

A STUDENT-FOCUSED, CLASSROOM-BASED
PROJECT AIMING TO INCREASE
COMPREHENSION AND PRODUCTION OF
COHESION THROUGH CONJUNCTION.

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Do **both** parts (a) and (b) of the following assignment:

- a. Produce (or adapt) a coursebook unit (or equivalent) for developing a specified aspect of written discourse in your own teaching/ learning situation. Justify your design choices.
- b. Trial the unit with a group of your learners and discuss the outcomes.

You should include the unit and/ or a description of the activity as an appendix.

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1.0 Introduction

In this student-focused, classroom-based project a course book unit of materials will be produced to develop the written discourse aspect of cohesion through conjunction. Small-scale empirical research by needs analysis will serve to justify the design choices of the unit. A trial of the materials will lead to a discussion of the outcomes.

Halliday (2001: 187) distinguishes between spoken and written discourse, describing spoken as ‘language in flux: language realized as movement and continuous flow’, yet written discourse as ‘the language of the school’ and ‘language in fix’, by which

‘writers construe, or rather *re*construe experience, [...] all have been speakers and listeners first, so that the written world is their secondary socialization.’ (2001: 187)

This differentiation has implications for the EFL classroom: because ‘our secondary, educational knowledge is heteroglossic - construed out of the dialectic between the spoken and the written’ (Halliday, 2001: 187), what written discourse is produced in the classroom is transferred from a somewhat complex mix of information gleaned from different semiotic (language) modes, which Martin refers to as ‘various channels of communication’ (2001: 45). Besides reinforcing the inveterate connection that written discourse has with spoken discourse, this illustrates that the written world requires a substantial amount of textual cohesion.

Developing written discourse, however, is problematical. Nunan (1999: 271) writes of the enormous challenges learners face when developing cohesion, stating

‘...producing a coherent, fluent, extended piece of writing is probably the most difficult thing there is to do in language.’

Nunan also (1999: 274) favours promoting awareness of the differences between the models of the spoken and written language, in agreement with Tomlinson (1998: 89) who advocates the use of materials that involve the learners in meaningful encounters, allowing

for subsequent analysis by the learners to involve them in language awareness, a point for which Nunan (1999: 290) warns

‘...getting the students to turn a set of [...] simple sentences into coherent discourse is [...] relatively straightforward, [but] the processes the writer must go through are extremely complex. [...] they are *required to use cohesion appropriately.*’ (my italics)

In Japan, a tendency towards ‘descriptions of the English Language [...] largely based on written sources and on written examples’ (Carter, Hughes and McCarthy, 1998: 67) and the translating of individual, decontextualised sentences will soon no longer suit further education entrance test requirements: written discourse instruction must adapt to cater for new learner needs of extended cohesive paragraphs (Tomlinson, 1998: 147). This will include conjunction, which Nunan (1999:122) describes not as

‘a device for reminding the reader of previously mentioned items - [or] *anaphoric relation* [but rather to] signal relationships that can only be fully understood through reference to other parts of the text.’

Essentially, therefore, they are ‘directives indicating that information is to be retrieved from elsewhere’. (Halliday and Hasan, noted in Gough and Talbot, 1996: 219)

This project therefore focuses on *cohesive ties*, referring to the conjunction aspect of grammatical cohesion for both the word class of conjunctions (i.e. *and*, *but*), and Conjunctive Adjuncts – Conjuncts comprising, among others, of linking prepositional phrases and adverbs (Holland and Lewis, 2000: 59).

First, a student questionnaire will approximately determine the group’s comprehension and production competency of a limited range of cohesive ties. Then, following the students’ demonstration of cohesive tie use through diary writing, materials will be produced to develop their main areas of weakness. This project, although initially limited in scope, will become a pilot study for the development of materials transferable to

a wider range of Japanese, taking into account the ‘continuing open-ended process of refinement and adaptation to different groups of learners’ (Donovan, 1998: 149).

Research questions:

- To what extent will the unit encourage the students to broaden the range of cohesive ties they use in written discourse?
- Will the course book unit support the development of the correct use of cohesive ties?

2.0 Method

2.1 Class description

The target group comprises eleven third year students of a Japanese private high school. The five males and six females, aged seventeen, are in their sixth academic year of EFL. I have been teaching this five times weekly, fifty-minute lesson since April 2004.

My principal English instruction obligation is for Oral Communication (O.C.), yet the small group size and lesson regularity will allow for activities to strengthen writing skills, concurrent to developing speaking proficiency. Despite having not formally tested the group's writing ability, I consider them between low and mid-intermediate (with one high-intermediate). Ten of the group will enter higher education, so anticipate the need for developing aspects of English written discourse. The members all agreed to inclusion in this project.

2.2 Needs analysis

2.2.1 Findings to date - Background on the target group's writing-based course

The group's previously submitted writing generally shows a capability of constructing relatively complex and articulate passages demonstrating strong development potential. By the limited use of cohesion through conjunction devices, or the high incidence of same conjunction repetition, short isolated sentences are frequent and fluid cohesive passages of written discourse are few. Therefore, this project focuses on developing cohesion through conjunction.

Instruction in developing writing skills occurs in a whole group (36-student), Japanese teacher fronted setting of which I am not directly involved. Pertinent to mention here, however, is that the course book, *Evergreen Writing* (Sasaki: 1998) - approved by Japan's Ministry of Education – teaches writing skills through the study of dialogues.

Concentrating on short isolated sentences, it contains question – response grammatical patterns.

2.2.2 Cohesive ties questionnaire - Empirical research

The target group completed a two-part response questionnaire (Appendix 1) containing a limited range of thirty cohesive ties. This was in order to gauge to what degree they comprehend and can produce a variety of cohesive ties, including the four different types of conjunction, signalling four semantic relationships (Nunan, 1999: 122):

- **Additive** ‘He didn’t study. And he failed.’
- **Adversative** ‘[...] it was a happy week. However the weather was not good.’
(Richards et al., 1992: 8)
- **Causal** ‘He studied hard. Therefore he passed the test.’
- **Temporal** ‘He studied hard. Then he took the exam.’

Table 1 below describes the functions of the four semantic relationships.

Table 1 Categories and functions of cohesive ties

Cohesive tie category*	Function	Numbers on questionnaire
Additive	Signals addition+ - the adding of further information: this may involve listing, detailing, extending.	1 – 7
Adversative	Signals comparison - that the new piece of information conflicts with previous statement, or negates it.	8 – 15
Causal	Signals causality - causes, consequences, results, and purposes.	16 – 22
Temporal	Signals temporality - sequencing in time.	23 – 30

*Halliday and Hasan’s categories and function noted in Holland and Lewis (2000: 60)

+Terminology taken from Martin (2001: 38)

Besides *conjunctions*, the questionnaire also includes *conjuncts*, a brief distinction of which is shown in table 2 below.

Table 2 Examples of Conjuncts and Conjunctions*

Conjunction (word class of its own) always at beginning of clause	Conjunctive Adjunct (Conjuncts) (prepositional phrases, adverbs, etc) functioning in the clause
and	furthermore (adv)
because	because of (prep)
however+, but, yet	however+ (adv)
so that	consequently (adv); therefore (adv)

* (Bloor and Bloor, 1995: 57) + duplication of function

The questionnaire's two-part questions were:

1. Do you know what the cohesive ties listed mean? (Tick *Yes*, *No*, or *Maybe* for each.)
2. Can you confidently use them in written English? (Tick *Yes*, *No*, or *Maybe* for each.)

Given in an isolated - decontextualised - state, the students were not afforded opportunities to infer meaning from context. Consequently, the resultant level of comprehension directly affected how the students responded about their confidence of usage.

2.2.3 Questionnaire response breakdown – Tally of results

This section discusses the core observations made following completion of the questionnaire.

