS # 4007]** *“...Gass and Varonis (1985a- 1986) argued that NNs-NNs interaccations provide greater opportunities than Ns (Native Speaker) – NNs (Non Native Speaker) interactions for the negotiation of meaning and therefore for obtaining comprehensible input (that in turn, according to Krashen’s input hypothesis, facilitates L2 acquisition”.*

Another case where no punctuation was used was [4029], [4109], [4180\*], [3243], [1012], [3056], [2528], [252], [4256], [3188], [202], [4346], [4096].

B. In this case, there were some problems with the use of punctuation as to the choice of connective. In these sentences it is necessary to change the punctuation marks Wrong use of punctuation when using connectives.

a. In this case, there were some problems with the use of punctuation as to the choice of connective. In these sentences it is necessary to change the punctuation marks Wrong use of punctuation when using connectives.

[RPW EXTRACT #1462] attitudes, therefore, predispose people to think and react in a certain way to any object or situation with which they are related.

Another case of misuse of punctuation marks with connectives is [RPW 787]

In the CEW corpus, this case occurs in the next examples:

[CEW EXTRACT # 260] *“In Spanish it is not necessary to place a preposition before the verb, however, we can place the indefinite article “el”, and so we can say “el conductor concuidado es muy importante” or “el caminar es bueno para la salud”. Some English infinitives require actors as it is going to be specified below.”*

**[CEW EXTRACT # 265]** “They are sometimes called “nonfinite” (which means unfinished or incomplete) verbs because time is involved with all verbs forms. Whether finite or nonfinite, however, following a logical tense Sequence are important. In English, the same as in Spanish, we can find three different kinds of verbal which are called infinitive, gerund and participle.”

- b. When subordinating connectives occur at the beginning of sentences, it must be placed a comma separating the clause mid-sentence. That’s why it is a mistake to use a comma immediately after the connective.

**[RPW EXTRACT # 4356]** Although, it was confirmed that the majority of the students are averse to initiating an interaction and that there is not a direct relation between their social representations and their level of oral proficiency, the benefits of being exposed to the L2 in a non-educational context and those of interacting between peers stated by Gardner (Ellis, 1994), Gass and Varonis (1985a, 1986), and Varonis and Gass (1985b) should not be dismissed or unrecognized

Examples of this mistake in the CEW corpus are:

**[CEW EXTRACT # 914]** “For example, one might say: “A person called and they did not leave their name” in here the speaker avoid identifying the gender of the person. Although, “a person” is singular; people use “they” which is in plural to refer to the same subject.”

**[CEW EXTRACT # 891]** Although, singular forms of personal pronouns in the third person for the subjective and objective case work in the same way in English and Spanish, the plural form differs in the gender since the English language uses “they” and “them” for referring to Feminine and male subjects.

This case is present as well in [CEW 886], [CEW 827], [CEW915]

## 6.2 RPW

**CASE1:** As in numeral 5.1 (b.) -sometimes a connective is used but it can be erased for different reasons, and no other can be used instead- occurs again.

This time, new cases arise.

- A. Not only the connective should be deleted, but also information that is linked by it. This is necessary because that information has already been discussed and so, makes the two sentences repetitive calling for a transformation of the lines

**[RPW EXTRACT # 2122]** (1)The results showed the problems the L2 pieces of writing had. (2) They were categorized in the following way: (3)The first samples analysis showed that a potential problem was the use of connectors since in the majority of the samples students wrote single sentences instead of paragraphs. (4)Besides, (5)wrong use of connectors was identified. (6)For instance, (7)after final period they began the other sentence with a connector. (8)So taking into account the data from this samples analysis, the problem was due to L1 negative transfer.

The additive connective besides implies “in addition to what I previously stated... it is also true”. However, the information after the connective is the

same as the one before it: there are problems using connectives. Then, (4) and (5) should be deleted.

