

The Effects of Teaching Conjunctions on the Cohesion of EFL Students' Compositions

Truong Dinh Minh Dang^{1*}

English Lecturer

Faculty of Foreign Language, Nguyen Tat Thanh University, Vietnam

Corresponding Author:- Truong Dinh Minh Dang^{1*}

Abstract:- A well-written work is not only grammatically correct but also cohesive and coherent. Conjunctions are fundamental to the cohesion of a text and should be taught in writing classes. This study explores the role of conjunctions in creating cohesive and coherent writing and their impact on EFL students' written production. The research first assessed 62 students' attitudes toward learning and using conjunctions through a questionnaire, revealing their understanding of conjunctions' importance and a willingness to learn. The primary goal was to examine if teaching conjunctions would enhance students' ability to write cohesive texts. A pre- and post-test design with 50 students from an English center in Ho Chi Minh City showed improved conjunction use and higher mean scores after instruction. The study's findings offer recommendations for teaching conjunctions and suggest further research into cohesion elements in language instruction.

Keywords:- L2 Writing; Cohesion; Conjunctions; EFL Students.

I. INTRODUCTION

The study focuses on the challenges language learners face in mastering writing, especially in creating cohesive texts. Writing is considered the most difficult language skill for both ESL/EFL learners and native speakers, as noted by Ting (2003), Ong (2011), and Norrish (1983), due to the absence of non-verbal cues that aid communication. Prommas and Sinwongsuwat (2011) argue that cohesive devices, particularly conjunctions, are essential for clarity, yet they are often difficult for both learners and native speakers to use correctly. Various studies, such as Ridha (2012) on Iraqi students and Liu (2013) on Chinese students, have identified common writing errors like grammar, tense, and word order issues. In Vietnam, learners also struggle with writing cohesion and coherence, particularly in high schools where students often misuse or overuse cohesive devices. This issue arises from a lack of proper instruction, where students are taught lists of conjunctions without clear guidance, leading to confusion and errors. The researcher aims to address this issue by designing lessons focused on cohesive devices and investigating their impact on learners' writing skills and cohesion.

➤ Aims of the Paper

Several previous studies, including Crewe (1990), Field & Yip (1992), Chen (2006), Heino (2010), and Martinez (2004), have shown that ESL and EFL students often underuse, overuse, and misuse cohesive devices, facing difficulties in applying them correctly. However, there is limited research specifically on the use of conjunctions by Vietnamese-speaking students. Additionally, few studies have examined the relationship between teaching conjunctions and students' writing abilities. This study aims to address this gap by (1) investigating students' attitudes towards learning and using conjunctions in their writing, (2) exploring the potential effects of teaching conjunctions on the cohesion of students' compositions. The study was conducted at an educational center where the researcher is a full-time teacher.

➤ Research Questions

Below are the study's two research questions:

- What are EFL students' attitudes towards learning and using conjunctions in their writing?
- Does teaching conjunctions positively affect the cohesion of student's compositions?

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Writing is a complex process with many interconnected layers, making it difficult for both teachers and students to navigate. Effective written communication requires a deep understanding of the topic, the audience, and the context. Therefore, it is essential to establish clear criteria or frameworks that can guide both teaching and learning. These frameworks help teachers assess writing more objectively and provide students with a structure to follow in developing their own work.

Ultimately, five core Features of Effective Writing have emerged, as outlined by Cali and Bowen (2003): focus, organization, support and elaboration, style, and conventions. These features provide a solid foundation for both writing instruction and evaluation.

Attitude is a crucial factor in language learning success, with various definitions highlighting its importance. Montana and Kasprzyk (2008) define attitude as shaped by an individual's perceptions of outcomes or attributes related

to a behavior. Gardner and Lambert (1972) found that attitudes towards a language and its speakers influence motivation to learn that language. Positive attitudes generally enhance second language acquisition, while negative attitudes hinder it. Ajzen and Fishbein (1980) connected attitudes to intentional behaviors, suggesting that favorable attitudes result from believing in positive outcomes. Attitudes, as described by Ajzen (1988) and Gardner (1980), involve a tendency to respond positively to certain objects or events and are seen as motivators for language learners. Visserin Abidin (2012) supports the view that attitude is a key determinant of linguistic performance, emphasizing that language learning should be considered a social and psychological endeavor, not just an academic task.

Previous research on the relationship between cohesive devices and writing competence shows mixed results. Some studies found no significant link between cohesive devices and writing quality (Catro, 2004; Johnson, 1992; Zhang, 2000), while others reported a positive correlation (Ferris, 1994; Liu & Braine, 2005; Martinez, 2015). For instance, Emmanuel (2013) and Liu and Braine (2005) found that cohesive devices are crucial for effective writing, while Martinez (2015) noted a positive relationship between conjunction density and writing quality among secondary education students. However, Tran (2007) and Castro (2004) found that the use of cohesive devices did not always improve writing and could lead to overuse or misuse. Zhang (2000) also found no significant relationship between cohesive device frequency and writing quality. Li and Zhao (2019) similarly concluded that the appropriate use of conjunctions, rather than their frequency, affects writing quality.

In summary, while various studies have explored the impact of cohesive devices on writing, results have been inconsistent. More research is needed to specifically

investigate the effect of different types of conjunctions on EFL students' writing quality. This study aims to address this gap by focusing on the use of conjunctions and their correlation with writing quality.

III. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

To explore students' attitudes toward learning and using conjunctions in their writing, the researcher used a descriptive research design with a questionnaire to gather detailed data on students' attitudes, difficulties, and expectations. For examining the correlation between teaching conjunctions and the cohesion of students' compositions, a quasi-experimental quantitative design was employed. This approach allows for testing causal relationships by manipulating the use of conjunctions (independent variable) and measuring their impact on composition cohesion (dependent variable).

The study was conducted at Quang Tri Education Center in Ho Chi Minh City. This center focuses on training junior and high school students with general English based on the training program of the Ministry of Education.

The study involved grade 12 students from Quang Tri Education Center using the "English 12" textbook. Sixty-two students from 19 high schools in Ho Chi Minh City participated in questionnaires to gauge their attitudes toward learning conjunctions and writing skills. For the experimental phase, 50 intermediate-level students from two of the researcher's classes were selected through convenient sampling. The students were randomly divided into a control group (CG) and an experimental group (EG). The researcher taught conjunctions to the experimental group, and a pretest showed no significant difference in performance between the two groups before the intervention.

IV. FINDINGS AND RESULTS

➤ Responses to the Students' Attitudes towards Learning Writing Skill

Table 1 The Students' Attitudes Towards

| Question Number | Questions | Rates (%) | | | | |
|-----------------|---|----------------------------------|-----------------------------|------------------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| 1 | Of all four skills, writing is... | Very Difficult 15 (21.19%) | Difficult 24 (38.71%) | Acceptable 21 (33.87%) | Fairly Easy 2 (3.23%) | Very Easy 0 (0%) |
| 2 | Do you often practice your writing skill? | Never 16 (25.81%) | Rarely 17 (27.42%) | Sometimes 16 (25.81%) | Often 13 (20.97%) | Usually 0 (0%) |
| 3 | At your school, which skill is taught most? | Reading 16 (25.81%) | Listening 1 (1.61%) | Writing 12 (19.35%) | Speaking 4 (6.45%) | Grammar 29 (46.77%) |
| 4 | In your opinion, writing skill is... | Very Important 13 (20.97%) | Important 36 (58.06%) | Normal 8 (12.90%) | Unimportant 1 (1.61%) | Completely Important 0 (0%) |

The results from Table 1 indicate that a significant majority of students—59.9%—find writing to be a difficult subject, with 21.19% considering it very difficult and 38.71% finding it difficult. Only 3.23% of students felt that writing was easy. The frequency of writing practice among students was fairly evenly distributed: 25.81% never practiced, 27.42% rarely practiced, 25.81% practiced sometimes, and 20.97% practiced often. This distribution suggests that about half of the students engaged in writing practice to some extent, while the other half did not.

In terms of the English skills taught, grammar and reading were the most emphasized, with 46.77% of students receiving more instruction in grammar and 25.81% in

reading. Despite recognizing the importance of writing—58.06% of students considered it important and 20.97% deemed it very important—students did not dedicate sufficient time to practicing and revising their writing. Only 1.61% of students questioned the importance of writing.

Overall, while students are well-versed in vocabulary and grammar from their lessons, they struggle to apply these skills effectively in their writing, resulting in numerous grammatical and lexical errors.

➤ *The Students' Focuses, Difficulties and Methods used to Teach Writing*

Table 2 The Students' Focuses, Difficulties and Methods used to Teach Writing

| Question Number | Questions | Grading: 1 = the most; 5 = the least | | | | |
|-----------------|---|--------------------------------------|--------|--------|--------|--------|
| | | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 5 | Factors should be focused on in writing | | | | | |
| | - Contents and ideas of writing | 43.55% | 27.42% | 14.52% | 12.90% | 1.61% |
| | - Word use | 16.13% | 29.03% | 32.26% | 17.74% | 4.83% |
| | - Grammar accuracy | 30.65% | 29.03% | 20.97% | 16.13% | 3.23% |
| | - Coherence and Cohesion | 6.45% | 12.90% | 30.65% | 38.71% | 11.29% |
| | - Punctuation | 3.23% | 1.61% | 1.61% | 14.52% | 79.03% |
| 6 | The forms and methods have been used in teaching writing. | | | | | |
| | - Fill in the blanks | 45.16% | 17.74% | 20.97% | 8.06% | 8.06% |
| | - Write sentences from given words | 8.06% | 33.87% | 37.09% | 19.35% | 1.615 |
| | - Combine simple sentences into complex ones | 4.84% | 29.03% | 20.97% | 29.03% | 16.13% |
| | - Sentence transformation without changing the meaning | 35.48% | 14.52% | 12.90% | 25.81% | 11.29% |
| | - Free writing | 6.45% | 4.84% | 8.06% | 17.74% | 62.90% |
| 7 | Difficulties that students often face in English writing: | | | | | |
| | - Ideas expression | 41.94% | 20.97% | 17.74% | 16.13% | 3.23% |
| | - Word use | 25.81% | 27.42% | 17.74% | 14.52% | 4.84% |
| | - Grammar accuracy | 24.19% | 32.26% | 22.58% | 17.74% | 3.23% |
| | - Cohesion and coherence | 6.45% | 17.74% | 17.74% | 38.71% | 9.68% |
| | - Punctuation | 1.61% | 1.61% | 4.84% | 12.90% | 79.03% |

When writing, students primarily focus on expressing ideas and using grammar accurately, with 43.55% prioritizing content and ideas, and 30.65% emphasizing grammar accuracy. Only 6.45% of students consider cohesion and coherence as their main concerns. The difficulties they encounter are mainly related to expressing ideas (41.94%), word use (25.81%), and grammar accuracy (24.19%). Issues with cohesion, coherence, and punctuation are not commonly perceived as significant problems.