The tally (Appendix 2) of student responses - out of 330 for each part - reveals that comprehension (recognition) of the cohesive ties exceeds that of those unknown

(unrecognised). But the contrast with the students' confidence to use (produce) the ties (Figures 1 and 2) is significant:

Figures 1 and 2 Comprehension and production levels from questionnaire

Figure 1 - Comprehension

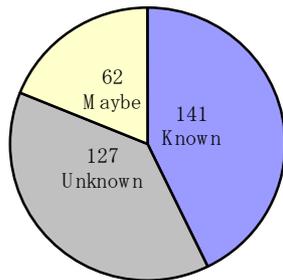
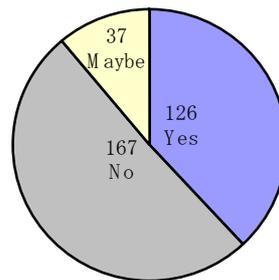


Figure 2 - Production

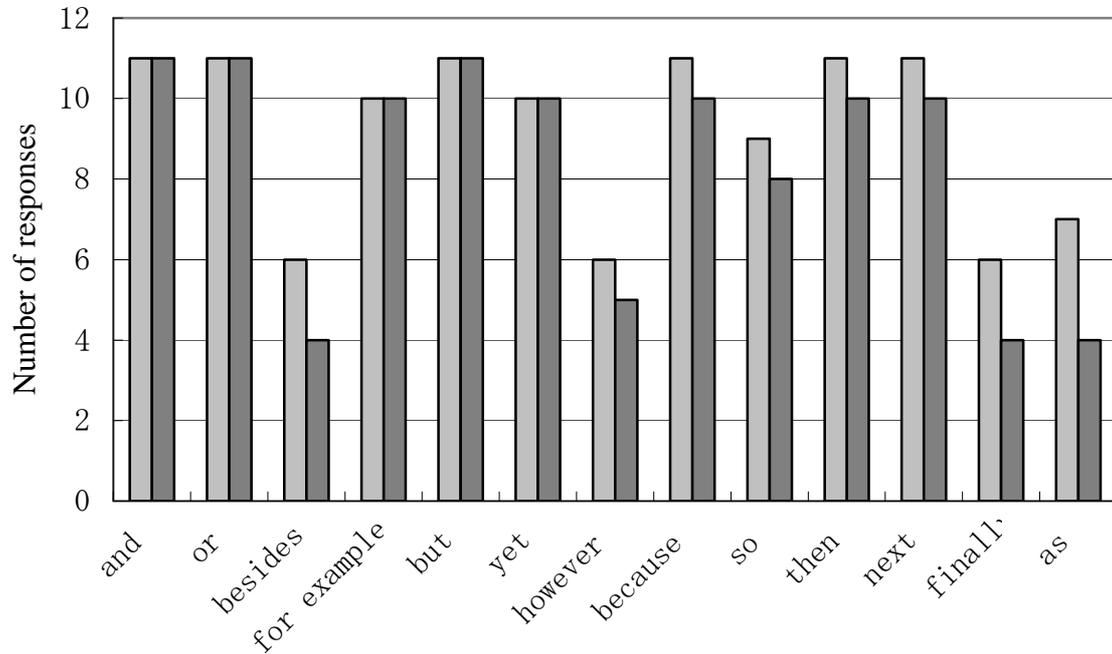


This supports a 'classic example of linguistic comprehension preceding linguistic production.' (Brown, 2000: 34). Nattinger offers an important distinction of these two terms (1988, noted in Willis, 1997: 139):

'comprehension [...] relies on strategies that permit one to *understand* words and *store* them, to commit them to memory that is, while production concerns strategies that activate one's storage by *retrieving* these words from memory and by *using* them in appropriate situations.'

Figure 3 below displays the thirteen cohesive ties known by group majority, and Yes level of production confidence.

Figure 3 Group majority known cohesive ties and Yes level of confidence



Key:

Known ties

Yes confidence

Figure 3 evinces these salient points:

- Despite knowing *besides*, *however*, *finally* and *as*, the students feel markedly less confident at using them, perhaps due to their double function as both sentence connectors and adverbs (*besides* is also a preposition).
- Due to the very limited demonstration of both *yet* and *as* in conjunction form in the group's previously submitted written discourse, they were judged to have been comprehended in their adverbial form. To confirm this, the group were asked to explain what meanings they understood from the words. All members responded using *yet* as a temporal adverb, thus functioning as an Adjunct - '*I haven't decided yet*' - rather than a conjunction, similar in meaning to *but* (Bloor and Bloor, 1995:

57). *As* was given as, ‘*as soon as possible*’. Thus, questionnaire responses do not necessarily indicate actual cohesive tie comprehension.

- High frequency and coreness ranking of common cohesive ties in the main correlates with Yes confidence levels. Furthermore, these high-frequency known ties comprise a balanced range of semantic relationships: Additive, Adversative, and Causal = 3 each; and Temporal, 4. This suggests that many students employ a relatively broad range of ties; closer inspection of confidence levels illustrates comparison-signalling adversatives are actually underused: *but* is by far the favoured tie (if *yet* is taken as adverbial).

2.2.4 Correlation of majority no/maybe comprehension and confidence responses

Figures 4 and 5 in Appendices 3 and 4 show the group majority response of No / Maybe comprehension and a comparison chart of confidence levels. Fundamentally, the main finding is the transfer between Maybe comprehension and subsequent production confidence: this acquisition stage almost always manifests itself as a No production confidence level.

2.3 Student diaries

Checking the target group’s use of cohesive ties was done over two sessions of diary writing. Bilingual dictionaries were allowed. The sessions’ aims were threefold:

1. To assess what cohesive ties are actually most commonly used.
2. To establish whether the students ever ‘experiment’ using little known cohesive ties.
3. To analyse whether the cohesive ties were used correctly.

The results (Table 3 below and Table 4 in Appendix 5) correspond with

previously made observations of natural discourse data. As McCarthy (1991: 47/ 48) points out, a few conjunctions (*and, but, so, because, then*) are ‘overwhelmingly frequent’. Despite the range of confidently used cohesive ties seemingly aligned to written skills level, mistakes frequently occur.

Table 3 Diary entries – range of cohesive ties

Day	Average word count	Average # of times cohesive ties used		Range (out of 30*)	Cohesive ties used not from questionnaire	# of times used
		Total	Not correctly			
One	31	2.9	0.8	7	Causal – <i>because of</i> ⁺	1
Two	41	2.0	1.0	4	Causal - <i>as a result</i> Temporal – <i>after</i>	1 4

*Indicates total number of different cohesive ties used from questionnaire. +Used incorrectly.

- Of both conjunctions and adjuncts from the questionnaire, in almost every instance, only conjunctions were employed, most commonly, *and, because, but, and so*.
- The students rarely employ many of the known ties, instead favouring the most frequent ones they feel sure to handle properly (with the exception of *because of, as a result, and after*): in no instance did a student use a tie they had recorded as Maybe comprehension.
- The high-intermediate student declares comprehending and confidently using 22 of the 30 ties. However, as with all group members, that student used only the most frequent ones. This suggests that the student sees or has little reason to use non-frequent ties.

3.0 Description of course book unit

3.1 Summary of needs analysis findings

Two main findings arose from the needs analysis and diary entries: many known and confidently used ties are unnaturally or inconsistently employed, heading, for example, unqualified dependent clauses. Also, in the main, less confidently used ties are seldom employed, at first appearing to stifle experimentation; in fact indicating that production competency is inconsistent with high confidence levels.

3.2 Unit aims

Rather than attempting to have the group produce extended pieces of writing, the unit of materials developed to increase comprehension and production of cohesion through conjunction (shown in Appendix 7) should initially focus on reviewing both known ties and unfamiliar ones, studying their placing within the clause, and developing short sentences.