*[RPW EXTRACT #3161] “This data and its subsequent analysis showed that there were some issues that affected the class development in depth compared to some others. For example, it was difficult to deal mainly with some disruptive behaviors exhibited by students, and with their lack of attention to class. In consequence, the most significant matter that was affecting classes at this stage was the pre-service teachers’ experience regarding to classroom management techniques’ and strategies. Although some other troublesome issues came up during...”*

The causal connective *in consequence* means “the specific consequence/result of what I previously stated is...” Despite this, the sentence before it does not present the cause why classroom management is the **most significant** aspect of the teaching practicum. In this case, the argument is not well developed. The sentence before the connective must change because there is information missing.

An improved version of this passage would be exemplified by: state that there is a problem that could be solved applying better classroom management techniques. Mention the problems. Compare those problems that affect learning against those who don’t really. This would highlight why classroom management is so important. Then, adding the connective this previous idea becomes the cause why classroom management is the most important.

Another case of a connective being deleted as well as the information around it is [RPW 2680], [RPW 2230], [RPW 1529] and [RPW 4540].

- B. In this case, more than one connective is used in the same sentence but they have contradictory functions.

*[RPW EXTRACT 3042] **Conversely**, it is **also** highlighted the importance of using the target for both language-related and classroom management functions.*

*Conversely* means “in an opposite way”, and *also* “in addition”. Both meanings are contradicting, however they are used one after the other. This makes no sense.

**CASE 2:** Next, just like in numeral 5.1 (b.) - Another problem that emerged when doing the quantitative analysis of the writing samples had to do with punctuation.- arises again. This time, new cases are presented.

- A. In this case, the problem occurs when it is used a semicolon where a comma should be placed.

*[RPW EXTRACT # 4000] **Although** our interaction outside the classroom with peers is almost null; we consider that if we and L2 learners in general spoke more English in out-of-class-situations, we would improve somehow our oral proficiency.*

*[RPW EXTRACT # 2628] The Lic. María Sonia Zambrano stated the need of incorporating English teachers to the school to cover all areas needed for secondary education, and **therefore**; to carry out one of the reintegration programs offered by the INPEC; that is the educational one.*

Other cases of the same problem are [RPW EXTRACT 4101], [RPW EXTRACT 2172], [RPW EXTRACT 4302]

**CASE 3:** Other times, the use of the connective could not be appropriately judged because the sentences were not complete. That is they were just fragments. An example of it is the following:

[RPW EXTRACT # 2041] In the same matter, O'Malley and Chamot (1990) stated that "Learning Strategies are special ways of processing information and secure the retention of this" **in other words** learning.

Other cases were , [RPW EXTRACT 1007], [RPW EXTRACT 2218],

The problematic use of RPW written work is found not to be the connectives themselves but the language around them. This requires rewriting rather than replacing or taking out the connectives. This problem was also found in Huang's study (2006).

**CASE 4:** In other cases, it was common the inappropriate use of connectives. In this case, differently from (a), the connective must be replaced by another one, since a link is needed.

[RPW EXTRACT #3253] *Each stage of reflection had a great impact on pre-service teachers and their subsequent performance since every instructor has an initial presumption and theories of language teaching and learning, then, based on personal experiences and reflection after classroom practice he/she can vary his/her approaches leading to improvement. In this reflective practice, the pre-service teachers applied theories in classroom practice, then, analyzed*

*their performance together with their peers to finally do a peer reflection on the results of the observations done. The final outcome was an adjustment of the theories initially applied with the intention of improvement. **On the other hand,** this study can be of great contribution for future pre-service teachers who wish to have a background on a real teaching experience.*

The adversative connective *on the other hand* shows a contrastive and emphatic relation between two ideas. It means “as against” or “to be set against” or “spite of”. However, in this example the connective is used to denote support to the ideas previously mentioned. Besides, this additive connotation is not clear. There seems to be no relation between the two ideas the writer tried to link.