In terms of teaching methods, students frequently encounter activities such as filling in blanks (45.16%), transforming sentences (35.48%), writing sentences from given words (8.06%), free writing based on prompts (6.45%), and combining simple sentences (4.84%). Most of these methods focus on grammatical exercises rather than

communicative writing, which may contribute to their struggles with fluent writing. Achieving organization and coherence remains challenging, as good writing requires not just grammatical accuracy but also effective cohesion and coherence to ensure that readers can follow the writer's ideas smoothly.

➤ *Responses to the Students' Attitudes towards Learning and using Conjunctions in English Writing*

This part revealed how the students felt about learning conjunctions and the application of conjunctions in writing an English composition.

➤ *The Students' Responses to the Importance of Conjunctions and Cohesion in Writing*

Table 3 The Students' Responses to the Importance of Conjunctions and Cohesion in Writing

| Question Number | Questions | Rate (%) | | | | |
|-----------------|--|----------------------------------|-----------------------------|------------------------------|-------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| | | (1) | (2) | (3) | (4) | |
| 8 | Students understand that conjunctions are... (1) Words used to combine similar words in clauses (2) Words used to combine similar clauses in sentences (3) Words used to combine sentences or paragraphs in compositions (4) All above are correct | 8.06% | 9.68% | 9.68% | 72.58% | |
| 9 | For students, applying conjunctions in writing is... | Very Difficult 6 (9.68%) | Difficult 19 (30.65%) | Acceptable 24 (38.71%) | Fairly Easy 13 (20.97%) | Very Easy 0 (0%) |
| 10 | For students, in English writing, using conjunctions is... | Very Important 28 (45.16%) | Important 20 (32.26%) | Normal 13 (20.97%) | Unimportant 1 (1.62%) | Completely Unimportant 0 (0%) |

Regarding conjunctions, although the majority of student could choose the correct answer for the definition of conjunctions (72.58%), the remaining students (27.42%) still did not know exactly what conjunctions are. They also confirmed that the use of conjunctions in writing is important with 77.42%. However, for students, they found that it was not extremely hard for them to apply

conjunctions in their writing. 38.71% students found it *acceptable* to use conjunctions, whereas 30.65% felt it *difficult* and 20.97% thought it *fairly easy* when using conjunctions to write.

Data of the rank of lessons that conjunctions are taught most is presented in the form of the pie chart below.

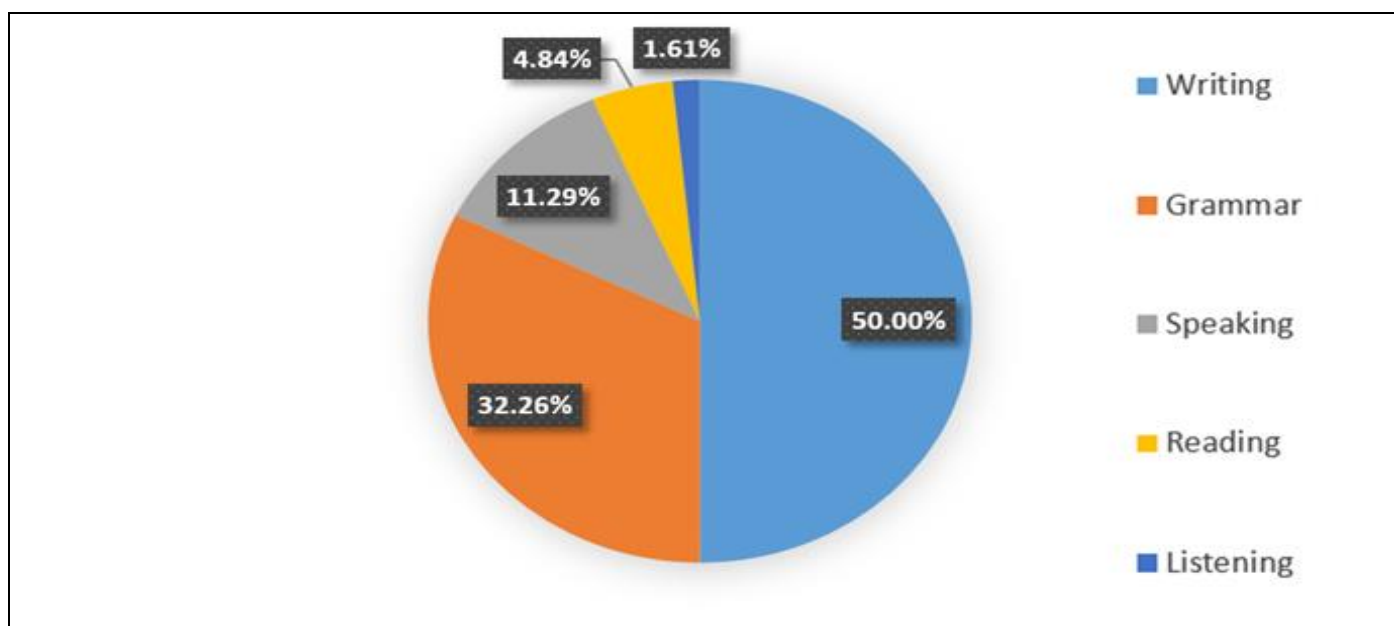


Fig 1 Ranking of Lessons that Conjunctions are taught Most

As can be seen from Figure 1, according to students, conjunctions are taught most in writing class with the choice of half of participants. Standing at the second position is grammar class with 32.26% and 11.29% is for speaking lessons. The last two positions call for reading class with 4.84% and listening class with 1.61%. It is not surprising that the concept of conjunctions is taught most in writing and grammar classes. Among different high schools, there is a rather similar priority in teaching conjunctions in writing classes.