Owing to the overall low to mid-intermediate level of the target group, and limited scope, the unit does not fully explore the possibilities that a discourse approach offers. Instead, a supportive approach designed initially to cater to their current competency stage should provide a 'scaffold' that reduces debilitating anxiety or confusion.

The unit aims to:

1. Further comprehension of little known ties, thus raising production competency and in particular boost the production of adversative ties beyond that of just *but*.
2. Promote correct and consistent production of the common cohesive ties known: for example, *and* is unnaturally used in almost a quarter of instances - *but*, *because*, *so* in about a half of instances. Causal *because* / *because of* should receive special attention.
3. Make provision for awareness-raising activities that include elements of speaking to

appease the school's expectation of my instruction methods.

4. Demonstrate the similarity and inter-changeability of some ties simultaneous to pointing out important differences, taking care not to create over-confusion through multiplicity of possible conjunctions taught in a disjointed and inconsistent manner. Consequently, the materials will have to be supportive.
5. Provide valuable learning opportunities for all of the group's competency levels, for the stronger students to expand their repertoire, but not overwhelming the weakest.

4.0 Discussion of outcomes

Following is a discussion of the salient observations and outcomes from a trial of the course book unit (in Appendix 7) and further diary writing.

4.1 Outcomes of classroom trial of unit

4.1.1 Linking and binding conjunctions

The unit aimed to raise awareness of some of the large inventory (Martin, 2001: 36) of the connectors which link clauses in discourse, referred to as *conjunction*. As Martin (2001: 36) observes, Halliday and Hasan regard conjunction as comprising ‘linkers’ which connect sentences to each other, but excludes co-ordinating and subordinating linkers within sentences, which ‘are considered structural by Halliday’ (Martin, 2001: 36), who draws a sharp distinction between the structural role of words like *and* (to co-ordinate clauses at a sentential level), and its texture-creating cohesive role (Schiffrin, 2001: 56). Yet for the purposes of this study both facets of linkers, ‘whether or not they link clauses within or between sentences’ (Martin, 2001: 36), were included. However, due to the target group’s average level of written proficiency, it appeared more advantageous for the materials to not specifically further distinguish the underlying difference between the linkers - linking (co-ordinating) conjunctions - and binders - binding (subordinating) conjunctions, such as ‘As I was watching TV, Yoko was walking home’.

In an attempt to avoid major confusion the materials offered support through a teacher-oriented approach, the intention being to raise student awareness and comprehension of both familiar and unfamiliar cohesive ties, and increase production levels. Within the unit, the linkers comprised quite a small set: *and; but; or; so* and *then*. Yet the difficulties that presented themselves included cases in which seemingly same

words could in fact be items of a different word class: i.e. *then* as conjunction and adverb (Bloor and Bloor, 1995: 24). Although the binders formed the larger group: i.e. *because; when; after; as; although*, the main challenge the materials had to overcome was to encourage the students to recognise that

‘A clause which begins with a linking conjunction must follow the clause to which it is linked, but a clause which begins with a binding conjunction may generally follow it or precede it.’ (Bloor and Bloor, 1995: 24)

It was problematical to assess to what degree the students could acknowledge the placing of both types of conjunction in the clause because the unit materials perhaps over-prescribed the sentence patterns. As such, by the students replicating the given example sentences, the level to which the unit’s language instruction intentions were actually processed by the students was not easily discoverable until final diary entry writing, when a display of the awareness that conjunctions are not part of the structure of the clause could be made more evident.

4.1.2 Demonstrating conjunction and adjunct distinction

Table 2 in section 2.2.2 displayed that whereas conjunction is a word class of its own, ‘adjunct is a function in the clause and is realized by such word classes as adverbs and nominals as well as by prepositional phrases’ (Bloor and Bloor, 1995: 56). There is a valuable distinction, however, between the linking, or joining, function of ‘Conjunctive Adjuncts’ (also called ‘cohesive conjunctives’ – for example, *then; for this reason; on the other hand*) (Bloor and Bloor, 1995: 98) and ‘conjunctions’ (linkers and binders). Although semantically they share many facets, Bloor and Bloor mention their different grammatical characteristics:

‘...the conjunction always occurs at the beginning of the clause which it links or

binds, whereas Conjunctive Adjuncts can occur at various points within the clause that they affect' (Bloor and Bloor, 1995: 56)

An awareness session of conjunction – adjunct difference was teacher-taught prior to part two's free writing session, which at first concentrated on introducing a range of adversative ties in comparison to causal ones. The first two diary entries illustrated *but* as undoubtedly the favoured adversative cohesive tie. Part two of the unit therefore attempted to introduce other adversatives, using lower case first letter in *but* - but upper case in *However* and *Nevertheless* - in order to show conjunction and adjunct general variation in clausal function: the conjunction *but* indicates an adversative relation between the two sentence parts, 'or rather that the second is in adverse relation to the first' (Bloor and Bloor, 1995: 56). *However*, on the other hand, signals both change of lexical item and grammatical change. In short, the difficulty was to get the students to notice the conjunction *but* as linking a two-part sentence, yet adverbial *however* (Conjunctive Adjunct) connecting two separate sentences (Bloor and Bloor, 1995: 56).

The student-produced passages were worthy of note: used seven times in total, *but* remained the group's chief adversative of choice, once as **But**...; and furthermore once as **But** when.... And despite *nevertheless* being used on one occasion, *however* was ignored. Fundamentally, though, the 46 percent occurrence of unnaturally or incorrectly used *but* in the first two diary entries was, following explicit awareness-raising, reduced to just 14 percent. Consequently, although *but* production levels were always relatively high, the students did move towards a more correct production level.

Part one of the unit purposely separated *because* and *because of* from the other causal conjunctions and adjuncts, instead replaced by *and* (in the sense of *so*). This was to try to remove the students' dependence on *because*, which previously has been incorrectly used. Despite having been given a fairly rigid structure to follow, the students did not

seem flustered by the replacement of *because* by the adjuncts *therefore*; *consequently* and *as a result* - all almost completely unknown by the group prior to instruction.

4.1.3 Generating the intended message

One apparent problem during the trial of the materials was how the students applied the example sentence patterns to their own sentences, failing to fully appreciate the function of the cohesive tie. For example, part one saw causal ties utilised incongruently, as in ‘I studied English really hard. As a result I think I’ll get a bad grade’. And similar errors manifested themselves with adversative ties, as in ‘I ate one hundred cherries (adversative *although*) I had stomach ache’, rendering the signalling and interpretation or understanding of the argumentation difficult to grasp (Holland and Lewis, 2000: 59). Fortunately, in such cases peer-correction ensued, leading the students to want to further discover correct causal versus adversative use. This became the purpose of unit two, in which six adversative ties were introduced concurrent to the review of causal ties (excluding *because (of)*). This helped the students to spot first-hand how the different functioning linking words altered the message of the sentence.

Similar to Firth’s observations of spoken discourse (in McCarthy, 1991:49), the non-native target group frequently use *because* to signal the reason/ justification relation. But continuing confusion caused by differences between clausal placing of *because* and comparative enhancing *so* means that further attempts should be made to further their comprehension and production.

Part four, in order to reduce reliance on *and*, intended to raise awareness of other extending additive expansion types (Halliday, 1994: 141). But ultimately, besides *and*, the students favoured employing a limited range of just one of two other forms, fortunately usually including one of the those previously unknown to them.

4.2 Post-instruction cohesive tie production

Diary entries one and two demonstrated the students' tendency towards using linking conjunctions *and* and *but* to head unqualified dependent clauses. Diary entry was intended as a measure of the improvement of the production of such conjunctions. Also, previous diary entries showed how usually only two-part sentences or two separate sentences were connected, often resulting in just two connected clauses. Table 6 below shows the decrease in errors of usage and cohesive range.