**[RPW EXTRACT # 2685]** *The students were neither exposed to the Target Language for long periods of time; nor had a huge amount of vocabulary to use. They only had an hour per week; and it should be used carefully in order to cover all the activities planned for that day. **As a result of this,** it was necessary to give them some basic vocabulary such as numbers, nationalities, clothes etc. that they could use daily, and encourage them to speak without being worried about the right pronunciation of the words. (See Appendix C)*

The causal connective *as a result of this* implies “because of something”<sup>89</sup>. However in this paragraph, the link is that of reason, which still is a causal relation. In that case, a better connective would be the causal connector used for talking about reasons, *for this reason*.

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<sup>89</sup> Cambridge

**[RPW EXTRACT # 1630]** “Table 2.1 illustrates results for the first three aspects considered, since their data may be confusing for the reader.

***Finally***, text length rendered apparently contradicting results. In the first task, the texts oscillated in length from student to student, yet all of them showed an increase of 20% in average in the number of words written by the subjects. This number was obtained after calculating the percentage of...”

The conclusive temporal connective *finally* in “and the last point or idea is”. In this case, the use of this connector is inappropriate because the discussion about table 2.1 and the topic text length is not the last one, there are more coming throughout the section. There are more coming such as calculating the percentage of words among students, such as 2.2 about frequency results for perceived cause of improvement is next. At the paragraph level. An additive connective should have been used instead, such as *furthermore* or *in addition*.

This problem also occurs in [RPW 2659], [RPW 1549], [RPW 3152]

**CASE 5:** Here, the use of a conclusive temporal connective is inappropriate since it should be used to finish the idea on the text. For that reason, the connective must be moved beyond in the text:

**[RPW EXTRACT # 4204]** ***Finally***, an interactive graphic is generated showing the data. To facilitate the analysis and interpretation of the data shown, descriptive statistics were used.

The conclusive temporal connective *finally* in “and the last point or idea is”. In this case, the use of this connector is inappropriate because generating

graphics for the study with a program is not the last step when analyzing the results; the last step is the next one, using descriptive statistics for studying the results. Thus, the connective should be moved and placed before the last sentence. An additive connective should have been used instead, such as *furthermore* or *in addition*. (at sentence level)

### 6.3 CEW

**CASE 1:** Subsequently, as in 5.1 (b.) - Another problem that emerged when doing the quantitative analysis of the writing samples had to do with punctuation.- this problem is presented. This time, new cases occur.

A. In this case, several writers used colons where it is supposed to be a comma.

**[CEW EXTRACT # 776] For instance:** *Yo canté toda la noche (I sang all night). Conjugated in second person singular, the suffix –ASTE is added to the rot.*

**[CEW EXTRACT # 314] For instance:** *“at one time, I attempted to climb Mt. Everest” (1).*

This case occurs in [CEW759], [CEW759<sup>3</sup>], [CEW750<sup>5</sup>], [CEW750<sup>8</sup>], [CEW810], [CEW345], [CEW727], [CEW800], [CEW411], [CEW747], [CEW737]

**CASE 2:** Sometimes, the connectives were used in final position when they can only be placed at the beginning or the end of sentences.

**[CEW EXTRACT # 514]** *“Stressed vowels are not inflected **also**. As an example of this we have: *Lean el libro café.* (read the brown book)...”*

The additive connective also signals “in addition”. This additive connective can occur at the beginning or the middle of a sentence, but not at the end. Thus, when the connective in E-6 is replaced by its meaning, the phrase would imply: [Stressed vowels are not inflected (in addition)]

**[CEW EXTRACT # 496]** *If the noun is in plural, then the adjective that modifies it must be pluralized also.*

Again, the additive connective also is placed at the end of the sentence though this position is inadequate. In this case, the connective is not necessary so it can be deleted out of the sentence. That’s why when replacing the connective also with its meaning, it is more evident the mistake: [If the noun is in plural, then the adjective that modifies it must be pluralized (in addition)].