➤ *The Students' Focuses, Difficulties and Methods used to Teach Conjunctions.*

Related to the data of students' focuses, difficulties and method used to teach conjunctions by their teachers, there are three questions used to explore students' attitudes. The answers to question number 12 and 14 are presented in the Table 6 below.

Table 4 The Students' Focuses, Difficulties and Methods used to Teach Conjunctions

| Number | Questions | Grading: 1 = the most; 4 = the least | | | |
|--------|--|--------------------------------------|--------|--------|--------|
| | | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 12 | Forms and tasks teachers often use to teach conjunctions: | | | | |
| | - Fill in the blank (multiple choice) | 69.35% | 12.90% | 6.45% | 11.29% |
| | - Combine simple sentences into complex ones by using conjunctions | 22.58% | 53.23% | 17.74% | 6.45% |
| | - Cloze text | 6.45% | 24.19% | 40.32% | 29.03% |
| | - Free writing | 1.61% | 9.68% | 35.48% | 53.23% |
| 14 | When learning conjunctions, students often pay attention to the following factors: | | | | |
| | - Tense of verbs | 37.09% | 22.58% | 33.87% | 6.45% |
| | - Punctuation | 8.06% | 9.68% | 17.74% | 64.52% |
| | - Differentiation of similar conjunctions | 25.81% | 30.65% | 30.65% | 12.90% |
| | - Context to use conjunctions | 29.03% | 37.09% | 17.74% | 16.13% |

Table 4 indicates that students are predominantly taught conjunctions through various methods, including filling in blanks with given conjunctions (69.35%), combining simple sentences into complex ones using conjunctions (22.58%), cloze texts (6.45%), and free writing (1.61%). When it comes to learning conjunctions, 37.09% of students believe that paying attention to tenses is most

important, 29.03% think understanding the context is crucial, 25.81% emphasize differentiating similar conjunctions, and 8.06% consider punctuation to be the least significant factor.

Question 13 asked students to rank four types of conjunctions by difficulty, and their responses are illustrated in a pie chart in Figure 2.

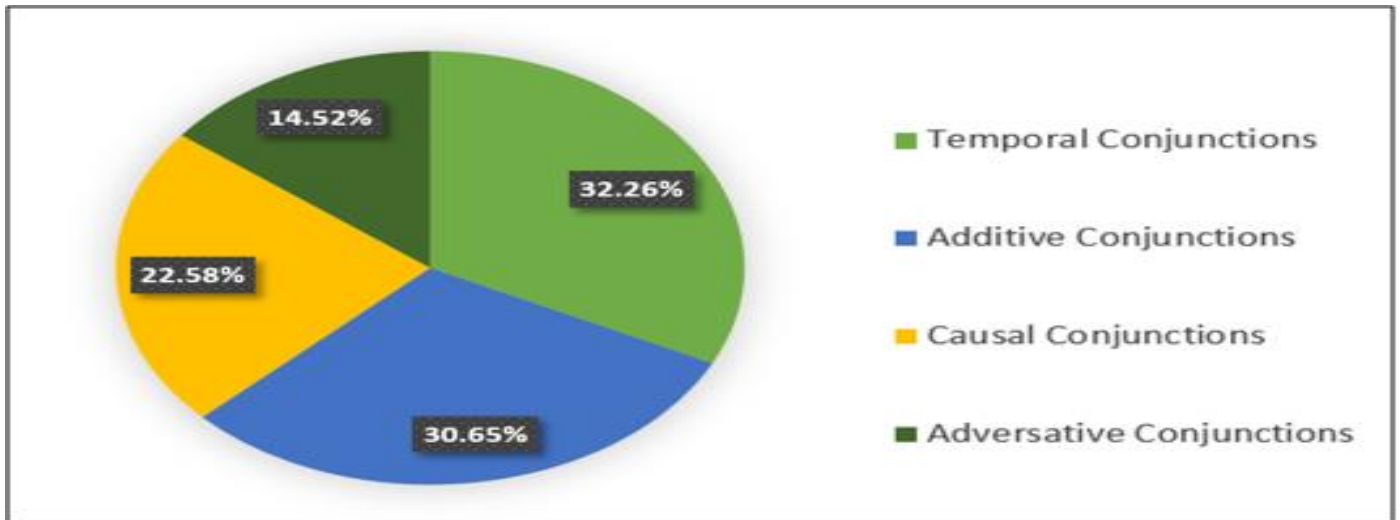


Fig 2 Ranking of Difficult-to-use Conjunctions

From Figure 2, it is reported that Temporal conjunctions is the most difficult one to use with 32.36%, followed by 30.65% of students who chose Additive conjunctions as the hardest to utilize. Surprisingly, the last two types of conjunctions, which are Causal and Adversative conjunctions are ranked as easier ones to apply in writing.