Table 6 Showing increased cohesive tie range

Day	Average word count	Average # of times cohesive ties used		
		Total	Incorrectly	Total range*
One and two (average)	36	2.5	0.9	10
Three	43	4.5	0.2	15

* Total number of different cohesive ties produced.

For just an average six-word increase in word count, both cohesive tie usage almost doubled and range rose by fifty per cent. Furthermore, due to greater awareness of the positioning within the clause, incorrect usage decreased overall from 37 per cent to 4 per cent. This was perhaps aided by the large cohesive tie jigsaw pieces (Appendix 9) visibly placed in the classroom, from which the students could be reminded about the cohesive ties they had just studied.

One of the favoured linkers - *and* - was previously most commonly used as an additive, and displaying chronological or logical sequence. Yet, following part four's dictionary definition of *and*, whereas *so* had always been used to indicate a cause-effect type of relation (Bloor and Bloor, 1995: 179), *and* became its replacement in once instance: 'I was tired and sleep (sic) on bus. I get off bus too late *and* [had to] walk to

home 20 minutes'. Accordingly, as a deeper understanding of the range of functions within the conjunction domain of cohesion increases, familiarisation of the positioning within the clause is concomitantly broadened. Such improvement in the recognition of the textual sequence - signalling a relationship between the segments of discourse (McCarthy, 1991: 46) - suggests that even at this stage of instruction, the target group may soon have a need to further develop through instruction a more definitive list of replacement items that perform the conjunctive role in *and*, *but* and *so*.

The target group continue to convey general causal simple conjunctive relation through *so*, but instruction having taken place, production of *therefore* and *consequently* has been accomplished from an almost 100 percent No production confidence in the questionnaire. Part two's cloze exercise that had been designed to purposefully include ambiguous cohesive tie choice, leading the students to question carefully what cohesive tie to select, was followed by a free writing exercise which saw a five times (correct usage) increase in the use of the adjunct *as a result*. Furthermore, the entries observed the range of causal and adversative cohesive ties employed exceed that of the first two diary entries (including *and*; *as* and *so*).

Concerning the causal relations cued by the conjunction *because* - within the enhancing expansion type of causal category (Halliday, 1994: 141) - it was mostly made use of as a cause, rather than as a justification, reason, or authority claim (Gough and Talbot, in Caldas-Coulthard and Coulthard, 1996: 225). This could indicate that the subtle shades of meaning that this conjunction is capable of conveying are not yet realised. Therefore, greater exposure to further contextual indications of nuance should be provided, also remaining true for logical-semantic relations such as *and*; *but* and *so*, typically grammaticalised by the conjunctions that the students favour. However, following the monolingual dictionary definition study of part four, the students already appear to have

begun to develop a greater awareness that *and* can be employed prior to supplying additive, adversative, causal and temporal meanings, ‘depending on contextual information’ (McCarthy, 1991: 48). Moreover, and perhaps as a result, it remains the logical-semantic relations, typically grammaticalised by the conjunctions *and*; *but* and *so*, that the students favour (Halliday, 1994: 140)

Table 8 below illustrates how some individuals adopted and produced cohesive ties which they had formerly lacked confidence to use. This displays that of the total of 49 cohesive ties used in diary entry three (in Table 7, Appendix 10), there was a 16 percent improvement from previously low confidence levels to production.

Table 8 Diary entry three cohesive ties used and previous confidence level

Conjunction /adjunct	# of times used	Questionnaire confidence level
However	2	Maybe
Finally	1	Maybe
Consequently	1	No
Therefore	2	No
Although	1	No
Because	1	No
Total	8	

So despite conjunctions generally remaining the preferred means of cohesion through conjunction, both a rise in the understanding of conjunction nuance and recent production of less commonly used adjuncts underscores an overall increase in the group’s cohesion through conjunction proficiency.

5.0 Limitations of short-term cohesion instruction

The following concerns arose when undertaking this project:

1. The three diary entries and part two free writing activity alone provided few opportunities for a true display of cohesive tie production competence; it acted more as an indication. Despite raising cohesive tie comprehension, and although major confusion with materials was not perceivable, the condensed nature of the unit did not afford sufficient opportunity to develop cohesion skills over an extended period, and failed to provide enough occasion to gradually increase language awareness activities, of which Tomlinson (1998: 89) writes can be extremely valuable. Yet such activities can never be sufficient, suggesting the need for a less grammar-focused but more ‘rounded’ approach, including

‘activities which guide learners to make discoveries from real world exposure about how users of the target language achieve their intended effects.’
2. Due to concentrating short-term on cohesion through conjunction, other aspects of written discourse also requiring remedial instruction could not be given due attention. For example, the diary entries showed that the group majority might have benefited more had a longer-term unit also incorporated exercises on cohesion through reference, an area for which production ability remains weak.

6.0 Conclusion

The course book unit had two main aims:

1. To encourage the students to broaden their range and use of cohesion through conjunction ties.
2. To support the development of correct cohesion through conjunction usage.

As a measure of how much the unit's goals were reached, compared to pre-instruction diary entries, post-instruction entries saw an overall fifty percent increase in the range of cohesive ties being employed. Furthermore, six separate ties were correctly produced by individuals who had responded Maybe and No for confidence levels in the questionnaire. These results show that not only has overall comprehension increased, but production ability has also risen along with the correct positioning of certain cohesive ties within the clause: usage errors dropped from 37 percent to 4 percent.

The chief outcomes of this study have therefore largely been positive, seeing a moderation in errors of usage and increased production levels. The students have clearly progressed to creating better cohesive passages with more correct positioning within the clause. Also, despite production remaining moderate, comprehension has developed sufficiently for future exposure to the ties to catch the students attention, not only helping to develop cohesive tie familiarity but also determine the intended message of written text and the spoken word. This, in turn, should help lead on to expanded production.

However, despite the students' general improvement in both the range and correct usage of cohesion through conjunction, there does remain a significant amount of development needed to raise their conjunction use to a level akin to a high proficiency learner (Er, 2001: 239). Therefore, the creation of course book style units must be dealt with as an ongoing process - a series of units - not just limited to a one-off of nine lessons. Then, as written discourse competence increases, and as an extension to the unit, the

students should be provided opportunities to analyse real native output data, demonstrating the significance in communicative terms of common everyday cohesive ties (McCarthy, 1991: 50).

In the meantime, besides access to learner dictionaries offering some indication of subtle shades of meaning in the differences of individual conjunction and conjunct meaning, graded extensive reading materials can offer exposure to such cohesive ties. For example, low-intermediate (native level) graded reader 'Fast Contact' in *The Bermuda Triangle* (Maule, 2000: 32-7) contains a number of the adversative and temporal cohesive ties from the course book unit, thus making it a valid source of supplementary extensive material, provided the students can be encouraged to focus on the content more than the specific language used.

In my own oral communication teaching situation, piloting the unit and adjusting and developing the materials for the benefit of a wider group of learners within the greater high school environment has already been achieved concurrent to undertaking this project: the adversative and causal ties practice activities have assisted in the speaking preparation for 'The Society for Testing English Proficiency (Eiken)' pre stage two test. Consequently I have come to realise that, in agreement with Halliday (2001: 187), instruction pertaining to a multimodal educational experience, combining instruction in written discourse with that of our 'homoglossic' knowledge – 'construed solely out of the clausal grammar of the spoken language' – underpins the development of literacy when the two modes are developed together.

It now remains for written discourse instruction to also provide the students with opportunities to work on 'tidying up' the use of further cohesive devices.