Some other examples of this case are [CEW512], [CEW432], [CEW428], [CEW476]

#### **6.4. OTHERS**

**CASE 1:** There are paragraphs where too many connectives are used. That is the case of the following:

**On the other hand,** in English there is no distinction in gender in third person in plural, **in contrast** Spanish has a pronoun for feminine and another for masculine. Both languages have three grammatical persons. English has subjective personal pronouns and objective personal pronouns but Spanish has the tonic and atonic forms. **Although** atonic form are mostly used as the object personal pronouns of English, they cannot be placed after prepositions, **instead** we use the tonic pronouns. As we have seen throughout this paper, **although** English and Spanish have similar uses in grammar maybe due to their common origins, they present several differences important to understand when learning and teaching.

Six connectives were used in total of six sentences. The writer used too many connectives which impede the flow of the argument and makes the text sound rather fragmented. In fact, the many ideas presented on the paragraph are not linked coherently by the use of the connectives. An important source of such incoherence is the misuse of the three connectives

Also, this case occurs in the RPW corpus.

*[1693] secondly, continuous practice must be provided to students, as this was seen as one of the most important factors determining their improvement in writing texts. Therefore, a minimum of 1 hour per week is suggested to be used to develop this ability, although more time dedicated to this area will consequently render better outcomes.*

As it can be seen, this is just half one long paragraph where there are 6 connectives. Those connectives are: indeed, however, in first place, secondly, therefore and although.

These previous examples are similar to those presented by Wei-yu (2006), who found that Taiwanese EFL students 'clutter up' their texts with too many connectives. Sometimes, even seven connectives were used in six sentences. All these, show signs of misuse (that, therefore and consequently) linking ideas which did not hang together. Tang and Ng also found this problem with Chinese EFL students and stated that when facing difficulties in building logical argument and meeting the requirement of the length their work, students have to rely on the use of connectives to glue their sentences together so as to impose surface logicity and at the same time, to make their work look more academic. As a result, connectives are overused and their arguments look confusing.

**CASE 2:** Another problem found in the learners' corpora was the use of spoken features in academic writing. Let us consider the following:

-The use of *besides*. The additive connective *besides* was used 28 times in the RPW. This is a problematic issue because it is a rather informal connective, and it should be avoided in this type of writing .

Guilquin and Paquot's (2007) study found the same problem in their corpus. The adverb *besides* was usually misused. The typical function of *besides* in native English is to introduce a final point or argument that is decisive. They do not offer a percentage of the times this connective occurs. In learner English, however, *besides* tends to be used simply to introduce an additional point. Also, according to Field and Yip in Wei-Yu (2006), *besides* is an informal connective which is used more often in speech. Therefore, informal writing, its use is not register-appropriate and should be avoided. The use of *besides* gives an unintended colloquial tone to the academic paper. Wei-Yu found that the use of *besides* could be rather abrupt as when it was used to connect two sentences with very different topics. Seven of the ten students used it. Therefore, the current study agrees with Field and Yip's in Wei-Yu (2006) following comment: "on two accounts, its informality and its misuse it would be best to discourage the use of *besides* in essay writing". Tang and Ng (1995), also found this problem.

It was only used by one group because *besides* is a connective that is used in spoken features and in Colombia there is no the possibility for learners to receive input from native speakers, they don't know how to differentiate it.

Also there is the idea that *besides* is a really formal and difficult to use connective. However, we are not certain that CEW did not use it because they know it is incorrect. Rather, we think that is due to the fact that is the one learnt in advanced levels.

**CASE 3:** "Logicality leaps" (refer to section 5.1.-(a)- Case 4)

Now that all the problematic cases have been addressed, it is worth discussing which are some of the probable causes. Some categories and some

connectives have particularly high frequency (Witte & Faigley, 1981, cited in Tang and Ng 1995). This high frequency indicates that students have their own favorite connectives and they also believe that the connectives are the means to improve the organization of ideas at sentence and paragraph level to provide a smooth flow, and to achieve coherence in the whole piece of writing so they are not tired of putting more and more of them into their writing. Similarly, additive devices were the most frequently used because they are helpful in connecting phrases, clauses and sentences in writing (Braine et al., 2005).