➤ The Students' Suggestions for Teaching Writing and Conjunctions

Based on students' responses to this question, the researcher collected a variety of recommendations related to their desire of how they are taught in writing class. Below is a collection of students' suggestions for improving teaching writing practice:

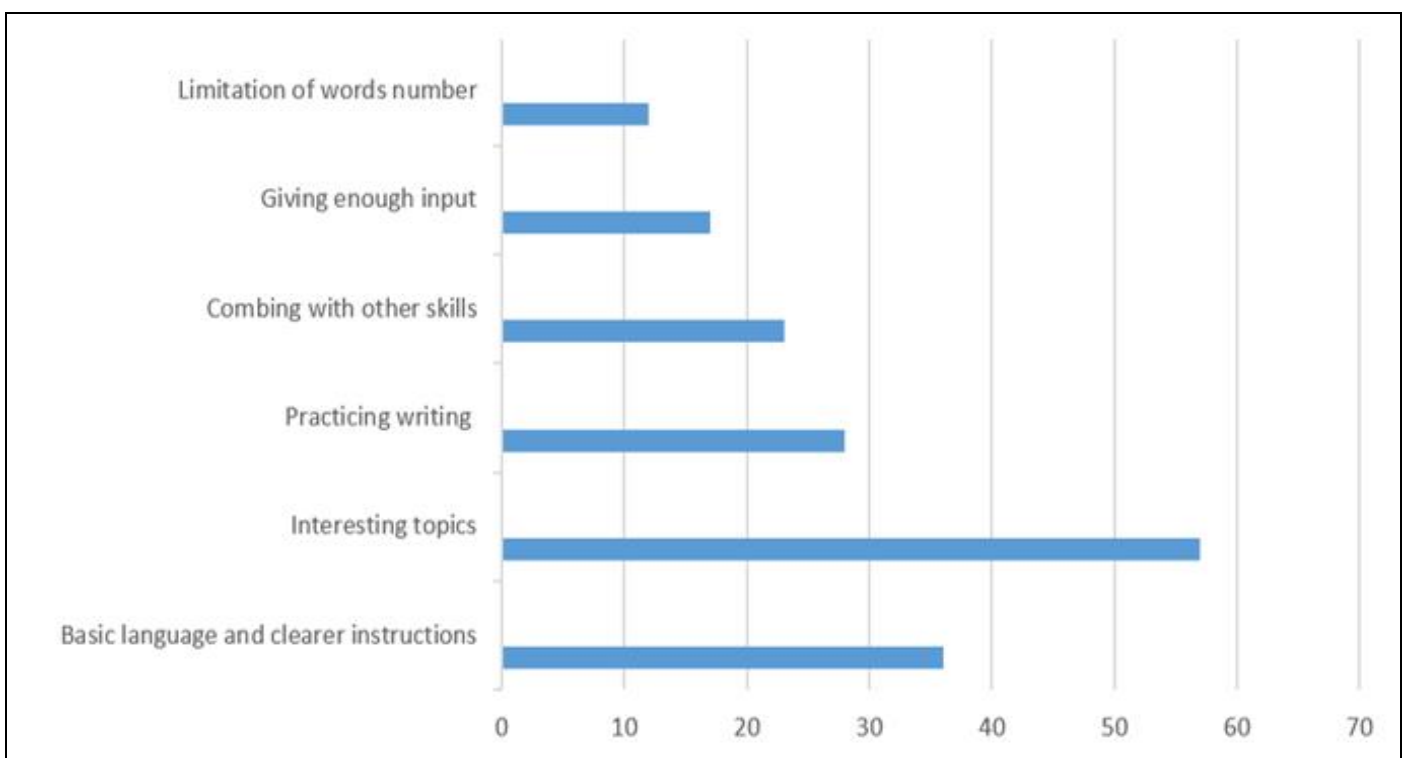


Fig 3 Students' Suggestions for Teaching Writing Skill

Fig 3 highlights that students are most concerned about the topics assigned for writing, with 56.5% indicating that more interesting and familiar topics would enhance their writing experience. The second major concern, noted by 36.7% of students, is the language and instructions used by teachers. They suggest that teachers should simplify their language and use clear instructions to prevent misunderstandings and improve writing skills. This recommendation aligns with the idea that good writing instruction should include accessible language and clear guidance.

Another significant suggestion, from 18 students, is for more writing practice across various formats, from sentences to essays, with exercises progressing from easy to difficult. This approach is supported by Jurecic (2006) and Trupe (2001), who advocate for extensive practice and process instruction to develop writing skills.

Additionally, 24.2% of students recommend integrating writing with other skills, such as reading. They

believe that reading can complement writing by exposing students to different writing styles and improving their own writing. This view is consistent with Chokwe (2013), who argues that writing should not be isolated from reading.

Another suggestion, made by 11 students, is to provide ample input before writing, including vocabulary, grammar, ideas, and writing samples. This preparation helps students understand the structure and expectations for different types of writing.

Finally, 12.9% of students mention the importance of appropriate word limits. They suggest that teachers should set word count limits that match students' levels to avoid overwhelming or discouraging them.

➤ *The Students' Suggestions for Teaching Conjunctions*

When it comes to suggestions for teaching conjunctions in particular, students also gave a variety of recommendations. Below are their responses collected:

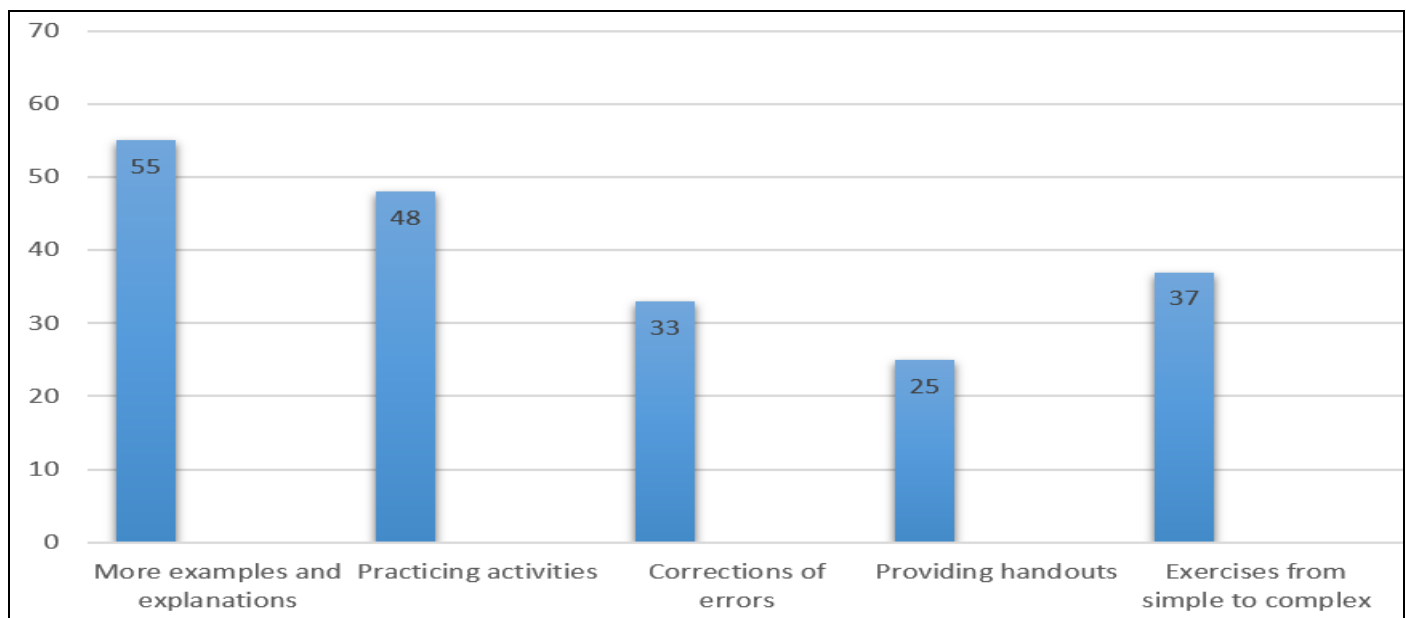


Fig 4 Students' Suggestions for Teaching Conjunctions

According to Figure 4, students expressed a strong need for more examples and explanations when learning conjunctions. Most students (55 out of 62) emphasized the importance of clear, simple examples to help them understand the differences between conjunctions and use them correctly. They also requested practical tips for recognizing and using conjunctions and suggested that explanations in Vietnamese could aid comprehension.

In addition to detailed explanations, 37 students preferred engaging practice activities. They recommended incorporating games into exercises to make learning more enjoyable and motivating. Another key suggestion from 33 students was for teachers to highlight common errors during corrections. This approach would help students learn from their mistakes and avoid repeating them. Additionally, 37 students proposed that grammatical exercises should be

organized progressively from simple to complex, starting with sentence-level exercises and advancing to paragraph and composition levels. Lastly, 25 students suggested that teachers provide handouts summarizing key points and notes from each lesson. These handouts would offer students a useful reference for reviewing and consolidating their knowledge.

➤ *The Results of the Two Tests*

• *The Students' Results of the Pretest*

The pretests aimed to assess the English proficiency and use of conjunctions in writing for both the experimental group (EG) and the control group (CG), providing a baseline for the posttests. The density of conjunctions was calculated by dividing the number of appropriately used conjunctions by the number of T-units in each composition. An

Independent Sample test was conducted to compare the conjunction density between the two groups. The null hypothesis (H₀) was that the medians of the two groups

were similar. The descriptive statistics for the pretest results of both groups are shown in Table 5.

Table 5 Descriptive Statistics of the Two Groups' Pretest

| | | EG | CG |
|--------------------|---------|-------|-------|
| N | Valid | 25 | 25 |
| | Missing | 0 | 0 |
| Mean | | 0.66 | 0.66 |
| Std. Error of Mean | | 0.05 | 0.04 |
| Std. Deviation | | 0.27 | 0.22 |
| Minimum | | 0.32 | 0.32 |
| Maximum | | 1.44 | 1.08 |
| Sum | | 16.84 | 16.40 |

In table 5, the mean of the two groups was the same, which enabled the conclusion that the average density conjunctions of the two groups was equivalent. Additionally, their standard deviations and standard error of mean were

also not much different. This also indicated that there was no single group whose density of conjunctions was more bunched or more scattered about its mean.

Table 6 Independent Sample Test for the Two Groups' Pretest

| | TEST |
|---|------|
| Sig. of Levene's test for Equality of Variances | 0.47 |
| Sig. (2-tailed) of T-test for Equality of Means | 0.81 |

In Table 6, the p-value of Levene's test was reported as 0.47 and it was definitely higher than 0.05, which caused to accept use the result of the Equal variances assumed. Then, the p-value of 2-tailed of T-test was 0.81, also greater than 0.05. This caused the acceptance of H₀, which means there was no significant difference in density of conjunctions between CG and EG.

In short, the Independent Sample test was conducted to compare the density of conjunctions used in the pretest of the two groups. There was no significant difference in the level of using conjunctions among the students in the two groups. As such, the homogeneity of the two groups was satisfied based on the result of the test.

➤ Summary

The pretests for both groups were analyzed and compared, confirming their homogeneity. The results

indicated that the control group (CG) and experimental group (EG) were at similar levels of conjunction use in English writing. This suggests that any potential improvement in conjunction use across the groups could be attributed solely to the experimental teaching implemented by the researcher.