Appendix 1 Cohesive ties student questionnaire

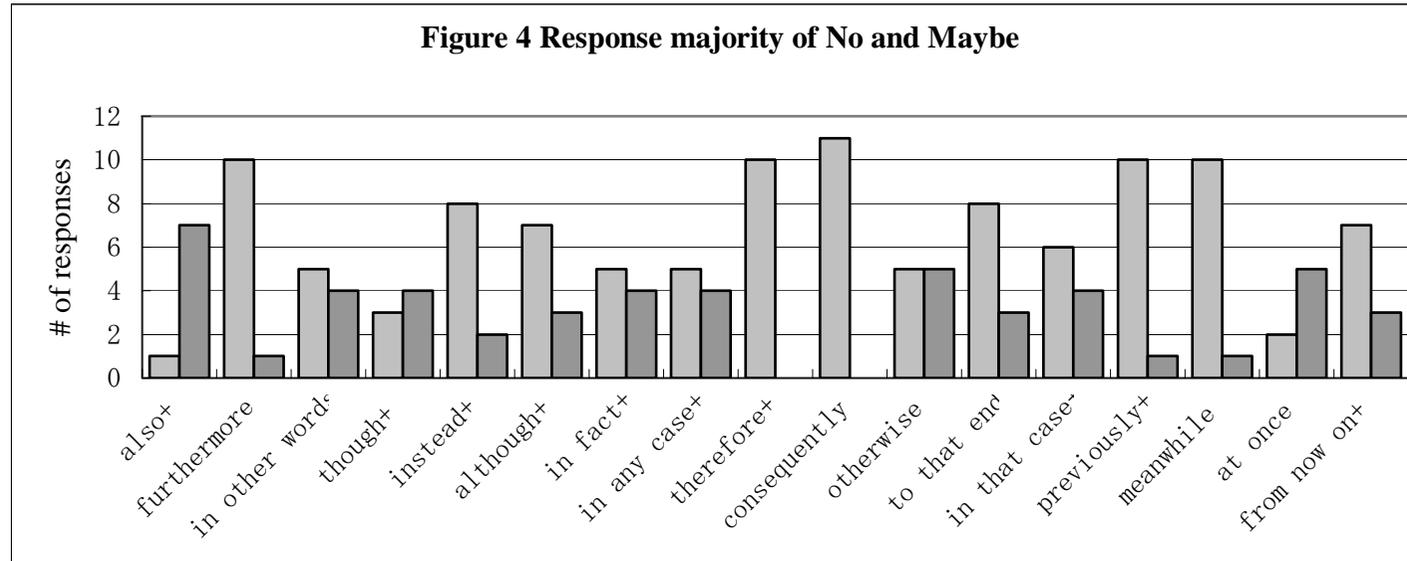
		Do you know what the numbered words on the left mean?			Can you confidently use them when you write something in English?		
		YES	NO	MAYBE	YES	NO	MAYBE
1	and						
2	also						
3	or						
4	furthermore						
5	besides						
6	in other words						
7	for example						
8	but						
9	yet						
10	though						
11	however						
12	instead						
13	although						
14	in fact						
15	in any case						
16	therefore						
17	consequently						
18	because						
19	otherwise						
20	so						
21	to that end						
22	in that case						
23	then						
24	next						
25	previously						
26	finally						
27	as						
28	meanwhile						
29	at once						
30	from now on						

Appendix 2**Tally of results - Conjunctions student questionnaire**

		Do you know what the numbered words on the left mean?			Can you confidently use them when you write something in English?		
		YES	NO	MAYBE	YES	NO	MAYBE
1	and	11*	0	0	11	0	0
2	also	3	1	7	2	3	6
3	or	11	0	0	11	0	0
4	furthermore	0	10	1	0	11	0
5	besides	6	5	0	4	6	1
6	in other words	2	5	4	1	7	3
7	for example	10	1	0	10	1	0
8	but	11	0	0	11	0	0
9	yet	10	0	1	8	0	3
10	though	4	3	4	3	7	1
11	however	6	2	3	5	1	5
12	instead	1	8	2	1	9	1
13	although	1	7	3	1	10	0
14	in fact	2	5	4	2	9	0
15	in any case	1	5	4	1	9	1
16	therefore	1	10	0	1	10	0
17	consequently	0	11	0	0	11	0
18	because	11	0	0	10	1	0
19	otherwise	1	5	5	1	9	1
20	so	9	0	2	8	1	2
21	to that end	0	8	3	0	10	1
22	in that case	1	6	4	1	9	1
23	then	11	0	0	10	0	1
24	next	11	0	0	11	0	0
25	previously	0	10	1	0	11	0
26	finally	6	3	2	4	5	2
27	as	7	1	3	4	1	6
28	meanwhile	0	10	1	0	11	0
29	at once	4	2	5	4	5	2
30	from now on	1	7	3	1	10	0
	TOTAL	141	127	62	126	167	37

* Figures in bold highlight majority known ties.

Appendix 3



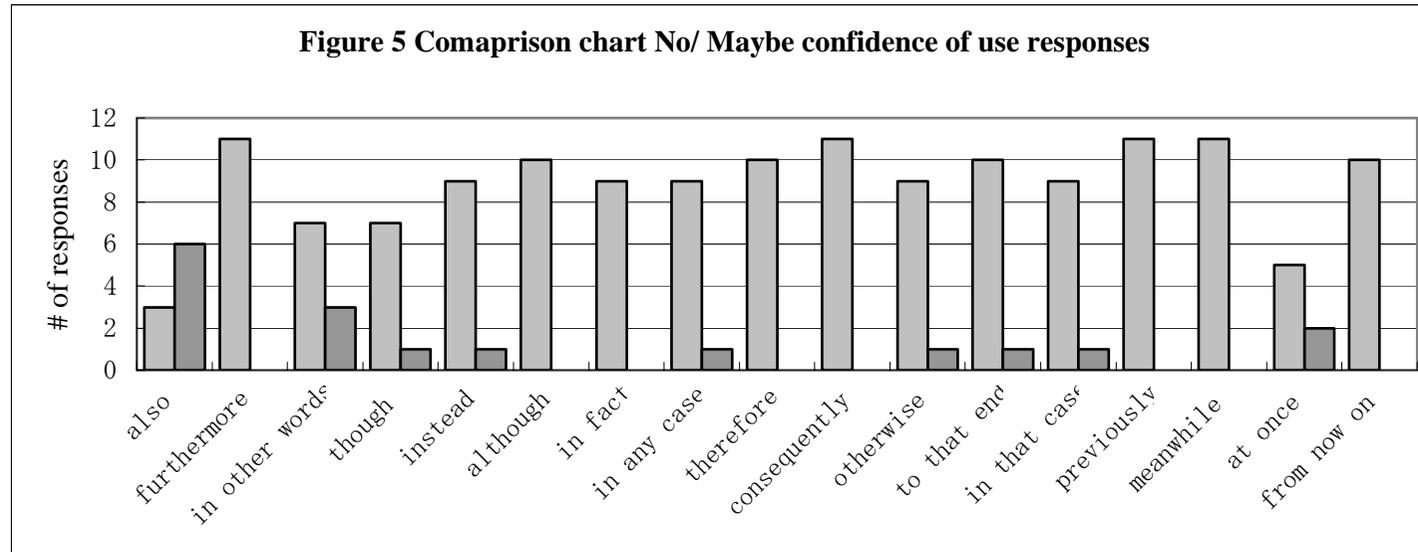
+ Cohesive ties deemed important to learn by elementary and intermediate learner dictionaries

Key:

No responses

Maybe responses

Appendix 4



Key:

No responses

Maybe responses

Appendix 5

Table 4 Days one and two combined diary writing. Questionnaire cohesive ties used (and common errors/ unnatural usage)