The results from our research show that additive devices are highly used in comparison with other devices such as adversative, causal or temporal. The reason for this high frequency of additive devices is understandable. Students think that it is the simplest and easiest connective. It can be used to join any sentences and the connection it makes is straightforward. However, as Tang and Ng state sometimes this simplicity of course might lead the writer to be too general (1995).

Another potential cause that might give grounds to our hypotheses relating overuse has to do with lack of lexical variety. Students were not competent enough to use other items to indicate transition of meaning (Braine et al., 2005). Then, this assumption could work with the CEW group taking into account that they have less experience and probably less lexical variety than the RPW group.

Now, relating the misuse students make of connectives we could say that one of the causes might be related to students' lack of register sensitivity or organizational characteristics (formal and informal connectives in academic writing) (Wei-Yu, 2006). The use of spoken-like devices may be due to the fact that mainly, students learn English by speaking, or with oral input (Guilquin et al., 2007). However, for L2 learners this does not seem that probable because the input is little. And, if they receive that from teachers this is little information or simplified and with less lexical density. Regarding textbooks, it is different from authentic speech and simplified. However, for Guilquin et al. (2007), although with a lower frequency, register confusion also takes place in

the L1 learning of writing. For that reason, they state that register confusion is “a part of the process of acquiring a foreign language as it is part of the process of becoming an expert writer”.

Some other issues to which these problems might be attributed have to do with not proper pedagogical practices (Wei-Yu, 2006). It is pointed out by Crewe (qtd. In Tang and Ng, 1995) that mechanical exercises commonly found in textbooks are “possible source of the problem of misuse and overuse”. Very often when coherence is discussed in books about writing, placement of transitional words or phrases between sentences is usually suggested. Exercises are devised based on this principle and format. Students are drilled to link up two sentences with the connective provided. The connective is either to be put in between or at the beginning of the sentence. In these textbooks connectives are treated as equivalents without any regard for the possible differences among them. Of course, this kind of words or phrases has an important role in developing coherence, but to what extent students can understand the correct and appropriate use of these words or phrases from the mechanical exercises which work on artificially constructed isolated sentences is the main concern.

Similarly, Guilquin et al (2007) suggest that this problem may have to do with L2 instruction. In this sense, the authors affirm that the emphasis on grammatical accuracy, rather than stylistic appropriacy, plus the inadequate materials learners have access to, could be the reason for this notorious drawback on connectives’ usage. They adhere Crewe and Milton and Tsang position in that the list of connectives presented in textbooks “are especially harmful... with little context and comments, as if these connectives were interchangeable”. Also, they claim that some textbooks may suggest certain techniques of translation that produce transfer errors, such as the case of the French bilingual dictionary Robert and Collins Senior from 1998.

Being more specific, it is necessary to mention that there are problems which are particular to certain types of connectives. As to causal connectives, Wei – Yu (2006) hypothesizes, the possible cause for the misuse can be that these

devices are used to express a conclusion without really providing convincing evidence or enough information for the reader to follow the argument. Thus, as suggested by Crewe (ctd. in Wei-Yu, 2006), students need to think more through their argument before deciding on the connectives there are going to use.

Problems with connective use could also be due to transfer from the L1. The rhetorical style of the first language, in this case specifically Spanish, might have an effect on second language writing. In Ying's (2008) study, although the problem is not directly related to connectives, Japanese and Chinese students of English are reported to have problems in writing due to interference from their L1.

## 7. CONCLUSIONS

After carrying out this study on connectives and analyzing the data obtained during the process, the pre-service teachers reached some conclusions. First, as to overuse, it can be concluded that CEW used more connectives than RPW (0.89% and 0.55%, respectively). The categories of connectives most commonly used by RPW were additive and adversative (41,02% and 49,47% respectively). Similarly, CEW also preferred these categories but the percentages of use were different. This is, this group used the additive category 49,47% and the adversative category 41,14%. CEW relies almost completely on only two sets of connectives, which are up to a 90%. This might be due to the kind of text this corpus was made of.