➤ The Students' Results of the Posttest

After confirming that the levels of conjunction use in English writing were similar between the two groups, only the experimental group (EG) received instruction and review on conjunctions. Both groups then completed the posttests. The researcher used Independent Sample tests to compare the density of conjunctions between the control group (CG) and EG in the posttest, with the null hypothesis (H₀) stating that the medians of the two groups were similar. Descriptive statistics for the posttest results are presented in Table 7.

Table 7 Descriptive Statistics of the Two Groups' Posttest

| | | EG | CG |
|--------------------|---------|-------|-------|
| N | Valid | 25 | 25 |
| | Missing | 0 | 0 |
| Mean | | 0.79 | 0.65 |
| Std. Error of Mean | | 0.04 | 0.04 |
| Std. Deviation | | 0.21 | 0.22 |
| Minimum | | 0.35 | 0.33 |
| Maximum | | 1.33 | 1.007 |
| Sum | | 19.99 | 16.22 |

Table 7 shows that the mean conjunction use was higher in the experimental group (EG) at 0.79 compared to the control group (CG) at 0.65. The EG also had higher minimum and maximum values, with a significant gap in the

total number of conjunctions used—19.99 for the EG versus 16.22 for the CG. Additionally, the CG's standard deviation was greater than that of the EG, indicating more variability in the CG's conjunction use compared to the EG.

Table 8 The Independent Sample Test for the Two Groups' Posttest

| | TEST |
|---|------|
| Sig. of Levene's test for Equality of Variances | 0.75 |
| Sig. (2-tailed) of T-test for Equality of Means | 0.02 |

Table 8 shows that Levene's test for equality of variances had a significance (Sig.) of 0.75, which is greater than the p-value of 0.05, so the assumption of equal variances was met. The two-tailed significance (Sig.) of the T-test was 0.02, which is less than the p-value of 0.05. Therefore, the null hypothesis of median equivalence was rejected, indicating a significant difference in the median density of conjunctions between the control group (CG) and the experimental group (EG). This suggests that the treatment positively affected the EG's use of conjunctions in their English writing compositions.

➤ Summary

This section aimed to analyze and compare the posttest performances of the two groups. The results confirmed that the experimental group (EG), after receiving the treatment, performed significantly better than the control group (CG) in using conjunctions in their compositions. Initially, both groups were homogeneous in terms of their background,

English proficiency, and conjunction use ability. Since the experimental teaching was the only variable affecting the EG, it can be concluded that this treatment was the key factor contributing to the EG's improved use of conjunctions.

➤ The EG's Results of the Pretest and Posttest

In this section, the researcher evaluated and validated the progress in using conjunctions in English writing within the experimental group (EG) by analyzing their pretest and posttest results. With 25 students in the EG, there were 25 pretests and 25 posttests completed. The Shapiro-Wilk tests confirmed the normal distribution of the population. Consequently, parametric tests, specifically Paired Sample T-tests, were used to assess the density of conjunctions before and after the treatment. The null hypothesis (H_0) stated that the medians of the pretest and posttest results were similar. Descriptive statistics for the EG's pretests and posttests were shown in Table 9.

Table 9 Descriptive Statistics of the EG's Pretest and Posttest

| EG | N | Mean | Median | Std.Deviation | Minimum | Maximum | Sum |
|----------|----|------|--------|---------------|---------|---------|-------|
| Pretest | 25 | 0.66 | 0.66 | 0.27 | 0.32 | 1.44 | 16.84 |
| Posttest | 25 | 0.79 | 0.76 | 0.21 | 0.35 | 1.33 | 19.99 |

In table 9, the EG experienced a considerable growth in its mean number, particularly from 0.66 in the pretest to 0.79 in the posttest. The minimum and maximum number between the two tests were also different. Moreover, table 10 also showed an alteration in the EG's median, which was

reported to be 0.66 of the pretest and 0.76 in the posttest, increasing nearly one point after the treatment. Finally, the sum number of the EG before and after the treatment also experienced a great increase from 16.84 to 19.99.

Table 10 The Paired Samples T-Tests for the EG's Pretest and Posttest.

| | TEST |
|---|-------|
| Sig. (2-tailed) of T-test for Equality of Means | 0.04 |
| Mean | -0.13 |

As seen in Table 10, the Sig. (2-tailed) of the Paired Samples T-test was 0.04 and smaller than 0.05. Hence, H_0 for median equality was rejected. It could be said that the density of conjunctions of the EG in the posttest were significantly higher after the intervention and the average difference between the two tests was -0.13. In short, it was obvious that the impact of teaching conjunctions on helping the students use conjunctions more appropriately was statistically proved.

➤ Summary

In general, this section is done for investigating, comparing, and explaining the difference in the EG's performances of using conjunctions before and after the

intervention. The students of the EG might improve their ability of using conjunctions appropriately. This was proved by the climb in their density of conjunctions.

➤ The CG's Results of the Pretest and Posttest

In this part, the results of the pretest and posttest achieved by the students in the CG were taken into consideration for any possible progress without the treatment. A number of 25 pretests and 25 posttests were investigated. Due to the normality of the data, the researcher utilized the Paired Samples T-tests to check the equality of the medians. Then, H_0 was stated that the medians of the two variables were similar. The descriptive statistics of the CG's pretests and posttests was presented in Table 11.