Cohesive device used	Used as	# of times used	# of errors		Nature of error/ unnatural usage
			Day one	Day two	
and	conjunction	18	1	3	Lower case <i>a</i> following a full-stop
but	conjunction	13	4	3	Lower case <i>b</i> following a full-stop Unnatural linking to previous clause: heading dominant clause; continuation from previous clause would be more suitable Clausal end position
because	conjunction	11	2	2	Lower case <i>b</i> following a full-stop Heading an unbound dominant clause
so	conjunction	9	1	3	Unnatural use as dependent clause sentence header; more suitable if linked to dominant clause.
then	Adjunct	1	1	0	More suitable if used with <i>by and</i> or <i>so</i> (<i>and then / so then</i>)
as	conjunction	1	0	0	
from now on	Adjunct	1	0	0	
TOTAL		54	9	11	

Appendix 6

Course book unit description

The unit covers the following five teacher-taught parts, covering nine 50-minute lessons:

Part	Lessons	Category	Unit description
One	2	Causal (excluding <i>because</i>)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Introduce <i>Therefore</i>, <i>Consequently</i> and <i>As a result</i>.• Focus on mid-sentence clause linking function of <i>and</i> and <i>so</i>.• Awareness raising - develop own sentences using patterns and language bank provided.• Classmate interview (oral). Record (write) sentences using causal linking words.
Two	2	Causal (reviewed) Adversative	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Focus on Cause and Effect – The differences between Causal and Effect.• Own sentence creation using relevant category.• Cloze procedure. Placing suitable cohesive ties within a story – ‘My idea of a great day’.• Developing own stories, using newly studied and suitable cohesive ties.
Three	1	Temporal	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Looking at using sequencing in time by writing about previous evening.• Classmate interview about what they were doing at a particular time.• Using <i>Meanwhile</i>, <i>When</i>, <i>when</i>, <i>As</i> and <i>as</i> to show concurrent events between two people.• Writing connected extended sentences about the concurrent events of others.
Four	2	Additive	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Study monolingual dictionary definitions of cohesive tie <i>and</i>.• In pairs, using learner dictionaries to check the definitions of other Additive cohesive ties.• Learning the difference between <i>Besides</i> and <i>besides</i>.• Cloze procedure of eight sentences.
Five	2	Causal (<i>because</i> / <i>because of</i>)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Deduction of differences (<i>because</i> and <i>because of</i>) and 8-sentence study of correct/ incorrect usage.• Study of position in clause and subsequent own sentence recording• Classmate oral interview and sentence writing with review through cloze procedure.

Appendix 6 continued**Course book unit description**

Following part five of the unit is an error correction exercise highlighting weak areas of common student mistakes (Appendix ? - idea from Harmer, 1999:120-2) taken from the first two days' diary entries. Finally, the students complete a third diary entry to assess cohesive tie uptake. The unit aims to teach the following ties:

Table 5 Cohesive ties for inclusion in the course book unit materials

Categories	Cohesive tie
Additive	and; also; or; besides; in other words; for example
Adversative	but; yet; though; although*; however; although; nevertheless*
Causal	(and); so; therefore; because; because of*; consequently; as a result*
Temporal	then; next, as; after that; meanwhile; finally

* Not included on questionnaire but promoted in materials.

Appendix 7

Course book unit

Part One – Linking words (Causal cohesive ties)

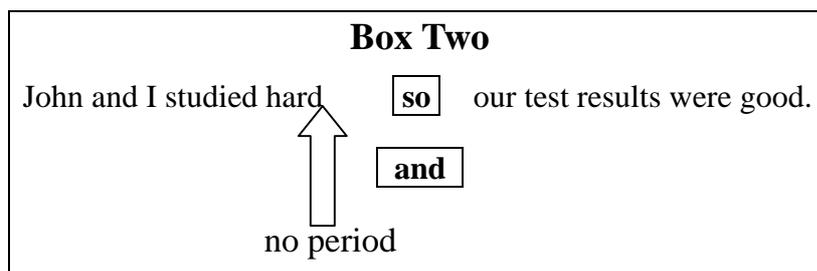
1. Look at these two sentences:

John and I studied hard. Our test results were good.

Now look at **Box One** below to see some of the linking words we can use to make a connection between the two sentences:

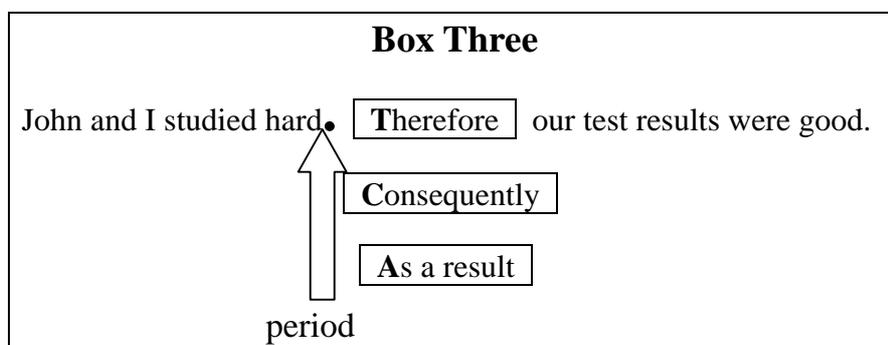
Box One	
Words often start with a <small>s</small> mall letter	Words often start with a B IG letter
so	Therefore
and	Consequently
	As a result

For example, the two separate sentences can become one sentence:



The action - *studied* (positive or negative) - causes the result - *test results were good* (positive or negative).

Now look at the sentences in **Box Three**.



Part One – Linking words (Causal cohesive ties) continued

5 tests I just took	How hard did I study?	What mark I think I'll get.
Ex. World History	Ex. I studied really hard.	Ex. I think I'll get a good mark.
1.	1.	1.
2.	2.	2.
3.	3.	3.
4.	4.	4.
5.	5.	5.
Linking words	How to use linking words	
so and Therefore Consequently As a result	Examples: I studied <u>World History</u> really hard so I think I'll get a good mark.	
	I studied <u>World History</u> really hard. As a result I think I'll get a good mark.	
	1.	
	2.	
	3.	
4.		
5.		

Language bank

I studied	really hard pretty hard a lot a little not so much	I didn't study	hard at all even 5 minutes!	I think I'll get a	great really good pretty good good so-so	mark.	I think I'll get a	bad really bad terrible	mark.
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Part One – Linking words (Causal cohesive ties) continued

Interview five classmates about two of their tests, using the questions 1 and 2 below. Then write two sentences (a and b) for each person use the linking words from part one:

Question 1. How hard did you study (maths) ____ (student's name) ____ ? Ex. I studied maths a little.	Question 2. What mark do you think you'll get? Ex. I think I'll get a terrible mark.
Ex. a. <u>Shunsuke</u> studied maths a little so he thinks he'll get a terrible mark.	
Ex. b. <u>Shunsuke</u> studied Japanese a lot. Therefore he thinks he'll get a great mark.	
1. a. _____ studied	
a. _____ didn't study	
b.	
2. a.	
b.	
3. a.	
b.	
4. a.	
b.	
5. a.	
b.	

Part Two – Linking words (Choosing between Causal and Adversative cohesive ties)

CAUSE		EFFECT	
POSITIVE		POSITIVE	
- I studied really hard	.... and	- I got a good mark.	
- I did many things	.... so	- I was tired.	
-		-	
-	.... . Therefore	-	
-		-	
NEGATIVE		NEGATIVE	
- I didn't study at all	.... . Consequently	- I got a terrible mark.	
- I didn't do many things	.... . As a result	- I wasn't tired.	
-		-	
-		-	
-		-	
POSITIVE		NEGATIVE	
- I studied really hard	.... but	- I got a terrible mark.	
- I did many things	.... yet	- I wasn't tired.	
-		-	
-	..... , though.	-	
-	.... , although	-	
NEGATIVE		POSITIVE	
- I didn't study at all	.... . However	- I got a good mark.	
- I didn't do many things	.... . Nevertheless	- I was tired.	
-		-	
-		-	
-		-	

1. Now make up your own sentences and write them in the spaces. They can be about anything and don't have to be true!

Part Two – Linking words (Choosing between Causal and Adversative cohesive ties) continued

1. Look at the text below. There are blanks where linking words should be. Choose suitable words to put in the blanks?

My idea of a great day.