Concerning misuse, the group with the higher rate was CEW with a 27,60% of connectives mistakenly used against a 13,59% by RPW. The most problematic categories for CEW were the additive (52,83%) and the adversative (45,28%). Surprisingly, as it was mentioned before they are also the most used. As to RPW, the causal (12,85%) and the adversative (35,71%) were the most commonly misused. The three most problematic connectives for CEW were *therefore*, *although* and *finally*. On the other hand, for the RPW, the most problematic connectives were *for instance*, *also*, and *however*.

Also, from the qualitative analysis, it was concluded that both CEW and RPW had difficulties in other aspects. The analysis showed register confusion of connectives which are only of oral and informal use. This is the case of *besides*, *though*. Also, it was common the use of too many connectives in just one paragraph (up to 6), which cluttered up paragraphs unnecessarily. Finally, another characteristic was identified, the presence of *logicality leaps*. This is, students made connections straightforward between sentences without any

logical relation. This made hard not only the task of reading the paragraphs, but also the judging of the cases of misuse.

## 8. RECOMMENDATIONS

First, in order for students improve students use of connectives it is important for them to increase the amount of their reading and build their own knowledge. This is, reaching real examples of how to write by having access to academic papers, books and articles.

Also, it is necessary that in class, teachers provide students with exercises where they do not have to drill and link up two sentences with the connectives provided, placing them at the beginning or the end of each sentence. The exercises should give students the chance to analyze the way they place the connective and the meaning that it gives to the sentence.

In addition, in order to avoid students using informal connectives when writing academic essays, it is important to give them the information necessary when they attend to Compresión y Conversación Inglesa class where they can clarify the use of those connectives in terms of the different registers. Thus, to avoid the use of informal connectives such as *though* or *besides* in formal writing.

Also, as to the sampling process, the researchers recommend that for further studies on the use of connectives corpora of the same gender and size is used. Under those conditions the study will be much more accurate and the results more reliable.

The research group suggests to continue with this study in order to find out the reason why students use (wrongly or correctly) some connective category more than others. Moreover, it would be important to use the essays written by EFL students from the language program and compare them with native speakers of English in other countries so that the results got from the studies with Colombian students can be analyzed with real evidence.

Finally, it would be great help for students that a group of researchers carried out action research to have a plan and a solution strategy to deal with the problems.

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## APPENDIX 1

### *Sites Where You Can Download Text Software Analysis From*

The following list of softwares can be downloaded at these official websites:

(List order arranged according to Table 2)

MonoConc Pro 2.2 (MCP 2.2) - <<http://www.athel.com/mono.html>> (Demo version of 20 hits)

WordSmith Tools 4 (WST 4) - <[http://www.oup.co.uk/isbn/0\\_19\\_459400\\_9](http://www.oup.co.uk/isbn/0_19_459400_9)> (Ordered at the website of Oxford University Press- No demo or trial version is available) or <[www.lexically.net](http://www.lexically.net)> (Demo version)

Concordance - <<http://www.concordancesoftware.co.uk/>> (Downloaded and licensed at the official website-30-day trial available)

Multi Language Corpus Tool (MLCT) - <<http://www.lancs.ac.uk/staff/piaosl/research/download/download.htm>>

ConcApp 4 (CA 4) - < <http://www.edict.com.hk/pub/concapp>> Available at the author's website

TextSTAT 2.6 (TS2.6) - < <http://www.niederlandistik.fu-berlin.de/textstat/>>

AntConc 3.1.1 (AC 3.1) - < <http://www.antlab.sci.waseda.ac.jp/software.html>> Available at the author's website

Aconcorde (ACC) - < <http://www.andy-roberts.net/software/> > Available at the author's website