Table 11 Descriptive Statistics of the CG's Pretests and Posttests

| CG | N | Mean | Median | Std.Deviation | Minimum | Maximum | Sum |
|----------|----|------|--------|---------------|---------|---------|-------|
| Pretest | 25 | 0.66 | 0.71 | 0.22 | 0.32 | 1.007 | 16.40 |
| Posttest | 25 | 0.65 | 0.63 | 0.21 | 0.33 | 1.007 | 16.22 |

As described in Table 11, the minimum number had some increases, particularly from 0.32 to 0.33 in the pretest and posttest of the CG while the maximum number of 1.007 remained unchanged. On the other hand, other results had a slight decreasing trend. Namely, the mean and median

number reduced slightly from 0.66 to 0.65, and 0.71 to 0.63 respectively. The standard deviation and sum number reduced from 0.22 to 0.21 and from 16.40 to 16.22 respectively.

Table 12 The Paired Samples T-test for the CG's Pretest and Posttest

| | TEST |
|---|------|
| Sig. (2-tailed) of T-test for Equality of Means | 0.90 |
| Mean | 0.01 |

In Table 12, it was presented that the Sig. (2-tailed) of the Paired Samples T-test was 0.90, higher than 0.05. Hence, H_0 for the equivalence of medians was retained because the average difference of the two tests was very small with the mean just 0.01. It could be said that without any treatment to support, the students' application of conjunctions had no significant difference.

V. DISCUSSION

➤ *The Learners' Attitudes towards Learning and using Conjunctions in their English Writing*

The first research questions, "*What are students' attitudes towards learning and using conjunctions in English writing?*" was discussed in this part.

The questionnaire results showed that most students recognized the importance of writing skills but reported several challenges. They noted that they were not extensively taught writing skills in high school, did not dedicate enough time to practice, and found that most writing tasks did not effectively teach them composition skills.

Regarding conjunctions, while most students understood their purpose, some were still unclear about what conjunctions are. Many students agreed on the importance of using conjunctions in writing and did not find them particularly difficult to use. However, they reported that their instruction on conjunctions was limited and often individual, leading to an incomplete understanding.

These findings align with previous studies (Uzun, 2018; Martínez, 2015; Kondal & Bairi, 2016; Purba & Pulungan, 2017), which suggest that while students generally find learning conjunctions manageable, the teaching often results in overuse, misuse, or illogical application. Additionally, many students approach writing with a lack of focus on coherence and cohesion, prioritizing expression and memory over smooth, concise writing.

In this study, students ranked Temporal conjunctions as the most challenging, differing from previous studies that did not identify this type as particularly difficult. The

questionnaire also collected suggestions from students on improving the teaching of conjunctions and writing skills. These suggestions provide valuable insights for educators aiming to enhance instructional practices and better address students' needs in writing and conjunction usage.

➤ *The Effectiveness of Teaching Conjunctions on the Cohesion of EFL Students' Composition*

This part was to answer the second research question which was "*Does teaching conjunctions affect positively on the cohesion of students' compositions?*"

The results from the pre- and post-tests indicate a significant correlation between the experimental teaching of conjunctions and the ability of EFL students to apply conjunctions effectively in their writing. This suggests that explicit instruction on conjunctions and their use can substantially enhance students' ability to connect sentences and paragraphs in their compositions.

These findings align with previous research (Tran, 2007; Tahsildar & Yusoff, 2018; Uzun, 2018; Martínez, 2015), which all demonstrate the positive impact of teaching conjunctions on language accuracy and composition cohesion. The quantitative analysis in these studies supports a substantial relationship between the density of conjunctions and the coherence of written texts.

However, in the context of high school education in Vietnam, there is limited research on the effects of teaching conjunctions on writing skills. This thesis, along with Tran's (2007) study, contributes valuable insights to the literature, advocating for improved and well-designed teaching practices for conjunctions in Vietnamese high schools.

VI. CONCLUSION

The responses from the students' questionnaire offered a comprehensive view of their background, including age, gender, and English proficiency. Despite being in grade 12 and having studied English for around 10-12 years, many students still faced challenges in writing and producing cohesive texts. This highlights the need for targeted support to enhance their writing skills.

Regarding conjunctions, most students recognized their importance in creating cohesive compositions. They agreed that understanding conjunctions could improve their ability to connect sentences, paragraphs, and essays effectively. However, some students remained uncertain about the concepts of "conjunctions" and "cohesion" and did not prioritize coherence in their writing. They often focused on expressing their ideas without considering smooth and concise writing. There is a need for more detailed instruction and support to help these students practice both inside and outside the classroom.

Students provided several suggestions for improving the teaching of writing and conjunctions based on their experiences and preferences. Their recommendations covered various aspects of the teaching process, from initial engagement to post-lesson activities, and were both meaningful and creative.

In summary, the study underscores the importance of teaching conjunctions, which are often overlooked but crucial for improving writing skills. With continued focus on conjunctions, students can further develop their writing abilities and apply this knowledge in their future practice.

The effectiveness of teaching conjunctions on the cohesion of EFL students' composition.

The intervention helped students in the EG in several ways. They became more aware of the role of conjunctions in writing and learned how to use them effectively. They gained an understanding of different types of conjunctions and recognized their importance in creating a cohesive text. Additionally, they developed a habit of using conjunctions to connect their ideas more seamlessly.

In terms of using conjunctions, the teaching helped students acquire a detailed understanding of their functions and distinguish between similar conjunctions. They became more adept at using conjunctions appropriately and flexibly, and there was a noticeable reduction in misuse. However, there was also a tendency among some students to overuse conjunctions in their writing.

Overall, the study demonstrates that explicit instruction in conjunctions can significantly improve writing cohesion, although attention is needed to manage the potential for overuse.

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