Saturday was a really great day for me! In the morning the weather was fine my friend and I decided to play soccer. We played outside for about four hours, we didn't get tired because we are both quite fit. after lunch at about two o'clock the sky turned black rain clouds appeared. The rain started gently at first soon became extremely heavy. we continued to play until the grass became too slippery to go on. Feeling thirsty we went home relaxed in front of a good movie. Then I spent the evening sleeping on the sofa. That's my idea of a great day!

Now write your own original text about your own great day that you had recently. (Use the linking words.)

Part Three – Temporal cohesive ties

1. Write in order 5 things that you did after school yesterday.

Ex. At about 5 o'clock I went shopping.

At 6 pm I called my brother and cooked dinner.

From seven thirty to 10 I studied.

At 10 o'clock I took a shower

At 11:30 I went to bed.

Use these words to show sequence in time:

and then Then Next After that Finally

Ex. I went shopping I called my brother and cooked dinner. I studied. I took a shower went to bed at 11:30.

- At about (...) o'clock I
- **and then**, at (.....), I.....
-
-
- **Finally**,

2. Now find 5 partners who were doing something at the same time as you.

Ask them a question, like this:

Question: *Takuya, what were you doing at* | *(about) ...(7)... o'clock?*
| *(half seven)?*

Answer: *I was eating dinner.*

Part Three – Temporal cohesive ties continued

3. Using the patterns below, write sentences showing what you and your classmates were doing at the same time.

.... Meanwhile	At half five I <u>was studying</u> . Meanwhile Takuya <u>was eating</u> dinner.
When,.....	When I <u>was studying</u> , Takuya <u>was eating</u> dinner.
.....when.....	I <u>was studying</u> when Takuya <u>was eating</u> dinner.
As.....,.....	As I <u>was studying</u> , Takuya <u>was eating</u> dinner.
.....as.....	I <u>was studying</u> as Takuya <u>was eating</u> dinner.

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

4. Try to write long connected sentences about two other people.

Ex. Yoko was dancing and then she called Nami. After that she called her boyfriend.

Part Four - Additive cohesive ties

Looking at monolingual dictionary definitions of cohesive devices

1. Let's look at some of the definitions of the cohesive conjunction **and** from four English – English dictionaries*.

A = Oxford Elementary Learner's Dictionary (1994)

B = Oxford Student's Dictionary of English (2001)

C = Longman Handy Learner's Dictionary (1999)

D = Cambridge Learner's Dictionary (2001)

and

A (p.11) (*conjunction*) a word that joins words or parts of sentences together: *fish and chips* *They sang and danced all evening.* *The cat was black and white.*

B (p.25) 1. also; in addition to: *a boy and a girl* • *Do it slowly and carefully* • *We were singing and dancing all evening* • *Come in and sit down*

3. used between repeated words to show that something is increasing or continuing: *The situation is getting worse and worse.* *I shouted and shouted but nobody answered.*

C (p.15) 1. (joining two things) as well as: *John and Sally* *We're cold and hungry.*

2. then; therefore: *Water the seeds and they will grow.*

3. (showing that something continues without stopping): *We ran and ran.*

Part Four - Additive cohesive ties continued

D (p.34) 1. **JOIN** used to join two words or two parts of a sentence: *tea **and** coffee* *We were tired **and** hungry* *Tim lives in Brighton **and** Anne in Oxford.*

2. **AFTER** used to say that one thing happens after another thing: *I got dressed **and** had my breakfast.*

3. **SO**
*The car wouldn't start **and** I had to get a taxi.*

6. **EMPHASIZE** used between two words that are the same to make their meaning stronger: *The sound grew louder **and** louder.*

(*There are a few omissions and typography does not reproduce the originals exactly.)

So we can see that **and** can be used for different things and in different ways.

Here are some more words that can be used different ways too:

and also / Also or besides Besides In other words For example

Besides and **besides** are a little difficult. Look at these examples:

Ex. 1. I didn't want to go outside this morning. **Besides**, it was raining.

means: I didn't want to go outside. **And one more reason is that** it was raining.

Ex. 2. There were only three people **besides** me on the train yesterday.

means: There were only three people **in addition to** / **(also)** me.

BE CAREFUL. **besides** is different to **beside**. *beside* means *next to someone or something, or very near them.* (She was standing *beside* his bed.)

Part Four - Additive cohesive ties continued

2. Look in the monolingual dictionaries to find the definitions and examples of the words.

3. Now try to use the words in the box below. Maybe more than one can fit in the spaces.

1. I don't like this shirt. _____, it's too expensive.
2. The food is very delicious, _____ very cheap.
3. Would you like to sit here _____ next to the window?
4. There were four people in the room, _____ me and Jim.
5. Don't drive so fast _____ you'll have an accident.
6. My mother said I have to go straight home after school. _____ I can't go out with you this evening.
7. I don't want to go tonight. _____ I haven't got any money.
8. Some people, students _____, can get cheaper movie tickets.

(*Contain some alterations from originals.)

3. Look again at number 5 in the box. The word we need means 'if not'. Can you find which word we need? Check with your teacher or check the monolingual dictionary.

Part Five - Using *because* and *because of*

1. Look at these definitions of *because* and *because of* from four English dictionaries:

(A - Oxford Elementary Learner's Dictionary; B - Oxford Student's Dictionary of English; C - Cambridge Learner's Dictionary; D - Longman Handy Longman's Dictionary.)

because *conjunction.* for the reason that. (Used to give a reason for something):

A) He was angry *because* I was late.

B) They didn't go for a walk *because* it was raining.

C) I phoned *because* I need to talk to you.

I can't come out tonight *because* I've got too much homework.

D) I do it *because* I like it.

2. Now look again at the underlined words that come after *because*. In grammar, what kind of word are they? Write it here:_____.

because of *preposition.* as a result of someone or something:

I. We stayed at home *because of* the rain.

II. They didn't go for a walk *because of* the rain.

III. We got into all this trouble *because of* you.

IV. I came back *because of* the storm.

3. Now look again at the underlined words that come after *because*. In grammar, what kind of word are they? Write it here:_____.

Part Five - Using *because* and *because of* continued

Do you think these sentences are possible? – Tick in the Yes or No boxes for each one.

	Yes	No
Ex. 1. I went home early <i>because</i> I was tired.	✓	
Ex. 2. I didn't go shopping <i>because of</i> I had no money.		✓
1. I cried <i>because of</i> the movie was sad.		
2. I cried <i>because of</i> the movie's sad story.		
3. I went swimming <i>because</i> the weather was so hot.		
4. I went swimming <i>because of</i> the hot weather.		
5. I failed the test <i>because</i> the writing part was too hard.		
6. I passed the exam <i>because of</i> the easy reading part.		
7. I couldn't sleep <i>because of</i> my room was so hot.		
8. We use the air conditioner because of it is humid in summer.		

Where do we put *because* and *because of*?

Let's now look at the sentence order.

This is okay:

He was angry *because* I was late.

and this:

Because I was late, he was angry.

(BIG 'B')

(comma)

BUT this is **NOT** okay:

He was angry. *Because* I was late.

or this:

He was angry. *because* I was late.