Simple Concordance Program 4.08 (SCP) -  
<<http://web.bham.ac.uk/a.reed/textworld/scp/>>

Concordancer for Windows 2.0 (WC2) - <  
<http://www.flwi.ugent.be/nl/upload/courses/bdfrancq/WCONCORD.EXE>> or  
<<http://opinion.nucba.ac.jp/~davidlee/devotedtocorpora/WCONCORD.ZIP>>

## APPENDIX 2

The steps to follow with the program are:

### A. LOADING CORPORA INTO THE PROGRAM (BOTH CORPORA).

1. Click on the **'Concord'** button in the WordSmith Tools main screen. A new window 'Concord' opens
2. In the **'File'** menu, select **'New'** (or use Ctrl+ N). The 'Getting Started' window opens.
3. Select texts:
  - a. Click on the **'Texts'** tab.
  - b. click on **'Choose Texts Now'**
  - c. Browse the files in the left hand window. Select the ones you want to use by highlighting them and clicking on the blue arrow. The text appears in the table to the right. To remove texts from the selection, click on them in the table and then on the delete button on your keyboard.
  - d. Click on the green check mark on the upper right corner of the window .
  - d. Close the **'Choose Texts'** window to return to the **'Getting started'** box.

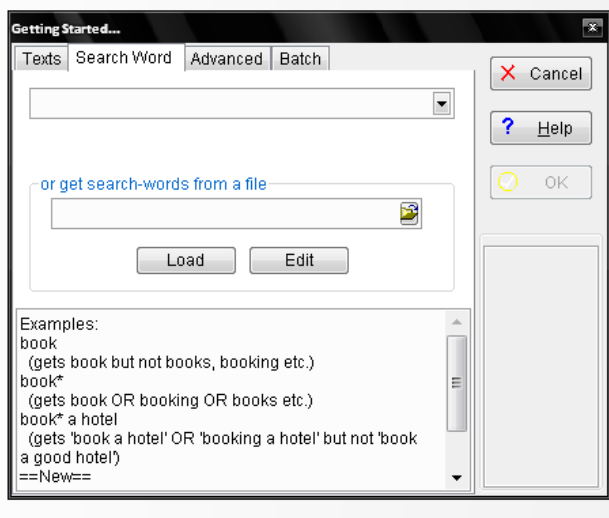
### B. LOADING THE SEARCH-WORD LIST (BOTH CORPORA)

First of all, based on *TABLE 1. Connectives* a list of connectives will be created in Microsoft Word Office 2007 consisting of 146 connectives<sup>90</sup>. It will be then saved as *texto sin formato* (\*.txt). This list of connectives will be loaded into WST4. The steps to follow are:


1. Click on **Search Word**. This window will appear:

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<sup>90</sup> However, not all connectives listed in TABLE 1 appeared in the corpora (CEW and RPW). This is why, it will be made clear after analyzing the two groups of texts.



2. Instead of typing in each word or phrase in the Search Word dialogue box,

browse for the file and add it. To do so, click on the icon . Browse for the file and load it. Then press

**Load** to read the entries (or **Clear** if you change your mind).

3. Click on **OK**. The Concordance Window opens and your hits are listed. You may be asked if you want to sort the lines before display (If it doesn't appear, click on **Edit**, then **Resort** or press **F6**)

4. when the **Concordance Sort** window appears, click on the **Main Sort** tab, and select the option **Set Order**.

5. Click on **OK**

The list that appears will be saved and printed to analyze the **misuse** of connectives.

### **C. CALCULATING THE NUMBER OF CONNECTIVES USED (BOTH CORPORA)**

1. In the **Concord** window (the list that displays the results the hit results), click on the tab **Notes**.

2. *Type in the results in Excel, and calculate the total number of connectives used in the corpus.*

3. *The top ten list of the **most frequently used connectives** will be created.*

- To analyze **RPW** repeat the same process. You will come across a similar results table as the one shown in B.