(end of sentence)

(period then small 'b')

or this:

Because I was late. He was angry.

So, we can put the result **He was angry** and then the reason **I was late** together, like this:
He was angry *because* I was late.

OR we can put the reason and then the result, like this: ***Because* I was late, he was angry.**

Part Five - Using *because* and *because of* continued

OVER TO YOU!

Write about 5 recent *because* / *because of* reason and result experiences two ways.

Ex. a. *Because* I didn't wake up early this morning, I missed my usual train.

Ex. b. I missed my usual train *because* I didn't wake up early this morning.

Ex. c. *Because of* my bad maths test mark, my parents were angry.

Ex. d. My parents were angry *because of* my bad maths test mark.

1. a.

b.

2. a.

b.

3. a.

b.

4. a.

b.

5. a.

b.

INTERVIEW YOUR CLASSMATES

Now interview 5 classmates. They will tell you the reason and result of something. Listen carefully.

First, your partner will **ONLY** tell you the reason and result. Your partner will not say *because* or *because of* when they tell you.

Then, **after** your partner tells you two sentences, you must write the sentence using *because* or *because of*.

Finally, after writing it, check with your partner that you have used *because* or *because of* correctly. (You can use the past or present tenses)

Part Five - Using *because* and *because of* continued

Name	<i>Because</i> or <i>because of</i> sentences
Ex.	Ryosuke says: "I ate too much." " I felt sick" (Don't write this part)
Ryosuke	You write: Ex. <i>Because Ryosuke ate too much, he felt sick.</i> Or <i>Ryosuke felt sick because he ate too much.</i>
1.	
2.	
3.	
4.	
5.	

REVIEW

Write *because* or *because of* in the spaces below:

1. his bad back, James couldn't ride his motorbike.
2. Fred had to go back to Australia his sister was getting married.
3. Anna lost her purse, she went to the police station.
4. her students didn't do their homework, Lauren's got angry.
5. John wasn't able to go fishing the lightning storm.

Appendix 8

Using the students' own errors for instruction

1. Try to match two boxes together to make five connected sentences. Can you do it? Use the same punctuation (, . **B b**) as in the boxes. Then write the sentences in the spaces at the bottom

7. This movie is very difficult and tiring.

2. Because I want money.

8. Because we'll have a dance live (*show*) in July.

11. I went to *my* part-time job.

10. but, I couldn't eat kuppa.

12. I went to dance school after the test.

3. because I don't like stories of the past.

5. Because of I was so tired.

1. I went shopping on Sunday

4. I worked hard.

9. I ate reimen and meat etc, etc..

6. because I needed new shorts.

Sentence numbers			
1	6	I went shopping on Sunday	because I needed new shorts

Appendix 8

Using the students' own errors for instruction continued

2. Look at how the sentences can look in English. Maybe for some the order is different from the originals.

I went shopping on Sunday because I needed new shorts.

Because I needed new shorts, I went shopping on Sunday.

This is not possible *I went shopping. Because I needed new shorts.

.....or this *I went shopping. because I needed new shorts.

WHY are they not possible? Discuss it with your classmates and teacher

3. Now change this to read well: **This movie is very difficult and tiring. because I don't like stories of the past.**

or...

4. Now look at the other four sentences from part one and then write them so that they read properly.

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

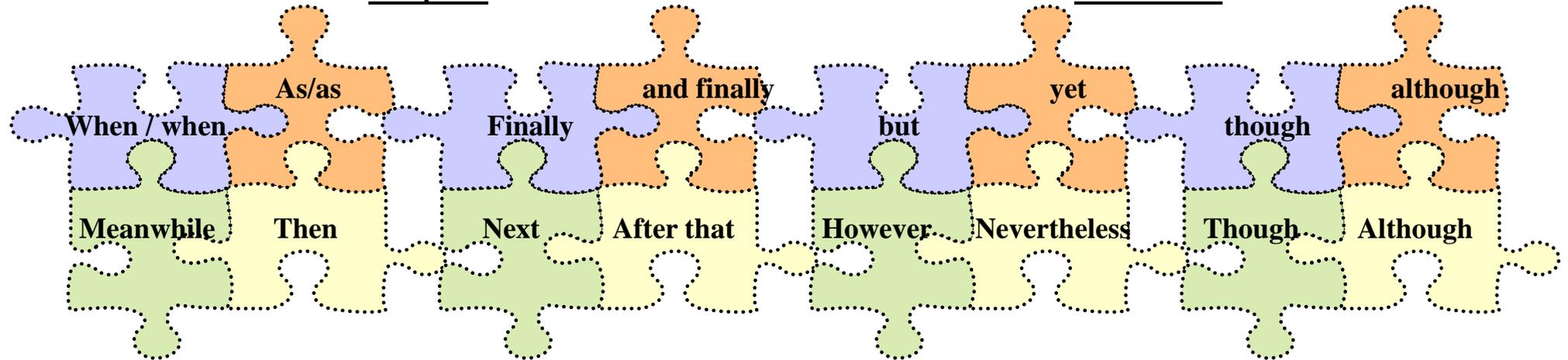
.....

.....

Appendix 9 Conjunctions reminder jigsaw wall cards. Blow up to large size, cut out and put on the classroom wall for all to see.

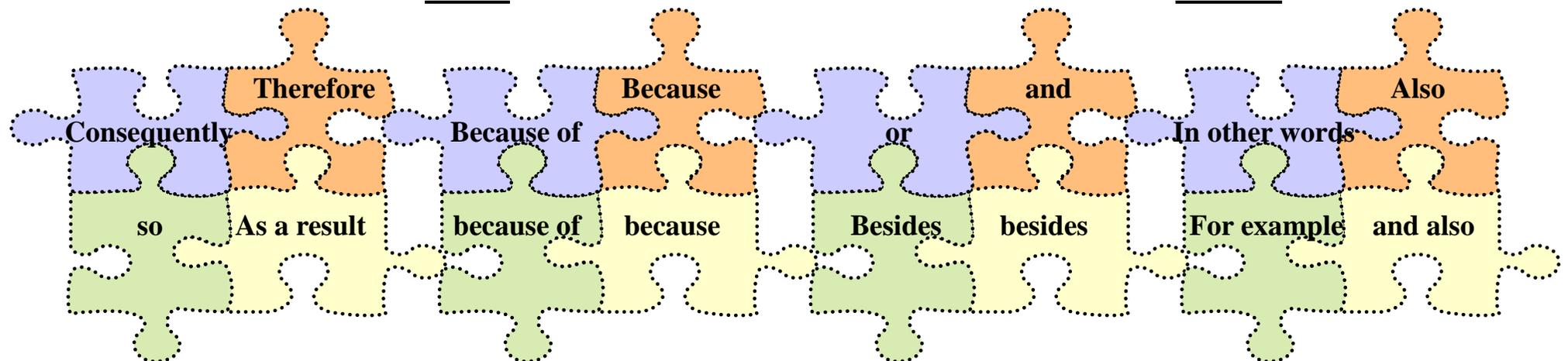
Temporal

Adversative



Causal

Additive



Appendix 10

Table 7 Cohesive tie adoption – third diary entry and comparison

Conjunction/Adjunct	Diary one	Diary two	Part two	Diary three
and	11	7	15	6
but	8	5	7	6
yet	0	0	0	2
However	0	0	0	4
Although	0	0	0	1
Nevertheless	0	0	0	3
Therefore*	0	0	4	2
Consequently	0	0	1	1
because	5	6	1	8
so	5	4	5	6
As a result	1	0	5	5
When	0	0	3	1
Before (that)	0	0	0	1
After (that)	0	4	0	2
Finally	0	0	0	1
TOTAL	30	26	39	49

* Therefore was incorrectly used as an adversative once, yet experimentation had risen.

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